

Chapter 4: Team Effectiveness



When trainees finish studying this part, they should be able to:

1. Set team objectives and criteria.
2. Define the dimensions influencing team effectiveness.
3. Understand the relationship between group cohesiveness, group effectiveness, and group norms
4. Describe the role of feedback process in enhancing team effectiveness, see Figure 4.1.



Figure 4.1: Effective team development

“Probably the most fundamental ingredient of effective teams is trust. Trust is belief in the reliance, ability, and integrity of the other. Unless team members trust one another; the team leader, management, and managers may find that building an effective work team is impossible.”

Setting Team
Objectives and
Criteria



4.1 Setting Team Objectives and Criteria

Team goals should be

SMART

Team objectives should be **SMART**

- **Specific:** goals should be very specific and simple. For example “The sales team should increase the annual sales volume by 5% next month.”
- **Measurable:** it is preferred to set measurable goals. If goals are not measurable, managers can hardly evaluate the teams’ performance. Goals are used as benchmarks. However, teams might pursue some immeasurable (qualitative) objectives.
- **Attainable:** team objectives should be realistic so that team members can achieve them. However, those objectives should be challenging.
- **Result-Oriented:** team objectives should define clearly the desired final outcome
- **Time-Bounded:** team objectives should have a starting date and an ending date.

Dimensions
Influencing
Team
Effectiveness



4.2 Dimensions Influencing Team Effectiveness

The following is a classic listing of effective teams:

- Members are loyal to one another and the leader.
- Members and leaders have a high degree of confidence and trust in each other.
- The group is eager to help members develop their own potentials.
- The members communicate fully and frankly all information relevant to the team’s activities.
- Members feel secure in making decisions that seem appropriate to them.
- Activities of the group occur in a supportive atmosphere.
- Group values and goals express relevant values and goals of members.



Q: What are the dimensions that influence team effectiveness?

A large number of dimensions can affect how effectively the team functions. Here we examine five important dimensions that managers need to consider, see Figure 4.2.

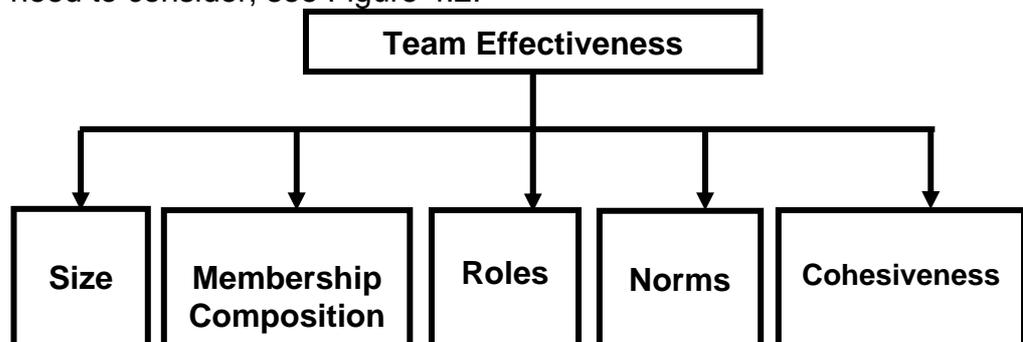


Figure 4.2: Important dimensions that managers need to consider

Size



A) Size

Effective task groups can range from 2 members to a normal upper limit of 16. *It is difficult to pinpoint an ideal group size because the appropriate size depends on the group's purpose.*

Size affects how individuals interact with each other as well as the overall performance of the group. In groups of less than five members, there will be more personal discussion and more complete participation. *As a group size grows beyond several members, it becomes more difficult for all members to participate effectively. Communication and coordination among members become more difficult, and there is a tendency to split into subgroups.* As a result, the interactions become more centralized, with few individuals taking more active roles relative to the rest; disagreements may occur more easily; and group satisfaction may decline unless group members put a good effort into relationship-oriented roles.

As group size increases, more potential human resources are available to perform the work and accomplish the needed tasks. While this can boost performance, the expanded group size tends to increase turnover and absenteeism.

Membership
Composition

B) Membership Composition

Two composition factors have particularly important influence on a group's effectiveness, see Table 4.1. **The first factor is members' characteristics, while the second factor is members' motivations.**

Table 4.1: Membership composition

Members' characteristics	Members' motivations
It includes physical traits, abilities, job-related knowledge and skills, personality, age, race, and gender.	It includes members' motives to join a group; such as the need for power, security, and affiliation.

- Membership composition can be homogeneous or heterogeneous.
- A group is considered homogeneous when it is composed of individuals having similar group related:
 - Characteristics
 - Interests
 - Attitudes
 - Age
 - Race, and
 - Job-related knowledge and skills
 - Backgrounds
 - Values
 - Personality
 - Gender
- Most heterogeneous groups are a function of increases in organizational diversity.



Does homogeneous or heterogeneous lead to more effective team?

- For tasks that are **standard and routine**, a homogeneous team functions more quickly. Membership homogeneity contributes to member satisfaction, creates less conflict, and increases the chance of harmonious working relationships among group members.
- For tasks that are **non-routine** and require diverse skills, opinions, and behaviors, a heterogeneous team yields better results. A heterogeneous membership can bring variety of skills and viewpoints to bear on problems and thus facilitate task accomplishment.

Roles



C) Roles

Roles are the many hats we wear. Roles are shared expectations of how group members will fulfill the requirements of their positions. *People develop their roles based on their own expectations, team's expectations, and the organization's expectations.*

To summarize:

- We may define a role as the typical behaviors that characterize a person in a social context.
- In organizations, many roles are assigned by virtue of an individual's position within an organization. For example, boss may be expected to give orders, and a teacher may be expected to lecture and to give exams. These are behaviors expected of the individual in that role.

When operating in a team, individuals typically fulfill several roles. Members' roles fit into three categories, see Figure 4.3:

First: Task-oriented roles: focus on behaviors directly related to establishing and achieving the goals of the group or getting the task done. They include the following behaviors:

- Seeking and providing information,
- Initiating actions and procedures,
- Clarifying issues,
- Summarizing progress, energizing the quantity and quality of output, and
- Helping the team to reach consensus.

Second: Relationship-oriented roles: *include behaviors that cultivate the well-being, continuity, and development of the group.* They focus on the operation of the group and maintenance of good relationships among members. They help foster group unity, positive interpersonal relations among group members, and the development of members' ability to work effectively together.

Third: Self-oriented roles: occur to meet some personal need or goal of an individual without regard for the group's problems. They often have a negative influence on a group's effectiveness.

Examples of such behaviors include:

- Dominating group discussions,
- Emphasizing personal issues,
- Interrupting others,
- Distracting the group from its work, and
- Wasting the team's time.

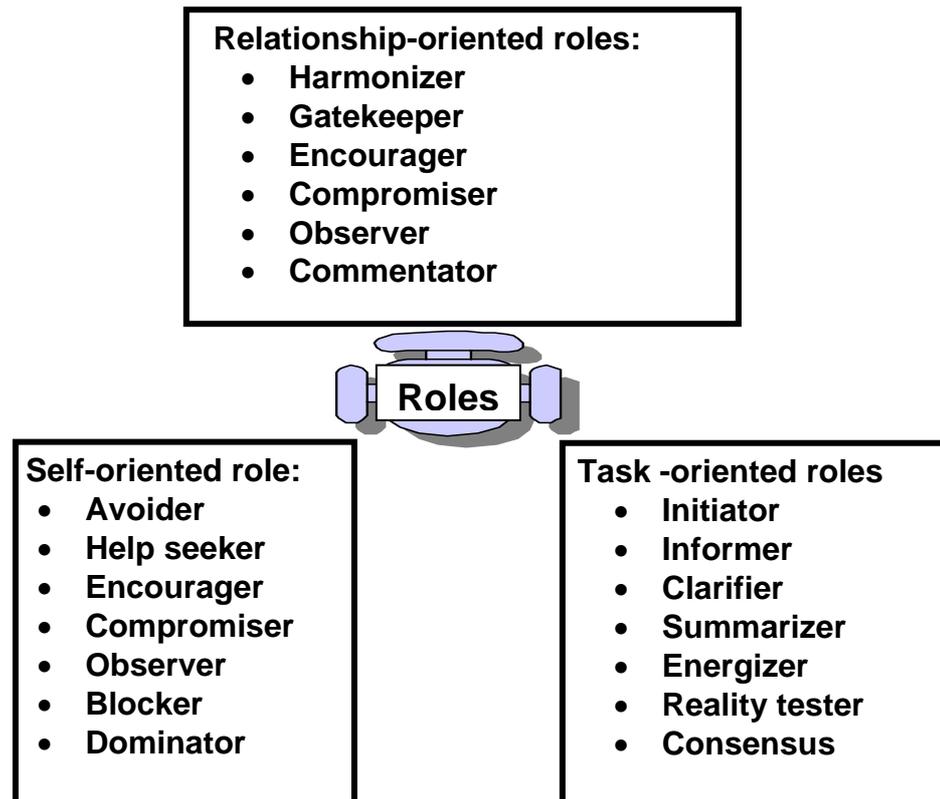


Figure 4.3: Team roles

Roles

- **Role:** set of behaviors a group member is expected to perform because of his position in the group.
- **In cross-functional teams,** members perform roles in their specialty.
- **Managers** need to clearly describe expected roles to group members when they are assigned to the group.
- **Role making** occurs as workers take on more roles as group members.
- **Self-managed teams** may assign the roles to members themselves.

Norms

D) Norms

Why do norms develop? The most important function that norms serve is to provide regularity and predictability to behavior. This provides implied psychological security and permits us to carry out daily business with minimal disruption.

**Norms: a group's unspoken rules.**

- Norms may be defined as generally agreed-upon informal rules that guide team members' behavior.
- They represent shared ways of viewing the world. Norms differ from organizational rules in that they are not formal and written.
- Norms regulate the behavior of teams in important ways such as how to dress, and when it is acceptable to be late for or absent from work.
- Norms can be either prescriptive – dictating the behaviors that should be programmed- or proscriptive – dictating the behaviors that should be avoided.
- Norms are unwritten and often-informal rules shared beliefs about what behavior is appropriate and expected of team members.
- Norms differ from organizational rules in that they are unwritten. Team members must accept them and behave in a way consistent with them before they can be said to exist. This difference is important when dealing with heterogeneous and diverse teams.

Team Norms: shared rules that members follow may include:

- People dress.
- The upper and lower limits of productivity.
- The information that can be told to the boss.
- The matters that need to remain secret.
- Performance standards.
- Voice and body language.
- Power of distance.
- Teams may set working hours, behavior rules, etc.
- Conformity & Deviance: members conform to norms to obtain rewards, imitate respected members, and because they feel the behavior is right. When a member deviates, other members will try to make them conform, expel the member, or change the group norms to accommodate them. Conformity and deviance must be balanced for high performance from the group. Deviance allows for new ideas in the group.
- If a group member does not follow the norms, the other members will try to enforce compliance through acceptance and friendship or through such means as punishment and verbal abuse.

- Group norms can be positive, helping the group meet its objectives, or they can be negative, hindering the group’s effectiveness.
- Managers need to understand the norms of the groups they manage and then work toward maintaining and developing positive norms, while eliminating negative norms.

Cohesiveness



E) Cohesiveness

- Group cohesiveness: measures the loyalty to the group by its members.
- Level of participation: as cohesiveness rises, so will participation.
- Participation helps get members actively involved, but too much can waste time.
- Level of Conformity: as conformity rises, so does cohesiveness.
- With too much conformity, performance can suffer.
- Level of Group Goal Accomplishment: as cohesiveness rises, the emphasis on group accomplishment will rise.
- High levels of cohesiveness can cause the group to focus more on itself than the firm.
- Determinates of cohesiveness can be altered to change cohesiveness levels in a group.
- Group Size: small groups allow high cohesiveness.
- Low cohesiveness groups with many members can benefit from splitting into two groups.
- Managed Diversity: diverse groups often come up with better solutions.
- Group Identity: when cohesiveness is low, encourage a group to adopt a unique identity and engage in healthy competition with others.
- Success: cohesiveness increases with success.
- Look for a way for a group to find some small success.

Group Cohesiveness, Group Effectiveness, and Group Norms

4.3 Group Cohesiveness, Group Effectiveness, and Group Norms

Norms	Cohesiveness of the work group	
	High	Low
Aligned with organization	Highest performance	Moderate performance

Team Communication Process



4.4 Team Communication Process

Importance of good communication: good communication allows a firm to:

- Learn new skills and technologies.
- Become more responsive to customers.

- Improve Quality of their product or service.
- Foster innovation.

The Communication Process



4.5 The Communication Process

Communication consists of two phases:

1. **Transmission phase:** 2 or more people share information.
2. **Feedback phase:** a common understanding is assured, as shown in Figure 4.4.

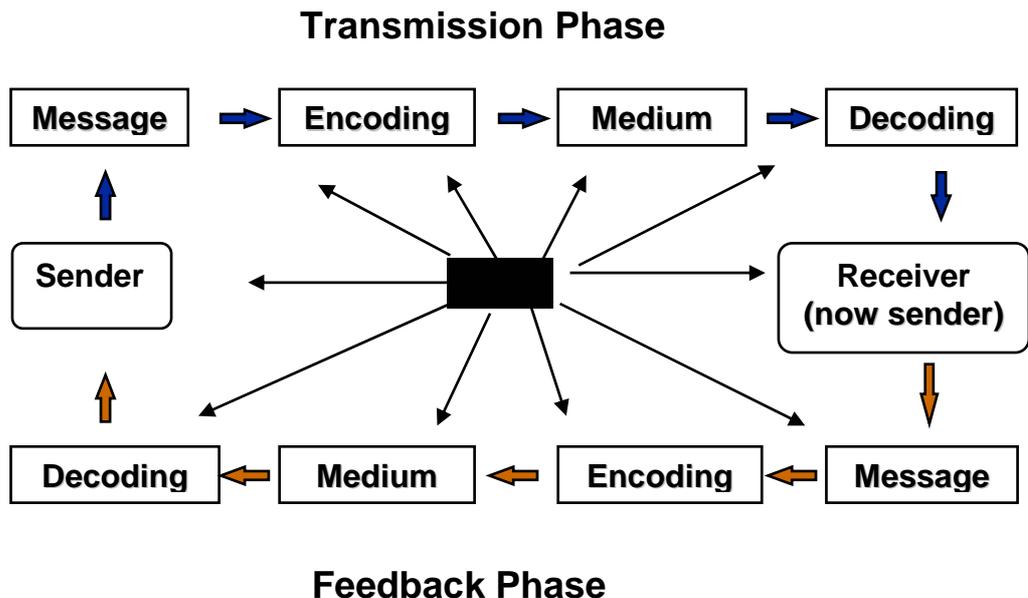


Figure 4.4: Communication process

The interpersonal communication model includes the following parts:

The sender



A) The sender

- The communication process starts with the Sender who wants to share information.
- Sender must decide on a message to share.
- Sender also puts the message into symbols or language, a process called encoding.

Noise

B) Noise: Anything harming the communication process.

Message



C) Message

- Messages are transmitted over a medium to a receiver.
- Medium pathway: the message is transmitted on (phone, letter).

Receiver

D) Receiver

- Person gets the message.
- Decodes the message.
- Decoding allows the receiver to understand the message.
- This is a critical point, can lead to misunderstanding.

Feedback

E) Feedback

- Feedback is started by receiver and states that the message is understood or that it must be re-sent.

Encoding

**F) Encoding**

- Encoding of messages can be done verbally or non-verbally
- Verbal: spoken or written communication.
- Nonverbal: facial gestures, body language, dress.
- Sender and receiver communicate based on their perception.
- Subjective perception can lead to biases and stereotypes that hurt communication.
- Effective Managers avoid communicating based on a pre-set belief, as shown in Figure 4.5.



Figure 4.5: Effective manager

Dangers of
Ineffective
Communication**Dangers of Ineffective Communication**

Managers spend most of their time communicating so both they and the subordinates must be effective communicators. To be effective:

- Select an appropriate medium for each message.
- There is no one “best” medium.
- Consider information richness: the amount of information a medium can carry.
- Medium with high richness can carry much information to aid understanding.
- Is there a need for a paper/electronic trail to provide documentation?

Communication
Media**Communication Media****1) Face-to-Face**

- Highest information richness.
- Can take advantage of verbal and nonverbal signals.
- Provides for instant feedback.
- "Management By Walking Around" takes advantage of this with informal talks to workers.
- Video Conferences: provide much of this richness and reduce travel costs and meeting times.

**2) Verbal Communication Electronically Transmitted**

- Has next highest richness.
- Phone conversations, but no visual nonverbal cues.
- Do have tone of voice, sender's emphasis and quick feedback.

**3) Personally Addressed Written Communication:**

- Lower richness than the verbal forms, but still is directed at a given person.
- Personal addressing helps ensure receiver reads it.
- Letters and e-mails are common forms.
- Cannot provide instant feedback to sender but can get feedback later.
- Excellent for complex messages needing follow-up.

**4) Impersonal Written Communication**

- Lowest richness.
- Good for messages to many receivers. Little feedback is expected.
- Newsletters, reports are examples, as shown in Figure 4.6.

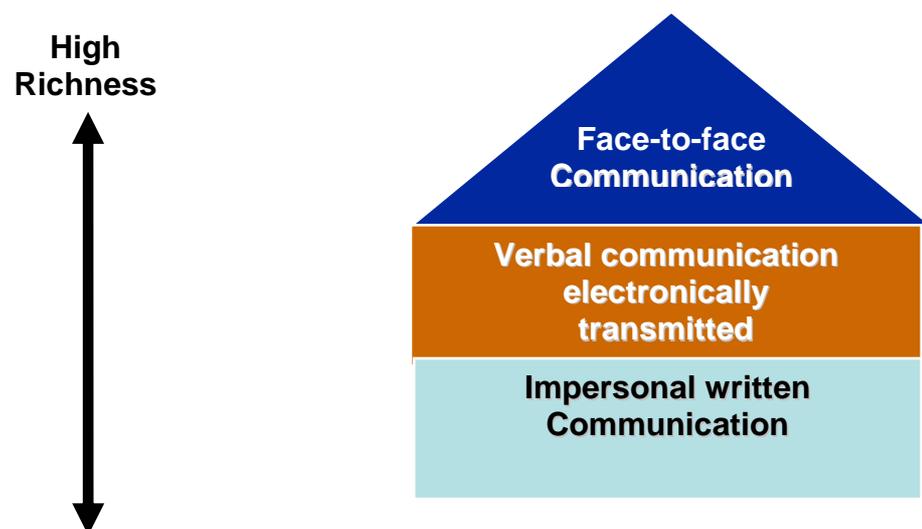


Figure 4.6: Information richness and media type



5) E-Mail Trends

- E-mail use is growing rapidly in large firms, and there is even special e-mail etiquette:
- Words in all CAPITALS are seen as “screaming” at the receiver.
- Punctuate your messages for easy reading and don't ramble on.
- Pay attention to spelling and treat like a written letter.
- E-mail has allowed telecommuting, where workers can work from home and be in touch with e-mail.



6) Communication Networks

- Networks show information flows in an organization.
- Wheel Network: information flow to and from one central member, as shown in Figure 4.7.
- Chain Network: members communicate with people next to them in sequence.
- Wheel and Chain networks provide for little interaction.
- Circle Network: members communicate with others close to them in terms of expertise, office location, etc.
- All-Channel Network: found in teams, with high levels of communications between each member and all others.

Communication
Networks in
Groups &
Teams

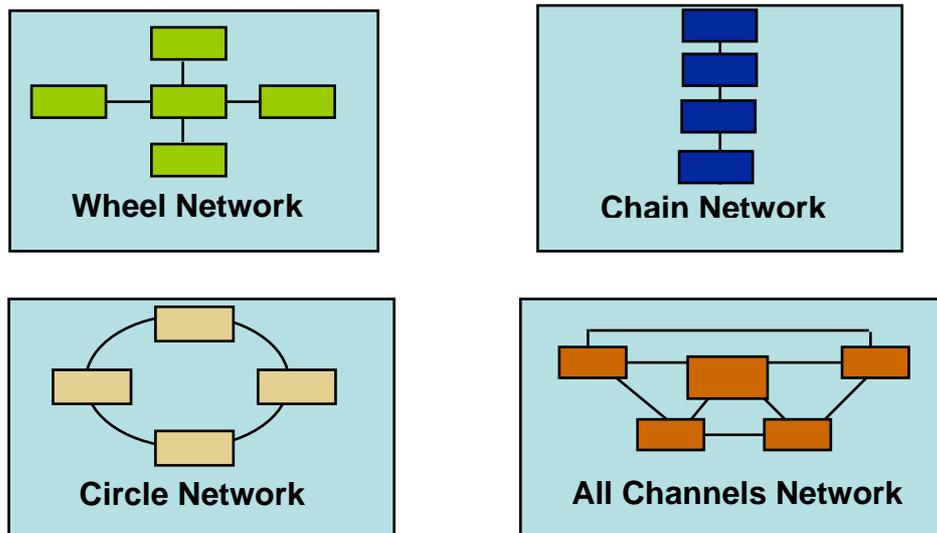


Figure 4.7: Communication network

Communication Networks in Groups & Teams

Organization chart depicts formal reporting channels.

- Communication is informal and flows around issues, goals, and projects.
- Vertical Communication: goes up and down the corporate hierarchy.
- Horizontal Communication: between employees of the same level.
 - Informal communications can span levels and departments.
- Grapevine: informal network carrying unofficial information through the firm.

Communication Skills for Managers as Senders



Communication Skills for Managers as Senders

- ✓ Send clear and complete messages.
- ✓ Encode messages in symbols the receiver understands.
- ✓ Select a medium appropriate for the message AND monitored by the receiver.
- ✓ Avoid filtering (holding back information) and distortion as the message passes through other workers.
- ✓ Ensure a feedback mechanism is included in the message.
- ✓ Provide accurate information to avoid rumors.
- ✓ Pay Attention to what is sent as a message.
- ✓ Be a good listener: don't interrupt.
- ✓ Ask questions to clarify your understanding.
- ✓ Be empathetic: try to understand what the sender feels.
- ✓ Understand linguistic styles: different people speak differently.
 - Speed, tone, pausing all impact communication.
 - This is particularly true across cultures.

Managers should expect and plan for this.



Assessment 4.1

Communication & Distributed Leadership

	Statement	Self	Group
01	I/we share ideas.		
02	I/we share feelings when appropriate.		
03	I/we share materials or resources.		
04	I/we volunteer for roles, which help the group accomplish the task (e.g., timekeeper).		
05	I/we volunteer for roles, which help to maintain a harmonious working group (e.g., encourage everyone to participate).		
06	I/we-clarify the purpose of the meeting.		
07	I/we set or call attention to time limits.		
08	I/we ask for help, clarification, or technical assistance when needed.		
09	I/we praise team members' contributions.		
10	I/we ask team member's opinions.		

11	I/we use head nods, smiles, and other facial expressions to show interest/approval.		
12	I/we offer to explain or clarify.		
13	I/we paraphrase other team members' contributions		
14	I/we energize the group with humor, ideas, or enthusiasm when motivation is low.		
15	I/we relieve tension with humor.		
16	I/we check for others' understanding of the concepts discussed.		
17	I/we summarize outcomes before moving to the next agenda item.		



Assessment 4.2

Trust Building

	Statement	Self	Group
01	I/we arrive at meetings on time.		
02	I/we stay for the duration of the meeting.		
03	I/we participated in the establishment of the group's goal.		
04	I/we shared individual personal goals.		
05	I/we encourage everyone to participate.		
06	I/we use member's names.		
07	I/we look at the speaker.		
08	I/we do not use "put-downs."		
09	I/we use an appropriate volume and voice tone.		
10	I/we follow through on next steps.		
11	I/we have a procedure to set personal and group goals and evaluate progress.		

Groups &
Teams Impact
Effectiveness



Groups & Teams Impact Effectiveness

Group Dynamics

- Dynamics affect how a group or team functions.
- Group size: affects how a group performs.
- Normally, keep group small (2 to 9 members).
- Small groups interact better and tend to be more motivated.
- Use large groups when more resources are needed.
- Division of labor is possible with large group.
- Group Tasks: impacts how a group interacts.
- Task interdependence shows how work of one member impacts another.
- As interdependence rises, members work closer together, as shown in Figure 4.8.

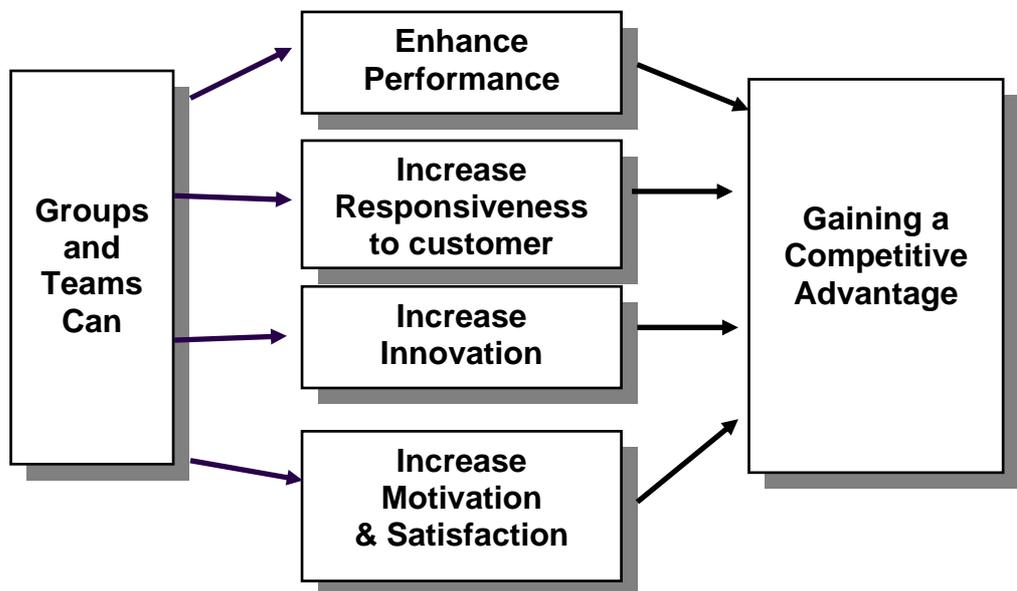


Figure 4.8: Groups and teams impact effectiveness