I. Chapter Overview

People may belong to a group simply because they are an employee or in some way affiliated with an organization. Joining the group can be a voluntary action and may be done for personal or career reasons. A personal reason may include just being with other people, or to pursue an activity that is associated with the group, such as playing bridge.

In the workplace, there are groups called functional groups that fulfill the ongoing needs in the organization by carrying out a particular function. Task groups are set up to carry out a specific activity, and then disband when the activity is completed. Formal groups are set up by management to meet organizational objectives. Both functional and task groups are formal groups. Informal groups result when individuals in the organization develop relationships to meet personal needs.

The supervisor accomplishes the objectives of the department through the successful work of groups. To make sure groups do what is expected of them, the supervisor should keep them informed about what is happening in the organization and what changes are planned. The supervisor will be responsible for setting up groups, and can maximize the groups’ effectiveness by combining people with a variety of strengths and backgrounds, while avoiding separation of members of informal groups.

Group members have various roles, or patterns of behavior related to their position in the group. Members are expected to follow norms, or the group’s standards for appropriate or acceptable behavior. The chapter includes several characteristics of groups. All characteristics of an individual group will affect its effectiveness. In general, a supervisor wants a group to be effective and to have goals that support the achievement of organizational goals.
Groups and teams go through stages of development. Forming is the first stage of the team development process in which the team members become acquainted with one another and oriented to the idea that they are part of a team. The next stage, storming, describes a period of conflict in which group members assert their different roles on the team. The third stage, norming, is characterized by agreement among team members during which there is understanding of what each person’s role in the team is, and team members generally feel as though their voices have been heard by the other members. The fourth stage, performing, is characterized by solving organizational problems and meeting assigned challenges. Once the team has met all of its goals, it is appropriate for the team to disband. This is the last stage; adjourning.

Organizations can use teams to collaborate on solving problems and making decisions. A team will have insights and ideas that exceed those of individuals. Teams can help organizations improve performance as measured by higher quality and greater productivity and profits. Supervisors can increase the success of the team through effective communications that create a climate of trust and encourage collaboration. This chapter emphasizes the supervisor’s role as team leader. However, teams may be self-directed with the supervisor playing a role that is external to the working team.

Some of the team’s work is accomplished during meetings. Meetings should be well planned. One can use an agenda that is distributed prior to the meeting to guide the specific goals of the meeting. Participants should be well prepared for the meeting, arrive on time, and participate in discussions and decision-making.

II. Teaching the Concepts by Learning Objectives

Learning Objective 3.1: Explain why people join groups.

1. Key Term:

   **Group**: Two or more people who interact with one another, are aware of one another, and think of themselves as a unit

2. Teaching Notes:

   The supervisor must see that groups of employees work together to accomplish objectives. As leaders or members of a team, supervisors help plan and carry out a variety of activities. Many group and team efforts take place in meetings.

   People belong to groups for many reasons. Sometimes group membership simply goes along with being an employee. At other times, employees join a group because their supervisor or some other manager asks them to do so. Finally, an employee may join a group because being a member satisfies his or her personal needs. The most common personal reasons for joining a group include the following:

   - *Closeness*—Being members of the same group builds ties among people. Friendships
generally result from the shared experiences that come from membership in some kind of group.

- **Strength in numbers**—Having ties with others gives people confidence that they may lack when they act alone. In an organization, a group of people tends to be more influential than one person acting alone.
- **Common goals**—When people have a goal to meet, they can get moral and practical support by working with or alongside others who have similar goals.
- **Achievement of personal objectives**—Membership in a group can help people achieve personal objectives in a variety of ways. The time spent with group members can be enjoyable, and membership in certain group can enhance a person’s prestige, and satisfy people’s desire to feel important.

3. **Teaching examples to describe why people join groups:**

   A person may choose to join a group or may be assigned to a group. An employee will probably be assigned to a work group or a department. An individual can be a member of a group with little personal interaction. Work groups may be working toward a common goal, but with minimum contact or communication.

4. **Exercise to describe why people join groups:**

   See the “Exercise” for Learning Objective 3.2. Identify types of groups that exist in the workplace. The exercise includes discussion and practice on why people join groups.

**Learning Objective 3.2: Distinguish types of groups that exist in the workplace.**

1. **Key Terms:**

   - **Functional Groups**: Groups that fulfill ongoing needs in the organization by carrying out a particular function
   - **Task Groups**: Groups that are set up to carry out a specific activity and then disband when the activity is completed
   - **Formal Groups**: Groups set up by management to meet organizational objectives
   - **Informal Groups**: Groups that form when individuals in the organization develop relationships to meet personal needs

2. **Teaching notes:**

   All the employees of an organization form a group. On a practical level however, most organizations are too large for all their members to interact with one another. Therefore, except
at very small organizations, most employees cluster into smaller groups. Some examples are
departments, task forces, etc. To fully benefit from the various groups in an organization, the
supervisor should be able to identify the groups. Then the supervisor can apply several principles
for building cooperation on the part of the group members.

Types of groups include:

- **Functional and task groups**: Functional groups are groups that fulfill ongoing needs in the
organization by carrying out a particular function, such as producing goods, selling
products, or investing funds. Task groups are set up to carry out a specific activity, and
they disband when that activity has been completed.

- **Formal and informal groups**: The examples of functional and task groups are also types of
formal groups. These are groups set up by management to meet organization objectives.
Thus, these groups result from the management function of organizing. Informal groups
result when individuals in the organization develop relationships to meet personal needs.
Most employees welcome the opportunity to be part of informal groups because these
groups help satisfy social needs. The friendships established within the group can make
work more enjoyable. Informal subgroups can develop among members of a formal group
when the formal group fails to meet some personal needs and when some group members
feel uncomfortable with the way they are expected to behave.

3. Teaching examples to identify types of groups that exist in the workplace:

While informal groups may influence the success of departments and organizations, the
supervisor will likely spend more time working with the formal groups. There is increasing
interest with task groups in organizations today. Many organizations are attempting to
accomplish continuous improvement or gain a competitive edge through the use of groups or
teams.

Note that the phrase “groups or teams” was used in the paragraph above. Both words are used in
the text in different parts of the chapter. In the discussion, there seems to be little difference in
the two concepts. Students may be confused about the distinction between the two words. Thus,
it may be useful to discuss the difference in the definitions. The difference is in the degree of
collaboration of the two concepts.

Group: Two or more people who interact with one another, are aware of one another, and think
of themselves as being a group.

Team: A group of people who must collaborate to some degree to achieve a common goal. (This
term is introduced in Learning Objective 3.6.)

The students may have more experience or recognition of the word team as it relates to
organizations. The word team, used alone or with a variety of other descriptive words, is used in
many companies and is seen in numerous books and articles. Many of the descriptions of teams
are more like task groups than functional groups. In addition, the word teamwork is used in the text and other materials to describe the type of interaction that takes place in the organization and includes individuals who are not necessarily thought of as team or group members.

4. Exercise to identify types of groups that exist in the workplace:

The purpose of this exercise is to sensitize students to the number of groups that they are a part of. Use the exercise as a classroom exercise and allow about ten minutes for the exercise.

a. Ask students to list all of the groups they belong to.

b. For each group listed, have the students indicate why they joined or were assigned to the group and whether the groups are formal or informal. For the formal groups, indicate whether they are functional groups or task groups.

c. Discuss why students are in groups, whether they are more likely to be in more formal or informal groups, and the objective of the groups.

Learning Objective 3.3: Discuss how supervisors can get groups to cooperate with them.

1. Teaching Notes:

Groups have a lot to offer with regard to decision making and problem solving. A group can generate a creative solution that a single person might not think of, and the group process can build support by letting people make decisions about what affects them. To make the most of the potential benefits of working with groups, supervisors can use the following tactics:

- Make sure all members of a formal group know what they can and should be doing.
- Communicate the limits on what the group can do.
- Keep groups informed about what is happening in the organization and what changes are planned for the future.
- Support the group when it wants to bring legitimate concerns to higher management.
- Make good choices about whom to assign to the group.
- Treat all employees fairly and impartially, respect the position of the group’s informal leader, and find ways to give rewards to the group as a whole, rather than to individual employees only.
- Encourage the group to participate in solving problems.

2. Teaching examples to discuss how supervisors can get groups to cooperate with them:

It may be difficult for students to distinguish groups from departments. It appears there is an overlap between the two concepts. It may be useful to think of a group as those employees who are working on a common product, project, or process, and a department as a number of employees working on a common function or family of products. A department may be made up of more than one group.

The term more common in some organizations when discussing task or project groups is teams.
Many companies are interested in developing special task teams related to continuous quality improvement, breakthrough ideas for a competitive advantage, and design and redesign of products and processes. The pattern of interaction that best accomplishes the objectives of the group is referred to as teamwork, or work of the team toward a common goal.

If groups or teams are developed by the supervisor, he or she will be able to gain cooperation through the selection process and good communications. If the group or team is developed by upper management, the supervisor may have to gain their cooperation by understanding and supporting the group’s goals.

3. Exercise to discuss how supervisors can get groups to cooperate with them:

   This exercise can be used as an extension of Learning Objective 3.3 or used separately.

   The purpose of the exercise is to get students to examine their motivation for cooperating with teams. If they understand what would increase their cooperation for achieving the goals of a group, they may be able to use that information to guide their action as a supervisor to gain cooperation.

   - Ask students to think of at least two groups they belong to, one where they are cooperative with the goals of the group and one where they are somewhat uncooperative. It would be useful to think of work-related groups if they have had work experience.
   - Have the students list reasons why they are cooperative or uncooperative with these groups.
   - Have the students share their lists of reasons with the class. Write the reasons for cooperating and not cooperating on a flip chart or black (white) board.
   - Discuss the common reasons listed. It is likely that students are more likely to cooperate when they are kept informed about and understand the purpose of the objectives, treated fairly and with respect, or, in other words, all of the suggested behaviors listed in the text.

Learning Objective 3.4: Describe characteristics of groups in the workplace.

1. Key Terms:

   **Roles**: Patterns of behavior related to employees’ position in a group

   **Role conflicts**: Situations in which a person has two different roles that call for conflicting types of behavior

   **Norms**: Group standards for appropriate or acceptable behavior

   **Status**: A group member’s position in relation to others in the group

   **Cohesiveness**: The degree to which group members stick together
**Homogeneity**: The degree to which the members of a group are the same

2. **Teaching Notes:**

Social scientists have summarized a number of group characteristics, including ways to describe them, how effective they are, and the pressures they place on individuals. Supervisors who are aware of this theoretical information can use it to understand what is happening in a group situation. They can decide whether the group is effectively supporting the achievement of organizational objectives or if supervisors need to step in and make changes.

When looking at how groups are the same or different, it helps to consider some basic ways of describing them. Some of the most useful characteristics include roles, norms, status, cohesiveness, size, homogeneity, and effectiveness (Refer to Figure 3.3.).

**Roles**: In an organization’s groups, the various group members also take on roles, or patterns of behavior related to their position in the group. Some common roles include the leader of a group, the scapegoat, the class clown, and the person to whom others take their problems.

Sometimes a person’s formal position in an organization dictates a certain role. Another source of a person’s role is a combination of the person’s beliefs about how he or she ought to behave and other people’s expectations about how that person will act.

The kinds of roles people select serve different purposes. People may take on a role, such as the leader or organizer, that helps the group in getting its work done or they may take on a role that holds the group together. Finally, group members may take on roles that help them meet personal needs.

Awareness of roles is important because recognizing them can help the supervisor encourage desirable behavior or bring about a change in undesirable behavior.

Sometimes supervisors have to resolve problems involving role conflicts. The way a supervisor resolves conflicts, influences his or her performance as a supervisor as well as his or her relationships with other employees.

**Norms**: Groups typically have standards for appropriate or acceptable behavior, called the group’s norms. When a member of the group violates a norm, the group responds by pressuring the person to conform. Formal groups have procedures for handling violations of norms that are group policies. With unofficial norms, a typical first step would be for someone to point out to the violator how he or she is expected to behave. If that doesn’t work, the group may resort to shutting the person out, ridiculing the person, or even threatening him or her with physical harm.

When a supervisor finds that a group of employees seems to be behaving in a way that works
against the achievement of organizational objectives, the supervisor could investigate whether these employees are following some norm of an informal group.

*Status:* A group member’s status is his or her position relative to others in the group. Status depends on a variety of factors, including the person’s role in the group, title, pay, education level, age, race, and sex. Status is important to supervisors because the group members with the highest status have the most effect on the development of group norms. Group members with lower status tend to pattern their behaviors after the group’s high-status members. A supervisor who wants to reinforce or change group norms will have the greatest success rate by focusing on the high-status members of the group.

*Cohesiveness:* A cohesive group has members who want to stay with the group even during periods of stress. They abide by its norms even when under pressure to follow other norms. Groups that are cohesive work harder than others and are more likely to accomplish their objectives. Thus, when a group’s objectives support those of the organization, the supervisor will want the group to be cohesive. The supervisor can foster cohesiveness by:

- Communicating to the group members their common characteristics and goals
- Emphasizing the areas in which the group has succeeded in achieving its goals
- Keeping the group sufficiently small so that everyone feels comfortable while participating in the group’s activities
- Encouraging competition with other groups
- Encouraging less active members to participate in group activities

*Size:* An organization’s groups may vary widely in size. Big groups typically operate differently from small ones. Small groups tend to reach decisions faster and rely less on formal rules and procedures. Quiet members are more likely to participate in a small group. A bigger group might make sense when a lot of work needs to get done and the individual group members can work independently most of the time.

*Homogeneity:* A homogeneous group is one in which group members have a lot in common. When group members have many differences, the group is said to be heterogeneous. Group members can be alike or different according to age, sex, race, work experience, education level, social class, personality, interests, and other characteristics.

The members of a homogeneous group enjoy a number of benefits. Perhaps the most significant is that people feel most comfortable being around others who are like themselves. This may be the reason that homogeneous groups offer better cooperation among members, greater satisfaction, and higher productivity, at least for simple tasks.

For complex, creative tasks, a heterogeneous group can perform better than a homogenous one because group members offer a variety of skills, experience, and viewpoints. The heterogeneous group as a whole has broader skills and knowledge, and it can examine problems from different points of view.
Effectiveness: The preceding characteristics of groups can affect whether a particular group is effective—that is, whether it achieves what it has set out to do. To the supervisor, a group’s effectiveness is one of its most important characteristics. In general, the organization’s formal groups should be as effective as possible. The supervisor wants informal groups to be effective only to the extent that they support organization goals.

Today, more and more organizations are improving group effectiveness by giving employees access to tools that help them collaborate online. Modern supervisors have to keep up with the latest in social networking so that they can always stay in touch with their team or group members.

3. Teaching examples to describe characteristics of groups in the workplace:

While the characteristics of groups or teams is useful information, supervisors are also likely to be interested in the best way to structure and implement teams to accomplish the objectives of the department and organization. Students and supervisors will likely need to know more about the dynamics of teams, how to direct teams irrespective of the fact that the supervisor is the leader or not the leader, and how to maximize the output of teams on special projects or process improvement.

The characteristics in the text tend to be physical or descriptive, not dynamic. This part of the learning objective is intended to illustrate the concepts in the text as applied to a problem-solving group or team.

Roles: In an organization’s groups, various members take on roles, or patterns of behavior related to their position in the group. Two roles that will be played in the team are related to accomplishing the task and processing or managing group dynamics.

There are two important tasks to be performed by members of the group if it is to achieve its goals. First, action must take place to accomplish the task assigned to the group. This action will include planning, data collection and analysis, and decision making about solutions. The person who fills this role keeps the group or team on task and is usually the leader. Second, there will be process work, which is action to facilitate the smooth operation of the team. For example, a person who fulfills the role of facilitating group processes may summarize information, provide tension release through a joke, and generally keep the team functioning smoothly. This person is likely to be concerned with feelings of group members. These two roles will likely to be played by different team members.

Norms: Groups typically have standards for appropriate or acceptable behavior, or group norms.

The group or team will have norms, or standards of appropriate behavior. These will originate within the team itself, in the organization, and from the goals that are to be accomplished. The
team may set some rules early in its tenure. For example, it may establish rules concerning respecting others’ ideas, carrying the share of the responsibility, and staying on schedule. The organization norms and standards will likely apply unless the team is required to come up with a dramatic innovation, in which case it may be told to start with no preconceived rules or ideas. The goals to be accomplished will set the team’s direction. This in turn may dictate certain standards. For example, if the team is required to come up with a solution to a specific problem, it may have to suspend rules related to chain of command or span of influence.

Status: A group member’s status is his or her position in relation to others in the group.

In a highly effective team, status differences will likely be minimized. Each team member should contribute to the overall work of the team. Status should become less a factor as the value of each person’s contribution is realized. It is important that the supervisor realize the implications of status in the group. If the objective of the team is to come up with a new idea and the supervisor is part of the team, it is important that he or she does not take the role of the final arbiter. Instead, the supervisor should play the role of team member. If the team is empowered to come up with new ideas or solutions to problems, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to hand over the team’s decisions to upper management and not enforce his or her own individual decisions.

Cohesiveness: The degree to which group members stick together is known as the group’s cohesiveness, or the “glue” that holds the group together.

Team cohesiveness is related to the shared interest and support of meeting the objectives of the group. A group that has a shared objective, and members committed to making contributions to reach that objective, will likely have a greater degree of cohesiveness than the one that does not. This is important to know while selecting members for the team. Members who already have an interest in the topic or objective of the work are likely to develop into committed team members.

Size: Although the size of an organization’s groups may vary widely, there is a tendency to form informal subgroups if the size of the group goes beyond 20 members. In many cases, the core team size will be smaller, perhaps five to eight members. Other employees may be included as per the requirement.

Homogeneity: Homogeneity refers to the degree to which the members of a group are the same.

In problem-solving or process-improvement teams, complementary characteristics will be more productive. For complex, creative tasks, a heterogeneous group can perform better. Because group members offer a variety of skills, experience, and viewpoints, the group as a whole has broader skills and knowledge, and it can examine problems from different perspectives.

Effectiveness: The preceding characteristics of groups can affect whether a particular group is effective.
For the supervisor, a group’s effectiveness is one of its most important characteristics. The characteristics described above are illustrated to indicate what will make a team effective. The most important criterion for a team is that it must function in an environment that supports effective teams. While part of the environment is created by the supervisor and his or her ability to support and facilitate the team, the organization itself must create an environment that supports effective teams. Like the department and the organization, the group or team must have clear performance objectives. Although experienced teams may come up with project ideas, more than likely the objectives will be defined by management.

4. Exercise to describe characteristics of groups in the workplace:

The purpose of this exercise is to have students experience working as a team (or not as the outcome may indicate). For this exercise you will need a set of Tinker Toys for each group.

Divide the class into several teams. If the size of the class permits you may want to select teams of various sizes, including one team of 12 or more. If the size of the class does not permit, assemble the students into groups of four to seven people. Allow approximately 30 minutes for the exercise. Steps to complete this exercise include:

a. Give each group a container of Tinker Toys, or divide sets into an equal number and selection of pieces. Give each group at least 20 pieces.

b. Instruct the group to build the tallest free-standing structure possible out of the pieces they have. Give the group five minutes to plan the structure. (Watch the groups, and if they seem to be finished with the planning phase earlier, move on to the building phase.) Then give the groups 40 seconds to build the structure.

c. When they complete their task determine the successful groups and pick the winner from the selected groups. Then ask them the following questions:
   (1) What role did each individual in the group play?
   (2) Was there any set of rules or regulations for the group to follow?
   (3) Did all the group members participate? If not, why?
   (4) Have group members check with each other to see if all the individuals shared a common purpose. If they did not, determine the level of contribution made by the non-team players of the group.

Learning Objective 3.5: Identify the stages that teams pass through as they develop.

1. Key Terms:

   **Team**: A small group whose members share goals, commitment, and accountability for results

   **Self-managing work teams**: Groups of 5 to 15 members who work together to produce an entire product

2. Teaching Notes:
Organizations today are increasingly looking for ways to involve employees in decision making and problem solving. For a growing number of organizations, teamwork is the means to employee involvement. When most organizations form a team, someone is appointed to be the team leader. Often the team leader is a supervisor, and the team consists of operative employees.

Being an effective team leader draws on many of the same skills required of an effective supervisor. The team leader needs excellent communication skills, patience, fairness, and good rapport with team members. In addition, because the purpose of the team is to draw on the expertise of all team members, the team leader will need to rely most on a leadership style that encourages involvement.

In the 1970s, it became popular to form teams in which employees suggested ways to improve the quality of their work. More recently, organizations have expanded their use of teams by creating self-managing work teams. The members of self-managing working teams, rotate jobs, schedule work and vacations, and make other decisions affecting their area of responsibility.

The five stages that teams work through en route to becoming effective are:

- **Forming**: This is the first stage of the team development process in which the team members become acquainted with one another and oriented to the idea that they are part of a team. During this phase of team development, members will explore what is expected of them as part of the team, as well as the different strengths of the other team members.

- **Storming**: This is the second stage of team development and it describes a period of conflict in which group members assert their different roles on the team. This period of group development is often perceived as stressful because group members try to delineate exactly what each member’s specific role will be.

- **Norming**: This is that third stage of team development and is characterized by agreement among team members. During this stage, there is an understanding of what each person’s role in the team is, and team members generally feel as though their voices have been heard by the other members.

- **Performing**: This is the fourth stage of team development and is characterized by solving organizational problems and meeting assigned challenges. It is during this stage that the team becomes productive, largely because it has developed through the previous three stages.

- **Adjourning**: This is the fifth stage of team development. Once the team has met all of its goals, it is appropriate for the team to disband. This stage of team development is not required for every team, given that some teams meet for indefinite periods of time. When this stage is appropriate, though, it is normal for team members to feel a sense of loss as team members often find being part of a team to be rewarding.

3. Teaching examples to identify the stages in the development of groups:

The life cycle of a group can be illustrated in an educational organization. In this example there
was no supervisor or manager involved except in the initial charge to the group.

A group of teachers was selected to participate in a team to come up with a new interdisciplinary program. Their charge, or objective, was to design a new broad-based program to act as a foundation for a mid-level management program. The members came from various disciplines within the school. The following will illustrate what happened to the team as they proceeded toward their goal.

**Forming:** When a group forms first, its members tend to be highly committed to the group but they do not possess the experience or skills to work together effectively.

Although the members were committed to the concept or objective, they were not committed to the group. The early work of the group focused on clarification of goals and objectives, and the understanding of each other. The language of each discipline had to be learned by each member. It was discovered that even though different disciplines used the same word the meaning may not be the same. Various members of the group brought with them their biases related to other disciplines. This phase of the team’s work seemed to produce little results, if any. However, it was setting the stage for more productive work at a later time.

**Storming:** If group members are able to learn their roles and the group’s objectives, the group moves to the dissatisfaction stage. While members are more competent at working together, their initial enthusiasm has given way to disappointment with day-to-day reality of being part of my group.

The lack of progress and the recognition of the amount of work to be done to develop a program resulted in the dissatisfaction or disillusioned stage. Some members were unhappy with the rate of progress and thought they would function better working alone. Other members warned them not to go off by themselves because the larger group would disagree with whatever they decided.

**Norming:** If group members are able to reconcile the differences between their initial expectations and the realities they experience, they move to the norming stage. Members continue to be more productive and morale improves.

The group gradually moved out of the forming stage and into a more productive stage. They formed smaller task groups to interview members of departments that may have a stake in the new program and brought information back to the larger group. This gave each member a sense that they were involved in the work of the group. It also gave them some tangible output that would move the group toward its objective.

**Performing:** If group members continue to resolve conflicts and meeting assigned challenges for the group, their output and morale will continue to increase. The group is effectively working as a team.
As information was brought to the larger group, members found they were better able to evaluate recommendations from a broader perspective. Many of the members found that they could make objective decisions based on what was best for the students of the new program and set aside personal desires. This indicated that the group members were buying in to the original charge given to the group.

Members found that they were supportive of the ideas that they would have turned down at the earlier meetings. The group began to think of slogans that would be useful in selling their program to the administration and others in the organization. They also talked about getting T-shirts for the members, so that others in the organization would know that they were a part of this team. The project seemed to be making faster progress which was an added plus for the group. It now seemed that they would complete the project on schedule.

Adjourning: At some point, many groups must come to an end.

During the last planned meeting, the team had a cake and punch party. Pictures were taken and promises were made to get back together. They pledged that if more work was needed, they were all willing to go back to work.

4. Exercise to identify the stages in the development of groups:

Students who have been a member of a group or team may recognize the stages of development described above and in the text. Ask students to describe their experiences and explain what it was like when the team passed through various stages. Also ask students for examples when the group did not survive a stage. Have them identify, if possible, what went wrong and why.

Learning Objective 3.6: Explain why teamwork is important.

1. Teaching Notes:

A basic benefit of using work teams is that they enable the organization to increase its usage of the insights and expertise of all its employees.

Teams can also serve as motivators. Employees who participate in planning and decision-making are more likely to take responsibility for the quality of what they do. They also tend to be more enthusiastic about their work. Responsible, enthusiastic employees are more likely to work hard and deliver high quality.

Ultimately, motivating employees and drawing on their strengths should enhance the performance of the organizations that use self-managing work teams.

2. Teaching examples to explain why teamwork is important:
The following example of teamwork took place in a small die casting company. Initially management recognized a growing safety problem, made a small and unsuccessful attempt to improve the situation, and ended up turning the problem over to a team.

The accounting department brought a safety concern to the attention of the upper management. It was obvious that the number of injuries in the plant was too high. The costs in medical expenses, lost time, and insurance premium plus the pain and suffering of employees had to be reduced.

The first attempt to bring the issue to the attention of the employees was in a general information meeting that was held once a month. The general manager simply said she had become aware of the high number of injuries in the factory and people should be more careful. The comment resulted in more grumbling about the history of a lack of concern by management and now the management wanted them to be more careful. Employees felt insulted by the general manager’s statement.

Since the company did not have a formal safety committee, it was decided that a team working on the safety problems could make better progress on the current issue. A team was selected. All of the members were production employees representing all the departments in the factory. Since this was the first time a production employee team was being used to make improvements, the team was provided continuous motivation. The team was provided training in basic safety and team problem-solving techniques. The team was also given the support of an outside facilitator. In this case, the supervisor was not involved because he or she lacked the time and skills necessary to work effectively with the team.

The employees knew firsthand the pain of the injuries, both physical pain and the inconvenience of going to the local medical center for treatment. They immediately agreed that this was a worthwhile project and they would give it all the attention necessary to improve the situation. Their first question concerned the nature of the problem. Because there was hot metal involved in the manufacturing process, the initial hypothesis was that burns were the biggest problem. A review of the OSHA records revealed that cuts were the biggest problem. That was a surprise! The records also revealed another problem: they were not completed as required by state and federal regulations. That was another issue to be added to their to-do list.

The team continued its investigation of the injuries, talking to the employees entered in the records. One of the causes found was that the employee was not protecting himself by wearing adequate safety gloves. Employees wanted gloves that were soft and pliable. They chose their own gloves from the supply room. They didn’t like the more durable gloves, and most employees refused to use them. The team talked to people in all the departments, including those handling hot parts.

The number of pairs of gloves used each month cost over $15,000, but this money was not providing the protection necessary. The team thought that since the company was spending that amount of money on gloves, it would be useful to talk to some safety products companies. Sales
people attended one of the team meetings and demonstrated their products. The team learned that the gloves employees disliked as well as the ones they were using were not the right gloves for the jobs performed and materials used in the factory. Several pairs of gloves were selected for a trial.

The team proved to be helpful in getting the support of other employees in the glove trial. After talking to them one-on-one, the employees volunteered to use the new gloves. Members of the team distributed the gloves and talked to the employees after they had a chance to try them under production conditions. The final results were that new gloves were selected, there was widespread acceptance by the employees, the gloves provided more protection, and the cost was less.

The value of the team approach to this problem included the fact that the team was a group of people who focused on the problem, they were able to understand their peers’ dislike of the old gloves, and they could communicate this to the sales people. In other words, this team had a stake in the problem and its solution. The team was also helpful in gaining quick acceptance of the new gloves. Other positive outcomes included better communications of the team members and management, and saving to the company. The team also proposed a better record keeping system and provided the training for the new record system.

3. Exercise to explain why teamwork is important:

See the “Exercise” for Learning Objective 3.7, describe how the supervisor can lead a team so that it is productive. The exercise includes discussion and practice on why teamwork is important.

Learning Objective 3.7: Describe how the supervisor can lead a team so that it is productive.

1. Key Term:

   **Team building**: Developing the ability of team members to work together to achieve common objectives

2. Teaching Notes:

   *Leading the team*: Whether an organization’s teams achieve the benefits of teamwork depends in part on the teams’ leaders. Broadly speaking, the goal of a team leader is to develop a productive team. Experts in teamwork have linked the productivity of teams to the following characteristics:
   - **Openness and honesty**: These are signs that the group members trust one another.
   - **Leadership that does not dominate**: The leader is flexible, changing with conditions and circumstances.
   - **Decisions made by consensus**: The leader will sometimes have to make a decision alone or reject suggestions, but all team members should have a voice in making many decisions,
not simply a vote without the full opportunity to be heard.

- **Acceptance of assignments**: Team members should willingly take on the tasks that must be done, then do them correctly and on time.
- **Goals that are understood and accepted**: Goals give the team purpose and direction.
- **Assessment of progress and results**: Team members should focus on results.
- **Comfortable atmosphere**: Some conflict can stimulate desirable action and change, but there should be a basic level of cooperation.
- **Involvement and participation**: Team members should be involved in the work of the group.
- **Debate and discussion**: If everyone agrees at all the time, it may signify that team members are unable or unwilling to contribute.
- **Atmosphere of listening**: Team members should listen to one another, even when they disagree.
- **Access to information**: All team members need to know what is happening.
- **Win-win approach to conflict**: Team members should work to resolve conflicts in ways that let everyone be a winner.
- **Relatively low turnover**: Members of a team must have close relationships, which is impossible when the team’s membership keeps changing.

Some ways to develop this kind of team include communicating often to be sure everyone understands the goals and reviews what is working well and what needs to change. Team leaders need to be good role models—trustworthy, cooperative, and team oriented. When the supervisor’s role involves team leadership, he or she may want to get training in coaching, conflict management, and other skills to help team members work together effectively.

**Coaching the team**: The team leader who can stimulate high-quality performance is one who focuses on enabling team members to do their best. *Enabling* in this context means providing employees with the resources they need to do their job and removing obstacles that interfere with their work. Providing resources includes making sure employees have the training they need to be effective team members. Besides technical skills, employees on teams may need training in interpersonal skills such as conflict resolution. In addition, supervisors should acquaint themselves with the strengths that the members themselves bring to the team.

By enabling teams to excel and empowering them to make decisions, team leaders are coaching employees.

The team leader encourages team members by expressing understanding and appreciation of their ideas and feelings. The coach also pays attention to how team members interact, recognizing when it is time to wrap up a discussion and when to promote balanced participation from team members.

This style of leading may seem to leave a supervisor with less power than one who gives directions and checks up on performance. However, coaching enables the supervisor to build on
the strengths and expertise of the whole group.

*Selection of team members:* A team leader may be charged with selecting either candidates for jobs that involve teamwork or existing employees to participate in a team devoted to a particular task. In either case, the supervisor should look for people who work well with others. If the team is to include people from several departments, the team leader should talk to other supervisors and employees to learn which employees would do best on the team.

*Team building:* Team building includes several activities: setting goals, analyzing what needs to be done and allocating work; examining how well the group is working, and examining the relationships among the team members.

At some organizations, a consultant with expertise in team building carries out this process. However, hiring someone often is too expensive, especially for small organizations. When the supervisor is responsible for team building, he or she can carry out that responsibility at regular team meetings. At the end of a meeting, the supervisor can devote some time to asking team members how well they thought the meeting worked and whether they think they developed a creative solution. Participants can rate how well the meeting went in terms of whether everyone participated, whether they felt that others heard them, and whether the meeting had a successful outcome.

*Communication in teams:* The way the team leader communicates with other team members will influence the success of the team. In general, the team leader should create a climate of trust and openness and encourage team members to collaborate. The team leader also should acknowledge disagreement, not squelch it.

Team leaders need this kind of communication style because successful teamwork requires open and positive communication among team members. Feeling able to express one’s viewpoint and knowing how to do so constructively are essential for reaping the benefits of diverse viewpoints.

Effective communication is not just a matter of being pleasant; sometimes the supervisor has to get everyone focused on the issue at hand. And some situations call for firmness.

*Rewards:* For teams to remain productive, members must be rewarded appropriately. The organization should reward the entire team for its accomplishments instead of emphasizing individual rewards.

Team members also are likely to value different rewards; therefore, the rewards should be varied enough that everyone feels motivated.

3. Teaching examples to describe how the supervisor can lead a team so that it is productive:

Leadership involves providing direction to the team. The leader must give the team members a
clear sense of where they are going or what they are expected to achieve. Leadership also means creating an environment in which the team can achieve its goals. Leadership may come from inside or outside the actual team that is working on a problem.

When the supervisor is expected to provide the leadership necessary to achieve success, he or she will have to use personal and organizational resources to get the desired characteristics of a successful team. It is much easier to recognize the characteristics of a successful team than it is to orchestrate the conditions to achieve these characteristics. One of the reasons teams do not achieve these characteristics is related to the skills of the supervisor (or other leaders in the organization), the members selected for the team, unrealistic expectations either in the outcome or the time frame for reaching the desired outcome, lack of a clear vision of what is expected, and resources available to the team.

4. Exercise to describe how the supervisor can lead a team so that it is productive:

The purpose of this exercise is to have students apply the knowledge they acquired from this course and their own experience in achieving the characteristics of a successful team. This exercise can be used as a classroom exercise or as homework. The amount of time required will depend on the number of characteristics that are discussed. If it is used as a classroom exercise, allow about 25 minutes for one or two characteristics and five minutes for each additional characteristic discussed.

Steps to use this exercise:

a. Assign one or more of the following characteristics to each student or group of students. If this is an in-class exercise, allow the students 10 to 15 minutes to come up with methods to achieve the assigned characteristic(s).

b. Discuss the suggestions. Determine if the students think the method will get the desired results. What problems do the students see with the methods suggested? Do they have suggestions for modifying the suggestions?

Some of the potential problems include personal choices of the members, interest by the members in the teams, and the value of the outcome to each of the members.

Characteristics (those listed in the text):

- **Openness and honesty:** These are signs that group members trust one another.
- **Leadership that does not dominate:** The leader is flexible, changing with conditions and circumstances.
- **Decisions made by consensus:** The leader will sometimes have to make a decision alone or reject suggestions, but all team members should have a voice in making many decisions, not simply a vote without the full opportunity to be heard.
- **Acceptance of assignments:** Team members should willingly take on the tasks that must be done, then do them correctly and on time.
- **Goals that are understood and accepted:** Goals give the team purpose and direction.
• Assessment of progress and results: Team members should focus on results.
• Comfortable atmosphere: Some conflict can stimulate desirable action and change, but there should be a basic level of cooperation.
• Involvement and participation: Team members should be involved in the work of the group.
• Debate and discussion: If everyone agrees at all the time, it may signify that team members are unable or unwilling to contribute.
• Atmosphere of listening: Team members should listen to one another, even when they disagree.
• Access to information: All team members need to know what is happening.
• Win-win approach to conflict: Team members should work to resolve conflicts in ways that let everyone be a winner.
• Relatively low turnover: Members of a team must have close relationships, which is impossible when the team’s membership keeps changing.

Learning Objective 3.8: Discuss how to plan for effective meetings.

1. Key Term:

   Agenda: A list of the topics to be covered at a meeting

2. Teaching Notes:

   Much of the work of teams and other groups occurs in meetings. When groups plan, solve problems, and reward successes, they usually do so in a meeting.

   Meetings should take place when they serve a purpose. Many supervisors and other managers hold meetings at a regularly scheduled time, whether or not they have something particular to accomplish. A supervisor who is thinking of calling a meeting should consider specifically what the meeting is intended to accomplish within the time allotted. Unless the supervisor ensures that the topic is relevant to the particular job site, employees will see the meetings as a waste of time. Supervisors should not call a meeting at all for illogical purposes.

   There are several valid reasons for holding a meeting:
   • One is to convey news to a group of people when their feedback is important.
   • A meeting is also appropriate when the supervisor wants the group to participate in decision making.
   • The supervisor may use meetings to prepare group members for a change and build support for that change.
   • Meetings are especially important when some or all members of a group work in different locations.

   To prepare for a meeting, the supervisor should decide who is to attend and when and where to
meet. When the purpose of a meeting is to convey information to the whole department, the whole department should be invited. When participants are to provide or evaluate information, the supervisor should invite only those who have the needed information or expertise.

As much as possible, a meeting should be scheduled at a time that is convenient for all participants.

The location of the meeting usually depends on the available facilities.

One of the most basic preparation tasks is to draw up an agenda. A complete agenda specifies the meeting’s date, time, location, and objectives, as well as the items on the agenda—that is, a list of a few topics for idea generation, discussion, and/or problem solving. For each agenda item, the planner should identify who will lead it, specify how the topic will be addressed, and estimate how much time the item will require. Figure 3.5 is an agenda that was used at a meeting called by an editor to discuss the progress on this book.

A well-crafted agenda is specific enough that participants can be well prepared. The agenda should be distributed to all participants in time for participants to review it before the meeting and make any necessary preparations. In addition, the person calling the meeting should make sure that participants have received any other documents they might need so they are prepared to contribute.

3. Teaching examples to discuss how to plan for effective meetings:

   Be sure meetings are needed and well planned. Before holding a meeting, the supervisor should spend time preparing. The first question is: what is the purpose of having a meeting? (See Chapter 6, for general information on planning.) If there is no purpose, don’t call one. However, if the supervisor is finding that meetings have no purpose on a consistent basis, he or she should ask if they are overlooking important work that needs to be done with or by the team.

   When planning the meeting, determine who needs to be at the meeting. Are there people who are not part of the core team essential to the progress of the team? Prepare an agenda and distribute it ahead of time. Inform all participants when and where the meeting will be held. Include the topics to be covered. Also include whether the topic is for information purposes only, is to be discussed by the group, or if a decision must be reached by the group. Information-only items should be first on the agenda. Discussion and decision items follow. Plan enough time to complete all items on the agenda and allow sufficient time for difficult and controversial items. When there are difficult items on the agenda, also schedule a second meeting to complete the work on the issues.

4. Exercise to discuss how to plan for effective meetings:

   See the “Exercise” for Learning Objective 3.9, Provide guidelines for conducting effective
meetings. The exercise includes planning an effective meeting.

Learning Objective 3.9: Provide guidelines for conducting effective meetings.

1. Teaching Notes:

Meetings should begin promptly at the scheduled starting time. This practice demonstrates respect for all participants’ schedules, and it encourages people to be on time. It helps to announce an ending time and end the meeting promptly at that time. When critical issues come up near the end of a meeting, the group can reach an agreement to extend the meeting or continue the discussion at another time.

To make sure that meetings are as fruitful as possible, the supervisor can help to facilitate the discussion in several ways. One is to rephrase ideas participants express. The supervisor should summarize key points often enough to make sure everyone is following the discussion.

The supervisor should be careful not to dominate the discussion, instead, he or she should make sure that everyone has a chance to participate. The person leading the meeting is responsible for encouraging everyone to contribute.

Quieting participants who are monopolizing a discussion can be a delicate matter. One approach is to begin with someone other than the talkative person, then go around the table and hear each person’s views on some topic. Also, the supervisor could have a one-on-one talk with the person monopolizing discussions, letting the person know his or her contributions are important but that the lengthy discourse is unnecessary.

Throughout the meeting, the supervisor should take notes on what is being decided. This helps the supervisor summarize key points. In addition, it helps the supervisor recall what actions are to be taken later and by whom.

When it is time for the meeting to end, the supervisor should help bring it to a close. A direct way to do this is to summarize what has been covered, state what needs to happen next and thank everyone for coming. Figure 3.6 summarizes the guidelines for conducting a meeting.

A frequent complaint about meetings is that they waste time because participants stray from the main topic and go off on tangents. Thus, a job for the supervisor is to keep the discussion linked to the agenda items. When a participant begins discussing an unrelated topic, the supervisor can restate the purpose of the meeting and suggest that if the topic seems important, it could be covered in another meeting.

In steering the discussion back on course, it is important to avoid ridiculing the participants, and respect their efforts to contribute. The supervisor can do this by focusing on the effects of particular kinds of behavior instead of on the personalities of the participants.
Other problems arise because the meeting leader and participants have failed to prepare for the meeting. If there is no agenda, the discussion may ramble aimlessly. If someone failed to bring necessary background information, the participants may be unable to make plans or reach decisions, and the meeting will be unproductive. These kinds of problems lead to frustration and anger among participants who feel they are wasting precious time. The solution is to follow the guidelines described previously, including the creation and distribution of an agenda well before the meeting. When the supervisor is prepared to lead the meeting but others are unprepared to participate, the supervisor should consider rescheduling the meeting.

2. Teaching examples to provide guidelines for conducting effective meetings:

   Good planning will facilitate conducting an effective meeting. Help participants prepare for the meeting by sending them any information pertinent to the meeting with the agenda. During the meeting be sure that each item is covered and the necessary decisions are made. Items that require additional attention should have a follow-up plan of action with personnel assigned to tasks and a time line set for completion or a progress report. End meetings on time.

3. Exercise to provide guidelines for conducting effective meetings:

   The purpose of this exercise is to give students experience in planning a meeting and holding a meeting. Assign general topics to the students for planning a meeting. For example, students can plan a meeting for planning a picnic, a last day party, a field trip with the destination known or unknown, etc. The meeting can be held or the exercise can include the planning of the meeting only. Steps for using the exercise:
   a. Divide the students into small groups and assign or let the group pick a topic for a meeting.
   b. Have the groups plan a meeting, including the topics, date and time, place, and who will be invited. Students should determine if the meeting topics are for information only, require discussion only, require a decision, or require a plan of action for tasks to be accomplished before the next meeting. The students can also anticipate what needs to be covered in the next meeting and plan for that meeting also.
   c. Students can be asked to role play the meeting if desired.
   d. Present the agenda or the role-played meeting for the students. Ask for constructive criticism of the planning and the meeting.

III. Answers to Review and Discussion Questions

1. Think of your current job or the most recent job you have held. (If you have never been employed, consider your role as a student.)

   a. Of what groups are you a member? For example, what organization employs you? In which division or department do you work? Are you a member of any informal groups?
Students’ answers will vary.

b. Why did you join each of these groups?

Students’ answers will vary.

2. State whether each of the following groups is formal or informal. Then state whether it is a functional group or a task group.

   a. Six employees who have decided on their own to research the possibility of establishing an on-site day care facility.

      Informal, task

   b. The board of directors of a major corporation.

      Formal, functional

   c. Three employees who decide to plan a birthday celebration for a co-worker.

      Informal, task

   d. Software developers at an educational publisher.

      Formal, functional

3. Joseph Dittrick is a supervisor in the marketing department of a toy manufacturer. He is responsible for leading a group of employees in finding ways to improve a problematic product. In what ways can Joseph encourage the group to be as effective as possible?

   The different ways in which Joseph can encourage the group include:
   
   • Leadership: Whether an organization’s teams will achieve the benefits depends in part on the teams’ leaders. A team leader strives to develop a productive, focused, and driven team. Experts in the field of teamwork have correlated the productivity of teams to the following characteristics: openness and honesty, leadership that does not dominate, decisions made by consensus, acceptance of assignments, goals that are understood and accepted, assessment of progress and results, comfortable atmosphere, involvement and participation, debate and discussion, listening, access to information, and a win-win approach to conflict.

   • Selection of team members: If the team leader is responsible for selecting the team members, this may involve selecting candidates for jobs that involve teamwork, or the supervisor may select existing employees to participate in a team devoted to a particular task. Criteria should include people who work well with others.
• **Team building:** Team building includes several activities: setting goals, analyzing what needs to be done and allocating work, examining how well the group is working, and examining the relationships among the team members.

• **Communication style:** The way the team leader communicates with other team members will influence the success of the team. In general, the team leader should create a climate of trust and openness and encourage team members to collaborate. The team leader also should acknowledge disagreement, not squelch it.

• **Rewards:** For teams to remain productive, members must be rewarded appropriately. The organization should reward the entire team for its accomplishments, instead of emphasizing individual rewards.

4. **Why do supervisors need to know about each of the following characteristics of groups?**

   a. **Roles of group members**

      The supervisor can help encourage desirable behavior or bring about a change in undesirable behavior by being aware of roles in the group. For example, to bring about change, a supervisor probably would want to include an informal group’s leader in planning how to carry out a change in policy. When a person holds roles that have conflicting expectations, the resolution of the conflict will influence his or her performance as well as relationships with other employees.

   b. **Status of group members**

      Status is important to supervisors because the group members with the highest status have the most effect on the development of group norms, and members with lower status tend to pattern their behavior after that of the high-status members. If a supervisor wants to reinforce or change group norms, he or she will have a higher success rate by focusing on the high-status members.

5. **Yolanda Gibbs supervises employees in the reference department of a public library. Her team meets once a month to discuss ways to improve the quality of services delivered at the library. Yolanda wants the team to be cohesive so that its members will work hard. How can she encourage the cohesiveness of this group?**

   Yolanda Gibbs can foster cohesiveness by:

   • Communicating to the group members their common characteristics and goals
   • Emphasizing areas in which the group has succeeded in achieving its goals
   • Keeping the group sufficiently small so that everyone feels comfortable participating in the group’s activities
   • Encouraging competition with the other groups
   • Encouraging the less active members to participate in group activities
6. A supervisor observes that the members of a committee seem to spend a lot of time complaining and have trouble focusing on the issues the committee was formed to address. How can the supervisor help the committee move into the performing stage of team development?

Although the committee has already been formed, it is yet to go through the storming and norming stage. Unless these two stages are taken care of, the committee cannot reach the performing stage.

Storming describes a period of conflict in which group members assert their different roles on the team. This period of group development is often perceived as stressful, largely because group members try to delineate exactly what each member’s specific role will be. The supervisors should allow the team members to express their feelings and opinions related to their role in the group. The supervisor should also highlight the long-term goal of the team in order to most effectively facilitate this stage of team development.

Norming is characterized by agreement among team members. During this stage, there is understanding of what each person’s role in the team is, and team members generally feel as though their voices have been heard by the other members. There is not as much conflict in this stage of team development. The supervisor should help his or her team develop effective norms and values that will help the team ultimately meet its goal.

Performing is characterized by solving organizational problems and meeting assigned challenges. It is during this stage that the team becomes productive, largely because it has developed through the previous three stages. The supervisor should reinforce team members throughout this stage of productivity. The supervisor should also reward team members in order to encourage further team success.

7. Peter Wilson is a supervisor who also leads a team that has been working on revamping an old product—snow saucers—to make them seem new and more attractive to a new generation of customers. The team includes both design people and salespeople. What type or types of rewards might Peter consider for his team members if the project is successful?

Student answers will vary. However, some students might say that Peter should use a mixture of rewards, both monetary and nonmonetary. Nonmonetary rewards might include time off. Since the sales people and design people might value different types of rewards. Hence, Peter should take his team members’ opinion on the type of rewards to be given out.

8. How can a supervisor at an organization with self-managing work teams help the organization avoid violations of federal labor law?

Unionized companies are unlikely to be challenged in this area, because most unions have approval of teams. Some legal experts recommend avoiding any discussion of topics that could be a matter for union bargaining, such as working conditions or pay, focusing instead on specific
work-related projects or problems. A supervisor or other manager who wants to form a team should get legal advice on how to form and operate it without violating the law.

9. Bonnie First supervises respiratory therapists at a large community hospital. One day her manager said, “Your department used too much overtime again last week. I want you to propose a solution to this problem, and I think you need to involve the employees in finding the solution. Get back to me in a week with your ideas.” To prepare for the next meeting with her manager, Bonnie decided she needed to hold a department meeting at 1:00 the next afternoon. She asked two therapists to spread the word about this meeting.

At the meeting, Bonnie described the problem. To her disappointment, no one seemed to have any suggestions. She said, “Unless someone has a better idea, you’re just going to have to help each other out more when someone is having trouble keeping up. And don’t hesitate to ask me to pitch in, too.”

How could the supervisor have better planned this meeting?

Student answers will vary. However, some students might say that Bonnie should have drawn up the meeting’s agenda. The complete agenda should have specified the meeting’s date, time, location, and objectives, as well as the items on the agenda. For each agenda item, she should have identified who would lead it, specified how the topic would be addressed, and estimated how much time the items would require.

She should have distributed the agenda to all participants in time for participants to review it before the meeting and make any necessary preparations. In addition, she should have made sure that participants have received any other documents they might need so they are prepared to contribute.

10. As a supervisor, you have done everything you can to prepare for a meeting, including writing up and distributing an agenda. At the meeting, you have problems with two of the participants. Ken dominates the conversation, drifting off to subjects that are not on the agenda. Sheryl refuses to talk at all, even though you know she has read the agenda and probably has something insightful to contribute. What steps might you take to elicit more positive participation from Ken and Sheryl?

Student answers will vary. However, some students might say that the supervisor should begin with someone other than Ken, then go around the table and hear each person’s views on the topic. Also, the supervisor could have a one-on-one talk with Ken, letting him know that his contributions are important but that the lengthy discourse is unnecessary. The supervisor should keep the discussion linked to the agenda items. When Ken begins discussing an unrelated topic, the supervisor should restate the purpose of the meeting and suggest that if the topic Ken wants to discuss is important, it could be covered in another meeting.
The supervisor could ask Sheryl what she thinks about the suggestions that have been proposed.

IV. Skill-Building

Meeting the Challenge

1. Reflecting back on page 67, imagine that you were a sterile processing department (SPD) supervisor at Christiana Hospital, assigned to one of its problem-solving teams. Consider that your team would also include hospital managers, nurses, and employees and that some team members would be from the operating room, while others would represent SPD. With your group, discuss and identify several possible sources of conflict on this team. Suggest some ways that an SPD supervisor could help the team move beyond conflict (the storming stage) and toward constructive solutions. Also, identify ways that your participation on the team could help you lead your employees in SPD.

Students’ answers will vary. However, some students might say that the new problem-solving team will have to deal with conflicts arising out of the different perspectives of the team members who span across different departments in the hospital. This will be stronger during the storming stage of team development. The additional responsibility given to the new team could give rise to role-conflicts. Characteristics associated with team productivity, illustrated in text Table 3.1, are factors that will help in reducing conflict and improving productivity. Improving communication, coaching and mentoring, and team rewards too will aid in reducing conflicts.

Problem-Solving Case: Peer Groups Help Eastman Kodak Employees Resolve Disputes

1. What challenges could arise from bringing together employees and managers to work as a group on a dispute resolution panel? How can Kodak address these challenges?

Students’ answers will vary. Students should identify the challenges of working in a diverse team, especially where the managers may feel threatened to have their decisions and authority challenged and the employees may feel that there might be retribution from the managers later. Kodak should guard against such perceptions and work hard to create transparencies in the process.

2. To staff its peer/management review panels, Kodak requests volunteers. What are some advantages and disadvantages of using volunteers instead of another approach, such as hiring people for the job or requiring employees to participate?

Advantages include the commitment and willingness of the participants. Also, they may participate if they feel prepared.

Disadvantage may include conflict of interest by certain individuals who may be trying to protect or cover for someone else. Hiring someone to do it has its benefits of “no baggage attached”,

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however, they may not fully understand the culture of the company. Requiring employees to participate can take away the intentional conflict of interest, however, it may not bring the commitment of the employees.

3. Imagine you are the leader of a peer/management panel such as the one described in this case. Your panel is being asked to hear an employee’s complaint that her supervisor unreasonably turned down her request to participate in a training program. Prepare an agenda for the panel’s meeting to hear the complaint. Whose viewpoints will you need to hear? How will you ensure that all those viewpoints are heard? How will you set up the meeting to ensure that the whole panel participates in the decision?

Students’ answers will vary. However, some students should include the viewpoints of the both the supervisor as well as the employee. There should also be someone neutral “in the know” in the field about the training needs as well as the fit of the program should be heard from.

**Assessing Yourself: How Do You Communicate as a Team Leader?**

Scoring is provided at the end of the self-quiz. Discussing the pros and cons of each of the approaches might generate some interesting ideas.

**Class Skills Exercise: Meeting Participation Skills**

The instructions for the exercise, as well as the discussion questions are provided in the text.

**Building Supervision Skills: Evaluating Team Performance**

This exercise can be used as an opening exercise to begin your discussion on working with teams.

**Objectives:**
1. Identify shortcomings of working in groups (if you decide to introduce the exercise as outlined below)
2. Illustrate how working in groups to solve problems is often more effective than working alone
3. Stimulate students’ thinking about the benefits that can be realized when a group works effectively together

**Suggestions:**
1. Before you refer students to the exercise: Most students would have been involved in some kind of group effort or committee—at work, school, church, a civic group, etc. You could begin the class by asking, “How many of you have been involved in any kind of group where the group had a problem to solve or an objective to achieve?” Then follow with, “Based on your experiences in those groups, briefly describe the difficulties/disadvantages/weaknesses of group performance.”

You may want to jot down their ideas on the board. Some examples include, people don’t show
up or show up late, disagreements and discussions among members often steer the group away from objective, takes too long to make a decision, not everyone has the same level of commitment etc.

2. **Introduce exercise**

3. **At the conclusion of Chart 1:** There is usually at least one person in every class who can write all fifty states during the first round. You have at least two options:
   - At the end of the first round, ask who was able to complete the entire list. Recognize their achievement and explain that since this is supposed to be a group effort, you don’t want to give an unfair advantage to the groups they get into. It would be natural for the group just to allow the most knowledgeable person in the group to do all the work. Therefore, you will designate those who know all fifty states as observers for the second round, or you might suggest that during the second round you will check over their answers for them while the others complete the second round.
   - Proceed directly to chart two without asking who got them all. After the second round when everyone finds out which groups had people in them that got all fifty in the first round, this fact will usually lead to some discussion. For example, how did the groups behave that had people who knew them all? Did they let that person do all the work by him/herself? What implications does this have to the way work groups operate?

4. **At the conclusion of chart 2:** Read and/or show the answer key given below:

   | Alabama      | Alaska          |
   | Alabama      | Alaska          |
   | Arizona      | Arkansas        |
   | California   | Colorado        |
   | Connecticut  | Delaware        |
   | Florida      | Georgia         |
   | Hawaii       | Idaho           |
   | Illinois     | Indiana         |
   | Iowa         | Kansas          |
   | Kentucky     | Louisiana       |
   | Maine        | Maryland        |
   | Massachusetts| Michigan        |
   | Minnesota    | Mississippi     |
   | Missouri     | Montana         |
   | Nebraska     | Nevada          |
   | New Hampshire| New Jersey      |
   | New Mexico   | New York        |
   | North Carolina| North Dakota  |
   | Ohio         | Oklahoma        |
   | Oregon       | Pennsylvania    |
   | Rhode Island | South Carolina  |
South Dakota	Tennessee
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