# Article review

A team as described by the article is " a small number of people with complementary skills committed to a common purpose, performance goals and waysof working for which they hold themselves mutually accountable" (p. 365). The use of " team" and " group" are not interchangeable because in a team all members contribute to accomplishing a set or prescribed goal. Team work is critical to the development of any organization. Therefore, the article aims to explore the different types of teams, the selection of team members, and to highlight the essential stages of team development. The knowledge of the three types of teams has been found to be quite useful (p. 366). That is, operational or primary teams comprise permanent workers with diversified skills organized to produce a product. Secondly, service teams are likely to be based on the need to service a particular or group of client(s) to provide particular service to a wide range of customers. Finally, cross – functional teams consist of representatives from various functions and disciplines. These tend to be set up for a particular purpose. They could be part-time or full-time for a fixed period of time. It is important to note that the organization on a whole should be committed to team work or else all efforts will prove futile. This concept of teamwork if carried out appropriately and effectively will be transferred into relationships with customers and suppliers which have been proven to be mutually beneficial. The quality of team members will make the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful team. Hence, time and effort must be placed into the selection process. The findings of Dr Meredith Belbin, though theoretical, suggests that " imperfect people can make perfect teams" (p. 367) and " the roles, skills and contributions of individual members of a team are complementary" (p. 367). Most organizations are usually interested in developing or training their

current crop of employees. They are of the view that the necessary skills and abilities can be acquired. The challenges involved in the initial stages are enormous. Individuals with different personalities usually will clash. Four distinct phases of team development are suggested by Tuckman. They are forming, storming, norming and performing. As the name suggests, forming, is the beginning. Enthusiasm is usually high and competence low. The hardest hurdle to jump however is storming. This involves the phase where it is hard to work together. Members are trying to figure out the best way to functionally move ahead. In the norming stage the team is beginning to reach its potential. The last phase is performing in which the team is has accomplished the set objectives. The team is now working together to achieve one goal. It is crucial that complacency does not impair the team. Thus reformation efforts should be put in place. It is at this point that team leadership becomes necessary to drive the team and provide additional resources and training as the needs arise. The leader should be the conduit for change. Three ways for dealing with this post are: " the team leader is a supervisor outside the team" (p. 369) they will need training for the new role, " the team leader is a working team member with the main responsibility for direct liaison with management" (p. 369) they are more likely to be recruited but will need full leadership training or " the team operates without a designated leader inside or outside the team-the self managed team" (p. 369). Where there is no designated leader, constant training will be required to manage team dynamics. The type of leadership adopted will determine selection criteria and training needs. For team work to be realized, self regulation is the key. Research conducted by Acas/Travistock indicates that self regulation was lacking in those teams that

were not performing to their full potential. Self regulation is a process. It takes time to reach that level of competence and independence. Management is now to oversee the team and ensure that adequate support and training is given. Mistakes made should not be frowned upon as it is part of the developmental process. The emphasis should be placed on learning from mistakes. " As teams develop, they can take on more responsibility for quality, production methods, hours and times of work and the selection of, or discipline of, team members" (p. 369). Team work is not only recommended, it is not optional if any organization is to grow and prosper. The direction of the company must be decided and the necessary type of team chosen, and member criteria selected. Finally, the team must be equipped with patience to journey through the different stages of development. Reference McGreevy, M. (2006). Team working: part 2 – how are teams chosen and developed?. Industrial and commercial training, 38(7), 365-370.