

## Unit 3

### TEAM PERFORMANCE

This unit is about leading the team in planning, reviewing and achieving the work to meet required objectives.

**At the end of this unit you will be able to:**

**Understand the team objective(s) and plan for achievement:**

- Explain how to develop given directions into clear objectives
- Plan and allocate the work of the team to meet objectives
- Explain to the team the objectives and responsibilities for achieving the objective(s)

**Monitor and review the progress and standard of the team's work:**

- Monitor the progress of the team against objectives
- Identify actions to be taken if work deviates from agreed standards
- Describe how to review any changes to original work objectives

**Provide feedback to individuals or the team on work performance:**

- Explain how to give feedback on work performance to an individual or team
- Describe how to give performance improvement feedback
- Explain how to propose and agree work improvement suggestions with higher management

### Introduction

**On 25 May 1961 John F. Kennedy in an address to Congress made the following statement:**

"First, I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth."



Thus was initiated one of the biggest, most expensive, imaginative, technically challenging and risky projects of modern times. His goal was achieved on July 24 1969 with the successful completion of the project, when Apollo 11 splashed down safely in the Pacific, after an epic 195 hr. 18 min. 35 sec. expedition to the moon, during which, on 20 July 1969, the Lunar Module's commander Neil Armstrong stepped off the Lunar Module's ladder and onto the moon's surface.

In contrast, the Millennium Dome, a project to celebrate the new millennium, originally conceived in the 90's under John Major's Conservative government and subsequently extended and redefined under Tony Blair's Labour government was constructed, opened and finally closed on 31 December 2000, a few hours before the start of the new millennium!

What these two examples have in common is that they are both projects; where they differ is that one was successful and the other was not. In this unit we will be looking at projects, the team performance factors that must be considered to ensure that they are brought to a successful conclusion, and the role of the team leader in achieving this.

### What is a project?

One of the main reasons that a group of people work as a team is so that they can undertake work that is recognised as a clearly defined 'project'. That is work which is either additional to the main business of an organisation, e.g. implementing a new system or procedure, or work that arrives as a separate 'package' such as a contract to deliver a specific product or service. You may be leading a team that is charged with implementing a single, discrete project, or you may work for an organisation whose work is predominately project-based, such as a design-based company, or a supplier of particular services. In the first instance, you are likely to find yourself as a team leader, occasionally. In the second instance, team leading will be the basis of all your work and you may find yourself leading different teams on different projects.

Whatever your circumstance, the job of team leader is the same; you are leading your team to work effectively together on a series of tasks that as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. You are, in other words, a **project manager**.

### 3.1 Team leading as the project manager

#### The project manager will be the person who:

1. Manages the project for the client
2. Delivers the objectives

#### He or she should be:

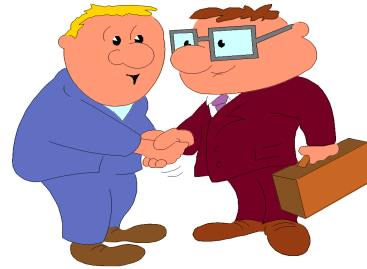
- A good communicator
- A good observer
- A good organiser
- Good at coping with difficulties
- Able to do simple maths
- Computer literate or able to be trained
- Capable of establishing a good rapport with the client

**Note:** If he/she is not all of these things alone, the project manager needs to choose others to fill these gaps when selecting team members.

## The Initiator (or 'client' - if external) will:

Set the client's requirements, i.e.

- Objectives
- Scope
- Deliverables
- Related projects
- Constraints
- Assumptions



They also give or obtain financial authority for the project.

### 3.2 Defining a project

A project is work undertaken to achieve a specific goal.

It must have a defined set of objectives and a clear **start** and **finish** point. This is what differentiates a project (whether short or long term) from an ongoing process or routine matter within the office.

A project can be something small and simple with minimum costs, e.g. painting a front door, or it can be more involved and more costly, e.g. decorating the whole of a 3-bedroom house.

#### There are five stages to any project:

1. Initiation of the project
2. Planning of the project
3. Motivating the team members
4. Monitoring the project
5. Finalising the project

#### Initiation of the project

You, or someone within your organisation, will identify a need to achieve something that is not already accomplished. This will necessitate the undertaking of the 'project' to achieve the desired outcome. The project may be for an internal or an external client. Whichever, they are the customer and you must liaise closely with them in order to fully understand what they require and to ensure that you can arrive at a set of S.M.A.R.T. objectives for the project on which you can agree.

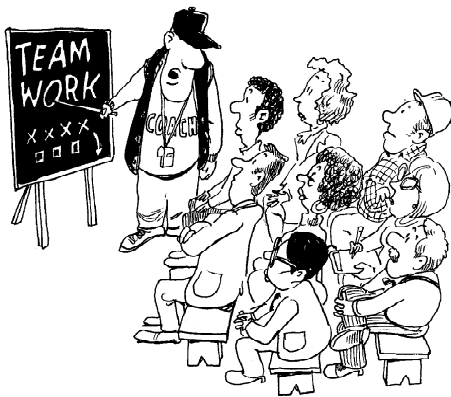
At the initial stage you must determine whether in fact the project is feasible. If, for instance, Health and Safety regulations dictate that no more than six people should work in the area currently provided within the Typing Resource area and five people already work there, you cannot plan a project for an additional three members of staff.

## Planning the project

At the outset of the project you must clearly define the goal. The project must have a planned, methodical approach in order to meet its objectives. Good planning will ensure that the project is not only completed on time, and within the budget limitations, but will also provide the blueprint for all required works, and should be easy to follow.

When planning the project involve members of the project team. This will ensure that you have the benefit of their experience and detailed knowledge, and will also help in gaining their commitment to achieving their specific goals. The plan is important not only for defining what you expect to achieve but as a tool for monitoring progress and assessing actual achievement made against that which was planned.

## Motivating the team players within the project



Most projects require a team of players rather than just one person. In business, project work offers new challenges and opportunities for staff to work together.

### **Together Everyone Achieves More.**

Distribute targets and workload around the team. Make sure that everyone knows what is expected – not only from them as individual players (individual goals or objectives), but from them as a whole (team objectives). Ensure that all objectives are S.M.A.R.T. and that individuals take ownership and responsibility for achieving

the objectives that they are allocated. Keep everyone informed so that good two-way communication is maintained at all times.

## Monitoring the project

Separate resources will need to be set aside for project work, and working within the agreed budgets, limitations and other constraints are important.

Monitoring certain aspects of the project, e.g. cost of the goods, availability and delivery time, will let you know whether you are likely to be successful in the project, whether you will need to alter any plans and whether there will be any problems.

Get input from others. For instance, check with your manager whether a realistic timescale has been set for the project.

At the planning stage you may need to look at the required end date and work backwards, negotiating how much time you may reasonably have to spend in getting the necessary goods delivered, for example.

By reviewing your plan at various stages you can identify possible problems (such as non-availability of goods and the need to find other suppliers) and you can then adjust the timescale, or goods required, as necessary.

Indeed you may need to revise your project plan several times before the project is actually finished, but at all times at least you will be in charge of the project - and it won't take charge of you. Don't forget though - whilst you can remain a little flexible in your planning - always keep all parties concerned up to date with what is happening and discuss the need for alterations as they arise.

### **Finalising the project**

When all steps have been taken and all factors are in place to achieve the objective set, then the project can be deemed to be finalised.

#### **Checklist to identify the key features of project work.**

##### **A project must:**

- Have a clearly defined start and finish
- Require a certain number of activities to be undertaken for its completion
- Usually require a team of personnel (rather than just one person) to complete it
- Be a 'one-off' procedure as opposed to an ongoing routine process

### **3.3 Work breakdown structure**

In its early stages, the work breakdown structure will show only the work that needs to be done but will not dwell on how long it may take. Neither does it sort out the order in which the work will be carried out. It is a general, first overview.

Each of these steps is then further divided.

Below this, there can be a further division of activities related to final delivery or deliverables.

This will represent the work that needs to be done to complete the project successfully.

#### **Note**

Each section of your work breakdown structure does not have to have the same number of steps to complete. Some stages will require more work than others to accomplish. However, the team should co-ordinate their activities and regularly review them to ensure that all 'cogs of the wheel' will be in place to turn at the same time at project end.

The final part of your work breakdown structure may be called a work package or activity. These are activities which are attributable to one person, a team of people, or a subcontractor. At this stage if you have not already done so, you will need to look at who in your team should be responsible for these activities.



