

1.

BSBWOR203A WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH OTHERS

Elements and performance criteria:

1. DEVELOP EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS

- 1.1 Identify own responsibilities and duties in relation to workgroup members
- 1.2 Take time and resource constraints into account
- 1.3 Encourage, acknowledge and act upon constructive feedback

2. CONTRIBUTE TO WORKGROUP ACTIVITIES

- 2.1 Provide support to team members to ensure workgroup goals are met
- 2.2 Contribute constructively to workgroup goals
- 2.3 Share information relevant to workgroup to ensure goals are met
- 2.4 Identify and plan strategies/opportunities for improvement

3. DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND CONFLICT

- 3.1 Respect differences in personal values and beliefs in the development of relationships
- 3.2 Identify any linguistic and cultural differences in communication styles
- 3.3 Identify issues, problems and conflict encountered in the workplace
- 3.4 Seek assistance from workgroup members when problems and conflict arise

INTRODUCTION

This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to work in a group environment promoting team commitment and cooperation, supporting team members and dealing with issues, problems and conflict.

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

TYPES OF WORKGROUPS

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

A formal group in an organisation is established by management to perform specific tasks in order to meet the goals of the organisation. 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.

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 organisational 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 organisation, 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.

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 organisation, good team effectiveness can act as a powerful socialising agent. Examples of this are helping new employees with organisational policies and procedures, and working together to get jobs done more quickly and to a higher standard, using cooperation and reciprocation.

GROUP BEHAVIOUR

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:

1. Inclusion
2. Control
3. Acceptance



FIGURE 1.1
Small group discussion

In a team with inclusion, control and acceptance, group leaders and members are accessible to one another. No one person monopolises 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.

DEVELOP EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS

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.

1.1 IDENTIFY OWN RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES IN RELATION TO WORKGROUP MEMBERS

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

- Organisational code of conduct
- Organisational 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 behaviours 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 organised into a collective group. These norms usually include the following.

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.

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.

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 prioritise your work goals linked to organisational goals.

SEEK ASSISTANCE WHEN DIFFICULTIES ARISE

Effective group performance is very important to the organisation 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 organisation. Therefore, assistance should be sought from a supervisor or manager to help solve the problems before production is affected.

QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES TO CLARIFY INSTRUCTIONS

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, rapport 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.

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.

TAKE TIME AND RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS INTO ACCOUNT

1.2

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.

ENCOURAGE, ACKNOWLEDGE AND ACT UPON CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

1.3

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 organisation 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.



1.1 KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS

1. List the different types of workgroups:

2. Explain the meaning of group dynamics:

3. Explain the meaning of synergy:

4. List the three interpersonal concerns within groups:

5. List your own responsibilities and duties in relation to workgroup members:

6. Explain the meaning of group norms:

7. List the number of factors that can affect the completion of your work tasks:

8. How can you encourage constructive feedback?



CASE STUDY 1.1

YOU ARE THE PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO THE SALES MANAGER OF OUR COMPANY BUSINESS STATIONERY SUPPLIES PTY. LTD.

In your department there are five people including yourself, your manager, and three sales reps.

The members of your workgroup have always been very friendly, cooperative and work well together.

You have been informed by your manager that because of an increase in business there will be a junior assistant joining your workgroup to help with administration duties.

The new recruit is a young man who has completed an administration course in year 11 at school, but he has no work experience. Your manager thinks it will be a good idea for him to help with administration duties to learn about the business before being trained in sales duties and eventually becoming a sales rep.

1. How will you help this person to integrate into your workgroup so that there is minimum disruption to present work procedures?

2. What are the problems that you can foresee when this young man joins your workgroup?

3. How do you think this new member to your workgroup will affect the group dynamics and the synergy of your present workgroup?

4. Describe the responsibilities and duties of *all* the members of your present workgroup to this new member of the group:

2.

CONTRIBUTE TO WORKGROUP ACTIVITIES

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.

2.1 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 organisation.

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

(continued)

STAGE	ACTIVITIES
4. Performing	Improvement in ways of doing things Development of interpersonal relationships Acceptance of delegated tasks Involvement in decision-making Achievement of performance

CONTRIBUTE CONSTRUCTIVELY TO WORKGROUP GOALS 2.2

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.

1. 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.
2. 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 behaviour and service to customers.

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.

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.



FIGURE 1.2
Qualities of effective
team members

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 organisation employing them. Teams that suffer from groupthink:

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

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.

SHARE INFORMATION RELEVANT TO WORKGROUP TO ENSURE GOALS ARE MET

2.3

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

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING

Solving problems in a group has four major advantages:

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

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.

NOTE

The practical work tasks at the end of each chapter are set for students in small groups of three or four people. The more experienced students will contribute many ideas to the brainstorm sessions, which will benefit the more inexperienced students.

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.
More than seven members in a group:	There are fewer opportunities for all members to participate. 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. It can take more time to reach a decision. It can result in divisions into sub-groups.

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.



1.2 KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS

1. Describe an effective workgroup or team:

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

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

4. Explain why good interpersonal relationships between employees is important for the business:

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

6. Describe the process of brainstorming and why this benefits all members of a group or team:

7. Explain why constructive feedback is important to employees and the organisation:

NOTE

When you form into groups for the practical work tasks at the end of the chapters in this book, make sure you use the team-building techniques given earlier in this chapter and on page xxx.

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.

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 recognise each other's contribution to the group goal, and operate well by using the following stages of formation:

1. **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 organisational abilities. If all members contribute these special skills to the group goal, this will produce good synergy.
2. **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.
3. **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 recognised that leaders have some common characteristics:

- intelligence
- social maturity
- motivation and achievement orientation
- self-confidence and enthusiasm
- good communication skills
- commitment to the job.

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

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 per cent 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.

1. 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.

WWW → For more information, log on to www.123helpme.com

2. 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 behavioural techniques, creative expression, stress management and other issues. There are support groups for eating disorders, anger management and drug and alcohol abuse.

WWW → For more information log on to www.pmh.health.wa.gov.au



2.4 IDENTIFY AND PLAN STRATEGIES/OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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

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

The use of joint labour–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 (1995) identified eight basic types of work functions that group/team members need to perform in order to work effectively:

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

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.



1.3 KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS

1. Explain why feedback from groups is more useful than feedback from individuals:

2. Why is it important to use active and effective listening?

3. Why is it important to use active and effective questioning?

3. Describe the advantages of teams:

4. Describe the disadvantages of teams:

5. Explain 'groupthink':

6. List some of the common leadership characteristics:

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7. List the six ways in which team decisions can be made:

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8. Explain team climate:

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9. Explain why team environment can influence team performance:

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CASE STUDY 1.2

YOU ARE WORKING IN A GROUP/TEAM AT YOUR COLLEGE, OR PART OF A GROUP AT WORK. THEREFORE, YOU WILL BE MIXING AND WORKING WITH PEOPLE FROM MANY DIFFERENT CULTURES AND WITH MANY DIFFERENT BELIEFS. ALL THESE PEOPLE WILL CONTRIBUTE DIFFERENT APTITUDES, ABILITIES AND SKILLS, INCLUDING VALUES AND ATTITUDES, AND PERSONALITY AND INTERESTS. ALL PEOPLE CAN LEARN MANY THINGS FROM ONE ANOTHER.

1. List how the ability to perform effectively in a group/team is achieved:

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2. Describe the type of work group/team you are involved in:

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3. Is the group synergy positive or negative? Describe why it is one or the other:

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4. Is there inclusion, control and acceptance of all people in the group? If not, why do you think this is the case?

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5. Is there cooperation, mutual respect and reciprocal effort among all the members of the group? If not, give examples of why this is not the case:

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6. Is there constructive feedback from all members of the group/team?

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7. Is there group cohesion in your team, and have you established the common objectives to complete your goals?

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8. Have you appointed a leader? State why it is necessary to have a leader:

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9. State the method your group uses to reach a decision. Which decision-making method do you think is the best one taken from the list on page xxx?

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3.

DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND CONFLICT

Internal customers are your colleagues and the people in other departments of your organisation. How you communicate with people within your organisation 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.



FIGURE 1.3
Conflict in the workplace



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

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

3.1 RESPECT DIFFERENCES IN PERSONAL VALUES AND BELIEFS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS

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 favourably 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.

IDENTIFY ANY LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN COMMUNICATION STYLES

3.2

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

1. Listen actively and effectively and provide feedback in order to avoid misinterpretation of instructions and directions.
2. Use appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication (described in more detail earlier in the chapter and in other chapters).
3. 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. (I discovered this when working in Africa and Papua New Guinea. I have made many lasting friends at work, in many different organisations, and in many different countries.)

IDENTIFY ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND CONFLICT ENCOUNTERED IN THE WORKPLACE

3.3

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.

1. Interpersonal conflict occurs when two or more people disagree over an issue or when they experience emotional opposition to one another.
2. Substantive conflict involves disagreements over resources, rewards, policies and procedures, and the allocation of roles.
3. 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.

3.4 SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM WORKGROUP MEMBERS WHEN PROBLEMS AND CONFLICT ARISE

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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



TABLE 1.3
Conflict resolution

CONFLICT TYPE	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	RESULTS
Lose/lose	Avoidance of conflict 'Smoothing'—recognising 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.

SUMMARY

- Information and ideas are conveyed and received through communication networks inside and outside the organisation.
- Informal communication networks are established when office workers socialise.
- An integral part of communication is the ability to think clearly and objectively.
- Non-verbal communication is a message sent by any other means than words.
- An effective workgroup or team is one that achieves high levels of both task performance and human resources maintenance over time.
- The structure of a group or team may develop slowly or quickly.
- Effective interpersonal communication within a group or team has two components: spoken and unspoken.
- Brainstorming is a process where all members of the group express any ideas or solutions that occur to them.
- Conflict resolution solves interpersonal conflict in three ways: lose/lose, win/lose, win/win strategies.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe the different kinds of non-verbal communication.
2. Describe an effective workgroup or team.
3. List the four stages in the development of groups or teams.
4. Describe good interpersonal relationships.
5. List the advantages in solving problems in a group.
6. List the three different types of conflict and the three ways in which conflict resolution can solve this conflict.



CASE STUDY 1.3

YOU ARE THE ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR OF OUR COMPANY BUSINESS STATIONERY SUPPLIES PTY. LTD. A CONFLICT SITUATION HAS ARISEN AS FOLLOWS:

The receptionist, Gina, has complained to you that she is being given tasks to complete by Soula, personal assistant to the manager. Gina says these are not her specified tasks and she just does not have time to do them. She says the reception area is very busy and because she is doing these tasks for Soula she is not completing some of her own specified tasks. Gina is a popular member of staff and has a friendly personality, which is suitable for reception duties, but she does spend a lot of time chatting to visitors and other members of staff.

Soula is an efficient and hard-working person but has been under stress for a number of months. She seems to have too much work, as she is coming in to work early in the morning and leaving late most evenings. This is why she has given tasks to Gina to complete. The situation at present is that Gina and Soula have had arguments. Both of them are dissatisfied with the situation and one or both of them might resign.

How would you deal with this conflict situation? Which conflict resolution strategy would you use to solve this problem?

Sample pages

7. Give and listen to positive feedback.

8. Use good spoken communication skills.

9. Use positive non-verbal communication.

10. Observe non-verbal communication in others.

11. Use positive communication.

PRACTICAL WORK TASK 1.3

When you form into a group in class or at work, does your group develop in the order of inclusion, control and acceptance?

- Does the group pass through the stages of Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing?
- Explain what each stage means and list the activities in each stage.
- Does the group use brainstorming techniques?
- Do all members use constructive feedback?
- Is there any personal conflict between members?
- Do you use conflict resolution to solve these problems?
- Explain why groups/teams have a positive effect on individuals.

Discuss these issues with the other members of your group.

PRACTICAL WORK TASKS 1.4

You are the supervisor of our company Business Stationery Supplies Pty. Ltd.

A number of conflict situations have arisen between employees over the past week as follows. Under each situation write down how you would deal with the problem.

1. On Friday afternoon a large order for stationery and furniture is received and a tender has to be completed to be sent off on Monday morning. This is a very important order and if the tender is not sent on Monday you could lose a large amount of business. A few members of staff have been asked to work over the weekend. One or two of these employees are annoyed as they have made arrangements for the weekend and this is very short notice.

2. There has been a mistake made in one of the orders which has resulted in a complaint from a customer and one employee has been reprimanded. She says it was not her fault and has blamed another employee.

This has resulted in an argument between the two, which, if not resolved, could develop into verbal and physical abuse, and is also affecting the morale of other employees.

3. You have recently appointed a new receptionist who seems to be very efficient and performs her tasks well. But you have received many complaints from customers that her attitude on the telephone is brusque and unhelpful, she speaks too quickly and does not use feedback techniques so that there have been one or two mistakes made. They also say she sounds miserable and unhappy.

4. All office employees are allowed to have coffee or tea whenever they feel like it providing work is not adversely affected. But you have noticed that over the past few weeks, people have been gathering in the rest room when getting a drink and staying for quite long periods discussing all kinds of topics, particularly on Monday after the weekend. This is affecting production and you feel you must speak to everyone about it. How would you do this?



EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

SELF-ASSESSMENT AND TRAINER ASSESSMENT

When you have completed the knowledge questions in the text, and the practical work tasks and case studies at the end of the chapter, tick the self-assessment column below. Then hand to your trainer to complete for official assessment.

STUDENT'S NAME:

GROUP NO:

The following elements of performance criteria have been completed:

CERTIFICATE 2 CHAPTER 1
.....

	SELF-ASSESSMENT PLEASE TICK	TRAINER ASSESSMENT PLEASE TICK
BSBWOR203A WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH OTHERS		
1. DEVELOP EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS		
1.1 Identify own responsibilities and duties	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
1.2 Take time and resource constraints into account	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
1.3 Encourage, acknowledge and act upon feedback	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
2. CONTRIBUTE TO WORKGROUP ACTIVITIES		
2.1 Provide support to team members to ensure goals are met	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
2.2 Contribute constructively to workgroup goals	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
2.3 Share information relevant to workgroup goals	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
2.4 Identify and plan opportunities for improvement	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
3. DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND CONFLICT		
3.1 Respect differences in personal values and beliefs	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
3.2 Identify any linguistic and cultural differences	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
3.3 Identify issues/problems/conflict in the workplace	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
3.4 Seek assistance from workgroup members	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

DATE:

TRAINER SIGNATURE: