



Ethiopian TVET-System



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT SERVICE

Level I

Based on May 2011 Occupational Standards

October, 2019



Module Title: Working with Others

TTLM Code: ICT ITS1 TTLM09 0919 v1

This module includes the following Learning Guides

LG12: Develop Effective Workplace Relationship

LG Code: ICT ITS1 M04 LO1–LG12

LG13: Contribute to Workgroup Activities

LG Code: ICT ITS1 M04 L02 – LG13

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**Instruction Sheet****LG12: Develop Effective Workplace Relationship**

This learning guide is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics –

- Duties and responsibilities are done in a positive manner.
- Assistance is sought from workgroup.
- Feedback provided by others in the team
- Differences in personal values and beliefs are respected and acknowledged in the development.

This guide will also assist you to attain the learning outcome stated in the cover page. Specifically, upon completion of this Learning Guide, you will be able to –

- Perform Duties and responsibilities in a positive manner to promote cooperation and good relationship.
- Sought Assistance from workgroup when difficulties arise and addressed through discussions.
- Encouraged, acknowledged and acted upon Feedback provided by others in the team.
- Respects Differences in personal values and beliefs and acknowledged in the development.

Learning Instructions:

1. Read the specific objectives of this Learning Guide.
2. Follow the instructions described below 3 to 6.
3. Read the information written in the information “Sheet 1, Sheet 2, Sheet 3 and Sheet 4” in page 3, 12, 16 and 19 respectively.
4. Accomplish the “Self-check 1, Self-check 2, Self-check 3 and Self-check 4” in page 10, 14, 17 and 22 respectively
5. If you earned a satisfactory evaluation from the “Self-check” proceed to “Operation Sheet 1, Operation Sheet 2 and Operation Sheet 3 ” in page ---.
6. Do the “LAP test” in page – ---



1.1. Introduction To Group Process

When you work in an office, many of the tasks performed in a work environment are in some way performed as part of a group or a team. In today's rapidly changing work environment it is unlikely that any one person will have all the skills needed to complete every task. So workgroups are formed from people with a range of skills, which are pooled. Once these people are able to relate to one another and link their knowledge and skills with those of the other members of the group, the group is able to perform effectively.

The group process leads to a spirit of cooperation, coordination and commonly understood procedures and conventions.

1.1.1. Types of Workgroups

Workgroups can be divided into two main types: **formal** and **informal**.

A formal group in an organization is established by management to perform specific tasks in order to meet the goals of the organization. It may consist of a committee, a department, a section, or some other unit in the workplace. In these groups, relationships and procedures are regulated through formal processes, as in formal meetings.

An informal group forms naturally around the workplace as, and when, the people involved feel like it. These could be 'interest' or 'friendship' groups.

1.1.2. Types of Work Teams

The terms 'team' and 'group' are often used in the same context, but, while a team can be classified as a group, a group may not conform to the specific criteria for a team. The key elements of a team are that members are operating within a charter. Members of a team see themselves as having specified roles, and they acknowledge that the team is accountable for achieving a specific organizational goal.

A **project work team** is created to complete a particular task or project. Members are chosen because their qualifications and experience are useful to the team's purpose. The members are chosen by management, and the team disbanded when the project is finished.

A **participative work team** is able to take some initiative and to participate in decision-making within the group. It is created to complete a range of duties.

A **self-managed team** creates new ideas, makes decisions and achieves results. This type of team is suited to a dynamic and flexible organization, in which teams need to respond quickly to changing circumstances.

A **committee or subcommittee** is a group of people with skills and knowledge formed to complete a specific task, which might involve presenting information at a large, formal meeting.

1.1.3. Group Dynamics

Any group has a 'personality' of its own, which is composed of the individual personalities of the people in it. A good example of this is a class of students. Each group of students is different from any other, and one person can change the whole dynamics of a particular class. This is caused by the 'synergy' of the group.

Synergy is described as 'the whole being greater than the sum of the individual parts'. Group synergy can be either positive or negative. In an organization, good team effectiveness can act as a powerful socializing agent. Examples of this are helping new employees with organizational policies and procedures, and working together to get jobs done more quickly and to a higher standard, using cooperation and reciprocation.

1.1.4. Group Behavior

In addition to completing tasks and achieving goals, members of a group or team relate to one another. Each person brings interpersonal concerns to the team, and these concerns become part of the group process. There are three interpersonal concerns within groups:

- Inclusion
- Control
- Acceptance



Figure 1.1 Small Group Discussions

In a team with inclusion, control and acceptance, group leaders and members are accessible to one another. No one person monopolizes the conversation or the decision-making, or interrupts while others are talking. As a member, you are given space to put forward your views.



1.2. Being an Effective Worker

To be an effective worker means many things. It means that you are a:

- safe worker
- worker who is responsible for the quality of their work
- worker that communicates well and works as a team member, sharing information and resources
- worker that seeks to resolve conflicts and problems
- worker that accepts change
- worker who appropriately utilizes resources for maximum efficiency and with regard to the environment
- worker that plans their daily work

Planning is essential regardless of your job role or responsibilities because as a worker you are part of a group or team. This might be a small team of two, or a large team such as a company or an organization. It is very rare for someone to work completely alone. Even in the most isolated of situations where you may be physically alone there is still a work plan, a communication process and an emergency response process.

As a member of a team it is very important to realize that the actions of every individual will impact on the team as a whole. Quite simply, the way you work affects everyone else. Think about how you would feel if you worked with someone who showed the following habits:

- disorganized
- late
- does not bring the correct tools and equipment
- does not use safety gear
- leaves the workplace in a mess
- cannot be communicated with, because they have not turned on the radio or mobile
- does not finish a job (manage their workload) in the designated time, thus holding everyone else up

In every workplace situation and on every workday, a person who is truly an effective worker will endeavor to:

- Take time and resource constraints into account in fulfilling work requirements.
- Contribute actively to the team and the appropriate work outcomes.
- Encourage, acknowledge and act upon constructive feedback.
- Identify their responsibilities and duties in relation to workgroup members and undertake activities in a manner that promotes cooperation and good relationships.
- Provide support to team members to ensure workgroup goals are met.
- Share information relevant to the work with co-workers.

1.3. Workplace Relationships

- **Definition of a workplace**

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A **workplace** is a location or building where people perform physical or mental work in order to earn a living. It is usually a location outside one's home or place of residence.

The term "**workplace**" is also used to describe the work environment in general especially as it relates to the rights and responsibilities of employees and employers.

- **Definition of Responsibility**

In the workplace, everyone interacts with each other. This is how society organizes itself and communicates together at work. These relationships are valuable for the opportunities they create to improve performance of individuals, as well as benefiting them, by creating a more useful and interesting place to work.

Each person in the team has a responsibility and a vested interest in making these relationships work, for their mutual benefit.

In practice, '**responsibility**' is all about doing your bit (and maybe a little more) to oil the wheels of the relationships you have with all of your colleagues, at whatever level of hierarchy they might be, such that everyone is a winner.

There are six critical activities that anyone creating a workplace relationship needs to be aware of - and be prepared to put into practice.

- **Show Commitment**

By being onside and decided to make the difference, whatever the history, you are starting a process to build relationships, even if it means you have to rethink your position as well a bit.

- **Be Interested in Others**

You'll build relationships faster if you dump talking all about yourself and make sure you ask questions that will help you get to know people better. Yet, this isn't actually the point. It's that you are showing that you are interested that counts.

- **Create Trust**

Following through with what you say you will do; being as open and honest as possible; giving and accepting feedback, as well as showing confidentiality and discretion, are all tiny and still vital tactics to adopt when building new and maintaining existing relationships.

- **Smile like you mean it.**

Greet people when you cross paths in the halls. Make small talk in the elevator and the kitchen. Offer advice--or at least sympathy -- when the printer jams. Small gestures like this seem inconsequential, but go a long way toward establishing you as a friendly, approachable person, which makes your coworkers much more likely to extend friendship to you in return.

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- **Make lunch time social time.**

If your department has a scheduled lunch break, tag along with a group, or ask one of your office neighbors to a restaurant you enjoy. Eat together.

- **Know your limits.**

Those without strong social butterfly inclinations should not feel left out of the fun. Spend your break time in the office social hub--the break room or the coffee shop across the street--and have a chat with whomever comes in. Pop into other people's cubicles on your walk to the supply closet, just to say hello. You certainly don't have to throw parties to make a few friends on the job.

1.4. Identify Duties and Responsibilities in Relation to Workgroup Members

Group members will include other members of the organization, including peers/work colleagues, your supervisor or manager and your coach/mentor. All these people are expected to work within the organization's team structure which includes:

- Organizational code of conduct
- Organizational procedures and policies
- Supervision and accountability including OHS
- Job description and specification relevant to work role
- Using a courteous and helpful manner at all times
- Completing allocated tasks as and when required
- Seeking assistance from an appropriate person if difficulties arise
- Using active and effective listening and questioning to clarify instructions and responsibilities.

Group Norms

These are known behaviors that are expected by all members of a group/team. These are unwritten 'rules' and 'standards' which develop within a specific group/team as people react with one another. Norms help a group to avoid a state of utter confusion and disorder as the inputs of different individuals are organized into a collective group. These norms usually include the following.

1.4.1. Behave in a courteous and helpful manner

In any workplace you will be involved with other people. Some people get on really well together, but other people appear to have personality clashes. But cooperation is necessary to work as a group or team in order to complete work tasks and reach the corporate goals.

Mutual respect means treating other people as you would like to be treated yourself, including acknowledging other people's cultural and religious beliefs.

Cooperation is essential for developing the ability to relate effectively to management, customers/clients and colleagues, to work as a team and to communicate well at an interpersonal level. For example, when one section of the business is working to complete a large order, staff from other sections will help out.

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Reciprocal effort at a personal level means that if you have a quiet period you will help someone who has a deadline to meet, and they will then help you when you have a large volume of work.

1.4.2. Complete allocated tasks as and when required

As you are working as part of a team or group, how you complete your tasks affects the completion of tasks by other people. You should therefore identify and plan and prioritize your work goals linked to organizational goals.

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**Self-Check – 1****Written Test**

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Use the Answer sheet provided in the next page:

1. List and explain the different types of workgroups:
2. Explain the meaning of synergy
3. List the three interpersonal concerns within groups:
4. To be an effective worker means many things. It means that you are a:
5. In every workplace situation and on every workday, a person who is truly an effective worker will endeavor to:
6. What is a workplace?
7. List the six critical activities that anyone creating a workplace relationship needs to be aware of and be prepared to put into practice.
8. Explain the meaning of *group norms*:
9. Explain the meaning of *Mutual respect*.
10. Explain the meaning of *Reciprocal effort at a personal level*:
11. Explain why *Cooperation is essential* in workplace?

Note: Satisfactory rating - 16 points

Unsatisfactory - below 16 points

You can ask your teacher for the copy of the correct answers.

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Answer Sheet

Score = _____

Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Short Answer Questions

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____



7.

8.

9.

10.

11.



2.1. Seek Assistance When Difficulties Arise

Effective group performance is very important to the organization if the goals of the company are to be achieved. If groups of people are not working well together, this is an indication of internal problems within the group and ultimately within the organization. Therefore, assistance should be sought from a supervisor or manager to help solve the problems before production is affected.

2.1.1. Questioning Techniques to Clarify Instructions

2.1.1.1. Active and effective listening

Active and effective listening is the process of receiving a message and relaying back to the sender exactly what the sender intended. This prevents misinformation, improves morale, relationship and trust levels with other people, and improves teamwork.

For example, if you are not listening correctly when you are working with other people, you will not perform your tasks effectively.

2.1.1.2. Active and effective questioning

Many people speak very badly, or have a different accent to yours, and it might be difficult to understand what they are saying. If you have to ask someone to repeat what they have said, particularly on the telephone, they are sometimes impatient and think you are being stupid. This is very far from the case. If you repeat what someone has said to you at work, it shows that you are working efficiently and effectively. You are clarifying what they have said to make sure you do not make any mistakes.

2.1.2. Take time and resource constraints into account

Completion of your own work tasks is linked to the completion of the tasks of your workgroup and this can be affected by a number of factors:

- breakdown of machinery
- interruption to electricity supply
- either yourself or other members of staff being away ill
- availability of time in order to complete work tasks
- availability and delivery of resources
- Cutting costs and downsizing of staff.

This is when reciprocal effort and cooperation come into effect and when assistance might have to be sought from a supervisor or manager.

**Self-Check – 2****Written Test**

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Use the Answer sheet provided in the next page:

1. Why is it important to use active and effective listening?
2. Why is it important to use active and effective questioning?
3. List the number of factors that can affect the completion of your work tasks:

Note: Satisfactory rating - 6 points

Unsatisfactory - below 6 points

You can ask your teacher for the copy of the correct answers.

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Answer Sheet

Score = _____

Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Short Answer Questions

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



3.1. Encourage, Acknowledge and Act upon Constructive Feedback

Feedback from groups can be even more useful than that from individuals, as the varying perceptions or ideas are pooled from a number of people and cover the problem from all viewpoints not just from the viewpoint of one person. This can mean a more successful outcome for the problem. Feedback from members of the group or other personnel in the organization can help you to improve your work performance. This includes:

- **Appraisal by superiors** is usually an official appraisal at the end of a year by your supervisor or manager.
- **Self-appraisal** is a very useful tool as it involves the employee in the evaluation process. This helps to clarify an employee's role and reduces role conflict.
- **Peer appraisal**, for example when a group member appraises another group member, can be useful when used in coaching and mentoring programs, and when used as part of periodic group-appraisal programs, which contribute to team building.
- **Customer feedback** is the key to any system control. A customer's feedback on your performance is an indication of how well you are performing your duties.

All tasks in a work environment are performed as part of a group or team. Many innovative ideas are produced by groups of people.

Feedback from all these sources can point out your **strengths** and **weaknesses**. Areas of weakness will be listed and ways to raise your competency recommended. These might include:

- help from colleagues and/or your supervisor
- extra training by the company
- mentoring and coaching by more experienced employees
- using training manuals and books for improving technological skills
- Enrolling in a training course such as this one.

**Self-Check – 3****Written Test**

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Use the Answer sheet provided in the next page:

1. How can you encourage constructive feedback?
2. Feedback from all these sources can point out your _____ and _____.
3. How ways to raise your competency recommended when areas of weakness will be listed?

Note: Satisfactory rating - 8 points

Unsatisfactory - below 8 points

You can ask your teacher for the copy of the correct answers.

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Answer Sheet

Score = _____

Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Short Answer Questions

1. _____

2. _____ and _____.

3. _____



4.1. Deal Effectively with Issues, Problems and Conflict

Internal customers are your colleagues and the people in other departments of your organization. How you communicate with people within your organization is just as important as how you deal with external customers, for if their needs are not satisfied then their service to outside customers will be adversely affected.

In a conflict situation, different types of behavior might include:

- Anger
- Physically aggressive acts
- Verbal threats or aggression
- Signs of distress
- Intimidation
- Sarcasm or ridicule
- Resentment.

4.1.1. Respect Differences in Personal Values and Beliefs

It is unlawful to discriminate against anyone in the workplace on the grounds of:

- race or ethnic origin
- physical, intellectual or psychological impairment (including having or being thought to have AIDS or being HIV positive)
- pregnancy
- parental status, and having or not having children
- marital status, including being a de facto spouse
- religious belief or activity
- age or sex
- being a member of a union.

Discrimination is treating someone less favorably than someone else:

- in the same or similar circumstances on one or more of the grounds listed above
- because of characteristics that apply to a person of a particular group
- by imposing an unreasonable condition that some people of a particular group are less able to meet than others.

Also, it is discrimination if you are prevented, because of your gender, race or disability, from:

- joining a training program
- applying for a promotion or transfer
- taking part in meetings
- Having equal access to facilities.

4.1.2. Identify any Linguistic and Cultural Differences in Communication Styles



When working with people with different cultures and beliefs from your own, you should use the following techniques:

- Listen actively and effectively and provide feedback in order to avoid misinterpretation of instructions and directions.
- Use appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Show empathy and interest in the other person's cultural background. You will find many things of fascination and in some cases customs that are far better than in your own country.

4.1.3. Identify Issues, Problems and Conflict Encountered in the Workplace

Most people in an office environment work with other individuals fairly agreeably most of the time. Accommodation or adjustment can be reached to achieve and maintain group harmony. But conflict can arise between workers, and this has to be solved before it affects the effectiveness of a working environment. Conflict can arise in **three** different ways, as described below.

- **Interpersonal conflict** occurs when two or more people disagree over an issue or when they experience emotional opposition to one another.
- **Substantive conflict** involves disagreements over resources, rewards, policies and procedures, and the allocation of roles.
- **Emotional conflict** occurs when there are feelings of anger, dislike, resentment and distrust, resulting in personality clashes. We all experience the feeling of liking some people better than others. You often meet someone for the first time and either like them a lot or instinctively dislike them.

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4.1.4. Seek Assistance from Workgroup Members when Problems and Conflict Arise

Conflict resolution: Conflict resolutions solve interpersonal conflict in three ways—through lose/lose strategy, win/lose strategy, or win/win strategy. How this operates is shown below.

Conflict Type	Possible Solutions	Results
Lose/Lose	Avoidance of conflict 'Smoothing' - recognizing both sides of conflict. Compromise - each party gives up something of value.	Conflict may appear to have been solved; disagreements are smoothed over; future conflict over the same issue will arise again.
Win/Lose	Competition - conflict resolved through force by someone with superior skills. Authoritative command - someone with authority specifies the outcome.	Only one person has gained anything and the problem is not resolved; future conflict over the same issue may arise again or lead to related conflict
Win/Win	Confrontation of the issues, problem-solving to resolve the conflict issues on both sides.	Conflict has been resolved on both sides; each person, or side, has won something and the conflict is unlikely to arise again.

This is where reciprocal effort and cooperation will come into effect and when assistance might also have to be sought from a supervisor or manager to achieve a Win/Win outcome.

**Self-Check – 4****Written Test**

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Use the Answer sheet provided in the next page:

1. _____ are your colleagues and the people in other departments of your organization.
2. List different types of behavior in a conflict situation:
3. What is Discrimination?
4. List unlawful discriminate against anyone in the workplace on the grounds of:
5. It is discrimination if you are prevented, because of your gender, race or disability, from:
6. What techniques you should use, when working with people with different cultures and beliefs from your own?
7. List and describe the three different ways that conflict can arise between workers:
8. List the three ways in which conflict resolution can solve conflicts.

Note: Satisfactory rating - 16 points

Unsatisfactory - below 16 points

You can ask your teacher for the copy of the correct answers.

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Answer Sheet

Score = _____

Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Short Answer Questions

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____



6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

Instruction Sheet	LG13: Contribute to Workgroup Activities
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This learning guide is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics –

- Provide support to team members to ensure workgroup goals are met.
- Contribute constructively to workgroup goals and tasks are made according to organizational requirements.
- Relevant Information to work shared with team members to ensure designated goals are met.

This guide will also assist you to attain the learning outcome stated in the cover page. Specifically, upon completion of this Learning Guide, you will be able to –

- Support is provided to team members to ensure workgroup goals are met.
- Constructive contributions to workgroup goals and tasks are made according to organizational requirements.
- Information relevant to work is shared with team members to ensure designated goals are met.

Learning Instructions:

7. Read the specific objectives of this Learning Guide.



8. Follow the instructions described below 3 to 6.
9. Read the information written in the information “Sheet 1, Sheet 2 and Sheet 3” in page 3, 8 and 13 respectively.
10. Accomplish the “Self-check 1, Self-check 2 and Self-check 3” in page 6, 10 and 20 respectively.
11. If you earned a satisfactory evaluation from the “Self-check” proceed to “Operation Sheet 1, Operation Sheet 2 and Operation Sheet 3” in page ---.
12. Do the “LAP test” in page – ---



4.2. Provide Support to Team Members to Ensure Workgroup Goals are Met

Good interpersonal relations is entering into and maintaining effective peer-group relationships in the work setting. This is vital if work is to be performed effectively and completed according to the goals set by the organization.

Bruce Tuckman, a leading psychologist in group dynamics, identified **four stages** in the development of groups and teams, as set out in Table 1.1. As the group moves through each stage, these concerns develop in the following order of inclusion, control and acceptance:

Table 1.1 Team members' activities in each stage

Stage	Activities
1. Forming	Clarification of goals Commitment to group's purpose Establishment of relationships Making tentative contributions Communication between members
2. Storming	Critique of group's performance Presentation of alternative points of view Emergence of conflict over power or leadership Provision of negative and positive feedback Discussion of problems or concerns Resolution of conflict
3. Norming	Offering support to other members Problem-solving and decision-making Improvement of plans Verification of goals Development or extension of skills
4. Performing	Improvement in ways of doing things Development of interpersonal relationships Acceptance of delegated tasks Involvement in decision-making Achievement of performance

An effective workgroup or team is one that achieves high levels of both task performance and human resources maintenance over time. Every manager should promote workgroup effectiveness. The structure of a group or team can develop slowly or quickly.

A workgroup will develop quickly if all members of the group help other members in the following ways:

- explaining and clarifying work tasks
- helping one another with tasks when required
- solving problems together
- providing encouragement for new members of the group



- providing feedback to all group members
- undertaking extra tasks if necessary.

4.2.1. Group Work Activities

Group Work Activities and enabling strategies

- Group Tasks or Assignments
- Discussion
- Role play
- Problem Based Learning

4.2.2. Description of Group Work Activities

Group work is a form of cooperative learning which aims to develop student's knowledge, generic skills, (e.g. communication skills, collaborative skills, critical thinking skills) and attitudes. The ability to participate effectively in group work or team work is seen as a desirable employability skill and should be considered to be part of every learner's educational experience.

Group work can be a means for acknowledging and utilizing an individual learner's additional strengths and expertise.

4.2.2.1. Skills required for Group Work:

- Teamwork
- Communication
- Problem solving
- Time management
- Negotiation
- Delegation
- Co-operation
- Leadership

4.2.2.2. job description

A **job description** is a list that a person might use for general tasks, or functions, and responsibilities of a position. It may often include to whom the position reports, specifications such as the qualifications or skills needed by the person in the job, or a salary range.

4.2.2.3. Roles and responsibilities

A job description may include relationships with other people in the organization: Supervisory level, managerial requirements, and relationships with other colleagues.

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4.2.2.4. Goals

A job description need not be limited to explaining the current situation, or work that is currently expected; it may also set out goals for what might be achieved in future.

4.2.2.5. Organizational requirements

Basically, an organization is a person or group of people intentionally organized to accomplish an overall, common goal or set of goals. Business organizations can range in size from one person to tens of thousands.

4.2.2.6. Vision statements, Mission statements and values of an organization

- **Vision:** Defines the desired or intended future state of an organization or enterprise in terms of its fundamental objective and/or strategic direction. Vision is a long-term view, sometimes describing how the organization would like the world to be in which it operates.
- **Mission:** Defines the fundamental purpose of an organization or an enterprise, succinctly describing why it exists and what it does to achieve its Vision.

It is sometimes used to set out a "picture" of the organization in the future. A mission statement provides details of what is done and answers the question: "What do we do?"

- **Values:** Beliefs that are shared among the stakeholders of an organization. Values drive an organization's culture and priorities and provide a framework in which decisions are made. For example, "Knowledge and skills are the keys to success" or "give a man bread and feed him for a day, but teach him to farm and feed him for life". These example values may set the priorities of self sufficiency over shelter.
- **Strategy:** Strategy, narrowly defined, means "the art of the general" (from Greek *stratigos*). A combination of the ends (goals) for which the firm is striving and the means (policies) by which it is seeking to get there.



Self-Check – 1	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Use the Answer sheet provided in the next page:

1. List the stages of development of a workgroup or team, and describe what these mean:

2. A workgroup will develop quickly if all members of the group help other members in the following ways:

3. Group Work Activities and enabling strategies

4. Describe the Group work



5. List the Skills required for Group Work:

6. What is a job description?

7. Explain the following:

• **Vision:**

• **Mission:**

• **Values:**

• **Strategy:**

Answer Sheet

Score = _____

Rating: _____

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Short Answer Questions

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5.1. Contribute Constructively to Workgroup Goals

5.1.1. Communication skills in groups or teams

The communication process is dynamic and interactive. People place meaning and structure on the variety of messages received from others. This interaction may be direct or indirect. Effective communication occurs when the intended meaning of the sender and the perceived meaning of the receiver are one and the same. The communication process takes place in various situations for different reasons, with the potential for many interpretations.

We discuss communication channels and communication barriers in other chapters. At all stages of development of a group or team, leaders and members should communicate with each other.

Effective interpersonal communication within a group or team has two components: **spoken** and **unspoken**.

- **Spoken communication skills.** Good spoken communication skills allow all members actively to participate in the interaction process. Members share ideas and their knowledge. In formal situations (e.g. meetings) members should be given the opportunity to speak and to share their ideas, qualifications and experience.
- **Non-verbal communication** is a message sent by any other means other than words or graphics. This can be by facial expressions, gestures, posture or how you dress. Or by how you speak on the telephone or face-to-face. Non-verbal communication can, in some instances, be more important than verbal communication.

Constructive Feedback: is obtained from formal/informal performance appraisals, from supervisors and other team members, and from clients. This shared information improves work practices and behavior and service to customers.

5.1.2. Advantages of Teams

The advantage that working as a team has over people working alone will depend on the qualifications and competencies, and effectiveness, of the people in the team, and whether the synergy of a team is either positive or negative. Usually, if a group is involved **in making a decision** it will be more likely to deliver a successful outcome than an individual, but if the synergy is negative the meeting can become bogged down with irrelevancies and no decisions are made.

Working in a team is also better **for the morale and motivation of the workforce**. People usually experience greater job satisfaction working in groups than working alone. Although success can depend on the specific problem, **difficult problems** have been found to be more effectively handled by a group,



whereas relatively simple problems may be handled more effectively and quickly by one person working alone.

5.1.3. Disadvantages of Teams

While many groups or teams are successful, they can also have disadvantages. Groups **take a lot longer** than one person to make a decision and to take action. Teams **take time to develop a structure** and are more effective over a longer period of time, and in some situations speed will be essential.

5.1.4. Groupthink

What is groupthink? Groupthink is when a team or group make decisions **without weighing all the pros and cons**, and agree for the sake of agreeing.

Teams suffering from groupthink fail to consider problems objectively or to research adequately. They do not consider alternatives and may take unnecessary risks. Groupthink may even lead members to look after their **own interests** rather than those of the organization employing them. Teams that suffer from groupthink:

- fail to express doubt because of social pressure from other members
- appear to be invulnerable
- stereotype outsiders unfavorably
- are ready to ridicule critics
- have a false impression of internal harmony by avoiding disagreements.

5.1.5. Team Climate

The climate of a team is created by its cohesiveness. When a team has a common commitment to a task and is considering a problem objectively, the climate is positive. If there is a lack of unity in a team, and dissatisfaction and low morale, the climate is negative and the team will be less effective.

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Self-Check – 2	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Use the Answer sheet provided in the next page:

1. Describe the two components of effective interpersonal communication within a group or team:

2. Explain why constructive feedback is important to employees and the organization:

3. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of teams:

4. Explain 'groupthink':

5. What happen with Teams that suffer from groupthink?

6. When a team climate becomes positive and negative?

Answer Sheet

Score = _____
Rating: _____



Name: _____

Date: _____

Short Answer Questions

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6.1. Share Information Relevant to Workgroup to Ensure Goals are Met

For a group/team to work effectively members should use open communication channels by observing one another’s satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance; recognizing workplace hazards, risks and controls; and clarifying the organization’s preferred task completion methods.

6.1.1. Group problem-solving

Solving problems in a group has four major advantages:

- Greater knowledge and information (synergy).
- More approaches to the problem.
- Increased acceptance of solutions.
- Better comprehension of the decision.

6.1.2. Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a process where all members of the group express any ideas or solutions that occur to them **without logic or deep thought**—quickly and at random. Often an illogical, random thought from one person will lead to a logical thought from another, merely through the association of ideas. All members of the group should be allowed a chance to put forward ideas through effective communication and effective listening.

6.1.3. Group size

How a group performs tasks can be affected by its size. As a group grows in size, more coordination and communication is required to achieve a positive outcome. It is difficult to estimate an ideal group size, but problems can occur when the group becomes big, as shown in Table 1.2.

It has been suggested that a smaller group is better than a large one for solving problems.

Table 1.2 Group size relative to effectiveness

Group Size	Effects of Group Size
Less than five members in a group:	There are fewer people to share task responsibilities. There are fewer potential resources available. There is more personal discussion and interaction. There is more participation by all members of the group. It is easier to reach conclusions and make decisions.



<p>More than seven members in a group:</p>	<p>There are fewer opportunities for all members to participate.</p> <p>There are more potential resources available (synergy). There is more member inhibition and reluctance to participate, which can result in domination by one or two aggressive members.</p> <p>It can take more time to reach a decision.</p> <p>It can result in divisions into sub-groups.</p>
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Group Cohesiveness: is when members are attracted to and motivated to remain part of the group. Group cohesion happens when members are of the same socioeconomic background, have the same attitudes, values and needs, and respect and hold one another's competencies in high regard. Some other factors which enhance group cohesion are agreement on group goals; small size; tasks requiring interdependence; and physical isolation from other groups, performance needs, or performance failure or crises.

6.1.4. Team Environment

A poor physical environment can influence team performance. Make sure any group or team you work in has the following:

- **Quiet environment:** Any group of people meeting to create new ideas, make decisions and achieve results needs a quiet location with few distractions and interruptions in order to perform effectively.
- **Good seating arrangement:** In any group situation, whether informal or formal, a good seating arrangement can have a positive outcome, as people can then communicate more effectively.

6.2. Team Building Techniques

To build an effective team out of a group of people, there are several preconditions that exist.

- **Group size:** An effective group needs to be small. For the activities in this book, groups performing practical tasks should consist of no more than three people, unless four are specified.
- **Group matched to task:** Group members who are similar in age, education and experience (homogeneous groups) work better together for simple tasks, where goals and objectives require cooperation, good working relationships and speed of completion. Group members who differ in age, education and experience (heterogeneous groups) work more effectively with creative and more complex projects, if speed is not a consideration.



- **Group cohesion:** Cohesion occurs in a group that works well together. Group members recognize each other's contribution to the group goal, and operate well by using the following stages of formation:
 - ✓ Group contribution. In any team situation, it is essential that each member be allowed to contribute his or her special skills and attributes. Every one of us is good at something: one person is artistic, another good at mathematics, or has superior IT skills, and someone else has good organizational abilities. If all members contribute these special skills to the group goal, this will produce good synergy.
 - ✓ Group objectives. The group identifies and establishes the common objectives required to complete the goal. All members of the group must come to an understanding and agree on how this will be achieved.
 - ✓ Group structure. Coordination is very important, and the appointment of a leader is essential to achieving the group objectives. The leader is responsible for making sure that the group objectives are understood and are completed in the designated time.
- **Leadership:** Some people are born leaders, others have to learn; but it is widely recognized that leaders have some common characteristics:
 - ✓ intelligence
 - ✓ social maturity
 - ✓ motivation and achievement orientation
 - ✓ self-confidence and enthusiasm
 - ✓ good communication skills
 - ✓ commitment to the job.

6.3. Team Decision-Making

The purpose of any group/team in a business is to achieve the corporate goals.

The best decision is one that would not have been taken by an individual alone; is a sound solution to the problem; is based on unbiased input from each team member; and addresses the team's goals. Below are different kinds of decision-making processes:

Method 1: Decision made by authority without group discussion

The leader in the group makes the decision. This is used for simple, routine, administrative decisions when little time is available.

Method 2: Decision made by authority after group discussion

The members of the team create and discuss ideas, but the leader makes the final decision.

Method 3: Decision by expert

An expert is selected from the group and makes the decision.

Method 4: Decisions by averaging individuals' opinions

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Each team member is separately asked their opinion and the results are averaged.

Method 5: Decision by majority vote

This is the most commonly used method often by a ‘show of hands’ until 51 percent or more of the team members make the decision.

Method 6: Decision by consensus

A collective decision is arrived at through an effective and fair communication process. All team members express their thoughts and feelings. Active and effective listening and questioning techniques are used to reach an effective and fair decision.

6.4. Team Work

There are a number of benefits of team work. Among them are:

- distributing the workload
- reinforcing individual capabilities
- creating participation and involvement
- making better decisions
- feeling we play a part in the work being done
- generating a diversity of ideas.

For example, aircraft technicians have to depend on co-workers when a new aircraft is being developed and it is very important for them to get along as a team. Teamwork not only creates safety, but also creates efficiency. The team members work together, learn from each other and feel motivated.

6.5. Support groups

Group therapy offers participants the opportunity of learning and gaining support from others who are experiencing similar problems. The topics covered in support groups include medical management, nutrition, cognitive behavioral techniques, creative expression, stress management and other issues. There are support groups for eating disorders, anger management and drug and alcohol abuse.

6.5.1. Identify and Plan Strategies/Opportunities for Improvement

Workgroups/teams enable organizations to accomplish tasks that individuals cannot do alone. An effective group/team has positive synergy and can become a key human resource of the organization. An effective group or team that is working towards the organization’s goals can have a positive effect on individuals in the team, which will improve their performance. It is therefore important for managers to recognize that:

- Group/team activity is important in organizations.
- Groups/teams can have a positive or negative effect on the business and the people who work in it.
- An understanding of group/team behavior can have a desirable effect on workers in the organization.

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The use of joint labor–management committees to discuss a wide range of company conditions has been growing for a number of years—conditions such as occupational health and safety, training, or production policy. Strategies to improve workgroups should be put in place as outlined below.

Margerison and McCann identified eight basic types of work functions that group/team members need to perform in order to work effectively:

- Advising: Gathering information and providing it to others.
- Innovating: Coming up with new ideas and new procedures.
- Promoting: Making people aware of new ideas and procedures.
- Developing: Taking the ideas and developing them so that they will work in practice.
- Organizing: Making plans, obtaining approvals, working out budgets, developing schedules.
- Producing: Carrying out the work to implement the ideas or produce the products, ensuring that this is done in an effective way.
- Inspecting: Ensuring that the work carried out meets the standards and policies and procedures of the organization.
- Maintaining: Supporting the other activities to maintain standards.

6.5.2. Linking skills

Linking skills ensure that team members work together in carrying out the above functions: These skills include:

- active listening
- communication
- problem-solving
- team development
- work allocation and delegation
- building team relationships
- setting quality standards
- setting objectives
- interface management
- participative decision-making
- conflict resolution.

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Self-Check – 3	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Use the Answer sheet provided in the next page:

1. List the four major advantages of solving problems in a group:

Describe the brainstorming and how benefits all members of a group or team:

2. Explain Group Cohesiveness

Explain how team environment can influence team performance:

3. List the several preconditions that exist, to build an effective team out of a group of people.

4. List some of the widely recognized common leadership characteristics:

5. List the different kinds of decision-making processes: in which team decisions can be made:

6. List the number of benefits of team work. Among them are:

_____li

st the eight basic types of work functions that group/team members need to perform in order to work effectively:

Linking skills ensure that team members work together in carrying out the above functions: These skills include:

Answer Sheet

Score = _____

Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Short Answer Questions

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