

Pulling Together

Getting the Most out of Teams

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Published by:

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Introduction

The majority of UK organisations use some form of teamworking (Kersley *et al.*, 2006). When it operates effectively, working in groups produces improvements in productivity, quality and customer satisfaction levels, as well as enhanced employee flexibility and commitment (Piczak and Hauser 1996). When it goes wrong, efficiency and productivity fall as conflict and rivalry replace group cohesion and co-operation. Part of the problem is that introducing teamworking in an organisation is far from straightforward and many obstacles need to be overcome (IDS, 2003). Selecting the composition of the group, setting team goals and boundaries, establishing effective team leadership and group decision-making processes, building relationships between members, managing group performance and deciding how best to reward team members, for example, are not easy. Sometimes the functioning of a group is less effective than the aggregate of individual efforts, as some members will work less hard when their efforts are masked by those of others than when they are individually accountable (West, 1996). At other times, group decisions, though often of better quality than the average put forward individually by group members, tend to be inferior to those of the most capable team members.

Yet today's workplace is teeming with teams (Robbins and Finley, 1997). There are work teams, project teams, customer support teams, design teams, planning teams, problem-solving teams and quality teams. There are functional teams and cross-functional or multidisciplinary teams. There are managed and self-managed teams. There are permanent teams and temporary teams. There are also 'virtual' teams spread across different locations, which, given technological advances, rarely, if ever, meet. As Katzenbach and Smith (1993a) acknowledge, teams are the basic units of performance in most organisations.

For employers, teamworking has a number of potential benefits. Organising work around groups of employees can help to increase competitiveness by making more effective and efficient use of labour (Acas, 2005). It can create ways of working that achieve a faster reaction to customer, client and organisational needs (Industrial Society, 1998). Teamworking can also speed the spread of ideas, helping the organisation to respond to opportunities and threats and to the fast-changing business environment (CIPD, 2006a). There are potential advantages for employees too, including undertaking more tasks and having a degree of control over how their work is structured and organised (IDS, 2003).

Successful teamworking requires adequate organisational support and the right environment. Traditionally, managers have managed individuals, with systems and structures focusing on what each employee contributes as an individual. As Acas (2005) makes clear: 'teamwork requires a participative style of management where employees have significant degree of control over their own work'. In such circumstances, the role of the manager/supervisor shifts from one of 'controller' to

'initiator, counsellor and facilitator'. Changes in supervision and devolving decision making raise questions about how best to manage and assess performance to ensure an organisation gets the best out of its teams. Research suggests that many organisations are struggling to measure all the critical elements of team performance, with assessment done, at best, in an ad hoc manner (Mendibil et al., 2001). An inability to properly measure and manage teams prevents organisations from making use of the full potential of teamworking.

Background

Overview

'A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.'

Katzenbach and Smith, 1993a

Teamworking has evolved over the years, largely from early experiments in ways of improving employee motivation, such as those conducted at Western Electric's Hawthorne plant in the US between 1927 and 1932, and those based on socio-technical systems (STS) theory, which looked at work design and developing the optimal combination of technical work and social work structures. Most of the research into teamworking has focused on the manufacturing sector (Acas, 2005). However, teamworking, as a way of organising work, is fairly common in most UK workplaces. Teamworking is now the preferred method of work organisation in most UK organisations, at least for some employees. Results of the most recent Workplace Employment Relations Survey (WERS, 2004) reveal that 72 per cent of workplaces involved at least some of their core employees in formally designated teams – similar to the proportion (74 per cent) found in 1998 (Kersley et al., 2006).

The various types of teams tend to fall into one of four categories – organisational teams, such as the top management team; work teams, which are dependent on one another to deliver a specified outcome; project teams, established to carry out a set piece of work; and ad hoc teams, set up to deal with specific issues (Armstrong, 1999). However, not all work groups can be classed as teams, as Katzenbach and Smith (1993a) point out: 'A team (is not) just any group working together. Committees, councils and task forces are not necessarily teams. Groups do not become teams simply because that is what someone calls them'.

Team members should rarely number more than 15, though some organisations operate much larger teams, or have less than six members: too few members could limit the range of skills, while too big a group will encourage teams within the team to emerge. Two influential models of team roles – Belbin (1993) and Margerison and

McCann (1991) – have been developed and both stress the need for a team to be made up of good mix of types of employee, such that in any one area team members' strengths counteract the deficiencies of others and vice versa.

Types of teams

There are a wide variety of types of teams. Torrington *et al.* (2002) say that teams differ in terms of their timespan (temporary or permanent), interchangeability (group's range of specific skills), and task and functional range (breadth of tasks the team is required to perform). They contend that there are four broad team types:

1. **Production and service teams** – group of individuals with responsibility for a whole chunk of the production process, for example. The WERS figures suggest this is the most common form in the UK. In 83 per cent of cases, teams have responsibility for specific products or services (Kersley, 2006).
2. **Cross-functional management teams** – made up of individuals from a range of functions, such as marketing, research, sales and development.
3. **Functional teams** – made up of individuals within the same function.
4. **Problem-solving teams** – made up of individuals from a range of functions with the aim of solving production or quality problems, for example.

Similarly, Sundstrom *et al.* (1990) place the different types of teams into the following four categories:

1. **Advice and involvement** – examples include advisory panels, committees and employee involvement groups.
2. **Production and service** – examples include assembly teams, maintenance crews and flight attendant crews.
3. **Project** – examples include research groups, task forces and architect teams.
4. **Organised action** – examples include sports teams, negotiating teams, expedition teams, surgery teams and cockpit crews.

According to this study, the different types of teams are distinguished by characteristics, such as the combination of member expertise, team's degree of integration with other work units and team's work cycle. For example, the typical work cycle of production or service teams is repetitive or continuous whereas for teams in the organised action category it is characterised by brief performance events or repeated under new conditions.

Parry *et al.* (1998) describe teams as mini organisations, each with their own purpose, levels of autonomy, operating procedures, decision-making and task design. They distinguish between:

- ‘Self-directed’ teams, whose purpose is to create greater flexibility and innovation in permanent work teams, with empowerment a way of generating commitment and accountability.
- ‘Lean’ teams, which operate in lean production systems and have an emphasis on quality, continuous improvement and productivity.
- ‘Project’ teams, which are used to sustain cross-functional teamworking, and aim to integrate and compress development timescales.

Katzenbach and Smith (1993b) identify three kinds of teams – those that:

1. recommend things, such as forces or project groups
2. make or do things, such as manufacturing, operations or marketing groups
3. run things, such as groups that oversee some significant functional activity.

Importantly, Katzenbach and Smith differentiate between teams that are structured in a mindful way and other groups of people merely working together. They refer to these as ‘true teams’ and working groups, and the differences between the two are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Differences between teams and groups

‘True teams’	Working groups
Share leadership roles as they see fit	Have a strong, clearly-focused leader
Mutual, collective accountability	Individual accountability
Create specific team objectives that they deliver themselves	Objectives are imposed, mandated, granted and/or are the same as the broader organisational mission
Deliver collective products/outcomes	Deliver individual products/outcomes
Encourage open-ended discussion and active problem-solving meetings	Run efficient meetings
Measure performance directly by assessing collective products/outcomes	Measure effectiveness indirectly by their influence on others
Discuss, decide and do ‘real’ work together	Discuss, decide and delegate
Open and honest dialogue	Polite discussions
Have fun working together and laugh a lot	Just work
Cannot wait to be together	Meet because they have to

Source: Katzenbach and Smith (1993b)

Based on typology developed by West (2004), the CIPD (2006a) offers the following, though not exhaustive, list of types of teams:

- **Production and service teams** – examples include in product manufacturing, construction, sales and healthcare. Such teams are characterised as having a relatively long life-span and providing an ongoing product or service to customers or the organisation.

- **Project and development teams** – examples include research and product development teams. Such teams, which are often cross-functional with membership based on individual expertise, will be dedicated to a particular objective, and have limited life-spans and clear short-term goals.
- **Advice and involvement teams** – groups aiming to improve, for example, working conditions or product/service quality. Typically, team members do not devote a lot of time to the team and once it has achieved its objective the team will be disbanded.
- **Crews** – examples include airline crews. Such teams will often be formed from people who have rarely worked together but will receive prior training so they clearly understand their role.
- **Action and negotiation teams** – examples include surgical and legal teams, and will consist of people who tend to regularly work together. Such teams will operate under well-developed processes and clear objectives.
- **Virtual teams** – team members will work in different buildings and/or locations (such teams may fit into one of the other categories).
- **Self-managed teams** – where decision-making is devolved from line managers to the team (such teams may fit into one of the other categories).

A typology can be constructed based on these team forms that distinguishes on the one axis between short term and long term teams, temporary or permanent ones (*ie* on a temporal dimension) and between the scope of decision making on the other axis. Table 2 illustrates this idea:

Time/ decision	Recommendation	Delivery	Oversight
Temporary, short term	Design teams	Project teams	
Permanent, long term	Development teams	Production or service teams	Quality review teams

It is harder to illustrate oversight teams as they may fall into the category of ‘groups’, as defined by Katzenbach and Smith (1993b) above.

WERS survey results suggest that around half of teams (49 per cent) were permanent, a third (32 per cent) in place only for a fixed period of time, and the remainder a mixture of permanent and temporary. There are no statistics on the decision-making focus.

The way teams are managed, the freedom they are given, and the way they are organised, are other dimensions that cut across those in the above table.

IDS (2003) says the most common type continues to be the permanent (or process) team, which is especially popular in manufacturing organisations and increasingly common in service sector companies, particularly call-centre operations. However, the WERS 2004 results reveal that teamworking was most commonly found where core

employees worked in professional occupations (91 per cent) or associate professional and technical occupations (90 per cent), but much less widespread where core employees were engaged in process, plant and machine work (65 per cent) or were skilled workers (68 per cent). Teamworking is least common in sales and customer service occupations (59 per cent).

These results challenge the assumption (implicit in the research undertaken) that teamworking is a manufacturing type of work organisation and largely to be found among blue collar workers. Although the proclivity among employers in the UK for using non-managerial staff in team structures comes through in WERS, it found that 79 per cent of workplaces operate problem-solving groups involve non-managers (Kersley, 2006).

As to the management of teams, the WERS figures indicate that 61 per cent of staff jointly decide how work is to be done and only six per cent appoint their own leader. Interdependence also appears to be the norm. The survey reports that 81 per cent of employees depend on each other's work to be able to do their own job, but job rotation is also common with 66 per cent rotating tasks or roles within the group (Kersley, 2006).

Team structures

Size

Teams vary in size, though most commentators say teams should not be too large.

'The team discipline demands that a small number of people collaborate to achieve common purposes and goals. Rarely have we observed more than ten to 12 people team up effectively without subdividing in favour of smaller numbers,'

Katzenbach and Smith (2001)

Neathey and Suff (1997) agree, recommending the 'right' size for a self-managed team as anything between five and 15 people; a smaller number would in most cases be impractical, while many more could undermine group cohesion by creating sub-groups, or teams within a team. They found that the average size of a team was ten members. Similarly, Acas (2005), although stating there are no strict rules about the size of a team, which it says is often determined by the nature of the operation and layout of the workplace, recommends a maximum of 15 and a minimum of six team members. In teams of fewer than six, it may be difficult to ensure members have the right skills, while teams with more than 15 members have a tendency to split into sub-groups, says the conciliation service.

IDS (2003), however, says there is 'no prescribed optimum team size', noting that the size of teams in the case study organisations it describes range from between eight and 15 people at BMW Plant Group Oxford to 50 service engineers making up a service team at British Gas.

Roles

Teams need to contain the right mix of skills and experience. Katzenbach and Smith (1993b) say skill requirements fall into the following three categories:

1. technical or functional expertise
2. problem-solving and decision-making skills
3. interpersonal skills.

Based on their own strengths and weaknesses in these areas, as well as their backgrounds, team members will generally take on a specific role within the group – often through mutual discovery and understanding to see who is best suited to each of the different roles required in a group situation. Belbin (1993) revised the set of significant team roles he first developed in 1981. According to the author, the various roles are the core of an effective decision-making team as well as being essential to other kinds of workplace teams. The nine team roles described by Belbin (previously there were eight) are outlined in the following table (Table 3):

Table 3: Belbin’s team roles

Role	Activities	Characteristics
<i>Co-ordinator (previously chair person)</i>	Clarifies goals, helps allocate roles, responsibilities and duties, promotes decision making	Mature, confident, calm, impartial, self-disciplined, positive thinker
<i>Shaper</i>	Seeks patterns in group discussions, has drive and courage to overcome obstacles	High achiever, impatient, challenging, dynamic, pushes group towards agreement and decision-making
<i>Plant</i>	Advances proposals and new ideas, provides insights on courses of action	Creative, imaginative, unorthodox, knowledgeable
<i>Monitor/evaluator</i>	Analyses problems and complex issues, assess the contributions of others, sees all options	Sober, clever, discreet, unemotional
<i>Implementer (previously company worker)</i>	Turns ideas into practical action	Tough-minded, practical, tolerant, conscientious
<i>Teamworker</i>	Provides personal support and help to others, fosters team spirit	Co-operative, mild, perceptive, diplomatic
<i>Resource investigator</i>	Explores opportunities, develops contacts, negotiates with outsiders	Extrovert, enthusiastic, versatile, communicative
<i>Completer</i>	Searches out errors, emphasises the need to meet deadlines and completing tasks	Perseverance, conscientious, attention to detail, anxious
<i>Specialist</i>	Provides skills and knowledge in short supply	Single-minded, self-starting, dedicated

Source: Adapted from Hayes (1997); CIPD (2006a)

A second classification of roles has been developed by Margerison and McCann (1991), and this model groups the eight overlapping (or linked) roles into four general

approaches: explorers, advisers, controllers and organisers. The eight roles that make up Margerison and McCann's 'Team Wheel' are:

1. **Creator–innovator** – someone who enjoys thinking up new ideas and ways of doing things.
2. **Explorer–promoter** – someone who takes up new ideas and promotes them to others.
3. **Assessor–developer** – someone who takes up new ideas and makes them work in practice.
4. **Thruster–organiser** – someone who gets things done, emphasises targets, deadlines and budgets.
5. **Concluder–producer** – someone who develops plans and standard systems to ensure outputs are achieved.
6. **Controller–inspector** – someone who is concerned with the details, and adhering to rules and regulations.
7. **Upholder–maintainer** – someone who provides guidance and help in meeting standards.
8. **Reporter–adviser** – someone who gathers information and communicates it in an easily understandable way.

According to Margerison (2002), each team member possesses certain strengths around the Team Wheel, and other areas that are not so strong. The key, and the main reason for having teamwork, is that each person complements the other with their respective strengths. This can only be achieved if there are good links between the team members, however. So, for example, someone might be coming up with excellent ideas, but unless there are good links with those who are good at developing and promoting new ways of working, their efforts will largely be wasted. Margerison says 'linking' involves co-ordinating and integrating, and are skills required of all team members.

The role of team leader is not straightforward and largely depends on how much autonomy is granted to the team. Acas (2005) says there are three basic ways of dealing with team leadership:

1. Team leader is a supervisor outside the team.
2. Team leader is a working team member with the main responsibility for direct liaison with management.
3. Team operates without a designated leader inside or outside the team. Various members of the team deal with leadership and liaison with management according to task.

Where a traditional management hierarchy exists above the team, the team leader role is often similar to that of a traditional supervisor. But where a team has a significant degree of autonomy – such as a self-managed team – and where the traditional managerial has largely disappeared, a team leader may take on traditional line management activities and the role may rotate.

There is also the question of who appoints the team leader, if there is one. The WERS figures reported earlier that teams appointing their own leader are rare. Self managed teams seem to be more popular without a designated leader.

Managing Team Performance

Overview

'Managers are finding it difficult not only to measure team performance, but more importantly to manage and motivate the people within teams in a manner that is consistent with the strategy and objectives of the organisation.'

Mendibil et al., 2001

Despite the popularity and longevity of teamworking as a way of work organisation, problems persist in effectively managing teams, which means that, at best, teamworking fails to reach its full potential, or, at worse, it is considered a failure. Mendibil (2003) says the problem is not with teams, individuals, empowerment or the structure, but with organisational design and management philosophy, and with assigning responsibility and accountability.

Common problems include objectives that are not aligned with organisational strategy, employee performance measurement that is not linked to organisational objectives and a lack of understanding of how to effectively measure team performance. Robins and Finley (1997) say there is no single reason why teams do not always work well, but suggest that confusing goals, bad policies and stupid procedures, bad leadership, ill-conceived reward systems, an anti-team culture, and insufficient feedback and information are just some of the common problems that exist.

The literature identifies a number of key characteristics for good performance, including creating a common sense of purpose, agreeing clear team goals, clarifying roles, establishing durable performance standards (including a process for resolving conflict), developing effective means of communication, identifying team performance measures, and providing organisational support and resources. Getting the right mix of skills, experience and potential at the start is crucial, while leadership is vital to successful teams.

The role of middle managers has largely disappeared, with teamworking becoming the key working practice. Organisational systems, particularly measuring performance, are failing to keep pace with the shift to process-based structures that are increasingly replacing traditional hierarchical and functional ones, however.

Hammer and Stanton (1999) report that traditional ways of measuring performance, determining compensation, providing training and organising facilities are tailored to vertical units, not processes, and to individuals, not teams. Although Zigon (1997) acknowledges that measuring team performance can be difficult, it is essential to do so to ensure teams are moving the business forward.

Key characteristics for good performance

The CIPD (2006a) lists the characteristics of an effective team as:

- a common sense of purpose
- a clear understanding of the team's objectives
- resources to achieve those objectives
- mutual respect among team members, both as individuals and for the contribution each makes to the team's performance
- valuing members' strengths and weaknesses
- mutual trust
- willingness to share knowledge and expertise
- willingness to speak openly
- a range of skills among team members to deal effectively with all its tasks
- a range of personal styles for the various roles needed to carry out the team's tasks.

Katzenbach and Smith (1993a) recommend the following 'how-to recipe' for establishing effective team performance:

- **Establish urgency, demanding performance standards and direction** – all members need to believe the team has urgent and worthwhile purposes, and will want to know what the expectations are.
- **Select team members for skill and skill potential, not personality** – teams will only succeed if they possess the skills to meet their purpose and performance goals. Rather than determining what skills are required after the team is formed, managers should select people both for their existing skills and their potential to improve and learn new ones.
- **Set some clear rules of behaviour** – all effective teams set rules of conduct (regarding attendance, contribution and communication, for example) for themselves at the outset to help them achieve their performance objectives.
- **Set a few immediate performance-oriented tasks and goals** – the sooner a team starts to achieve performance goals, the sooner the team gels.

- **Regularly challenge the group with fresh information** – new information causes a team to redefine its understanding of its performance challenge, and will help it shape a common purpose, set clearer goals and improve its common approach.
- **Spend lots of time together** – teams require time to learn to be a team. Creative insights and personal bonding require impromptu and casual interactions as well as carrying out day-to-day tasks together.
- **Exploit positive feedback, recognition and reward** – positive reinforcement works as well in a team as elsewhere.

The same authors (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993b) also say a team that is performing well has the following characteristics:

- it is small in number
- members have complementary skills
- they are all working towards a commonly identified purpose
- the team has group performance goals, in addition to individual goals
- it has a common approach to working together
- members hold themselves mutually accountable, not just individually.

Similarly, a study of teamworking in primary healthcare by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the BMA (2000) found that effective teamwork is most likely to occur where:

- each team member's role is seen as essential
- roles are rewarding
- there are clear team goals.

It also reported that effective communication, optimum team size, recognition of team members' professional judgment and discretion, and adequate time and resources were important in promoting teamwork.

Research by the Ashridge Business School identified the following five 'success' factors for high-performing teams operating in complex environments, such as across cultures, time zones and organisational boundaries (Jones, 2006):

- **Focus on communication** – high-performing teams use a wide range of communication channels, with, perhaps surprisingly, greater use of telephones than face-to-face communication. The key is a clear communications strategy as well as a focus on what needs to be communicated, who should be 'in the loop' and agreement about how communication should take place.
- **Effective use of technology** – high-performing teams had learned how to make the best use of technology, including, for example, establishing an online meeting

management tool that enables teams from around the world to work on projects 24 hours a day.

- **Develop leadership skills** – high-performing team leaders tend to possess a range of leadership competencies, including the ability to manage upwards, to focus on outcomes and deliverables, and to motivate, coach and encourage team learning. Ashridge also found that high-performing team leaders know when to be flexible; when to be clear about what is non-negotiable (such as targets and deliverables) and when to allow the team to take responsibility.
- **Develop shared responsibility** – high-performing teams tend to rely on ‘shared leadership’, which requires team members to develop the maturity to take on greater responsibility, coach and develop colleagues, and build connections across the team.
- **Organisational support** – the support of HR and senior management is vital to high-performing teams, which tend to adopt new approaches to managing performance, focus more on team-related training, and develop new ways of working.

The characteristics of high-performing teams at Bayer Diagnostics

Clear objectives and agreed deals

- discussed by team to ensure common understanding
- agree specific results
- all members involved and committed

Openness and confrontation

- free expression with no fear of ridicule or hostility
- able to confront problems honestly

Support and trust

- willing to admit weakness, give and receive help
- understanding and valuing differences

Co-operation and conflict

- putting the team’s interest before own
- sharing of information and skills
- conflict not avoided

Sound procedures

- use optimum rules and methods

- adapting circumstances and resources

Appropriate leadership

- able to adjust style
- address individual needs while focusing on team
- set positive example

Regular review

- frank evaluation of team performance
- continuous learning and improvement

Individual development

- seizing opportunities for challenge
- learning through feedback
- willing to make changes

Sound inter-group relations

- considering impact of possible decisions
- communicating teams' decisions and actions
- accepting external help, ideas and views

Source: IDS (2003), 'Teamworking', IDS Studies 763, December

Team membership

Teams differ even if they share similar characteristics. Parry et al. (1998) identified three different approaches that require different behaviours and competencies. While a production team, for example, requires individuals with a good technical background and task orientation, a strategy-making team needs individuals with a long-term vision, as well as good social and communication skills. As was noted earlier, Katzenbach and Smith (1993b) emphasise the importance of ensuring that a team has the range of skills to perform a specific job, and that these fall into three groups. First, the team needs the relevant technical and functional skills, and expert knowledge. Second, the team needs to be able to effectively solve problems and reach a consensual decision, so it requires skills to identify the nature of a problem, evaluate options and possible solutions, and decide the most effective course of action. Third, the team must possess the range of skills so members can communicate effectively with one another. The greater the level of autonomy afforded to the team, the greater the range of skills it will need to possess. As well as the general skills that individuals working in teams will need to possess, such as good communication and an ability to share knowledge, those working in self-managed teams, for example, will also need to

be equipped with skills to take on the responsibilities of a supervisor, such as problem-solving, people management and target setting, and learn how to take responsibility for their own performance and how to access additional training (IDS, 2003).

Examples

Neathey and Suff (1997) report on self-managed teamworking at the not-for-profit private health insurer Western Provident Association (WPA). They found that all self-managed teams at WPA are multiskilled, meaning that every team member can take a customer through every stage of a process, whether it is opening a policy, making a claim or simply switching payment to direct debit. Teams play a central role in the selection of team members, with the selection panel for new recruits consisting of both the team leader and a team member. 'If a team leader or team member believes that someone won't fit into their group, there is no point in hiring them,' said a company spokesperson. Neathey and Suff say the need for team involvement was reinforced when WPA recruited 14 new employees without involving the teams. Although the new recruits seemed to possess the right outlook to become a successful team member, it was clear when they started working that this was not the case.

IDS (2001) examined teamworking at IT solutions and consultancy Logica. It reports that responsibility for putting together a project team rests with the project manager, who creates a resource plan outlining the particular technical abilities and specialist sector expertise required.

Permanent teams tend to be composed of individuals who would normally work together to complete a process, such as an assembly team, or a group of individuals performing the same role, such as in a call centre. Members may possess complementary skills so the team can carry out all its tasks, or possess the same skills set and perform the same tasks. Temporary teams are made up of individuals chosen for their expertise and experience. The process may be either informal, with volunteers asked to participate in a problem-solving team, for example, or formal, with members selected via an established personality assessment tool, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (IDS, 2003). Selecting team members on the basis of Belbin's team roles is an alternative (see page 8). According to this approach, the makeup of the 'ideal' team requires a mix of the different 'types', with the combination largely dependent on the sort of work the team is engaged in.

Hayes (1997) says that while different roles may be crucial to a team's overall success, tying the role to the individual is contentious, especially if circumstances change. 'The problem is that a very different situation may bring an entirely different facet of personality to the fore. People act in different ways in different situations. One person may take the role of 'shaper' with respect to one type of task, while adopting an evaluative role in another, and a 'plant' role in a third. It depends on expertise and knowledge, as well as personality inclinations,' says Hayes.

Where teams consist of members from different functions or from different levels within the organisation, there needs to be a way of addressing any differences in status. This has been a problem with the introduction of multidisciplinary teams in

the healthcare sector (NHS Modernisation Agency, 2003). According to Øvretveit (1997), there has been a 'tendency to avoid recognising real and important seniority and status differences between team members', possibly through fear of damaging or destroying the 'fragile consensus' that holds the team together. Nonetheless, team members interviewed by the NHS Modernisation Agency (2003) expressed a desire for inclusion and equality within improvement teams, irrespective of status.

A common goal

A team needs to be clear about what it is doing (Locke et al., 1982). This is the first phase of Tuckman's (1965) four stages of team development – forming, storming, norming and performing. 'Forming' is where team members work out what they are supposed to be doing. Larson and LaFasto (1989) stress the importance of a clear and elevating goal in the performance of effective teams. They define a clear goal as 'a specific performance objective, phrased in such concrete language that it is possible to tell, unequivocally, whether or not that performance objective has been attained', and elevating as 'personally and collectively' challenging.

Establishing a clear vision or common goal for the team will help keep team members focused. This approach involves dividing the overall objective into short- and long-term goals with set deadlines that enable the team to monitor progress. According to Locke et al. (1982), goals should be specific, not vague – for example, 'reduce customer complaints by three per cent within six months' rather than 'try to reduce customer complaints'. They should also be challenging, but reachable. If goals are unreachable there will be a sense of disappointment rather than achievement or pride in attainment, and the process becomes demotivating.

Katzenbach and Smith (1993a) adopt slightly different language, referring to the need for a team to have a common commitment, which they believe requires a purpose in which all team members can believe, and to which they are mutually accountable. Establishing a common purpose, like identifying a common goal, is also the beginning of the process of identifying a team's performance objectives. The authors say that the best teams translate their common purpose into specific performance goals, such as reducing the rejection rate from suppliers by 50 per cent or getting a new product to market in less than half the normal time. 'Transforming broad directives into specific and measurable performance goals is the surest first step for a team trying to shape a purpose meaningful to its members,' says Katzenbach and Smith. Members of teams that fail to translate their common purpose into specific and measurable performance goals will become 'confused, pull apart and revert to mediocre performance,' they claim.

Although management is responsible for clarifying the performance challenge, Katzenbach and Smith believe managers should allow teams the space to develop their own 'spin on that purpose, set of specific goals, timing and approach.' Hardingham and Royal (1994) say the objective-setting process establishes exactly what the overall team is trying to achieve, and how its success will be measured. It

also clarifies each team member's objectives within that, and the inter-relationships between objectives. In addition, they claim that objective setting provides the opportunity for team members to contribute to the thinking behind each other's objectives, and become committed as a team to each individual's achievement.

Developing a 'sense of purpose'

Daniel Kain from the University of Arizona says that one way to help a team establish or articulate a purpose is to ask a team to write an 'advertisement' for a new team member. The purpose of the activity is to articulate what the team sees as its purpose and chief values, not to reject any existing members. The requirements of the ad are as follows:

- It must indicate the name of the team. (If there isn't a name, the team members articulate some name that fits their work.)
- It must express the purpose of the team.
- It must articulate the desired qualities of team members.

In this activity, team members accomplish a good deal, says Kain. First, they begin to think about naming their team, a technique of developing team identity that has proven successful in the business world. Second, the team has to articulate a purpose, and since advertising values brevity, the team focuses on its main purpose. Discussing what to write for its purpose and putting this into words helps the team tackle what otherwise might seem too abstract for some people. Finally, by identifying the qualities the team would look for in new members, each team member has the opportunity to see what his or her colleagues value in the team context.

Source: Kain D (1998), 'We're a team! What do we do now?', presentation to the National Middle School Association annual conference, Denver, November

Group norms

Effective teams tend to develop and enforce 'norms' or informal rules that promote the efficient and effective operation of the team, and to which all team members are expected to conform. 'Teams develop their own values, norms and rules, and can become a more powerful source of control than managerial/bureaucratic conventions,' says Holbeche (2005). This occurs in the second phase of team development model developed by Tuckman (1965), which he calls 'norming' and is the stage at which teams determine appropriate ways forward in their work and exert pressure on members to conform. West (1996) says that this pressure to conform is beneficial in ensuring agreed ways of working are followed, helping to build cohesion and trust. However, he notes research that shows where teams have very clear objectives and ideals, plus high levels of participation and cohesion, members' commitment to consensus may override their ability to make good decisions.

Neathey and Suff (1997) report that nearly all the organisations they studied found peer pressure had an important and positive influence on group performance and the behaviours of team members. One example of the impact of peer group pressure on

individual team members is from the Trico plant in South Wales. Neathey and Suff found that team members were initially 'protective' of colleagues who were absent, not wanting to confront them on their return and make them account for their non-attendance. This quickly changed, however. The teams soon realised that they are responsible for their own performance and that non-attendance would severely hamper their ability to meet their targets. As a result, teams established their own norms with regard to absence, and absent members are challenged about their non-attendance when they return to work. Peer pressure and pride in the job were also the most powerful motivating forces at Aston Martin Lagonda, the manufacturer of hand-built bespoke cars. At Inland Revenue (now HM Revenue and Customs), employees participating in a pilot self-managed teamworking initiative reported that peer group pressure made them work harder. One team member explained: 'It used to be that if I was not going to meet an objective I'd think, "Oh, what the heck, there's not much I can do about it" but now I have the additional pressure that if something does not happen I will be letting the team down'.

Airbus, Filton Manufacturing - team behaviours

As a team we will:

- act as a team lead by example in our behaviours
- apply consistent standards across the business through adherence to processes and procedures
- apply the same high standards to ourselves as we expect from others
- encourage positive discussion and feedback within and outside the team
- listen to the opinions of others
- treat everyone with respect
- be open and honest in discussion
- give a united and consistent message across all communications
- demonstrate customer satisfaction is our first priority.

Source: Milsome S (2003), 'Creating high-performance workplaces', Managing Best Practice 112, November

Expected behaviours

Competency frameworks can be useful in clarifying roles by providing people with an understanding of what behaviours are appropriate and expected of them. The CIPD (2005a) reports that competencies involved in team-based working are often part of the skills matrix, along with technical skills. For example, at the East Kilbride plant of the Rolls-Royce Aero Repair and Overhaul Business the current capabilities of staff are mapped on the basis of essential engineering skills and softer skills. The matrix for any team member is transparent to all the team. IDS (2001) found that Leyland Trucks

(now a subsidiary of US company PACCAR) includes teamworking as one of the 12 personal abilities that employees should work towards achieving. Teamworking is defined as the competency to participate actively and constructively in team membership. Demonstrations of this competence might include the following positive examples:

- participates willingly and actively in team meetings/activities
- generates ideas and responds to others positively
- shows respect for colleagues
- supports team development by passing on skills and coaching
- shows trust in others; is dependable.

People also want to know how they will be judged, which requires clarification of levels of performance against such criteria. Both the team and its individual members will want regular feedback on how they are doing.

Role clarity

Team members need to be clear about their roles and what they expect of each other. Understanding what the team and individual members need to do, and why, is important if the team is going to be able understand how best it can add value. A lack of clarity is one of the main sources of employee dissatisfaction. Holbeche (1998) notes research that discovered a close relationship between a lack of clarity and people contemplating leaving the organisation, loss of motivation and frustration. Each team member also needs to understand the boundaries of his/her role. When people do not know the limits of their decision-making authority they become hesitant and less efficient. Role ambiguity can also give rise to conflict if there is potential overlap in responsibilities between team members.

As long ago as 1974, Irwin et al. summarised the main potential problems with roles:

- What do team members expect of each other?
- Have these expectations been shared? Do they match?
- Do individual objectives fit with the team's overall objectives?
- Are there areas of overlap or duplication between team roles that could produce conflict?

Autonomy

Conventional management centres on control. Managers and supervisors are concerned with 'commanding' their subordinates – directing their efforts so they accomplish their tasks on time and to the required standard. Yet, devolving control –

of planning and organisation of work, for example – to teams is associated with improved productivity and greater job satisfaction. Cordery et al. (1991) studied levels of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and ‘trust’ in management, as well as absenteeism and labour turnover in autonomous work groups, compared with employees in conventionally designed jobs, and found the former had a more favourable attitude to work.

Holbeche (1998) believes the commonest teamworking problem is managers retaining a ‘command and control’ management style, which she says ‘tends to undercut any attempt by people reporting to them to make their own decisions’. Teamworking should reduce the need for such rigid control, and the more autonomy a team has, the more managerial functions it takes on. Neathey and Suff (1997) report that self-directed teams are typically responsible for scheduling, job rotation, team leader selection and problem solving, among others, and, in some cases, for team selection, discipline and payment.

Under such circumstances, the role of managers changes considerably. Rather than controllers and commanders, they become supporters, coaches and facilitators. To assist the self-directed teams at Nortel Optoelectronics, a 12-strong resource support team was established, consisting of former supervisors and schedulers (Neathey and Suff, 1997). Their role, among others, was to:

- facilitate the transition to self-directed teams
- administer team reviews
- counsel and guide teams on any team-related issues
- educate and train team leaders (called ‘prime roles’)
- provide recruitment process support.

Shackleton (1995) identified the following six aspects of a manager’s role when teams are empowered:

1. **Respect and belief** – team managers need to believe in the potential of the team, and be able to identify and build on people’s strengths as well as their weaknesses.
2. **Confidence** – team managers need to be confident that empowerment does not threaten their position, but to use it to develop a new role, encouraging and helping the team.
3. **Training** – team managers need to develop the potential of their teams, encouraging them to identify their own training needs, while, at the same time, encouraging them to apply their existing skills.
4. **Boundaries** – team managers need to set clear team boundaries, so everyone (both staff and managers) is clear about what the team is responsible for and what remains under the control of the manager.

5. **Information** – empowering teams almost always means they will need more information, so, although the team is responsible for specifying what it needs, team managers need to facilitate the transfer of this information and ensure the team is provided with what it needs.
6. **Rate of progress** – team managers need to work closely with the team (or its leader) to ensure it has practical working objectives as well as provide feedback on progress.

Manz and Sims (1996) believe that the team leader role evolves as the team matures. So, for example, at start up the team leader is responsible for exercising authority and applying his/her expertise to problem solving, and co-ordinating the group's activities. When the team has reached maturity, however, responsibilities are shared across the group and the team leader assumes the role of team champion, counsellor and coach, and acts as boundary leader.

DARA – the Defence Aviation Repair Agency – has introduced self-directed teams, which it defines as: 'An empowered group of individuals working to a common goal using the resources made available to the group to achieve agreed outputs' (IDS, 2003). It uses a tool for measuring the level of empowerment of such teams called the 'organisational culture profile' (OCP). IDS (2003) reports that OCP is a matrix comprising 15 key indicators – including communication, environment and individual's role – against which teams' degree of empowerment is measured along with five key stages of organisational development (from traditional to mature self-directed). A descriptive statement for each development level, which can be used to assess team performance, accompanies each indicator. For example, an 'individual's role' within a team at the traditional level of empowerment is described as: 'Just do the job'; at the intermediate 'involved' level it is: 'Involved in how the job should be structured and what tasks are needed to make the role effective and efficient'; and at the 'mature self-directed' level it is: 'Understands customer requirements and changes the role to meet those requirements'.

Leadership

Leadership is one of the key ingredients identified by Larson and LaFasto (1989) for effective team performance. Similarly, the report on teamworking from the NHS Modernisation Agency (2003) identified leadership within teams as one of the key factors in the successful adoption and sustainability of new practices. It says that effective team leaders possess a number of qualities and skills, including enthusiasm, insight, knowledge and commitment. Armstrong (1999) believes that competencies can be developed specifically for team leaders, and to achieve good teamwork, leaders should:

- establish urgency and direction
- as far as possible select members who have the required technical and teamworking skills

- pay particular attention to first meetings and actions
- agree team objectives and standards within the team
- assess people's performance not only on the results they achieve but on their capacity to work well in a team
- encourage team members to plan and their own work, monitor control information and take action without reference to their team leader except in special circumstances
- stimulate team members to come up with joint suggestions on how the performance of the team could be improved or working methods changed for the better; and
- hold special 'off-the-job' meetings regularly to discuss work-related issues, review progress and explore new ideas.

Importantly, team leaders need to be able to resolve conflict, though this is often difficult as conflict within teams has both a positive and a negative role. 'As a team leader, one must realise the paradox that surrounds conflict. The team needs to embrace conflict as a means of generating and evaluating ideas. While at the same time, it must shy away from it to prevent anger, frustration or alienation. The biggest challenge for the team leader is figuring out how to balance these two forces', comments Brockman (1996).

As was noted earlier, the role of team leader will vary depending on the degree of autonomy given to teams. Some companies place great emphasis on the role of working team leader, who generally has responsibility for decision-making in areas such as work allocation, team selection and even team budgets. Acas (2005) reports that effective team leaders are distinguished by their ability to 'lead from the front' and in training, coaching and counselling their team members to achieve high performance. They are usually also able to carry out most of the team's tasks themselves, and be able to co-ordinate and evaluate ideas for improvement.

The following example, from BP Chemicals, illustrates the various activities that team leaders tend to undertake.

Manufacturing team leader role, BP Chemicals

Operations

Emergency response

- overall local co-ordination of team
- crisis management

Planning and co-ordinating

- contribute to daily planning via attendance at daily co-ordination meeting and input to medium-term plans. Allocate work across the team

Team briefing

- brief team on a regular basis (information note etc.), collect feedback and lead workgroups

People

Training and assessment

- help identify and define team development/training needs
- responsible for coaching/developing team members

Appraisal

- facilitate team appraisal process

Teamwork

- ability to facilitate resolution of conflict within the team Initiator of disciplinary system, if required

Cover arrangements

- overall co-ordination across all

Information

Handover

- team handover of area status
- key point of contact for team

Night order book

- write appropriate sections of the NOB with assistance of Manufacturing Engineering Team

Costs

IPMs/KPIs/Optimisation

- monitor, report and control appropriate indicators/measurements

Source: Industrial Society (1998), 'Teamworking', Managing Best Practice 47, May

Team leaders tend to be appointed by management, though where the team is to some extent self-managing the group may elect the leader and the role may also be rotated. Some organisations have dropped the 'leader' title, preferring one that does not automatically suggest the person in the role is in charge. IDS (2003) provides the example of the 'team co-ordinator' at BMW Group, Oxford. Management selects people for the role through group assessment centres, which includes making presentations, and taking part in role plays and group discussions. Team co-

ordinators receive a week's training to equip them for the role in areas such as presentation skills, team dynamics and teambuilding, conflict resolution, assertiveness, problem-solving techniques and goal setting. Half of their time is spent facilitating the teams in their self-management activities, including problem-solving.

Neathey and Suff (1997) report that Nortel Optoelectronics introduced 'prime roles', which involves an individual team member taking responsibility for specific activities and functions, as a way of establishing an element of control in its self-managed teams. A process team, for example, has five prime roles: health and safety, human resources, quality and engineering, scheduling and materials, and training. The prime role recommendations adopted by Nortel were:

- a role not a job
- not a supervisory substitute
- specify minimum period – one year
- manager can suggest candidate but cannot enforce
- team agreed
- prime role is responsible for training replacement
- always available, once left the role
- prime role can be part of the development plan
- prime to be available at shift handover.

Communication

Hayes (1997) says that communication is probably the single most important factor for establishing cohesion among team members. Research among high-performing teams by Ashridge Business School found that communication typically takes up between 50 per cent and 70 per cent of team leaders' time (Jones, 2006). Team members will need to develop their own interactive and communication skills, such as the ability to give and receive feedback, and handle conflict. As one commentator puts it, 'team members need to know how to talk with, explain to, agree with, disagree with, decide, listen to, and convince more people than they ever had before' (quoted in Neathey and Suff, 1997).

The quality of the communication is one of the litmus tests for team health, according to Hardingham and Royal (1994). They say communication needs to be genuinely interactive, with team members building on each other's comments and suggestions, adding fresh perspective to move the discussion forward. Every team member needs to have access to the same information, irrespective of any difference in status.

Regular team briefings are commonly used to disseminate information and gather feedback. IDS (2003) reports that every fortnight at BMW Group, Oxford there is a 45-

minute session built into the production schedule for a team talk. At these gatherings, team members have the opportunity to raise and discuss any issue of relevance to the team. Initially these meetings were taken up by very specific local issues, such the provision of a drinking fountain, but over time, as these have been resolved, the focus has shifted to continuous improvement activities. Regular team meetings are particularly vital where team members are dispersed. British Gas brings its service teams together once a month for a team brief (IDS, 2003). Usually held at a convenient venue, the meetings typically last for two hours and provide an opportunity for the team manager to discuss general levels of performance, and allow engineers to raise issues and ask questions.

Organisational support

Creating the right environment in which teamworking can thrive is crucial, and includes establishing a culture of co-operation and sharing as well as developing policies and procedures that support teams. Hayes (1997) notes that: 'Research into the activities and the characteristics of supportive organisations all points to the idea that the organisational culture within which the team is operating is a vital factor in how well the team is able to function.' Managers and senior managers have a crucial role to play in developing the supportive culture that underpins effective teamworking. Holbeche (2005) says the involvement and commitment of senior managers is essential, as teamworking leads to different methods of co-ordinating work through new organisational routines.

One important aspect of the teamworking culture that requires careful management is the tendency for teams to become insular and less co-operative with others in the organisation. Teams tend to have, or at least develop, their own distinctive identity – something managers often encourage – but this can lead to tension and unhealthy competition with other work groups. Managers must ensure teams retain the ability to co-operate, while making sure they compete only for achievement, not resources (Hayes, 1997). The culture should be one in which the various work groups share a common perception, such as the overall success of the business, with each team contributing their bit to this overarching goal. In such circumstances, competition can be healthy, stimulating the development of an achievement-oriented culture in which every team plays its part.

Hackman (1990) identified six types of support that organisations need to provide for their teams that will ensure they operate effectively and efficiently. The six – which reinforce some of the key characteristics already mentioned – are:

1. **Clear targets** – teams need a clearly defined task.
2. **Adequate resources** – teams must have what they need to function properly, and these resources are likely to alter throughout the group's life.

3. **Reliable information** – access to accurate information is vital, helping teams make realistic decisions and to solve problems. Information also needs to be regularly updated.
4. **Training and education** – all teams, however well they are functioning, will need to develop their range of skills and knowledge, so training opportunities should always be available.
5. **Regular feedback** – teams need regular and reliable feedback on performance (both the team's and the organisation's) and organisational developments.
6. **Technical and process assistance** – teams will require a certain amount of technical and process support to effectively function. This may include specific technical knowledge about a production process, for example, or help and support in getting things done in the organisation.

Acas (2005) notes that teams may stagnate or encounter problems that they cannot overcome from their own resources, and will look to management for assistance. This may include clarifying objectives, providing additional resources, training and team building exercises.

In fact, the WERS reports that in the 12 months prior to the survey, 34 per cent of workplaces had provided core employees with training in teamworking, including in 37 per cent of workplaces where staff already work in formally designated teams and 27 per cent of workplaces with no formal teamworking arrangements.

Milsome (2004) reports that the policies and infrastructure that support the Working in Groups (WinGs) system and the focus on continuous improvement at BMW Group, Oxford, includes:

- support from a senior person to get improvement ideas implemented
- recruitment practices that seek out people with the 'right attitude'
- trackside improvement workshops and multifunctional continuous improvement workshops to encourage creativity and innovation in teams
- a recognition scheme for teams' continuous improvement activities.

Measuring team performance

The traditional way of examining team effectiveness is the inputs, processes and outputs model. The systems theory approach has inputs on the left, processes in the centre and outputs on the right:

- **Inputs** – these are the things that are available to the team as it performs its tasks, such as skills of teams members and organisational environment.
- **Processes** – process criteria by which managers can examine the ways in which teams work. For a team to operate effectively, it must:

- work hard enough
 - have sufficient knowledge and skills
 - have a strategy to accomplish its work or ways to approach its tasks
 - have a constructive and positive group dynamic among its members.
- **Outputs** – these are the results of a team’s work. A team is effective if:
- its product or service meets standards demanded by its customers (quality, timeliness *etc.*)
 - if the group process in performing its tasks enhances members’ ability to work together as a team in the future
 - if team members derive satisfaction from working together as a group.

Others would add measurement of ‘outcomes’ to this list, especially where outputs are internally focused. Examining outcomes looks at the impact more from a customer perspective. IES experience in the NHS was that staff found it hard to measure team performance in terms of patient outcomes, being more comfortable with staff inputs (Reilly et al., 2005).

The above model emphasises the way in which teams are influenced by both individual- and organisational-level inputs, as well as the relationship between the various inputs and processes and team performance. Healy et al. (2004) used the model to look at the performance of surgical teams. It found that surgical teams have specific tasks and objectives, composition, structure, conditions of work, human and technological resources and competencies that can be collectively termed as inputs. At the same time, its processes involve a set of complex interactions among team members, their technology, and their patients. There are also social, cultural, political and ergonomic factors that affect teams. In short, Healy et al. say that a ‘hierarchy of interrelated factors affect team performance, some intrinsic and some extrinsic’.

Borrill et al. (2000) also applied the inputs, processes and outputs approach to healthcare (see Table 2.1).

Table 4: Performance measurement in healthcare

Inputs →	Group processes →	Outputs
Domain	Leadership	Effectiveness - self and externally rated
Healthcare environment	Clarity of objectives	Clinical outcomes/quality of healthcare
Organisational context	Participation	Innovation - self and externally rated
Team task	Task orientation	Cost effectiveness
Team composition	Support for innovation	Team member mental health
	Reflexivity	Team member turnover
	Decision making	
	Communication/integration	

Questionnaires and surveys, observations, interviews and archival data have all been used to measure teamwork (Healey et al., 2004). As the authors note: 'Observational measures of tasks and behaviours are a common form of team assessment, although they cannot reveal all relevant facets of team performance.' They found that though the completion of a team's tasks was necessary for effective performance, it did not completely capture the quality and efficacy of the team's work, so other measures are needed to capture behaviours, such as communication, co-operation and leadership. Hayes (1997) says there are several different ways of evaluating team performance. One way is to focus on measuring characteristics, seeing how team members respond to particular psychometric instruments, such as questionnaires and inventories. Another is to apply a team performance curve to see how well a team is doing. Another still assesses a team's decision-making to ensure it is not being influenced by damaging or negative factors.

According to the CIPD (2005b), there are two types of performance measure:

1. output / outcome measures, including:
 - a. performance
 - b. achievement of goals and standards
 - c. the integration of inter-team efforts
2. input / process measures, including:
 - a. the levels of knowledge and skills
 - b. the quality of interactions and collective effort
 - c. involvement in decision-making
 - d. planning and goal-setting
 - e. self-directed measurement and control of performance
 - f. the resolution of conflict within the team
 - g. the flexibility of the team to adapt to unforeseen problems.

A review of the literature by MacBryde (2001) revealed the following list of characteristics of team performance measures:

- derive from the stakeholders represented within the team membership
- clearly defined / explicit purpose
- relevant and easy to maintain
- simple to understand and use

- provide fast, accurate feedback
- stimulate continuous improvement
- clearly defined data collection and methods of calculating the level of performance
- clearly defined frequency of measurement
- applied at team and individual level
- related to both team outcome and process
- capture the dynamic nature of teamwork.

Meeting these criteria may be a challenge, especially with the more complex outcomes. Difficulty in specification and measurement leads some organisations to concentrate on the simpler process measures. It is easier to measure the team's production of widgets than to establish customer satisfaction with the product.

The author also sets out the various stage of the process for designing an effective team performance measurement system (TPMS). Following a period of educating team members about performance management and measurement, there are nine stages:

1. identify company strategy and organisational performance measures
2. identify team stakeholders' requirements
3. define team strategy and goals
4. develop top level performance measures
5. identify key drivers of team performance
6. develop performance measures for key drivers
7. define measurement strategy
8. refine and sign off the team performance measures
9. define TPMS review mechanism.

Mendibil et al. (2001) looked at team accountability to develop the following areas of measurement:

- **Business process measures** – those used to monitor the performance of the business process that the team is responsible for
- **Team measures** – those used to monitor how well teamworking is operating, including measures to address issues relating to individual and team competencies, behaviour, social interaction and general health of the team

- **Organisational support measures** – those used to monitor the team environment to ensure the team and the process perform as expected.

MacBryde (2001) reports on how the natural mineral water company Highland Spring applied the business process measures, team measures and organisational support measures. The following is a list of the measures being used by the manufacturing team to its performance and that of the process being used:

- overall equipment effectiveness (process measure)
- changeover time (process measure)
- current versus real manning levels (process measure)
- skills available versus. skills required (team measure)
- planned versus delivered training (organisational support measure)
- planned versus delivered staff briefings (team measure)
- employee questionnaire (team/organisational support measure).

According to Mendibil (2003), the drivers of team performance can be classified under task characteristics (such as, skill variety, task identity, task significance and interdependence); team characteristics (team type, relative size, heterogeneity, roles/responsibilities, goal clarity, and skills, knowledge and attitudes); teamwork processes (communication, leadership, back-up, coordination, decision-making and learning); and organisational context (stakeholders, organisational support, external environment). The author says the following four main criteria can be applied to determine team performance:

- **Expectations** – the degree to which tasks/process results satisfy team stakeholders
- **Efficiency** – the degree to which team processes, such as communication, co-ordination, leadership and decision-making, support the achievement of process results, team growth and member satisfaction
- **Learning and growth** – related both to the team and its individual members, including ability to innovate, range of transferable skills, and application of best practice and process improvements. It also relates to ‘future viability’ of the team, so incorporates behavioural variables, such as levels of participation, commitment and willingness to continue working together
- **Team satisfaction** – the degree to which teamwork contributes to the growth and personal wellbeing of team members.

Zigon (1994) developed the following seven-point plan to assess team performance:

1. review and revise organisational and business-unit measures

Do business-unit measures flow from, and support, corporate strategy? If only financial measures are being used, ask why. Identify measures to evaluate both strategic success and market results.

2. Review and revise business operating system measures

Are there measures of customer satisfaction? Flexibility or innovation? Productivity?

3. Map the business process

Identify the team's customers and the products/services the customers need. Identify all major process steps (boxes) and handoffs (arrows) that lead to the final product. Change the process to simplify it and increase value to the customer.

4. Identify team measurement points

Always measure the final product. Decide which process steps and handoffs are worth measuring. Measure processes by waste and cycle time. Measure handoffs by delivery and quality.

5. Identify individual accomplishments that support the team's processes

Build a role-result matrix, with team members down the left column, key process steps across the top row, and accomplishments needed to support each process step inside each cell.

6. Develop team and individual performance measures

For each accomplishment, select the general measures that are important (quantity, quality, cost and/or timeliness). For each general measure, answer the question: 'How can (quantity, quality, cost or timeliness) be measured? If an accomplishment can be measured with numbers, record the units to be counted (or tracked by percentage). If performance only can be described, list who will judge the work and what factors they will consider.

7. Develop team and individual performance objectives

The goal is verifiability. If the measure is numeric, ask: 'For this measure, what number would represent "meeting expectations?"'. Establish a range of performance above which special recognition is warranted and below which a performance problem exists. If the measure is descriptive, ask: 'For each factor the judge will look at, what would this person see that means a good job has been done?'. List the factors and what constitutes a good job for each factor. Ask: 'If this description equals "meeting expectations", what would "exceeding" look like?'. Write what the judge would see happening if these expectations were exceeded.

Milsome (2004) reports that team performance at BMW Group's Oxford plant is measured in eight areas, with teams assigned one of three ratings – 'started', 'good' and 'excellent'. The eight areas and examples of levels of performance are:

- **Communication/team talks** – examples: teams rated as 'started' under this category must have regularly held team talks (90 minutes per month), while those given an 'excellent' rating will be 'doing more than the scheduled team talks'.
- **Continuous improvement process** – teams rated as 'started' must provide evidence that members are coming up with ideas to improve the business, while

teams achieving a 'good' rating will have met a target to implement three ideas that produces £800 of savings per person.

- **Team attendance** – 'started' teams will have achieved attendance levels of 92 per cent and up to 96 per cent over the previous month, while attendance of 'excellent' rated teams will be above 98 per cent over the previous three months.
- **'Right first time'** – 'started' teams will be able to demonstrate examples of some improvement in this area, while 'good' teams can show problems have been solved with measurable benefit.
- **Team self organisation** – 'started' teams will have regularly performed WinGs Audits and displayed results, while teams rated as 'excellent' will be able to demonstrate a strong team spirit among members, who will be behaving in a mutually supportive manner.
- **Health and safety** – 'started' teams will be aware of, and adhere to, health and safety rules, while 'good' teams will have put an H&S prevention process in place.
- **5'S (Sort, Standardise, Simplify, Sweep, Self-Discipline)/housekeeping** – 'good' teams will have a 5'S plan in place, while an 'excellent' one will practice them to a very high standard across all shifts.
- **TPM (total preventative maintenance)** – 'started' teams will have trained a 'champion' in TPM usage of tools, while an 'excellent' team will have exceeded its TPM targets.

Suff (1997) reported that Ethicon, the Scottish-based Johnson & Johnson subsidiary that manufactures surgical products, measured team performance by:

- **Output** – which relates to the quantity of goods produced by the team
- **Quality** – with greater emphasis on quality assurance and operators auditing their own work
- **Lead time** – the time it takes for the product to complete the manufacturing process.

He also found that Kent County Council monitored team performance by examining the following six criteria:

1. **Accountabilities** – how far have the accountabilities of the team been met?
2. **Targets** – how far have the team's targets been met for the year?
3. **Planning** – how well has the team developed a clear plan, communicated it to others and measured performance?
4. **Energy and drive** – how well has the team developed new initiatives and dealt with change?

5. **Decision-making** – how good has the team’s decision-making ability been?
6. **Teamworking** – how well has the team worked together?

Rewarding teams

While teamworking has become increasingly popular, remuneration systems specifically linked to it are much less common. The latest CIPD (2006b) reward survey reveals that 25 per cent of participating organisations operate a bonus or incentive scheme that they define as team based, while just two per cent use gainsharing an (arrangement that is often team based). Team pay, which was for several years a distinct reward system in the IRS annual survey of pay trends, no longer has a separate entry, with any team reward arrangements now presumably captured by the incentive payments or cash bonus categories (IRS, 2005). And, despite the widespread use of teamworking in the UK, the CIPD (2006b) found that only 14 per cent of organisations use it as a factor in pay progression. Indeed, in the absence of evidence of any widespread uptake in team pay, IRS (2001) ran an article entitled: ‘Whatever happened to team reward?’

Nonetheless, financial and non-financial rewards can play a significant role in reinforcing teamworking and co-operative behaviour, and clarifying team objectives and goals (IDS, 2003). The CIPD (2005b) believes that while most team reward systems emphasis team pay rather than non-financial rewards, employees tend to favour the latter, particularly recognition of the successful completion of a task. An IES/Hay project in the NHS, however, elicited mixed views on cash versus non-financial rewards, depending upon existing pay levels and earnings opportunities (Reilly et al., 2005).

But whether organisations’ financial and non-financial rewards are linked directly to team performance or not, they still need to support a teamworking culture. The rationale for team reward is to reinforce behaviour that leads to effective teamwork (CIPD, 2005b). This can be done by directly incentivising teams to perform or by encouraging positive team behaviours through either some individually based pay scheme (*eg* competency based) or through a performance management system with a competency framework.

Systems that are designed to motivate individuals will be at odds with what is required to support teamworking. Acas (2005), for example, says that organisations moving to teamworking should ask themselves whether individual incentive payments encourage team members to work with the intelligence, flexibility, co-operation and emphasis on the product or service quality required.

Financial rewards

Team pay has a number of potential benefits. It can encourage co-operative work and behaviour, help clarify team goals and priorities, encourage flexibility and multi-

skilling, and collectively improve performance and team process (CIPD, 2005b). However, there are serious practical difficulties associated with introducing and managing a scheme and a number of potential disadvantages. Armstrong (2000) notes that: 'The case for team pay looks good in theory, but there are some formidable disadvantages. The criteria for success are exacting and it has not been proved that team pay for white-collar workers will inevitably be effective'. The potential drawbacks include: a difficulty in assessing the contribution of individual team members; individual employees, particularly high performers, may be demotivated; reluctance to move between teams, as individuals will prefer to stay in the better performing teams; pressure to conform to team norms may reduce innovation; early performance gains tend to disappear after two to three years.

The IES view expressed by Reilly and Cumming (Reilly, ed, 2003) is rather more nuanced:

'Trying to create a team culture through team-based pay is fraught with danger. It is much easier to reinforce a team culture with appropriate rewards than to lead with pay. The team structure has to be in place; the targets clear and self evident; the participants sufficiently skilled. Unfortunately, there are no 'off the shelf' solutions to team-working systems. Each case is different'.

If obstacles can be overcome then team-based pay can offer benefits in terms of cost reduction (compared with individual performance-related pay), skill enhancement across a team, facilitation of co-operative working and empowerment, and the communication and delivery of business goals.

IRS (2001) says to work effectively, team pay must meet a number of stringent criteria: teams must be clearly defined and identified, and performance measures need to genuinely reflect team contribution, for example. IRS also suggests that team pay works best where it fits the organisational culture, structure and team-based operations.

The CIPD (2005b) claims that team pay works best if teams:

- stand alone with agreed targets and standards
- have autonomy
- are composed of people whose work is interdependent
- are stable
- are well-established and make good use of complementary skills
- are composed of flexible, multi-skilled team players who are capable of expressing a different point of view if it is for the good of the whole.

And, for team pay to work well:

- everybody must understand and accept the targets

- the reward must be clearly linked to effort and achievement
- the reward must be worth striving for
- performance measures must be fair, consistent and acceptable
- everybody must be able to track performance in relation to targets and standards
- the team must influence its performance by changing behaviour or decisions
- the incentive formula must be easily understood
- reward must closely follow accomplishment
- the scheme must be appropriate
- the scheme should be carefully designed, installed, maintained and adapted to meet changing circumstances.

Where team pay does exist, it typically takes the form of a bonus payment, awarded in addition to basic salary and tied to measures of team performance (IRS 2001). Table 5 illustrates the types of monetary team reward.

Table 5:

Type of team reward	Definition
<i>Team reward for work teams</i>	Team-based financial rewards shared among team members in accordance with published criteria.
<i>Rewards for project or ad hoc teams</i>	Lump sum bonuses paid for the achievement of predetermined targets for competing the project to specification, within budget and on time.
<i>Bonus awards for executive directors</i>	Bonuses paid to the senior management team typically linked to whole business performance.
<i>Group incentive schemes</i>	Bonuses paid (either equally or proportionately) to manual workers within a group or area, related to output levels or time saved.
<i>Gainsharing</i>	A formula-based company or factory-wide bonus plan where employees share in the financial gains made by a company as a result of its improved performance.
<i>Company or plant-wide bonus schemes</i>	Cash bonuses allocated by reference to plant or company performance in terms of output or productivity.
<i>Rewarding individuals for effective teamworking</i>	Individual employees are rewarded on the basis of the assessments of their competency as teamworkers.

Source: Armstrong M (2000), Rewarding teams, CIPD good practice guide

The CIPD (2005c) found that individual bonuses and team-based rewards were the two most common methods of rewarding staff working in customer services. IRS (2000) found that team-based remuneration is a reasonably common in the call centre industry. It reported that almost a third of the 79 call centres it monitored had a team reward mechanism in place. Examples reported by IRS include:

- SITEL Consulting – employees receive a bonus tied to a combination of individual and team performance measures relating to quantity, attitude/customer service and product knowledge. Payments worth up to five per cent of gross salary are

available, with the bonus weighted 80 per cent to individual and 20 per cent to team performance.

- Halifax Direct – bonuses are linked to a combination of individual, team and whole centre performance. The four key elements of the bonus scheme include individual sales targets, customer service ‘hurdles’, team sales and call centre performance. The team component is worth 2.5 per cent of individual salary for on-target performance, rising to five per cent for ‘exceeding’ targets.

Examples

Team bonuses at Vertex Data Science

Team bonuses are paid in addition to individual performance-based salary increases at Vertex, which is a subsidiary of North West Water and, in 1998, employed more than 300 at two purpose-built call centres in Warrington. Individual employees are set performance and personal development objectives, and are expected to acquire a set of role-related competencies. Measurement of these factors affects individual rewards. In addition, bonuses, linked to achievement of personal, team or whole company targets, worth up to 7.5 per cent of salary for CSRs are payable at regular intervals. For frontline agents, the bonus is structured as follows:

- One-third (up to 2.5 per cent of gross pay) is linked to personal or team objectives. Examples include reducing the average call-handling time and increasing the ‘tele-economy’ (benchmarked performance against other competitor call centres) rating by percentage targets.
- One-third (2.5 per cent salary) is linked to team or whole-centre performance. Examples include answering a given proportion of incoming calls with a target time, and ensuring abandoned calls do not exceed a set of percentage of inbound calls.
- One third (2.5 per cent of salary) is tied to whole-company performance to ensure that, irrespective of role, employees clearly see the link between their own and corporate performance (IRS, 1999).

Store-team bonus at B&Q

The store-team bonus was introduced in February 2003. Under the scheme, which is designed to incentivise employees to improve customer service, sales and reduce shrinkage (stock wastage and theft) in their stores, employees receive a fixed payment worth three per cent of salary every six months if company profit targets are met. In addition, they are also eligible for a variable payment of up to 6.75 per cent based on store and company performance, plus an additional £250 if customer satisfaction levels increase. Payments for staff take account of their store’s ranking, based on local sales and shrinkage, in a league table of all stores. The league is divided into five divisions, with the top 20 per cent of stores in the Premiership and the remaining ones in divisions one to four. There is no payout for any league unless company profit exceeds a set target (Brown and Wustemann, 2003).

Non-financial rewards

Non-financial rewards, such as formal recognition of top performing teams, may, especially over the long term, be more powerful motivators than financial rewards. Non-financial rewards identify individual employees or teams for particular praise or acknowledgement. The size, scope and formality of non-financial recognition schemes vary enormously. Schemes range from those that are informal and impromptu to more formal structured schemes. According to Silverman and Reilly (Reilly, ed, 2005), non-financial recognition may be concerned with acknowledging the efforts of employees by:

- the manager saying thank you
- the manager writing formally to record thanks
- a more senior manager in the organisation writing to the individual or team
- public appreciation of the effort in a team meeting, in an organisational newsletter or at a special dinner
- a public gesture acknowledging contribution under difficult circumstances
- declaring the group team of the month or year.

Teamworking itself contains several important intrinsic motivators, such as autonomy, involvement and responsibility, but recognition is needed to enhance intrinsic motivation. Many organisations operate some form of recognition scheme. For example:

- BMW Group, Oxford, operates a WinGs (Working in Groups) recognition scheme that rewards teams rather than individuals. Milsome (2004) reports that the most popular rewards for teams that successfully identify and implement continuous improvement ideas are WinGs driving events, where team members drive Minis in challenging situations, such as slaloms, handbrake turns and sprints. IDS (2003) says top-performing teams in each area at the Oxford plant receive certificates and 'Top Team' shirts in recognition of their contribution.
- IDS also reports that service teams at British Gas are eligible for participation in the parent company's (Centrica) group-wide 'excellence rewards' scheme. According to IDS, these are very prestigious awards, recognised at board level, designed to acknowledge individuals and teams nominated by their colleagues as having gone beyond the call of duty in the course of their work.

Conclusions

Teamworking continues to be a very popular way of organising work in the UK. Organisations tend to benefit from improvements in productivity, quality, and customer satisfaction levels and greater employee commitment, while team members tend to enjoy greater job satisfaction from the freedom, responsibility and flexibility of working in groups. Despite these potential benefits, and the widespread use and longevity of teamworking in many workplaces, organisations are still struggling to effectively manage teams. Too many still operate systems and processes that are not compatible with teamworking. Research has discovered, for example, that when it comes to effectively measuring team performance, determining compensation, providing training and organising facilities, organisational systems are tailored to individuals rather than to teams.

But there is much that organisations can do to improve teamworking. Effective teams have a number of key characteristics, including a common sense of purpose, a clear team goals, a clear understanding of each member's role as well as the overall team role, durable performance standards, effective means of communication and robust team performance measures. Successful teams also have organisational support and access to resources. Selecting individuals with the right mix of skills, experience and potential at the start is crucial, as is the leadership role. Equipping team members with the skills they will need to work co-operatively, including the ability to successfully solve problems, reach consensual decisions and to communicate effectively with one another.

Organisational support systems are crucial to effective teamworking. This includes establishing a culture of co-operation and sharing as well as developing policies and procedures that support teams. The involvement and commitment of senior managers is also essential. Organisations need to set teams clear targets, supply adequate resources and reliable information, offer ongoing training opportunities, give regular feedback on performance, and, where necessary, provide technical and process assistance.

There is a big question mark over whether team pay is necessary for effective teamworking. Although it can encourage co-operative work and behaviour, and help

clarify team goals and priorities, among others, there are serious practical difficulties associated with introducing and managing a team pay system scheme. One important aspect of team pay that it can prove hard to identify performance targets that can drive team contribution. Organisations need to establish the right measures. Output measures include achievement of team goals and standards, while input and process measures will focus on teams' levels of knowledge and skills, the quality of their interactions and collective effort, and extent of their involvement in decision-making. If appropriate targets can be found (with the right team structure and rewards), then team-based pay can produce impressive results.

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