



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Groups - Individuals Who Work Together for a Common Goal

Corporations, when recruiting an employee, are preoccupied with the qualifications, experience, and achievements of the individual. They spend resources in selection, development, training, motivation, and promotion of individuals. Yet they still do not understand the fact that the ideal employee for a given job can never exist.

Since an ideal employee cannot be found, a team of individuals is the next best thing. It is not the individual but the team that is the instrument of sustained and enduring success.

What does it take to make a team?

Individuals who are not equal in talent, experience or education, but are equal in commitment, make a team. Teams are more flexible than large organizational groups because they can be more quickly assembled, deployed, refocused, and disbanded.

What is a Work Team?

1. **Small Number.** This means anywhere from 2 to 25 members. The size of the team depends on the following parameters:

- Meaningful purpose
- Specific performance goals
- Common approach
- Complementary skills
- Mutual accountability

These five aspects are absolute necessities for a team. A larger number of people can theoretically become a team, but such teams are more likely to break into sub-teams rather than functioning as a single team.

2. **Complementary Skills.** The benefits of synergy are realized when a group is diverse and has various ideas and multiple skills.
3. **Common Purpose.** This is the driving force of teams. The team starts with the organization's mission statement and then develops its own purpose. This purpose must be meaningful and must be owned by everyone, both as individuals and as a group. A team will constantly revisit its purpose by refining it and making it more relevant.
4. **Performance Goals** - The team needs to have a common goal or a set of goals. These goals must be achievable, sensible, and shared by the team. A group that talks like a team and looks like a team may not be a team. Teams are a means to an end and not an end in themselves. The team is an acting, moving, and energizing force. Specific performance goals are established, tracked, met and evaluated in an ongoing process.



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This progression of successful outcomes establishes trust and credibility among team members and fuels the team to handle larger challenges.

- 5. Common Approach.** Team members must agree on how they will work together. Many teams have developed their own charter or a set of rules that outline the expected behavior of members. Members often assume the roles of Questioner, Historian, Timekeeper and Facilitator to keep the team's process moving. All the players in the team must have a part to play. Individual performances must be measured and rewarded. At team meetings, however, the emphasis should be on collective accomplishments and failures and reviewing the team's procedures and processes.
- 6. Mutually Accountable.** This aspect of teamwork is usually the last to develop. It is also the most difficult to quantify.

People who readily agree that teams are more productive than groups are still often reluctant to rely on them. This resistance may arise due to many reasons, but it is powerful because it is grounded deeply in individualism. Real teams always find ways for each individual to contribute and thereby gain distinction.

Thus, we can say that teams (real teams and not groups that management calls "teams") should be the basic unit of performance for most organizations. A team whose members are aligned with its purpose, feel a challenge in their task, have a strong sense of camaraderie, feel responsible for the outcome, and experience growth as a team, will tend to sustain motivation in the long run.