CHAPTER

3

Working in Teams

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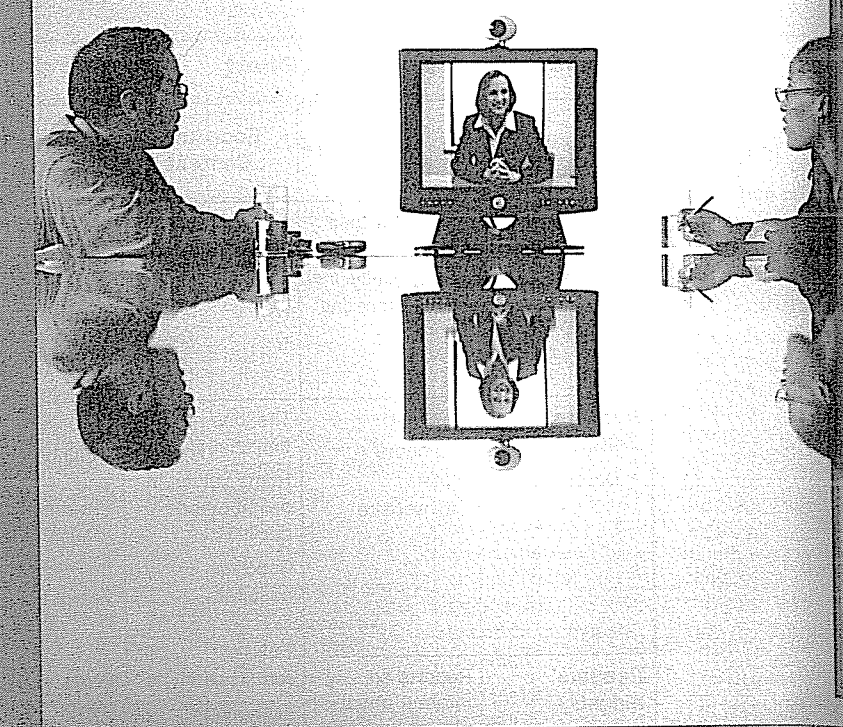


In this chapter, you will learn:

- Why working in teams is essential in technical workplaces.
- The four stages of teaming in the workplace: forming, storming, norming, and performing.
- How to use strategic planning to form a team and begin a project.
- Strategies for managing team conflict in the storming stage.
- How to define team roles in the norming stage to improve productivity.
- How to improve performance with Total Quality Management (TQM) strategies.
- How to work as part of a "virtual" team.

Working in teams happens every day in the technical workplace. In fact, when managers are surveyed about the abilities they look for in new employees, they often put "works well with a team" near the top of their list. The ability to collaborate with others is an essential skill if you are going to succeed in today's networked workplace.

Computers have only increased the ability and necessity to work in teams. Communication tools like e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, and websites allow people to work together electronically. Telecommuting, teleworking, and "virtual offices" are becoming more common, and people are increasingly finding themselves working outside the traditional office setting. Now, more than ever, it is essential that you learn how to use computers to help you work effectively with a team of others.

The Stages of Teaming

It would be nice if people worked well together from the start. But in reality, team members often need time to set goals and adjust to each other's working styles and abilities. In 1965, Bruce Tuckman introduced a model of how teams learn to work together (Figure 3.1). He pointed out that teams go through four stages.

These stages are not rigid. Instead, a team tends to move back and forth among the stages as the project evolves and moves forward.

Forming: Strategic Planning

Forming is an important part of the team-building process. When a team is first created, the members are usually excited and optimistic about the new project. They are often a little anxious, because each person is uncertain about the others' expectations.

Tuckman's Four Stages of Teaming

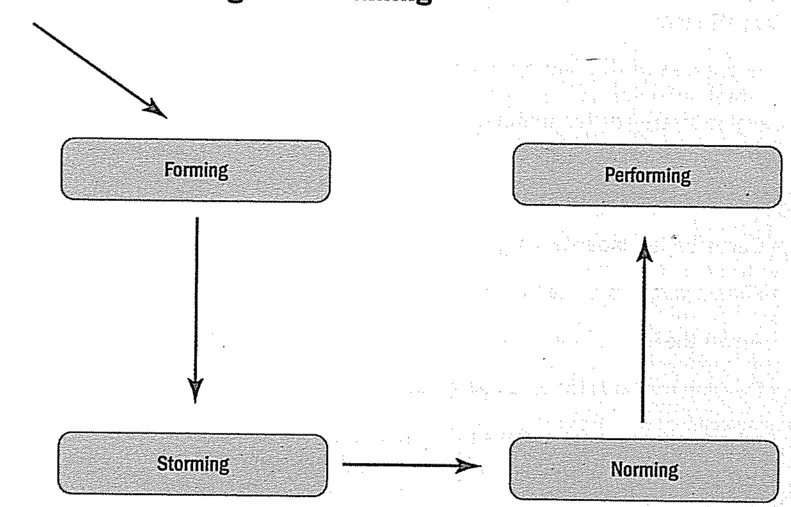


Figure 3.1: A team will typically go through four stages: forming, storming, norming, and performing. Give your team time to properly evolve as a unit.

GO TO THE NET
To learn more about Tuckman's teaming theories, go to
www.pearsonhighered.com/johnsonweb4/3.1

If your team's project involves writing a document, you should identify each team member's responsibilities while dividing up the writing task. For example, here are four jobs you might consider:

> **Coordinator**—The coordinator is responsible for maintaining the project schedule and running the meetings. The coordinator is not the "boss." Rather, he or she is a facilitator who helps keep the project on track.
>
> **Researchers**—One or two people in the group should be assigned to collect information. They are responsible for doing Internet searches, digging up materials in the library, and coordinating the team's empirical research.
>
> **Editor**—The editor is responsible for the organization and style of the document. He or she identifies places where the document is missing content or where information needs to be reorganized to achieve the project's purpose.
>
> **Designer**—The designer is responsible for laying out the document, collecting images, and making tables, graphs, and charts.

Notice that there is no "writer" among these roles. Instead, everyone in the group is responsible for writing some part of the document.

Step 4: Create a Project Calendar

Project calendars are essential for meeting deadlines. Numerous project management software packages like Microsoft Project, ArrantSoft, and Artemis Project Management help teams lay out calendars for completing projects. These programs are helpful for setting deadlines and specifying when interrelated parts of the project need to be completed (Figure 3.3).

You don't need project management software for smaller projects. A reliable time management technique is to use *backward planning* to determine when you need to accomplish specific tasks and meet smaller and final deadlines.

To do backward planning, start out by putting the project's deadline on a calendar. Then, work backward from that deadline, writing down the dates when specific project tasks need to be completed (Figure 3.4).

The advantage of a project calendar is that it keeps the team on task. The calendar shows the milestones for the project, so everyone knows how the rest of the team is progressing. In other words, everyone on the team knows when his or her part of the project needs to be completed.

Step 5: Write Out a Work Plan

A work plan is a description of how the project will be completed (Figure 3.5). Some work plans are rather simple, perhaps using an outline to describe how the project will go from start to finish. Other work plans, like the one in Figure 3.5, are very detailed and thorough.

A work plan will do the following:

- Identify the mission and objectives of the project.
- Lay out a step-by-step plan for achieving the mission and objectives.

GO TO THE NET
For more on sharing team responsibilities, go to: **www.pearsonhighered.com/johnsonweb4/3.4**

Project Planning Software

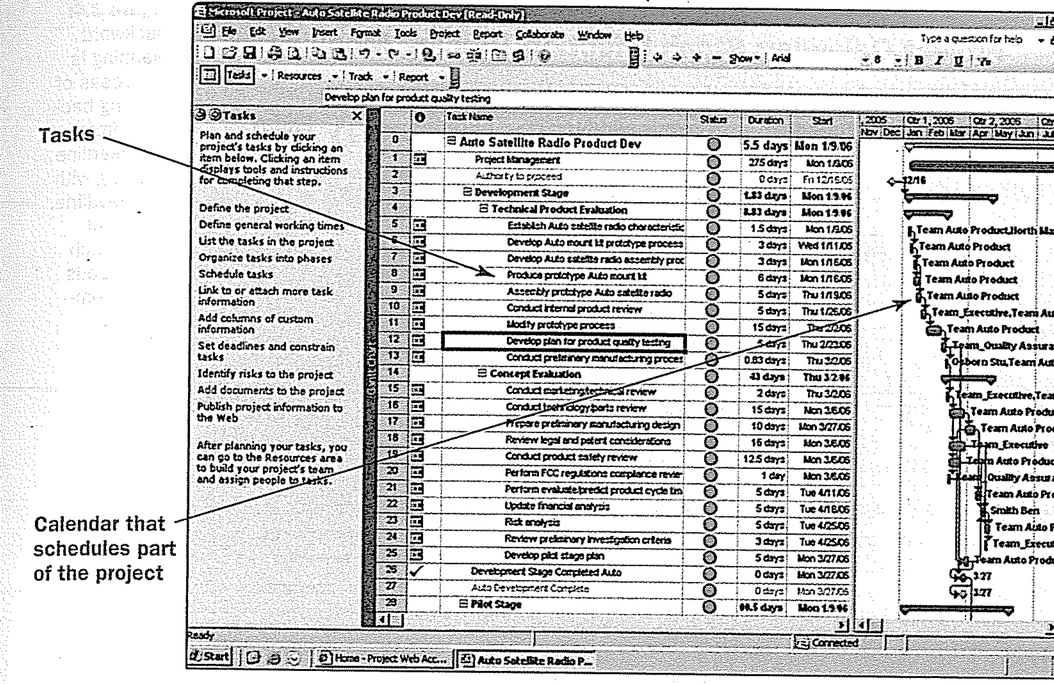


Figure 3.3: Project planning software can be helpful when setting a calendar for the team. In this screen, the calendar is represented visually to show how tasks relate to each other over time.

Source: Microsoft Inc., http://www.office.microsoft.com/en-us/project/HA101656381033.aspx.

- Establish a project calendar.
- Estimate a project budget if needed.
- Summarize the results/deliverables of the project.

A work plan is helpful for both small and large projects because team members need to see the project in writing. Otherwise, they will walk away from meetings with very different ideas about what needs to be accomplished.

By writing up a work plan, your team specifies how the project will be completed and who is responsible for which parts of the project. That way, team members can review the work plan if they are uncertain about (1) what tasks are being completed, (2) when the tasks will be finished, and (3) who is responsible for completing them.

Link

For help writing work plans as proposals, turn to Chapter 8, page 219.

Step 6: Agree on How Conflicts Will Be Resolved

Finally, your team should talk about how it will handle conflicts. Conflict is a natural, even healthy, part of a team project. However, the worst time to figure out how your team will handle conflicts is when you are in the middle of one.

Instead, in advance, talk with your team about how conflicts should be handled.

Backward Planning Calendar

Project Calendar: Staph Infection Training Modules

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
4 Staff Meeting	5	6	7	8 Complete Collection of Data
11	12	13 Report on Findings Due	14	15
18	19 Brochures, Pamphlets Printed	20	21	22 Proofread Training Materials
25	26	27 Training Modules Completed	28	29 Deadline: Training Day

Figure 3.4: Backward planning is a process of working backward from the deadline. Starting with the deadline, chart out when each task needs to be completed.

Here is the deadline. Work backward from this date.

Will the team take votes on important topics? Will the majority rule?

Will the team rely on the judgment of the team coordinator or the supervisor?

Does the team need to reach full consensus on decisions?

Can any team member call a team meeting to discuss conflicts?

Should agreements be written down for future reference?

You should not shy away from conflict in your team, because conflict is a natural part of the teaming process. Constructive conflict often leads to more creativity and closer bonds among team members. But destructive conflict can lead to dysfunctional working relationships, frustration, and lower morale. To foster constructive conflict and minimize destructive conflict, you should spend some time during the forming phase talking about the ways conflicts will be resolved.

AT A GLANCE

Six Steps for Strategic Planning

- Define the project mission and objectives.
- Identify project outcomes.
- Define team member responsibilities.
- Create a project calendar.
- Write out a work plan.
- Agree on how conflicts will be resolved.

A Work Plan

St. Thomas Medical Center

Date: April 28, 2011
To: Staph Infection Task Force (M. Franks, C. Little, J. Archuleta, L. Drew, V. Yi, J. Matthews, J. McManus)
From: Alice Falsworthy, Infections Specialist
Re: Work Plan for Combating Staph Infection

Last week, we met to discuss how we should handle the increase in staph infections here at the St. Thomas Medical Center. We defined our mission, defined major tasks, and developed a project calendar. The purpose of this memo is to summarize those decisions and lay out a work plan that we will follow.

Purpose of the work plan

I cannot overstate the importance of this project. Staph infections are becoming an increasing problem at hospitals around the country. Of particular concern are antibiotic-resistant bacteria called methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), which can kill patients with otherwise routine injuries. It is essential that we do everything in our power to control MRSA and other forms of staph.

Please post this work plan in your office to keep you on task and on schedule.

Mission statement

Project Mission
Our Mission: The purpose of this Staph Infection Task Force is to determine the level of staph infection vulnerability at St. Thomas Medical Center and to develop strategies for limiting our patients' exposure to staph, especially MRSA.

Team objectives

Secondary Objectives:
- Gain a better understanding of current research on staph and its treatments.
- Raise awareness of staph infections among our medical staff and patients.
- Assess the level of staph risk, especially MRSA, here at the hospital.
- Develop methods for controlling staph on hospital surfaces.

Figure 3.5: A work plan specifies the who what, where, when, why, and how of the project.

Figure 3.5: (continued)

Project Plan
To achieve our mission and meet the above objectives, we developed the following five-action plan:

Step-by-step actions

Action One: Collect Current Research on Staph Infections and Their Treatments
Mary Franks and Charles Little will collect and synthesize current research on staph infections, the available treatments, and control methods. They will run Internet searches, study the journals, attend workshops, and interview experts. They will also contact other hospitals to collect information on successful control methods. They will write a report on their findings and present it to the group on May 25 at our monthly meeting.

Action Two: Create Pamphlets and Other Literature That Help Medical Personnel Limit Staph Infections
Juliet Archuleta will begin developing a series of pamphlets and white papers that stress the importance of staph infections and offer strategies for combating them. These documents will be aimed at doctors and nurses to help them understand the importance of using antibiotics responsibly. Juliet will begin working on these documents immediately, but she will need the information collected by Mary and Charles to complete her part of the project. The documents will be completed by July 13, so we can have them printed to hand out at training modules.

Deliverables

Action Three: Conduct Experiments to Determine Level of Staph Risk at St. Thomas Medical Center
Lisa Drew and Valerie Yi will collect samples around the medical center to determine the risk of staph infection here at St. Thomas. The Center's Administration has asked us to develop a measurable knowledge of the problem at the Center. Lisa and Valerie will write a report to the Administration in which they discuss their findings. The report will be completed and delivered to the task force by June 2.

Action Four: Develop Contingency Plans for Handling Staph Instances
John Matthews and Joe McManus will develop contingency plans for handling instances of staph infections at the Center. These plans will offer

Figure 3.5:
(continued)

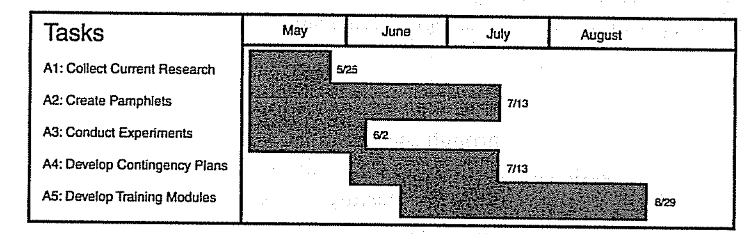
concrete steps that the staph task force can take to limit exposure to staph bacteria. These plans will be based on the research collected by Mary and Charles. They will be completed by July 13.

Deliverables

Action Five: Develop Training Modules
When our research is complete, all of the members of this task force will develop training modules to raise awareness of staph infections, offer prevention strategies, and provide information on proper use of antibiotics. Different modules will be developed for doctors, nurses, and custodial staff. Alice Falsworthy and Charles Little will coordinate the development of these training modules. The training modules will be ready by August 29.

Project Calendar
Here is a chart that illustrates the project calendar and its deadlines:

Timeline for achieving goals



Conclusion
If anyone on the task force would like to change the plan, we will call a meeting to discuss the proposed changes. If you wish to call a meeting, please contact me at ext. 8712, or e-mail me at Alice_Falsworthy@stthomasmc.com.

Storming: Managing Conflict

Not long after the forming stage, a team will typically go through a storming phase. When the actual work begins, some tension will usually surface among team members. At this point, team members will need to negotiate, adapt, and compromise to achieve the team's mission.

During the storming stage, team members may:

- resist suggestions for improvement from other members.
- have doubts about the work plan's ability to succeed.
- compete for resources or recognition.
- resent that others are not listening to their ideas.
- want to change the team's objectives.
- raise issues of ethics or politics that need to be addressed.
- believe they are doing more than their share of the work.

Storming is rarely pleasant, but it is a natural part of the teaming process. When storming, teams realize that even the best work plans are never perfect and that people don't always work the same way or have the same expectations. The important thing is to not let small conflicts or disagreements sidetrack the project.

Running Effective Meetings

One way to constructively work through the storming phase is to conduct effective meetings. Nothing is more frustrating to team members than having to waste their time and effort sitting in an unproductive meeting. By running organized meetings, your team can maintain the structure needed to keep people on track.

CHOOSE A MEETING FACILITATOR In the workplace, usually a manager or supervisor runs the meeting, so he or she is responsible for setting the time and agenda. An interesting workplace trend, though, is to rotate the facilitator role among team members. That way, everyone has a chance to run the meeting, allowing everyone on the team to take on leadership roles. In classroom situations, your team should rotate the facilitator role to maintain a more democratic approach.

SET AN AGENDA An agenda is a list of topics to be discussed at the meeting (Figure 3.6). The meeting coordinator should send out the meeting agenda at least a couple of days before the meeting. That way, everyone will know what issues will be discussed and decided on. Begin each meeting by first making sure everyone agrees to the agenda. Then, during the meeting, use the agenda to avoid going off track into nonagenda topics.

START AND END MEETINGS PROMPTLY If team members are not present, start the meeting anyway. Waiting for latecomers can be frustrating, so you should insist that people arrive on time. If people know the meeting will start on time, they will be there on time. Likewise, end meetings on time. Meetings that drag on endlessly can be equally frustrating.

GO TO THE NET Want to learn more about resolving conflict in the workplace? Go to **www.pearsonhighered.com/johnsonweb4/3.6**

An Agenda

Meeting Agenda

Staph Infection Task Force

May 15, 2011, 3:00 p.m., Memorial Room

I. Review Meeting Agenda
(5 minutes)

II. Presentation on Staph Infection by Charles Ganns
(10 minutes)

III. Discussion of Options for Managing Staph
(20 minutes)

IV. Outline Comprehensive Action Plan
(15 minutes)

V. New Business
(5 minutes)

VI. Recap of Meeting
(5 minutes)

Summary of Decisions Made:

Activities

Time allowed for each activity

If possible, leave space for recording notes about discussions.

Figure 3.6: A simple agenda is a helpful tool for keeping the meeting on track.

GO TO THE NET

Want to know more about running effective meetings? Go to **www.pearsonhighered.com/johnsonweb4/3.7**

ADDRESS EACH AGENDA ITEM SEPARATELY Discuss each agenda item before moving on to the next one. Bouncing around among items on the agenda ensures only that the meeting will be inefficient. If someone wants to move ahead to a future agenda item, first make sure the current item of discussion has been addressed.

ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION Everyone on the team should say something about each item. If one of the team members has not spoken, the facilitator should give that person an opportunity to speak.

ALLOW DISSENT At meetings, it is fine to disagree. Active debate about issues will help everyone consider the issues involved. In fact, if the team reaches consensus too quickly on an issue, someone might raise possible objections, allowing a consideration of alternatives.

REACH CONSENSUS AND MOVE ON People can talk endlessly about each agenda item, even after the team has reached consensus. So, allow any group member to "call the question" when he or she feels consensus has been reached. At that point, you can take an informal or formal vote to determine the team's course of action.

RECORD DECISIONS During meetings, someone should be responsible for keeping the minutes. The minutes record the team's decisions. Minimally, all decisions should be written down. After the meeting, the facilitator should send these notes or the full minutes to the team members, usually via e-mail.

RECAP EACH AGENDA ITEM At the end of the meeting, leave a few minutes to recap the decisions made by the team and to clarify who is doing what. It is not uncommon for teams to have a "great meeting" that still leaves people unsure of what was decided and who is doing what. So, go through each agenda item, summarizing (1) what action will be taken and (2) who is responsible for taking that action.

LOOK AHEAD Discuss when the team will meet again and the expectations for that meeting. If necessary, clarify what should be accomplished before the next meeting. Also, decide who will be responsible for facilitating the next meeting.

Typically, storming becomes most evident during meetings. People grow frustrated and even angry as the team struggles to accomplish its objectives. That's why running effective meetings is so important. Creating a predictable structure for the meeting can lower the level of frustration, allowing you to get work done.

Mediating Conflicts

Smaller conflicts should be handled using the conflict resolution methods that your team discussed when it was forming. Make sure everyone is encouraged to express his or her views openly. Make sure everyone is heard. Then, use the conflict resolution methods (vote, decision of the team leader, appeal to supervisor, reach full consensus) to decide which way to go.

The Steps of Mediation

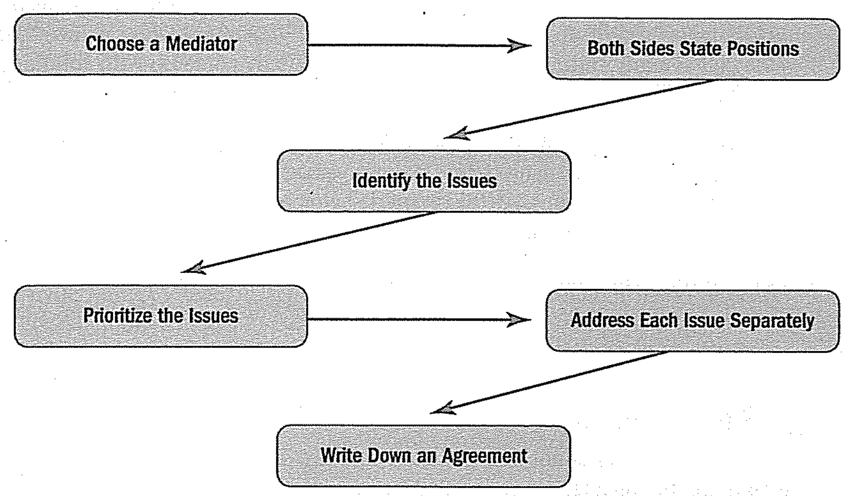


Figure 3.7: When more formal mediation is needed, you can follow these steps toward a resolution of the problem.

There will be situations, however, when personalities or ideas clash in ways that cannot be easily resolved. At these times, you may want to use mediation techniques to help your team move forward (Figure 3.7).

1. **Choose a mediator**—A mediator is like a referee. He or she does not take sides. Instead, it is the mediator's job to keep both sides of an argument talking about the issue. When the dialogue becomes unfriendly or goes off track, the mediator brings both sides back to the issues. In formal mediation, the mediator is someone who is not part of the group and has no connections to either side. In informal mediation, one of the group members who hasn't chosen sides can often serve as the referee.

2. **Ask both sides to state their positions**—Often, conflicts arise simply because each side has not clearly stated its position. Once each side has had a chance to explain its ideas clearly, the conflict should seem more resolvable.

3. **Identify the issues**—Both sides should discuss and identify the "issues" they disagree about. Often, disputes hinge on a small number of issues. Once these issues are identified, it becomes easier to talk about them.

4. **Prioritize the issues from most to least important**—Some issues are more important than others. By prioritizing the issues, both sides can usually find places where they already agree. Or, in some cases, a top priority to one side is not a foremost concern to the other side. By prioritizing the issues, both sides often begin to see room for negotiation.

To learn more about mediation, go to **www.pearsonhighered.com/johnsonweb4/3.8**

Link
Ethical issues are often a source of conflict. To learn more about ethics, go to Chapter 4, page 69.

5. **Address each issue separately, trying to find a middle ground that is acceptable to both sides of the dispute**—Focus on each issue separately and keep looking for middle ground between both sides. When both sides realize that they have many common interests, they will usually come up with solutions to the conflict.

6. **Write down an agreement that both sides can accept**—As the mediation continues, both sides usually find themselves agreeing on ways to resolve some or all of the issues. At this point, it helps to write down any compromises that both sides can accept.

The secret to successful mediation is a focus on issues, not personalities or perceived wrongs. The mediator's job is to keep the two sides discussing the issues, steering the discussion away from other distractions.

Firing a Team Member

Sometimes a team member is not doing his or her share of the work. When this happens, the team might consider removing that person from the project. The best way to handle these situations is to first mediate the problem. The members of the team should meet to talk with this person about their expectations, giving the person a chance to explain the situation.

After hearing this person's side of the story, the team might decide to give him or her a second chance. At that point, a work contract should be written that specifies exactly what this person needs to do for the project.

If the team still wants to let the person go, the supervisor (perhaps your instructor) should be asked about removing the person from the team. The supervisor should be present when the team tells the problematic team member that he or she is being removed.

Norming: Determining Team Roles

The storming period can be frustrating, but soon afterward, your team should enter the *norming* stage. In this stage, members of your team will begin to accept their responsibilities and their roles in the project. A sense of team unity will develop as people begin to trust each other. Criticism will become increasingly constructive as team members strive to achieve the project's mission and objectives.

Revising Objectives and Outcomes

The storming stage often reveals the flaws in the work plan. So, when norming, you might find it helpful to revisit and refine the team's original decisions about objectives and outcomes. The team may also want to revise the project schedule and reallocate the workload.

You don't need to completely rewrite the work plan from scratch. You should stay with your original work plan in most cases. The plan probably just needs to be revised and refined, not completely redone.

GO TO THE NET Need to fire a team member? Go to **www.pearsonhighered.com/johnsonweb4/3.9**

HELP

Virtual Teaming

Increasingly, technical workplaces are turning to virtual teaming to put the right people on any given project. Virtual teaming allows people to work on projects collaboratively through electronic networks, using e-mail, instant messaging, and phones to stay in contact. Electronic networks, called *intranets*, are often used to share information and documents among team members.

Virtual teams, just like teams working together in an office, schedule regular meetings, share ideas and documents, and work toward achieving specific goals. The main differences between on-site teams and virtual teams are how people communicate and where they are located. Software, such as Virtual Office, MS Outlook, Lotus Notes, and CyberMatrix Office, help people stay in touch and collaborate on projects.

Trends in the technical workplace support virtual teaming. Today, more people are "telecommuting" or "teleworking" from home or remote sites. Also, the global economy sometimes results in people on the same project working thousands of miles away from each other. Meanwhile, wireless technologies allow people to work just about anywhere. Chances are, you will find yourself working with a virtual team in the near future—if you aren't already.

Interestingly, virtual teaming does not change traditional teaming strategies—it only makes them more necessary. A virtual team will go through the forming, storming, norming, and performing stages, just like an on-site team. If good planning, communication, and conflict resolution are important with on-site teaming, they are even more important in virtual teams. After all, communicating with your virtual team is a little more difficult, because you cannot physically visit each other.

Here are some strategies for managing a successful virtual team:

Develop a work plan and stick to it—Members of virtual teams do not bump into each other in the hallway or the break room. So, they need a clear work plan to keep everyone moving together toward the final goal. Your team's work plan should (1) define the mission, (2) state objectives and measurable outcomes, (3) spell out each stage and task in the project, (4) specify who is responsible for each task, and (5) lay out a project calendar.

Communicate regularly—In virtual teams, the old saying "out of sight, out of mind" now becomes "out of communication, out of mind." Each member of the virtual team should agree to communicate with the others regularly (e.g., two times a day, two times a week). Your team can use e-mail, phones, instant messaging, or chat rooms to contact each other. You and your team members should constantly keep each other up to date on your progress. And if someone does not communicate for a day or two, the team leader should track him or her down and urge the team member to resume communications.

Hold teleconferences and videoconferences—There are many ways to hold real-time virtual meetings with team members. Your team members can teleconference over the phone, or you can use a chat room or instant messaging to exchange ideas. Increasingly, broadband technology is allowing people to hold videoconferences in which people meet and see each other with Internet

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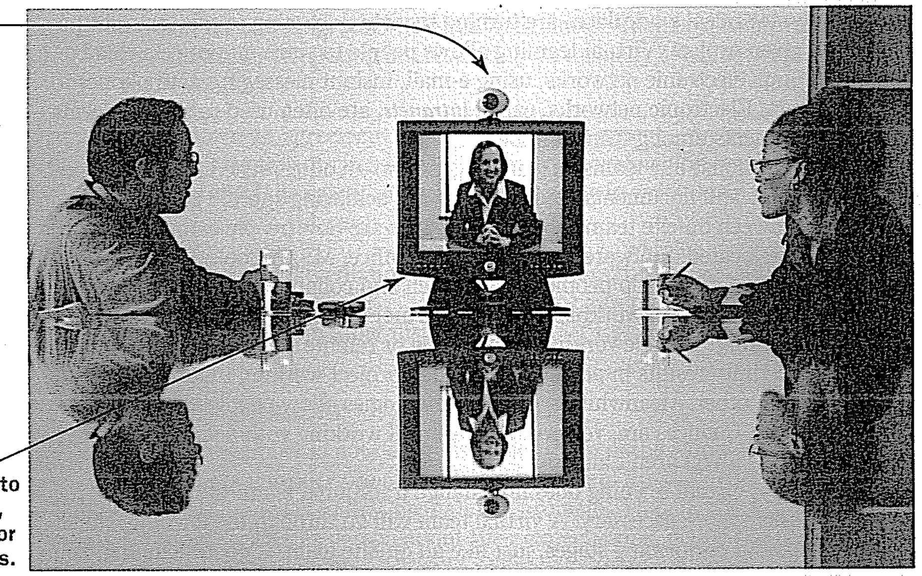
Teleconferencing



A webcam projects images to the other participants in the virtual meeting.

The monitor can be used to show people, documents, or presentations.

Figure A: Teleconferencing allows team members to hold meetings virtually.

cameras (webcams) through computer screens (Figure A). Like on-site meetings, virtual meetings should be preplanned and follow an agenda. The only significant difference between on-site meetings and virtual meetings is that people are not in the same room.

Build trust and respect—One of the shortcomings of virtual teaming is the lack of nonverbal cues (smiles, shrugs, scowls) that help people to avoid misunderstandings. As a result, people in virtual teams can feel insulted or disrespected much more easily than people in on-site teams. So it is doubly important that team members learn how to build trust with others and show respect. Trust is built by communicating effectively, meeting deadlines, and doing high-quality work. Respect is fostered by giving compliments and using "please" and "thank you" in messages. When conflicts do arise (and they will), focus on issues and problem solving, not personalities or perceived slights.

Keep regular hours—Time management is always important, even if you are working in a virtual team. During regular office hours, team members should be confident that they can contact each other. You and your team members should be ready to answer the phone, use instant messaging, or answer e-mail as though you were all working together in a typical office.

More than likely, virtual offices, teleworking, and virtual teams will be a common part of the workplace in the near future. Like on-site teaming, virtual teaming requires you to learn how to work effectively with others.

Figure A: Teleconferencing allows team members to hold meetings virtually.

Identifying Team Roles

When planning the project, your team divided up the work, giving each person specific responsibilities. As the team begins norming, though, you will notice that team members tend to take on *team roles* that reflect their personalities, capabilities, and interests.

A management specialist, Meredith Belbin (1981), developed a description of nine team roles that people generally follow. He also organized these nine roles into three categories: people-oriented roles, action-oriented roles, and cerebral roles.

PEOPLE-ORIENTED ROLES The people in these roles are responsible for managing the activities of the team members:

> The **coordinator** sets the agenda and keeps track of the team's objectives; asks broader questions and occasionally summarizes the team's decisions; keeps an eye on the project calendar and coordinates the work of various team members.
>
> The **resource investigator** goes out to find information, bringing new ideas and strategies into the discussion; looks outside the team for ways to improve the project.
>
> The **team worker** focuses on getting the work done; may not be fully invested in planning the project but will do his or her part of it.

ACTION-ORIENTED ROLES The people in these roles are responsible for getting things done:

> The **shaper** focuses on team tasks while looking for patterns in team discussions; emphasizes completing the project.
>
> The **implementor** stresses the "how to" nature of the project and is eager to develop methods for turning abstract objectives and plans into real actions.
>
> The **completer/finisher** stresses attention to details and the overall quality of the project; is concerned about meeting deadlines and maintaining a schedule.

CEREBRAL ROLES The people in cerebral roles are responsible for planning, creating, and providing expertise in a project:

> The **monitor/evaluator** keeps the team on task by critiquing poor decisions or pointing out any flaws in reasoning; tends to focus on achieving outcomes.
>
> The **plant** thinks creatively, often providing original suggestions and innovative solutions to problems; tends to stress the big picture over smaller details.
>
> The **specialist** contributes special skills and knowledge to the team; masters a specific topic or area of research, adding depth to the team's discussions.

As the team begins norming, you and the other members of the team might take some time to identify the roles each of you is playing. By identifying team roles, you can take advantage of each member's natural strengths and interests.

Not all the roles will be filled, especially in a smaller team. Instead, each team member might take on two or three roles, depending on the project. Roles may change and evolve as the project moves forward.

In other words, let the "completer/finisher" in the team worry about the deadlines and quality issues. Let the "team workers" concentrate on achieving specific tasks. Encourage

GO TO THE NET To learn more about team role theory, go to **www.pearsonhighered.com/johnsonweb4/3.11**

AT A GLANCE

Norming

- Revise objectives and outcomes.
- Identify team roles.
- Use groupware to facilitate work.

the "coordinators" and "shapers" to keep an eye on the overall objectives and mission of the team.

Using Groupware to Facilitate Work

When working in a team, you might need to use *groupware*, a kind of software that helps move information and documents around. Groupware allows team members to communicate and work collaboratively through a local area network (LAN) or an intranet.

Perhaps the most common use of groupware is sharing documents and sending messages. The two most popular groupware packages are IBM Lotus Notes© (Figure 3.8) and Microsoft Outlook©. These software packages and others like them support the following kinds of activities:

Scheduling and calendaring—One of the more powerful features of groupware is the ability to schedule meetings and keep a common calendar for the team. With this feature, team members can regularly check the calendar to stay on task.

Discussion lists and instant messaging—Groupware offers easy access to discussion lists (usually via e-mail) and instant messaging. With these tools, team members can post notes to each other on a discussion list or have real-time discussions through instant messaging.

Using Groupware

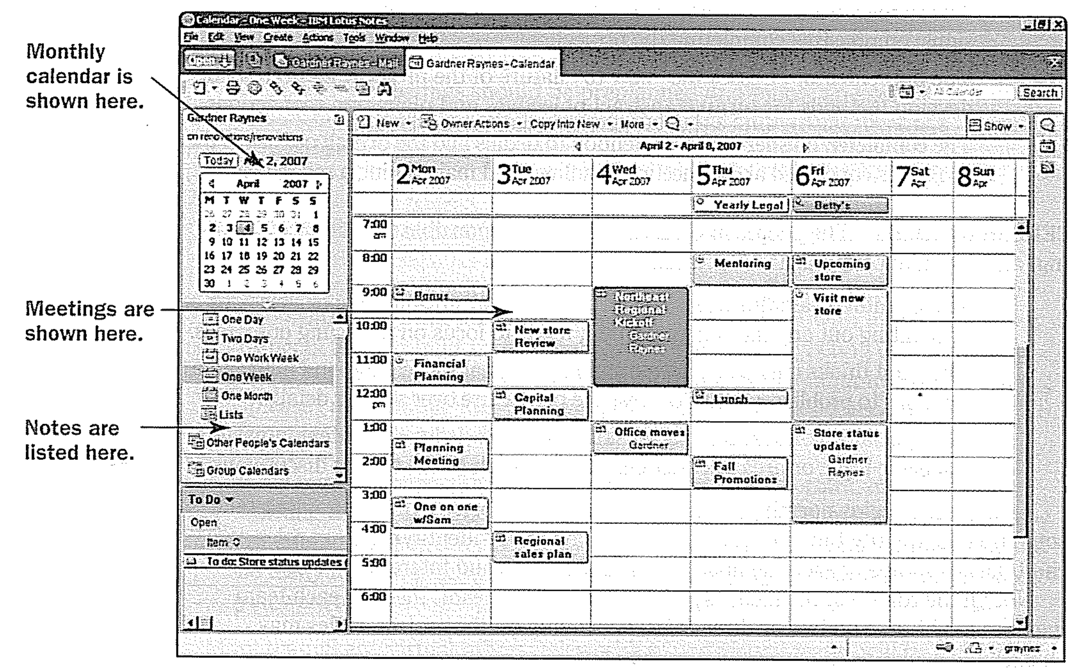


Figure 3.8: With groupware like Lotus Notes, shown here, members of a group can keep a common calendar, post notes, and send e-mails to each other. In this screen, the user can perform a variety of functions using the menu at the top.

Source: Reprint courtesy of International Business Machines Corporation, copyright 2011 © International Business Machines Corporation.

GO TO THE NET To learn more about groupware, go to **www.pearsonhighered.com/johnsonweb4/3.12**

Document posting and commenting—Files can be posted to a common site, allowing team members to view documents, comment on them electronically, or download them.

Using groupware effectively takes some practice. Eventually, the team will begin using the groupware as a meeting place and a posting board. It will become an integral part of the project.

gure 3.8: th group- re like tus Notes, own here, mbers of oup can p a com- n calendar, st notes, send ails to h other. In s screen, user can rm a ety of ctions g the u at the

Performing: Improving Quality

Link

For more ideas about improving quality through document cycling, see Chapter 20, page 566.

Your team is *performing* when members are comfortable with the project and their roles in it. Team members will recognize the other members' talents and weaknesses. They also begin to anticipate each other's needs and capabilities.

When your team is performing, you can start looking for ways to improve the quality of your work. One of the gurus of quality was W. Edwards Deming, who developed many of the principles behind Total Quality Management (TQM) and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), which are widely used in technical workplaces. Deming argued that teams should put an emphasis on improving the *process* rather than simply exhorting people to improve the product (Deming, 2000).

How can you improve quality in your team? While performing, a helpful technique is to develop *quality feedback loops* in which your team regularly compares outcomes to the project objectives.

An effective quality feedback loop should include methods to collect feedback on the outcomes of the project. To collect feedback, perhaps "focus groups" of customers might be consulted. Perhaps the product might be thoroughly user-tested. Perhaps supervisors or outside experts might be called in to offer suggestions for improvement. The type of feedback you need depends on the kind of product your team is being asked to produce.

Teams also need to regularly review the performance of their own members. Figure 3.9 shows a "Team Performance Review" form that is similar to ones found in the workplace. Your team and instructor can use this form to assess the performance of your team and look for places to improve. A performing team will have its ups and downs. There may even be times when the team regresses into the norming or even the storming stages. Eventually, though, the performing team usually regroups and puts the focus back on quality.

The Keys to Teaming

The keys to good teaming are good planning and effective communication. The planning strategies discussed in this chapter might seem like extra work, especially when time is limited and your team is eager to start working on the project. But good planning will save your team time in the long run. Each person needs a clear understanding of the mission and the steps in the project. Then, you need to keep the communication lines open. Plan to communicate regularly by phone, e-mail, and instant messaging.

Telecommuting, or teleworking, is becoming much more common in today's technical workplace. Sometimes your team members will be working a few days per week at home. Or, they may be working while they are on the road. Some telecommuters work almost exclusively from home, going to the office only when absolutely necessary. Good planning and effective communication are the keys to success in these virtual workplace environments.

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