

Groups and their functions

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Groups in Management In order to achieve the organizational goals, managers utilize work groups whose proper functioning requires coordination and direction. In understanding the structure of a group and effect on individual behavior, managers need to look into its internal functioning; where factors such as values, norms and beliefs shared by the members, are taken into account. These concepts will dictate the social roles and patterns of communication adapted by members of a group. Primary to these concepts is norms, which refer to mannerisms that one has to adjust to if they are to survive in a given group or environment. These mannerisms can be likened to an informal set of rules, as they are unwritten and used purely for socializing purposes. This implies that such mannerisms are unanimously agreed upon through a process of coordinating behavioral patterns of the individuals that make up a group.

Over time, the groups they belong in because of the similar mannerisms shared judge members of a group. Individuals within a group will subconsciously behave according to the norms of the group they belong to, even when they are not interacting with the group members. This is because they have become accustomed to do so; however, this is determined by factors such as amount of time spent with the group and commitment to purpose of the group. In an organizational set up, work groups are established to fulfill tasks, create a chain of command and share responsibilities and duties. Out of these three primary purposes of forming a group, it is clear that the preceding purpose will result in a temporary group. An individual within such a group is not likely to ‘lose’ their identity, as interaction with the group is short-lived thus cannot have such an impact

(Griffin and Moorhead, 2010).

The other crucial factor that managers should consider to achieve maximum productivity from groups is size. The number of people comprising a group determines how all the individuals interact with each other. This therefore, means a new dynamic is created whenever a new member is brought into a group. The new dynamic arises from the fact that level of interaction differs, where two people will hold a conversation easily because of a shared topic of interest. However, when a third person comes in they have to choose between either of the two individuals and pick a topic that will relate to them. This is known as social advantage where a coalition is formed to create cohesion. From this perspective, one can argue that a small group is more likely to gel especially if it comprises of an even number of people. This is as a result of the principle of coalition which implies that at any one time only two people can interact properly, leaving a third party isolated (Andersen and Taylor, 2009).

Factors that determine the level of interaction within a group, because of wanting to remain together include forces that cause attraction, resistance, or motivation to stay within the group. Wanting to remain together is essentially, what is referred to as group cohesiveness which is also influenced by age of group members, similarity of interests, size and regularity of interactions. For there to be functional competition in a group, managers should give short-term tasks that will boost motivation among members and encourage coming up with new ideas. If competition is used as a long-term strategy to create cohesiveness, it becomes counter-productive as it builds resentment and gives rise to conflicts. How groups function as a

whole is determined by their objectives, norms/standards, roles of every member, existence of a leader, patterns of communication and decision-making process. These are the same factors that will pose a danger to the group for instance, where a member may feel the pressure to conform to a particular standard yet they do not find it agreeable.

References

Andersen, M. and Taylor, H. (2009). “ Sociology: The Essentials”. Sixth Edition. Stamford, Connecticut: Cengage Learning.

Griffin, R. and Moorhead, G. (2010). “ Organizational Behavior: Managing People and Organizations”. Ninth Edition. Stamford, Connecticut: Cengage Learning.