

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Building and Managing Teams

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Effective modern leaders use focused work teams to solve business problems and to make business processes more efficient.

A work team is a temporary committee formed of employees collectively charged with responsibility for solving specific problems. Team members study their problem, suggest improvements in how products are created or services delivered, and then disband. Team members with different competencies and perspectives are chosen based on their relevance for solving the problem at hand. If the problem to be worked on touches multiple departments, representative employees from those departments are on the team. The diversity of team member's combined experience and hands-on knowledge regarding business processes means that they are more likely to come up with innovative and effective solutions than are management types who have a more abstracted understanding of business processes. By efficiently optimizing details of business procedure, teams free leaders to spend more time attending to the more abstract but vitally important customer experience. Teams are also good for moral as they generate high levels of involvement by empowering employees.

Efficiently cutting across layers of hierarchy to solve problems, work teams are one of the more efficient tools at a leader's disposal for orchestrating organizational change. With creative leadership, teams may address a variety of issues, including:

Operations teams are designed to streamline and make more efficient the way an organization's products are created or services are delivered.

Process improvement teams are designed to evaluate and improve work processes (e.g. responding to a customer complaint).

Quality teams are designated to measure, monitor and manage the quality of output for a division or organization.

Planning teams are designed to consider alternatives to current strategies and propose new strategies or plans for addressing issues of concern.

Advisory teams report to executives on a range of issues effecting the organization (Usually having representatives from multiple levels in the organizational hierarchy).

Successful new leaders must develop skills in creating and managing teams. When properly managed, teams can be a major asset. When poorly managed, they can often be counterproductive. The new leader faces the challenge of using teams creatively and effectively.

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