Chapter 4
Teamwork and Problem-Solving Skills
Changing Nature of the Workplace

- Foreign competition has led to many changes in the workplace.
- Workers began solving problems, making decisions, and working in teams.
- U.S. industry began making quality the number one priority.

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Changing Nature of the Workplace

- **Interpersonal skills**: Qualities of friendliness and sensitivity to others through communication.
- **Team**: A small group of people working together for a common purpose.
- **Quality**: A commitment by everyone in an organization to exceed customer expectations.
- **Quality assurance**: A variety of strategies used by a company to ensure that its products and services are of the highest quality.
- **Quality control**: Another term for quality assurance.
Teams in the Workplace

- In many companies, teams work on problem solving and increasing productivity.
- The typical team ranges from 5 to 15 people.
Pros and Cons of the Team Approach

- **Pros:**
  - Better, more creative decisions.
  - Faster gathering of information.
  - Accomplish more than individual workers.

- **Cons:**
  - May take more time to reach a decision.
  - Can be frustrating at times.
  - Not everyone can work effectively on a team.
Role of the Team in the Workplace

- Three common types of teams are:
  - Functional Teams.
  - Cross-Functional Teams.
  - Multifunctional Teams.
Functional Teams

- Functional team: Members have similar skills and expertise but could not do one another’s jobs.
  - Usually work in the same department.
  - Base problem solving on each member’s unique contribution.
Cross-Functional Teams

- **Cross-functional team**: Members work in different areas within a company.
  - Selected based on expertise and ability to contribute.
Multifunctional Teams

- **Multifunctional team**: Members are cross-trained so they can perform the same tasks as all other team members.
Self-directed team: Team with full responsibility for carrying out the assignment.

- Any type of team can be self-directed.
- Teams evaluate their own progress.
- They often hire, train, and evaluate team members.
Stages of Team Development

- Teams go through stages of development just like people do.
  - Stage 1: Forming – Members become acquainted, discuss purpose of team.
  - Stage 2: Storming – Members learn to trust and share feelings.
  - Stage 3: Norming – Members begin to work together and leaders emerge.
  - Stage 4: Performing – Members are committed to the team, work at peak efficiency.
Characteristics of an Effective Team

- Shares leadership.
  - Leaders and Authority
  - Leadership Qualities
- Rotates team roles.
- Stays focused.
- Works for the common good.
Shares Leadership

- Leadership is shared among members.
- Responsibility for team success or failure is shared.
- An effective leader listens and encourages.
Leadership: The capacity to direct a group.

Leadership and team skills are becoming essential for success as teams are emphasized more in the workplace.
Leaders and Authority

- **Position authority**: Specific powers given to a person as defined by the source of the title, which usually is the company management. Is usually less effective than earned authority.

- **Earned authority**: Power granted to a person by the other members of the group. Is usually more effective than position authority.
Skills and Qualities of a Good Leader

- Different roles require different types of leadership.
  - **Vision**: Knowing what is most important to a group and how to achieve it.
  - **Delegate**: To assign responsibility or authority to another person.
- Other qualities possessed by leaders include honesty, imagination, the desire to work hard, and good communication skills.
Rotates Team Roles

- All members are assigned roles and take turns in each role.
- Role rotation increases interest in team activities.
- Some roles that may be rotated are:
  - Leader.
  - Encourager.
  - Taskmaster.
  - Critic.
  - Recorder.
Stays Focused

- Keep a team focused on its mission by:
  - Using humor.
  - Taking breaks.
  - Listing goals.

- **Goal**: What you want to attain.

- **Gantt chart**: A graph that shows the steps of a task divided across a timetable.
Effective teams:

- Have members that understand the goal.
- Are able to set and meet deadlines.
- Encourage each other.
- Celebrate both team and individual accomplishments.
- Look for ways to improve.
Problem Solving

Problem: A difference between reality and expectation.

Problem solving: The process of making an expectation a reality.

- Workers are expected to solve problems.
- The problem-solving steps may be used by individuals or teams.
Steps in Problem Solving

- Identify and analyze the problem.
- Collect and analyze data.
- Consider possible solutions.
- Choose the best plan.
- Implement the plan.
- Observe, evaluate, and adjust.
Successful problem solving begins with determining and analyzing the problem.

Factors to consider when you try to determine the problem are criteria and constraints.

- **Criteria**: Standards you use to find the best solution.
- **Constraints**: Factors that may restrict or hinder your ability to solve the problem.
Collect and Analyze Data

- Gather and assess information.
- Develop your questions while you collect data.
- Organize your data in a form that your team members can easily understand and apply.
Consider Possible Solutions

- List as many solutions as you can without worrying about their quality.
- Rank them by their quality and practicality.
- Add details to the plausible solutions or try to combine multiple ideas.
Choose the Best Plan

- Pick the best idea from the top three.
- Evaluate this solution in terms of the problem, your evaluation criteria, and your constraints.
- After all options have been considered, you should have a solution.
Implement the Plan

- At this point, you should be confident in the solution to your problem.
- Now it is time to carry out your plan.
Observe, Evaluate, and Adjust

- This is one of the most important steps in problem solving.
- Carefully observe and evaluate your plan and make adjustments as necessary.
- Whether your plan fails or succeeds greatly depends on how it meets your evaluation criteria.
- If your plan fails, start over with step one.
Aids to Problem Solving

- **Brainstorming**: Technique to develop many ideas in a short time.
- **Compromise**: Both sides give up something of value to help solve a problem.
- **Consensus**: All members of a group fully accept and support the decision.
Managing Conflict

- **Conflict:** A hostile situation resulting from opposing views.
- Disagreements are bound to occur in the workplace.
- In teams, the individuals are responsible for preventing conflict.

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Managing Conflict

- Know when to intervene.
- Address the conflict.
- Identify the source and importance of the conflict.
- Identify possible solutions.
- Develop an acceptable solution.
- Implement and evaluate.