

Chapter 2: Defining Team Success

Learning Objectives

1. What are the three criteria used to define team success?
2. Why is team success more than just completion of the task?
3. What factors determine whether a group has the right set of people?
4. What types of tasks are better suited for groups than for individuals? Why?
5. What are the important parts of the group process?
6. How does an organization provide a supportive context for teams?
7. What are the characteristics of successful teams?
8. What are the benefits and problems of using work teams?
9. What are the implications of teams being a fad?

Test Questions and Answers

Short answer/Essay Questions

1. What are the three criteria used to define team success?
Task completion, social relations, and individual benefit.
2. What are the five characteristics of successful teams? How have researchers investigated these characteristics? Why have these researchers found different results and how are their results different from one another?
Clear goals, appropriate leadership, organizational support, suitable tasks, and accountability and rewards are the five characteristics. Researchers have used interviews and surveys to investigate what makes teams successful. However, because they are from different backgrounds their methods may have been different. The researchers also were investigating different types of teams, which led to different findings.
3. Why is it important that the characteristics of the task match the abilities and composition of the team?
Teams are generally designed based on what task they are supposed to complete. If the task is small and simple, a small temporary team may be pulled together to complete the task. Team members must either be easily trained or already know how to complete the task when it is assigned. The task must also be motivating to the team and somewhat challenging to complete.
4. What organizational supports should be provided to help teams succeed?
Clear goals and well-defined tasks, adequate resources, including financial, staffing, and training support. Teams should also be given reliable information and support to help with technical or interpersonal difficulties. Feedback and incentives to perform should also be given.

Multiple Choice

1. The main criteria used to measure team success are:
 - a. **Task completion, social relations, and individual benefit.**
 - b. Task speed, quality, and accuracy.
 - c. Social relations, group maintenance, and viability.
 - d. Individual success, group success, and organizational success.
 - e. None of the above.
2. Team success is more than just completing the task because:
 - a. The task may be able to be completed without using a team.
 - b. Teams may not be the most effective method for completing the task.
 - c. Developing team skills for the future is an important part of teamwork.
 - d. Teams are valuable when tasks are disrupted by unforeseen events.
 - e. **All of the above are true.**
3. Successful teams contain members who have all of the following characteristics except:
 - a. The skills, knowledge, and ability to perform the task.
 - b. The power and authority to implement team decisions.
 - c. The group process skills to work well together.
 - d. **Similar social and education backgrounds to support good communication.**
 - e. All of the above factors are important.
4. Groups are typically better than the sum of individual efforts for tasks that:
 - a. Are easily divisible.
 - b. Focus on maximizing output.
 - c. Consist of additive efforts.
 - d. **Are unitary and optimizing.**
 - e. All of the above.
5. Which of the following statements about the group process is false?
 - a. Groups may make bad decisions because the desire to maintain social relations conflicts with making a rational decision.
 - b. **The group process typically encourages creative solutions to problems.**
 - c. High performing groups usually have task oriented goals.
 - d. Good social relations among members provide support for performing the task.
 - e. All of the above are true.
6. What is the relationship between team success and organizational context?
 - a. Successful teams change the organization and create their own context.
 - b. Organizational context is not one of the main determinants of team success.
 - c. **The organization's feedback and reward system is an important part of a team's organizational context.**
 - d. Supportive organizational cultures promote open communication and give power and responsibility to the manager.
 - e. All of the above are true.

7. Research on the characteristics of successful work teams shows that they typically have:
 - a. Clear and well defined goals.
 - b. Leaders who facilitate (but not control) the team's actions.
 - c. Organizations that support the team with power and resources.
 - d. Tasks that are challenging and motivating.
 - e. **All of the above are characteristics of successful teams.**
8. Which of the following is a personal benefit of working in teams?
 - a. Developing communication and organizational skills
 - b. Increased social support
 - c. Shared knowledge and expertise
 - d. Improve interpersonal skills
 - e. **All of the above**
9. Which of the following is NOT a necessary condition for a team to succeed?
 - a. Task is suitable for teamwork
 - b. **Allotting tasks based on previous work in teams**
 - c. Organization provides supportive context to complete task
 - d. Team has right group of people to perform task
 - e. Team combines resources effectively
10. According to McGrath (1984), which is not a type of group goal based on the different types of tasks teams perform?
 - a. Generate
 - b. **Plan**
 - c. Choose
 - d. Negotiate
 - e. Execute
11. In a group, whose responsibility is it to provide direction?
 - a. The organization
 - b. All team members
 - c. **The group leader**
 - d. Project managers
 - e. None of the above
12. Which of the following should the organization provide to teams so they can be successful?
 - a. Minimal information from the organization
 - b. Tasks that are easy to complete
 - c. Free resources such as day care services
 - d. **Financial resources and training support**
 - e. Nothing; teams should function independently from the organization
13. The main reason researchers have found different results when looking at characteristics of successful teams is:

- a. **They have studied different types of teams**
 - b. They have used different methods of analysis
 - c. They have studied unsuccessful teams
 - d. All research has been done in a lab and is therefore biased
 - e. Organizations have not allowed researchers to study their employees
14. Implementation of work teams is one of the most common organizational interventions in:
- a. Research organizations
 - b. Management divisions
 - c. **Manufacturing firms**
 - d. Professional project firms
 - e. All of the above
15. From the organizations point of view, what is a problem with teamwork?
- a. Wasted resources implementing new team strategies instead of fixing old ones
 - b. Worker absenteeism due to team member dissatisfaction
 - c. Teams may not be necessary for the task at hand
 - d. Transitions from traditional management to teams can create large disagreements between employees and managers.
 - e. **All of the above**
16. Implementing teams in organizations is considered a fad because:
- a. Organizations are finally figuring out effective ways to use teams in all scenarios
 - b. Although they are used now, teams will no longer be used in the near future
 - c. An increased use of technology will no longer require that organizations use teams
 - d. **The usage of teams is overemphasized in businesses**
 - e. Teams are the only effective way to accomplish tasks
17. Many benefits from creating a team occur:
- a. **Over the long run after completing many projects**
 - b. During the process of completing the first project
 - c. When the team has a good relationship with managers
 - d. When the team has a large rate of turnover
 - e. After a team successfully completes the first project
18. To evaluate the success of a team, managers focus on the external product of the team while team members focus on:
- a. Their performance on the task at hand
 - b. **Internal group functioning**
 - c. Their relationship with the managers
 - d. Their own personal well being
 - e. Pleasing the organization
19. Working in a functional team can provide many personal benefits. What is one benefit that does not occur often?
- a. Increased social relations

- b. Developing communication and organizational skills
 - c. Broadening of knowledge
 - d. Increased awareness of other perspectives
 - e. **Career improvements or advancements**
20. What is an advantage of diversity in a highly skilled and committed team?
- a. Increase in productivity
 - b. More creativity
 - c. More innovative
 - d. Difference in opinions
 - e. **All of the above**
21. A study of student teams performing a variety of tasks identified a(n) _____ factor that predicted successful team performance.
- a. Collective personality
 - b. **Collective intelligence**
 - c. Collective morality
 - d. Individual personality
 - e. Individual intelligence

True/False

- 1. There is a clear way of measuring teamwork success **False**
- 2. Using teams is not always the best strategy for accomplishing a task. **True**
- 3. There is a major conflict between measuring team success and measuring individual success **True**
- 4. Highly interdependent tasks are a necessary condition for the use of teams. **True**
- 5. Group cohesion and good communication skills seldom matter for team success. **False**
- 6. Power and responsibility are solely held by the organization and are rarely given to teams **False**
- 7. Feedback from the organization is key to group success **True**
- 8. Organizations find switching from traditional work systems to teamwork very easy **False**
- 9. Many teams are being used in today's businesses without consideration for cost of implementation **True**