

Communication in Groups & Teams

Chapter
Eleven

Focus Questions

- What are the differences between groups and teams?
- Why are groups and teams becoming increasingly popular?
- What are the potential strengths of group discussion?

Focus Questions

- What are the potential limitations of group discussion?
- To what extent should leadership be assigned to a single group member?

Understanding Communication in Groups & Teams

- Climate communication
- Procedural communication
- Task communication

Communication is the primary influence on productivity & the climate of interaction

Defining Groups & Teams

- Group
 - People interacting in collective endeavors
- Team
 - Special kind of group
 - Strong sense of collective identity
- Virtual teams

The Rise of Groups & Teams

- Project teams
- Focus groups
- Brainstorming groups
- Advisory groups
- Quality Improvement Teams
- Decision-Making Groups

Standard Agenda for Problem Solving

Figure 11.2 A STANDARD AGENDA FOR PROBLEM SOLVING

Task groups generally aim to solve problems ranging from how to improve morale to what policy to implement. A time-tested method for effective problem solving is the agenda, based on philosopher John Dewey's (1910) model of reflective thinking:

Phase 1: Define the problem.

Phase 2: Analyze information relevant to the problem.

Phase 3: Generate criteria to assess solutions.

Phase 4: Identify potential solutions.

Phase 5: Select the best solution.

Phase 6: Implement the solution (or recommend implementation of it).

Phase 7: Develop an action plan to monitor the effectiveness of the solution.

Sources: Dewey, 1910; Wood, 2001a.

Potential Limitations of Groups

- Time issues
- Potential of conformity pressures

Potential Strengths of Groups

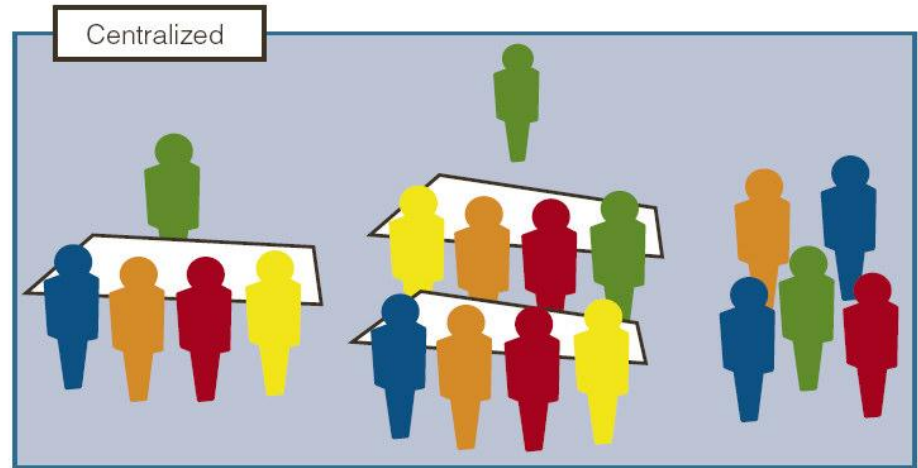
- Greater resources
- More thorough thought
 - Synergy
- Heightened creativity
- Enhanced commitment to decisions

Features of Small Groups

- Cohesion
 - Groupthink
- Group size
- Power structure
 - Power over
 - Power to
 - Social climbing

Interaction Patterns

- Centralized



- Decentralized

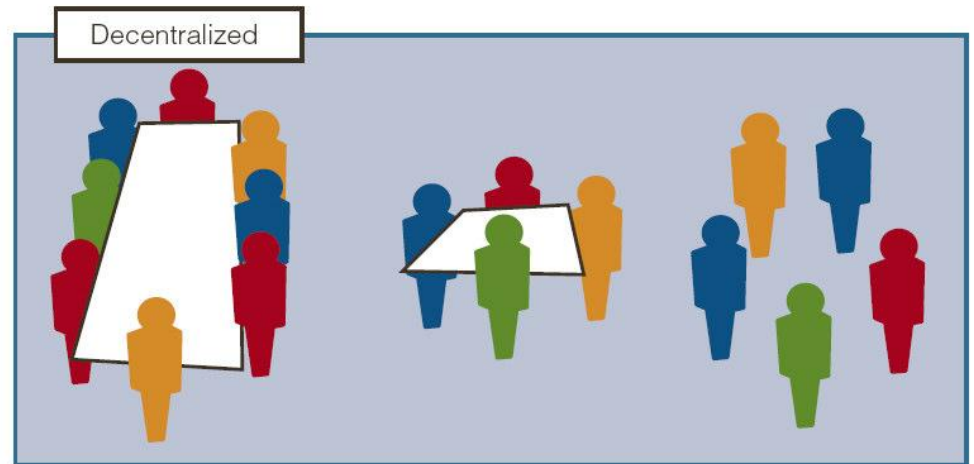


Figure 11.3 PATTERNS OF INTERACTION IN GROUPS

Five Bases of Power

- Reward
- Coercive
- Legitimate
- Expert
- Referent

Group Norms

- Guidelines that regulate how members act & interact with each other
- Trivial norms
- Substantive norms

Guidelines

- Participate constructively
 - Task communication
 - Procedural communication
 - Climate communication
 - Egocentric communication

Guidelines for Communicating in Groups and Teams

- Participate Constructively
- Provide leadership
- Manage conflict constructively
 - Disruptive conflict
 - Constructive conflict

Summary

- Communication in groups & teams
- Defining Groups & Teams
- The Rise of Groups & Teams
- Standard Agenda for Problem Solving
- Potential Limitations

Summary

- Potential Strengths
- Features of Small Groups
- Interaction Patterns
- Five Bases of Power
- Group Norms