**Chapter 1: Understanding Teams**

**Class Activities**

**Activity 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF A GROUP**

Objective: To understand the characteristics of a group.

Activity: In small groups (3-4 members), think of all the teams to which you have belonged and/or teams with which you are very familiar. As a group, agree on a final list of 20 teams for this activity. Then refer to Table 1.1 (Levi 5e, shown below) and for each of the characteristic, make a tally mark for each team that bears that characteristic.

Discussion: Which characteristic was the most common feature? Which characteristic was the least common feature? Which of the characteristic(s) do you think is the most defining feature of a group?

**Table 1.1** Characteristics of a Group

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Goal Orientation | People joining together for some purpose and to achieve some goal |
| Interdependent | People who have some type of relationship, see connections among themselves, or believe they share a common fate |
| Interpersonal Interaction | People who communicate and interact with one another |
| Perception of Membership | Recognition that there is a collective to which one belongs |
| Structured Relations | Roles, rules, and norms that control people’s interactions |
| Mutual Influence | Impact people have on one another because of their connections |
| Individual Motivation | Satisfaction of personal needs through membership in the group |

**Activity 2: TYPES OF WORK TEAMS**

Objective: To understand Sundstrom’s (1999) six types of work teams based upon their functions: production, service, management, project, action/performing, parallel/temporary.

Activity: In small groups (4-5 members), think of all the teams to which you have belonged and/or teams with which you are very familiar. Then categorize them into one of the six above types based upon the activities your team performed. Make sure you have at least one team in each category.

Discussion: Was it easy to classify? Did teams fall into one category or did some fall into multiple categories? To what extent do you think this type of classification is meaningful? How else may teams be classified other than by their functions?

**Activity 3: CLASSIFYING TEAMS**

Objective: To understand how teams may be classified by their power, leadership, decision-making, and interdependence of tasks as a work group, team, or self-managed team.

Activity: In small groups (4-5 members), think of all the teams to which you have belonged and/or teams with which you are very familiar. Then categorize them as a work group, team, or self-managed team. Make sure you have at least one team in each category.

Discussion: Was it easy to classify? Did teams fall into one category or did some fall into multiple categories? To what extent do you think this type of classification is meaningful? Which of these characteristics do you think is most important in classifying teams? What other characteristics would you include in classifying?

**Activity 4: USE OF TEAMS IN ROUTINE VERSUS NONROUTINE JOBS**

Objective: To understand how nonroutine jobs (i.e., jobs that involve more complexity, interdependence, uncertainty, variety) may be well suited for teamwork.

Activity: In small groups (3-4 members), think of a job that may be categorized as routine and one that may be categorized as nonroutine using the criteria provided in Levi 5e.

Discussion: For each job, discuss whether it is suited for teamwork or whether the work should be performed by individuals. Provide reasons for your analysis.