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A CASE STUDY OF THE EFFECT ON PERSONNEL MANagements PRODUCTIVITY IN AN ENGINEERING PACKAGING COMPANY

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Abstract

Employee management plays an important role in the productivity of any organisation. The topic studies the aspects that create an environment conducive to good performance. The findings can assist organisational leaders in creating successful turnaround strategies and streamline their business processes.

Although people management has been around for some time, many companies still experience personnel problems that affect productivity. The common problem for South Africa is a plague of strikes that hit us year after year. A question might be asked, why affected organisations have not come up with pre-emptive strategies.

This research uses a case study in an engineering packaging company, SPZ, to determine the reasons behind people's behaviour at work, why they react in a certain way, and how they can be managed effectively. The case study also shows results of the interviews conducted on a group of 15 random sampled employees. This will uncover the human side that could cause a plant with good equipment to be unproductive. The case present information on the company and the problems it is facing.

The case study method was better suited because it digs deeper into the problems and provides a snapshot on the relationship between workers and managers. This dissertation includes literature studies on the topics dealing with teamwork, leadership, communication, negotiation, and motivation. In addition, how they relate or affect productivity.

The biggest challenge at SPZ is lack of effective formal communication in the organisation starting a chain reaction, fuelled by continental cultural differences, manifesting itself in the form of low productivity. There is management productivity problem; some foreign managers were not prepared enough to manage a South African workforce.
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Section A: Introduction

Introduction

The way an organisation manages its staffs has a big impact on its performance. Although nowadays most processes have been automated that has in turn required fewer employees, machines cannot fully eliminate the need for human intervention in these processes. Management directs the effective use of both machine and human resources to achieve organisational goals. A workforce needs to be directed and motivated in a way that will benefit both the organisation and the employees. Leading, communication, negotiations, creating teams, and motivation are some of the major roles and responsibilities of management.

Leaders use the power they have to exert influence to achieve these goals. Foremost, a leader must have excellent communication skills in order to achieve influential power. Without influence, it can be very difficult to keep a motivated workforce. Motivation determines the followers’ determination to work for the organisation. When employees are not determined to work, the organisation suffers and management must uncover the forces behind this behaviour before it starts to lose its valued workforce and productivity. When employees leave a company, they carry their expertise out with them. Higher staff turnover pushes up expenses and reduces output during training period. This also greatly disturbs harmony and morale within an organisation.

Some challenging goals such as technological changes and competitive pressures may necessitate formation of special teams. Special teams can be a powerful tool if applied appropriately. There are various kinds of teams, which needs to be of adequate size, have a good blend of skills, and managed effectively. Apart from achieving their objectives, they have the power to unite people.

Along the way to achieving these goals, conflicts can arise, necessitating a need for negotiations. Conflicts cannot be avoided because people will not always have similar needs and views; it is natural for conflicts to occur. This situation should be viewed as an opportunity to bring employees closer together by forming partnership to find acceptable solutions to all parties. When the situation gets grim, a mediator can be assigned to intervene in the conflict.

An organisation is the way it is because of its workers. Employees are the most valuable asset of any organisation and as such, business leaders should look after them and invest in them. To assess the effectiveness of management productivity it is therefore useful to evaluate the effectiveness of the interaction and the relationship between subordinates and superior. This paper will attempt to uncover the human behaviour side that has led SPZ plant to low productivity.
Research Proposal

A written proposal was submitted for the purpose of:

1. Obtaining approval from the university.
2. Presenting the problem the company is facing.
3. Indicating the scope of the research.

Research Objective and Methodology

The objectives of this research are to:

- Determine the human factors that contribute to low productivity and how it affected it.
- Find ways of managing these factors to improve performance.

This will be accomplished by reviewing the available literature concerning personnel management. It will shed light on personnel management dynamics and provide clues on the approach that can be taken to improve staff performance. Various theories will be discussed that can be used to explain people’s behaviour. Lastly, a study will be conducted on a company to establish if these theories still hold.

A structured approach for this study was adapted from Quinlan as shown in Figure 1 below [1].
Concluding Summary

The way people behave and how they relate to one another in a work environment is an important factor when analysing their performance. This paper will present an outline of theories and concepts using five topics (leadership, communication, motivation, teams, and negotiation), explaining how people-to-people interaction affects the amount of effort and dedication they put on their work. A case study examining a packaging company, SPZ, will be presented.

A literature review of the above-mentioned topics follows next.
Section B: Literature Review

Chapter 1: Leadership

1.1 Introduction

Some subject matter usually receives a great deal of attention during turbulence times; leadership is one of them. Leadership is not necessarily management, although it is a crucial element of productive management. In addition, an effective leader does not necessarily make a good manager. Leadership is the process of stimulating a drive on others to work hard toward completing a crucial task. Influence can be any behaviour by one individual, which alters the behaviour, attitude, and feelings of another individual [2].

A successful leader influences others to follow his or her ideas while a successful manager gets his or her subordinates to accomplish company objectives [3]. According to Warren Bennis, a leader is concerned with doing the right thing, while a manager is concerned with doing things right [4]. A manager is formally appointed by an organisation whereas a leader can be informal as well. An organisational leader is an individual who has the power to manage and influence subordinates toward achieving organisational objectives. Effective leaders are those who give something and get something in return (social exchange process) [5]. Figure 2 below indicates elements of Leadership [6].

Power is the ability to influence behaviours of others; it is at the centre of leadership. Power is important over and above formal authority because the cooperation of others may be necessary. Even with authority, it is not always possible to direct subordinates’ efforts. Power and influence are the means through which a manager can cope with these situations.

Throughout the early days of leadership research, many people thought that certain people were born to be leaders as indicated by the Great Man theory. Later on researchers suggested a behavioural approach to leadership. They concluded that leaders become what they are by the way they conduct themselves and behave toward others. Since the Great man and the behavioural approach could not provide satisfactory explanations as to why certain people become great leaders, a situational approach was developed. This approach suggested that although traits and behaviour are important, chance and circumstances play a major role.

There is no single best approach to leadership, although, a person’s personality and circumstances plays a major role.
Figure 2: Three Elements of Leadership
1.2 Power and Influence

The amount of power one has is largely dependent on the degree to which the other person is dependent, not the degree of formal authority [3]. Managers usually have power over employees because they are dependent for things such as raises and promotions. On the contrary, a subordinate can have power over the manager when the manager is dependent for such things as informal contacts and valuable information. Power does not operate on a zero sum principle; in order for someone to gain power, it is not necessary for someone else to give it up or lose it [7].

To the extent that an individual is dependent on another, they are possibly subject to the other person’s power. Figure 3 below shows the balance of power between manager and subordinate [3]. Managers can boost their power by allowing others to see that they are reliant on them to get the job done [3]. When managers attempt to influence, employees have three basic responses: commitment, compliant, or resistance [8]. Commitment results when the manager is also a leader. Compliance is the result of a strict manager. Resistance, On the other hand, occurs when the power base is fragile, or is inconsistent with the situation.

Figure 3: Balancing Managerial and Subordinate Power
1.3 Forms of Power and Influence

To have power one must seem capable to control something significant to the follower, which will create dependency. That something consists of the basic needs described by Maslow. Figure 4 below shows leader-subordinate model [3]. Power can take many forms; researchers French and Raven came up with these five bases of power [9]:

1. Coercive power; can work when the follower believes that the influencer is able to punish in a way that will prevent satisfaction of an active need.

2. Reward power; works when the follower believes that the influencer can satisfy an active need.

3. Expert power; is effective when the follower believes that the influencer has exclusive knowledge that is valued.

4. Referent power; it centres on the characteristics of the influencer that causes the follower to be sharply attracted to the influencer.

5. Legitimate/traditional power is useful when the follower believes that the influencer has the right to issue orders.

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**Figure 4: Leader-Subordinate Influence Model**
1.3.1 Coercive Power

Coercive power stems from authority to punish or recommend punishment [10]. This is the power to force compliance through psychological, emotional, or physical threat [8]. Influence through fear is what most people think about when they criticise power. Fear is effective when it threatens a fundamental need [3]. Coercive methods work whenever a person genuinely wants something and believes it can be taken. Even in nonviolent situations, fear is the usual reason why people consciously or unconsciously allow themselves to be influenced [3]. However, it can be an expensive form of influence in the end if it is not utilised properly.

1.3.2 Reward Power

Reward offering is one of oldest and most effective means of influence, the power to grant or withhold rewards. Reward power influences by positively reinforcing behaviour desired by the leader with something of value. However, for this to work the follower must perceive the reward as sufficiently valuable. The difficult part is identifying what the follower perceives as rewarding, a limit to the rewards that a manager can offer, and rewards that certain employees can receive [3].

1.3.3 Legitimate Power

Legitimate power influences through formal authority. Historically, tradition has been the customary way to influence. This method works if the follower has adopted values that make her or him believe in the leader’s capability. An understated interest in tradition is that it simplifies the decision-making process. It is an attractive mechanism, which has the advantage of being impersonal. It is fast and predictable. The biggest drawback of tradition happens when it is overused to support arguments against doing things differently. Organisations using tradition in this manner may eventually face extinction [3].

1.3.4 Referent Power

Referent power is the ability to influence through identification. This type of power generally sets leaders apart from non-leaders [8]. Referent power bases on personal identification, imitation, and charisma. Charisma has no logic or tradition, but relies on the force of the leader’s characteristics or abilities. Furthermore, charismatic influence also depends on the follower’s personal identification with the leader and the need for affiliation and esteem [3]. People tend to be influenced more by the people who have traits they admire and who embody models of what they would like to be [11]. In an organisation, this is important because managers often serve as powerful role models for subordinates. Expert power and referent power mostly generates a strong follower commitment [10].
1.3.5 Expert Power

Expert power is the influence through rational faith, based on the follower’s perception that the influencer has unique expertise. The influence is rational in this case because the follower’s decision to obey is conscious and logical. A person can exercise this power when she has information or ideas that others perceive as vital. On the other hand, some people may not share information with that manager if they perceive that manager to be an expert, which could result in less effective decisions [3]. Usually, rational faith takes time to build and if the expert turns out to be wrong, influential power can decrease.

1.4 Persuasion and Participation

Nowadays, people have become more educated on the average and the abilities of the followers have come closer to those of their leaders [12]. As a result, it has become progressively crucial to seek cooperation of followers in order to influence. Persuasion and participation can stimulate this active cooperation of followers [3].

Persuasion is the effective communication of one’s viewpoints. Here the leader does not tell the follower what to do, but rather sells the idea to the follower. Persuasion influences the potential follower that obeying the leader will be in their best interest. Influence by persuasion can be slow and uncertain, and the leader may have to start afresh most of the time. A person influenced by persuasion may not need constant supervision since they are likely to exceed minimum requirements [3].

Influence through participation recognises the power and abilities of the follower. Here the leader does not impose opinions, but through guidance. Participation appeals to higher-level needs and it is only useful if such needs are active motivators [3].

1.5 Trait Theory (Great Man Theory)

Trait theory states that effective leaders have particular sets of characteristics in common. Irrespective of the situation in which they find themselves in, their leadership skills will emerge. This was the first systematic attempt to understand leadership [12]. It is either you have the right ingredients to be a leader, or you do not [13]. These characteristics include desire to lead, level of intelligence and knowledge, attractiveness, integrity, judgement, initiative, social and economic background, and level of confidence.

However, some researchers have concluded that a person does not become a leader by virtue of possession of some combination of traits, but it is entirely situational [14]. Traits alone are not enough to create a successful leader. The leader’s behaviour is also a factor. Because trait theory could not be validated, other theorists and researchers emerged proposing several theories.
1.6 **Behavioural Approach**

This approach suggests that the leader’s conduct determines effectiveness. It also suggests that there is one best method of leadership. It is more likely that the best method depends on the nature of the situation and that when a situation changes the method should also change accordingly [15]. Behavioural leadership categorise leadership methods by how the leader behaves towards the follower. Two basic leadership behaviours have received attention: job-centred (concern for production) leadership and employee-centred (concern for people) leadership [13].

1.6.1 **Autocratic and Democratic Leadership**

An autocratic managerial leader is authoritarian. This leader has sufficient base of power and does not hesitate to use it; the leader assumes McGregor’s Theory X. Because of these assumptions, subordinates are allowed little room in making decisions and all work are closely supervised. When an autocrat avoids negative coercive power to use reward power to influence, he/she is a *benevolent autocrat* [1]. Nonetheless, the leader retains the rigid style. Figure 5 below shows an authoritarian’s view on leadership and productivity [3]. The team under this leadership performs well as long as the leader is around [13].

![Figure 5: Authoritarian View](image-url)
The democratic leader's style is the opposite to that of an autocrat; it assumes McGregor Theory Y. The democratic leader influences by means that appeal to higher-level needs and does not impose his or her will on subordinates [1]. Subordinates are involved in decision-making and enjoy wide latitude in executing tasks. Instead of constantly checking up on people, the manager waits until subordinates complete the task before making an assessment. The team under this leadership is more likely to perform well even when the leader is absent [13].

1.6.2 Job-Centred and Employee-Centred Leadership

A job-centred manager is primarily concerned with the work design and reward systems that increase productivity. In contrast, an employee-centred manager is primarily concerned with improving human relations. This manager's behaviour is similar to that of participative style leader. During his research on this topic, Linkert concluded that management style was consistently either job-centred or employee-centred [16]. The outcomes of this research also indicated that an employee-centred style improves performance [16]. Later on behavioural scientists found that some managers’ leadership style to be both job-centred and employee-centred and that employee-centred style does not always improve performance [3].

1.7 Two-Dimensional View of Leadership Style

The findings of Linkert and McGregor gave a strong motivation to the participative style of management. However, poor results can be experienced by simply switching to employee centred and participating styles. A group at the Ohio State University did a research about this and found that although an autocrat is never a democratic leader, it is possible for a manager to be highly concerned with the job itself and yet still show a great deal of concern for human relations [3]. Blake and Mouton then modified the Ohio Studies and classified leader-managers as having five basic styles [17]:

1. Impoverished; the leader exerts minimum effort to get the job done.

2. Country club; the leader concentrates on good human relations, but has little concern for task efficiency.

3. Authority-obedient; the leader is highly concerned with task efficiency, but has little regards for subordinates’ morale.

4. Organisational; the leader manages adequate level of performance by balancing efficiency with sensibly good morale.

5. Team; the leader influences workers to commit to organisational goals, leading to high morale and efficiency.
1.8  Situational Approach

Neither trait nor behavioural approach were able to give a consistent relationship. This does not imply that traits and behaviour are unimportant. Thus, contemporary leadership theory has moved towards a situational or contingency approach. Hersey and Blanchard’s situational theory also states that leaders should adjust their styles to match the followers’ readiness [18]. Worker readiness is the ability and willingness to take responsibility for own behaviour at work.

1.8.1  Fiedler’s Contingency Model

Fiedler’s model argues that leadership effectiveness depends on the interaction between leadership style and the amount of control the leader has over the situation. He also suggested that two basic leader orientations are useful, relationship-oriented, and task-oriented [5]. A Least Proffered Co-worker (LPC) scale measures these orientations. A favourable (high LPC) description of a least preferred co-worker suggests a relationship-oriented leader, whereas an unfavourable description (low LPC) suggests a task-oriented leader [5] [12]. The model assessed leaders by conduct and performance of the people they manage. This model made a significant contribution by concentrating on the situation and identifying three factors that influence leadership effectiveness [19] [13]:

1. Leader-member relations; this includes the degree of confidence and loyalty shown by the subordinate in the leader, and personal appeal of the leader to the subordinate.

2. Task Structure; this refers to the extent to which subordinate duties are routine, well defined, and organised.

3. Position power; the amount of legitimate power linked with the leader’s position, which affects the capacity to reward and the level of support received from the formal organisation.

It is Fiedler’s view that a person’s leadership style is fixed, even though different leadership styles are appropriate in different situation [3]. Thus, to maximise performance, we should place managerial personnel in situations that best suit their fixed style [7]. See Figure 6 below for a graphic view of this theory [20]. Leadership style means the general behaviour (personality) of the leader towards the follower. Situational favourableness is the degree to which a situation allows or denies the leader a chance to influence.
1.8.2 Path-Goal Approach

Terence Mitchell and Robert House developed this approach, which emphasizes the need for managers to use the most appropriate style to the situation. Path-goal model suggests that the organizational leadership’s main aim is to clarify for subordinates the paths to desired goals. The model builds deeply on the expectancy theory of motivation. There are four leadership styles in this theory [21]:

1. Directive leadership; let employees know exactly what they are supposed to do and achieve.

2. Supportive leadership; the leader is approachable and friendly to employees, and shows concern for their welfare.

3. Participative leadership; involves subordinates in decision-making.

4. Achievement oriented leadership; sets challenging goals, shows confidence in employees, and have high expectations of them.
The path-goal theory suggests that the same leader uses these styles in different situations [12]. It also states that subordinates can be influenced to reach goals by shaping the paths to those goals—making the paths easier to travel. This can be achieved by [3]:

1. Providing clarity on what is expected.
2. Being supportive and removing frustrating barriers.
3. Directing subordinates toward goal attainment.
4. Arousing those subordinates’ needs over which the manager has some control and can satisfy.
5. Satisfying subordinates’ needs when the goal is reached.

1.8.3 Life Cycle Theory

According to this theory, the most effective leadership style varies with the maturity of the followers [3]. Maturity refers to the ability to take responsibility for one’s behaviour, desire for achievement, and one’s education and experience relative to the task. Four leadership styles can be identified for specific maturity levels of followers: telling, selling, participating, and delegating (see Figure 7 below) [22].

1. A telling style is appropriate when there is no willingness to take responsibility for the task.
2. A selling style is appropriate when employees are willing but unable to take responsibility.
3. A participative style is appropriate when employees can complete tasks on their own.
4. A delegating style is appropriate when subordinates are committed to working on their own.

Like other situational models, life cycle theory recommends an adaptive leadership style [22].
Strategic leadership is the ability to foresee, envision, sustain flexibility, think tactically, and work with others to introduce changes to establish a positive future for the organisation [23]. This positive future image motivates subordinates and provides direction for planning and goal settings [24]. Two kinds of visionary leadership are charismatic leadership and transformational leadership. Charisma is a Greek word meaning, “divine gift”. Charismatic leaders have strong, confident, dynamic personalities that attract followers and enable leaders to build strong bonds with them.

Transformational leadership goes beyond by generating awareness and acceptance of a group’s purpose and mission by getting employees to see beyond their own needs and
self-interest for the good of the organisation [13]. They make employees feel that they are an important element of the organisation. Transformational leaders put others’ needs ahead of their own and share risks with their followers. Thus, they are admired and can be counted on. Transformational approach relies heavily on the trait theory discussed earlier. In contrast, a transactional leader motivates followers by exchanging rewards for service, relying more on coercive power and reward power [25].

1.10 Conclusions

A leader must acquire power with which they can exert influence. A good balance of power between manager and subordinates build good relations that pave the way for good productivity. The best forms of power are those that do not leave the follower resentful but respectful and willing to follow.

A good leadership style is the one that integrates individual traits, conduct, and circumstances. Circumstances can put anyone in a leadership role but it is character, behaviour, and the ability to adapt that can keep you there.

A potential leader must have a high level of emotional and or psychological intelligence, possess the ability to read, analyse, and relate to the situation and the people.

Persuasion and participation approach can come in very handy when faced with a difficult situation.

Following next is a chapter on communication skills.
Chapter 2: Communication

2.1 Introduction

The ability to communicate well is a critical leadership skill [7]. Organisations want to hire and promote individuals with outstanding communications skills. Communication is a process of sharing ideas, thoughts, and feelings with other people and having those people understand the original idea as intended. A message can be in a verbal or nonverbal format. Effective communication finds a convenient way to convey a message. Barriers prevent and distort this message from reaching its audience in its entirety resulting in a poor communication. This waste time, energy, and can lead to conflicts.

The main barriers to effective communication are noise, using an inappropriate channel, and manipulation of information. Noise refers to elements such as difficult language, emotions, judgement, and perception. Common language sits at the centre of any communication. It can cause confusions even when people are literally speaking the same language. A simple statement can be interpreted differently depending on the environment at which it was said. Furthermore, researchers have indicated that using both written and spoken means is effective at minimising misinterpretation [26].

In an organisational setting, information flows in all directions. To limit information overload and its effect at top-level management, gatekeepers/information filters can be used. Unfortunately, this has the potential to leave the final message distorted. This can be resolved by creating an environment and systems that promote the flow of information to the right people and places.

Effective communication occurs in an environment where people feel unrestricted to voice themselves.
2.2 Communication Process

On many instances, people fail to understand the message [3]. Moreover, John Miner commented that only about 50% of attempted communications results in mutual agreements [2].

A communicator sends a message to the receiver. The message is the idea and information that is sent through a channel, in the form of a language that the recipient receives, interprets, and gives feedback. This message can be in the form of words, body language, and or tone of voice. Basic elements of communication are the communicator, interpretation, encoding, message, channel, decoding, receiver, feedback, and noise. Figure 8 below indicates this process [3].

![Communication Process Diagram](Image)

2.2.1 Channel

A channel is a medium through which a message is carried. If this is not properly matched, it will be difficult to convey the message. Unfortunately, sometimes when the channel proves to be effective there is a tendency for overuse, thereby increasing the likelihood of overloading that channel. Researchers have indicated that employing both written and spoken means is usually more effective than just written [26].

2.2.2 Common Language

For a successful communication, the receiver must be able to translate the message in the way the sender intended; this is decoding. Sometimes the receiver may attach a different meaning or simply cannot fully understand the language used. Communication is the transmission of information and understanding in the form of words or through the use common symbols. Moreover, the meaning may depend on the receiver or group and not in the actual words.

Abstract and complex language is an unclear language and is a major obstacle to effective communication. This condition frequently forms the basis for many misunderstandings. When an individual uses technical jargons that the next person
cannot understand, he/she is using a complicated language, thereby losing that common understanding.

2.2.4 Noise

In communication context, noise is regarded as a hindrance that interferes with the clarity of the original message. Noise can also refer to a difficult language, or perceptual differences. However, ambiguous communication can sometimes be intentional, to leave room for new interpretation, for creative thinking, and for experimentation [27].

Emotional noise, cognitive distractions, and premature judgement are internal barriers while physical noise, information overload, and message complexity are external barriers [28]. Emotional noise refers to feelings such as stress, anxiety, or anger that affects the ability to concentrate. Cognitive distractions are things stuck on someone’s mind that prevents focus. Premature judgement occurs when we assume to know where the speaker is going with the conversation and stop listening carefully.

From time to time communication may not occur as frequently as we would like due to time pressures. Short-circuiting is a breakdown of the formally approved communication system that often results from time pressures [12]. This usually happens because of difficulties experienced when following the prescribe communication channels.

2.2.5 Feedback

Two-way communication necessitates feedback. This is the receiver's opportunity to respond, thereby allowing the sender to establish how the information was perceived. During feedback, the receiver becomes the sender thus reversing the roles. Feedback is a response made based on what is heard, seen, or read. Follow up is the assumption that the message may have been misunderstood and an attempt to determine whether the anticipated meaning was received.

2.3 Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication differs from verbal in that it does not use words, but uses a person’s behaviour and surrounding to send or complement a message. These are body posture and orientation, touch, physical appearance, personal space, paralanguage and silence, eye contact, gestures, and physical environment. They occur in many different combinations. These signals can be easily misinterpreted as words [12]. Researchers have found that at least 65% of the interpretation of a message comes from nonverbal communication [28]. These are often unintentional and unconscious.

A mixed message may result when the meaning of the words clash with that of the body language or environment. Nonverbal cues do not always have the same meaning all the time they are situational. Furthermore, other cultures may have different interpretation
of the same cue. Nonverbal cues often provide valuable information about others’ current feelings, moods, and emotions [29].

2.4 Communication flow

If the setting allows, communication can flow in all directions within an organisation. This type of flow is beneficial to organisations [30]. As information flows up, across, and down the organisation, distortions to the message can occur, some due to filtering. This is a tendency to screen messages to send only relevant information to avoid information overload (see Figure 9). On the other hand, filtering can be an intentional distortion of information to make it seem favourable to the recipient.

2.4.1 Downward Communication

In organisations, communication tends to run downhill like water, those at the top are more likely to initiate communication flows [31]. Downward communication moves from higher levels individual in the hierarchy to those at lower levels, usually, when the manager gives job-related information to a subordinate.

2.4.2 Upward Communication

Upward communication is as important as downward communication because it is often vital to receive input from lower levels to make thorough decisions. It can have a considerable impact on productivity and it informs management on what is taking place at lower levels. The type of information contained here is usually concerned with job related activities. Upward communication occurs less often, compared to downward communication. The information that managers receive from subordinates is more likely to be positive than negative due to information filtering.
2.4.3 Lateral Communication

Often ignored in the design of organisations is the horizontal communication [12]. This takes place between people at the same hierarchical level. This is the most frequent flow in most organisations with the messages being those of a coordinating nature. The advantage of lateral communication is that it promotes the formation of peer relationships [3]. According to a survey, most people say that this is ineffective [32]. Structures have a tendency to discourage and slow down lateral flows because information usually have to pass through a mutual superior and then back down again.

2.4.4 Diagonal Communication

Diagonal communication is the least used and members of an organisation use it when they cannot use other channels. This type of communication takes place between staff of different departments who may not be at the same level.

2.5 Filtering

Filters manipulate information so that the receiver perceives it as positive, a common occurrence in upward communication. This happens because upward communication carries control information with which management makes important decision. To deal with the problem of distortion and omission, redundancy, verification, and bypassing
can be used to improve information accuracy. Below is a list of some of the steps to take to encourage communication of bad news [27]:

1. Be accessible; do not be surrounded by gatekeepers.

2. Be approachable; create an atmosphere in which subordinates feel free to speak up.

3. Be surrounded by independent minds.

4. Run meetings that influence independent thinking and honest feedback.

5. Be discreet about sources; do not betray confidences.

6. Never shoot the messenger.

During a decision making process, there usually is a large quantity of information to deal with, thus, relevant information must be extracted. In this context, more information is not always better. Rather implement communication systems that ensure that the right information goes to the right place [33]. On the contrary, regulating communication flows can ensure smooth flow of information, thereby reducing communication overload. Then again, over filtering may promote the use of grapevines.

2.6 The Grapevine

The grapevine is a significant informal communication channel that exists in all organisations. It fulfils People’s need to communicate. It occurs as a casual conversation between people, especially during free times. Although it is often associated with rumours and inaccurate messages, and that it omits and distorts some details, the grapevine contains vital elements of the truth [31]. Furthermore, researchers have indicated that it is accurate more often than not [3]. It can be very useful in performing planned leaks because it spreads information faster than the formal channels [34]. To lessen the undesirable aspects of the grapevine is to improve the formal communication channels.

2.7 Interpersonal Communication

This is communication between individuals in face-to-face and group settings. People respond to what they perceive to be happening not to what is actually happening in their environment [3]. Four areas of information determine the flow of communication (see Figure 10) [35]:

1. The arena; this area is most favourable for effective interpersonal communication because both the sender and the receivers understand all the
information needed for effective communication. In this region, the sender and the receiver fully understand each other.

2. The blind spot results when only others know the relevant information, communication suffers as a result.

3. The façade; this is when others do not have the necessary information. Some may resort to superficial communication. The situation can be particularly detrimental when a subordinate knows more than the direct superior does.

4. The unknown; in this region, no one knows the relevant information, resulting in a complete communication breakdown. It may happen when both parties do not understand each other.

Sharing of information with others increases the arena thereby reducing the façade. Feedback from those who know can improve communication by lessening the blind spot, resulting in a corresponding increase in the arena. Feedback depends on the active cooperation of others, while exposure requires the active behaviour of oneself and listening of others. Below are the techniques for improving interpersonal communication [3]:

1. Clarify your ideas.
2. Be sensitive to potential semantics problem.
3. Be sensitive to body language and tone of voice.
4. Be empathetic and open.
5. Obtain feedback.

Interpersonal style refers to the way in which an individual prefers to interact with others [31]. Effective interpersonal communication is of great value to managers for effective performance since they provide information, instruction, and commands that subordinates must understand. Four different managerial styles can be identified [12]:

1. Type A: These managers use neither exposure nor feedback. The unknown region dominates because managers are not willing to increase the area of their knowledge or that of others. This kind of managers usually displays the characteristics of an autocratic leader.

2. Type B: Some managers somewhat wish to have a satisfying relationship with their subordinates, but are let down by their personalities. The façade is the
prevalent feature of interpersonal relationships when managers overuse feedback to the exclusion of exposure. Type B managers often display some characteristics of a permissive leadership.

3. Type C: Managers who value their own views and thoughts over those of others, they use exposure at the cost of feedback. The blind spot is increased as result. Managers of this style usually have subordinates who are resentful, hostile, and insecure.

4. Type D: A good balance of exposure and feedback create the most effective interpersonal communication style. This style increases the arena thereby increasing communication effectiveness.

![Figure 10: Regions of Information (Johari Window)](image)

2.8 Communication Breakdown

2.8.1 Common Language

In a culturally diverse country like South Africa, people speak different languages both literally and metaphorically, and there is often big differences in educational levels further affecting the general understanding of even the basic instructions [31]. Communication is most effective when individuals speaks the same language and have similar perception, but tends to break down when they are not, as shown in Figure 11 [7].
This frame of reference can be used to determine how individuals interpret messages and information, determining if the message will be distorted. Individuals from different levels, backgrounds, and groups may not see things in the same light. A word can have different meanings between individuals, and the receiver may not fully understand the intended communication in similar terms (semantics variation). Semantics is the study of the way we use words and their meanings.

![Diagram of communication process with sender’s perceptions, message, feedback, and receiver’s perceptions, showing perceptual distortions such as stereotypes, halo effect, selective perception, and projection.]

**Figure 11: Influences of Perception on Communication**

### 2.8.2 Selective Perception

Selective perception takes place when individuals block out information that is in conflict with their beliefs. This will see messages that disagree with preconceived views either not administered or distorted to confirm those preconceptions. A halo effect is a good example, it occurs when one quality is used to develop an overall impression of an individual [7]. Selective perception results in stereotyping [12]. This is a barrier to communication because people will only hear things that confirm their stereotypes. Stereotyping is assigning qualities commonly associated with a particular group or an individual.

### 2.8.3 Listening

Bad listening habits can create a chain of communication breakdowns. Listening is supposed to consume half of the time [36]. This requires listening with an understanding, and paying attention. There are four basic steps to effective listening as illustrated in Figure 12 below [28]. Listening can be classified into counterfeit and authentic listening styles. See Table 1 and Table 2 for a brief explanation of these concepts. The following is a guide to effective listening [7] [27]:

```plaintext
---
```
1. Listen with intensity; give full attention to the speaker.

2. Listen with empathy; try to understand from the speaker's point of view.

3. Demonstrate acceptance; show that you are listening with an open mind.

4. Take responsibility for completeness; encourage the speaker to give complete information by asking open-ended questions or paraphrasing.

5. Be yourself; be natural and do not come across as an overly trained active listener.

6. Note all cues; be alert for mixed messages.

The Ten Commandments for good listening are stop talking, put the speaker at ease, show the speaker you want to listen, remove distractions, empathise with the speaker, be patient, hold your temper, go easy on argument and criticism, ask questions, and stop talking [34].

**Figure 12: Steps to Complete Listening**
**Table 1: Counterfeit Listening Styles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counterfeit Listening Styles</th>
<th>Behaviours that may look like listening on the surface</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo-listening</td>
<td>Pretending to listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selective Listening</td>
<td>Paying attention only to certain parts of the message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defensive listening</td>
<td>Perceiving criticism where none is intended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage-hogging</td>
<td>Using something the speaker says as an opening to jump in with a story of your own.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 2: Authentic Listening Styles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Authentic Listening Styles</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genuine interest and empathy for the person and situation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Controversial</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising</td>
<td>A listening response that presents advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating</td>
<td>A response that makes a judgement about the situation or person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helpful</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysing</td>
<td>Offering a different perspective on the issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>Clarifying your understanding of the speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal Encouraging</td>
<td>Giving short nonintrusive responses to encourage the speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting</td>
<td>Saying something to let them know that you understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrasing or Reflective Listening</td>
<td>A listening response that reflects the speaker's feelings and thinking, expressed uncertainly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2.8.4 Value Judgement**

Value judgement can be made by assigning a general value to a message before a communication is completed. This value judgement is typically based on the feelings toward the sender or the messages' expected meaning.

The level of credibility given to the communicator affects how the receiver perceives the communication. Hence, how the subordinate interpret the message is dependent on the experiences with that manager.
2.8 Conclusions

Communication is a two way process with feedback forming an essential part of it. A good communication process is an exchange of clear and undistorted messages; otherwise, a breakdown in communication will result.

Communication has two parts, verbal element, and nonverbal element. These two elements should complement each other to avoid confusions and mixed messages.

Free flow of information can easily overwhelm those at the top. As a result, organisations should carefully employ filters only at top level to manage and regulate this flow and to prevent information overload. However, top management must also regulate these filters to prevent a tendency of overreliance on the grapevine.

Effective communication occurs in an environment where there is a disciplined freedom of expression.

Next is the chapter that discusses how productivity can be increased through motivation.
Chapter 3: Motivation

3.1 Introduction

It might be easier to believe that a salary every month is enough to motivate anyone. Sound as it is, it is not always the case. The topic of motivation looks at factors that influence good work; it is concerned with the reasons behind human behaviour. Why a particular employee performs at that particular level? Most theories points to an unfulfilled need as the starting point in the process of motivation [12]. Needs are physiological and psychological desires. These needs produce tensions that effect attitudes and behaviour. Accomplishing the goal satisfies this need.

There are numerous theories of motivation that can be used to understand human behaviour better, but the most discussed groups are content theories and process theories. Content theories focus primarily on identifying that which is within the individual or work environment that energises and maintain behaviour. While process theories seek to explain the process to energise, direct, sustain, and ultimately stop a behaviour. Content theories include Maslow’s need hierarchy and Herzberg’s two-factor theory whereas process theories include expectancy theory and reinforcement theory. There are other theories like McGregor Theory X and theory Y, and equity theory.

These theories revolve around needs and rewards. Needs are generally categorised as either primary or secondary. Primary needs are physiological in nature and are more dominant in low-level workers while secondary needs are psychological in nature that becomes significant at higher ranks [37]. When an individual feels a need, it stimulates a drive state focused on a goal. After accomplishing this goal, the need is satisfied, somewhat satisfied, or unsatisfied (see Figure 13 below) [3].

Usually, we tend to repeat behaviours associated with satisfaction and avoid those associated with lack of satisfaction (law of effect). A reward is anything that a person perceives as valuable. Rewards can be either extrinsic or intrinsic. Intrinsic rewards are positively valued work outcomes obtained through the work itself whereas extrinsic rewards are positively valued work outcomes afforded to an individual by the organisation for the work performed [3] [38].

Behavioural scientists have given attention to many programs that motivate employees to improve performance, but two stand out: job enrichment and relating pay to performance [12].

A motivated workforce is a productive workforce. What motivates one individual does not necessarily motivate the other, and needs change with time.
Figure 13: Behaviour Motivation Model
3.2 Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow acknowledged that people have many needs, and felt that these needs could be compressed into five categories: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualisation (see Table 3) [39]. This theory of motivation puts emphasis on two fundamental principles [12]:

1. We have constant needs that depend on what we already have and that only unsatisfied needs can influence behaviour.

2. Needs are arranged in a hierarchy by level of importance. Once a need is fulfilled, another one emerges.

Maslow states that if there is more than one unsatisfied need, satisfaction of the more predominant need will take precedence; those that come first must be satisfied before a higher-level need in the hierarchy emerges and presses for satisfaction (repotent hierarchy) [3]. Furthermore, once a need is substantially satisfied, it no longer motivates behaviour [40].

What Maslow’s hierarchy does not indicate is that needs can overlap and fit more than one level, or change over time. A need does not have to be fully satisfied before the next higher level begins to influence behaviour. A number of researches suggest that higher-order needs tend to become more significant than lower order-needs as individuals move up the corporate ladder [37].

On the contrary, ERG theory states that a previously satisfied lower level need can reactivates when a higher-level need cannot be satisfied [38]. This theory compresses Maslow’s needs into three core needs: Existence needs, Relatedness needs, and Growth needs—hence ERG theory [41].
**Table 3: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher Order Needs</th>
<th>Lower Order Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-actualisation Needs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Social Needs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need to fulfil your dream and become everything you are capable of becoming.</td>
<td>Need for love, affection, and a sense of belonging; the need for companionship or affiliation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Esteem Needs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Safety and Security Needs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This include self-respect, achievement, competence, respect of others and recognition. Satisfaction of this level of needs lead to a feeling of self-confidence and prestige.</td>
<td>When physiological needs are satisfied, safety needs assumes importance. They include need for protection against physical and psychological threats and stability. It can show up as an attempt to ensure job safety and fringe benefits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Physiological Needs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basic human body needs essential for survival (Biological needs). These needs dominate when they are not satisfied.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.3 Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg suggested that hygiene factors and motivators influence employee motivation. This theory is similar to Maslow’s in that hygiene factors are comparable to Maslow’s lower order needs while motivators are similar to higher order needs [3] (see Figure 14).
Based on the study, Herzberg reached two conclusions [12]:

1. Some job conditions work mainly to dissatisfy employees when they are not present, although the presence of these conditions does not necessarily lead to motivation. These he called maintenance/hygiene factors, since they aim to maintain a reasonable level of satisfaction.

2. Certain job conditions encourage high levels of motivation and job satisfaction, although they do not prove highly dissatisfying in their absence. These he called motivational factors.

Furthermore, the study finds that when employees are highly motivated, they have a high tolerance for dissatisfaction arising from maintenance factors, but the reverse is not true. The theory suggests that the opposite of satisfaction is not dissatisfaction but no satisfaction while the opposite of dissatisfaction is no dissatisfaction. See Table 4 below for sources of job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction in this Herzberg’s theory [38].

The idea of a motivated work force has sparked an increased interest in job enrichment, an attempt to streamline jobs to increase workers’ satisfaction.
Table 4: Sources of Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hygiene factors in job context that influence job dissatisfaction</th>
<th>Motivator factors in job content that influence job satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational policies</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of supervision</td>
<td>Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working conditions</td>
<td>Work itself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base salary</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with peers</td>
<td>Advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with subordinates</td>
<td>growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High job Dissatisfaction</strong></td>
<td><strong>High job Satisfaction</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 Equity Theory

Have you ever been curious about the salary of your co-worker or the grades of a classmate? This is the basis of equity theory. Equity theory suggests that perceived inequity is a motivational force [12] [7]. The word equity relates to fairness and equal treatment. The theory states that employees subjectively determine the ratio of reward received versus effort expended and compare this ratio to that of other people doing similar work. An individual who believes that she/he has been inequitably treated will attempt to restore a state of balance, by either changing the effort level to match the reward or find a way to change the reward received. Moreover, Research suggests that under-rewarding is far more frequent than over-rewarding [42].
3.5 Vroom’s Expectancy Theory

Victor Vroom suggests that employees are motivated to make choices between different behaviours. The reasoning behind this expectancy theory is that an active need is not the only requisite that influences behaviour, but individuals exert work effort to attain performance that results in preferred reward [3] [38]. It is a belief that a particular performance will lead to a specific outcome. This theory stresses three factors: effort-performance, performance-outcome, and valence outcome [3]. Effort-performance (E-P) expectancy is the relationship between the amount of applied effort and performance. Performance-outcome (P-O) expectancy is the probability that a particular outcome will follow from a given performance level. Expectancy is a belief whether or not a particular behaviour will be successful. Valence/value (V) is the projected satisfaction or dissatisfaction that will result from a certain outcome.

Another issue covered is the instrumentality, which is a likelihood that an individual assigns to the performance. As result, motivation (M) is expressed as a product of expectancy (E), instrumentality (I), and preference (P):

$$M = E \times I \times P$$

OR

$$M = EP \times PO \times V$$

Numerous critics consider the expectancy theory to be too complex [43].

3.6 Reinforcement Theory

Content theory and process theories explain behaviour in terms of decisions made by an individual. Reinforcement theory has the idea that behaviour is a function of its consequences. This theory considers the use of punishment, extinction, negative or positive reinforcement strategies to create an environment of motivation—the environment influences behaviour. Figure 15 below shows these strategies [7].

A reinforcer is a direct consequence that follows a response to increase the probability that the desired behaviour will recur [40]. Thorndike’s law of effect supports this view, which states that “behaviour that results in a pleasing outcome will likely be repeated; behaviour that results in an unpleasant outcome is not likely to be repeated” [44]. Some critics express that this notion of rewarding or reinforcing performance is bribery and that it manipulates an individual to fit a manager’s concept of the perfect employee [45].
3.7 **McGregor’s Theory X & Theory Y**

This theory states that managers hold two sets of assumptions about human nature. Theory X sees people as irresponsible and lazy. This theory assumes the following [41]:

1. Employees naturally do not like working.
2. Employees only work if they are forced.
3. Workers put job security above anything associated with work and they exhibit little ambition.

The second set of assumptions is Theory Y, which views people as responsible. This one assumes that [41]:

1. Workers view working as a natural occurrence.
2. Employees will exercise self-direction and self-control if they are committed to the objectives.
3. An average person has the ability to be responsible.
4. Anyone can be innovative.

Theory X assumes that lower-order needs dominate workers while Theory Y assumes that higher-order needs dominate. McGregor believed that Theory Y assumptions were more valid [41].

3.8 Job Enrichment

It seems that some workers become dissatisfied and frustrated by routine, mechanically paced tasks. One of Herzberg’s theory contributions is the development of this job enrichment technique. This was regarded as a solution to the problem of quality of life at work [46]. Job enrichment relates to providing workers with an opportunity to grow psychologically and mature in the job; increasing the job’s range and depth. Although this technique results in higher satisfaction, lower boredom, and less absenteeism, it requires more training time [47]. Herzberg’s work identified five core dimensions that provide enrichment [48]:

1. Variety; workers are allowed to perform various operations. Tasks that use various operations are viewed as challenging.

2. Task identity; employees are allowed to perform a complete piece of work instead of a single part of the entire job.

3. Task significance; this is the effect that the work has on others. The feeling of doing something worthwhile is important to many people.

4. Autonomy; the control employees have over their jobs. It stimulates a sense of responsibility.

5. Feedback; the information received by workers about how well they are doing.

3.9 Performance-Contingent Pay or Pay for Performance

Performance-contingency pay is the concept that ties performance with pay/reward [38]. Money is the most obvious way in which organisations reward their employees. Both content and process theories suggest that money can influence performance.

In Maslow’s need hierarchy, pay has the potential to satisfy each of the five needs. On the other hand, Herzberg’s two-factor model suggests that pay is a maintenance factor that should not contribute significantly to employee motivation [12]. According to expectancy theory, pay is a good motivator if workers perceive it to be a direct result of good performance. Moreover, reinforcement theory suggests that pay is an environmental consequence that can be utilised to stimulate positive work behaviour.
However, in equity theory, pay is a major outcome that can stimulate workers to take action to restore the perceived inequity.

This system of motivation is very much similar to the old technique of *carrot and stick*—the classic method of getting a donkey to move. Research studies suggest a pay plan that creates a belief that good performance leads to high levels of pay, lessen undesirable effects of good performance, and create conditions that link performance and reward [49]. Figure 16 below outlines consequences of pay dissatisfaction [12].

**Figure 16: Consequences of Pay Dissatisfaction**
3.11 Conclusions

Most theories of motivation revolve around human needs, and these needs can be classified as either primary or secondary needs. Consequently, a clear understanding of an employee’s active and latent needs is an essential part of the manager’s job. Moreover, satisfying primary needs first increases the tolerance to dissatisfaction.

An unfulfilled need effect a behaviour change in an employee that reflects dissatisfaction. A need emerges when an employee seeks respect, fair treated, or simply for ambition fulfilment. Primary needs dominate at low-level workers while secondary needs become more significant when individuals moves higher up the ranks.

Money can be a powerful tool of motivation if it can be realistically justified or linked to performance. Although, not everyone can be motivated this way.

The ultimate result of motivation is to improve morale by providing an environment in which employees enjoy and put pride on their work.

Motivation in a way is service and maintenance of the workforce to keep them focussed on organisational objectives.

The next chapter talks about teams and their roles within an organisation.
Chapter 4: Teams and Work Groups

4.1 Introduction

Teams are essential to propelling every organisation forward and the most radical solutions could not have been achieved without them.

An organisation can be viewed as comprising of several work groups and teams. Performance is usually the main goal. There is a lot more to teamwork than just assigning workers to the same team. A team is a small group of equally accountable individuals with complementary skills working together to achieve a common purpose [7]. Teamwork is the process of working together to achieve this purpose. Effective teams outperform the sum of individual performance of its members working alone. Teams outperform individuals when the tasks necessitate multiple skills, judgement, and experience [41].

A work group is an assembly of employees who share particular norms and who strive to satisfy their needs by achieving group goals [3]. Two types of work groups are formal and informal work groups. Formal groups are those units organised by management to execute the functions of the organisation.

According to the Hawthorne experiments, a person’s performance depends on both the individual and the group [3]. Furthermore, it states that giving special attention to a group, changes that group’s behaviour [50]. This experiment has led to a condition known as the hawthorn effect (first coined by Elton Mayo). In this condition newness, interests in the experiment, or additional attention bestowed on the subject produces distorted, overly favourable results.

Elements that influence group/team performance are size, composition, group norms, cohesiveness, conflict, status of members, and the functional roles of group members. There are risks involved as well as opportunities, thus there is a need to understand the characteristics of effective work groups.

Teams need to be large enough to have a good blend of skills and resources, but also small enough to operate efficiently. Moreover, the type of team must be properly matched to the task.
4.2 Informal Work Group

Overlapping the formal work groups are the informal groups. These occur naturally in a work environment due to social needs. Informal groups are a spontaneous reaction to unfulfilled individual needs [3]. Below are the six general reasons for formation of informal groups:

1. Security
2. Social needs
3. Self esteem
4. Economic self interest
5. Mutual interest
6. Physical proximity

The social control exerted by the group on members can influence members to work with the organisation, or to resist change if that change threatens its existence. This happens because people respond to what they perceive to be taking place and not what is objectively happening [3].

People have reasons for joining informal groups, but they are often not consciously aware of what they are [3]. Informal organisations interact dynamically with the formal organisation. They are not necessarily harmful; they can be useful to the organisation.

4.3 Formal Work Groups

There are three types of formal groups: command groups, work teams, and committees/task force. A command group is made up of workers reporting to one manager. A work team also has a common manager but its members have more autonomy than in a command group. A committee is a group, delegated authority for a specific task, bringing people together outside of their normal duties to work on that assignment.

People have said unkind things about committees: "A committee is a group that works hard at making common sense seem difficult" [12]. The biggest difference between a committee and a task force is that a task force is nothing more than a temporary committee is. Their group decision making sets them apart from other types of groups.
There are two types of committees: an ad-hoc committee, and a standing committee. An ad-hoc (Latin term “for this”) committee is a temporary group formed for a specific purpose. A standing committee is a permanent group within an organisation with a specific goal, which mainly serve to advice in areas of continuing importance. A good example of a standing committee is the board of directors. A committee could be suitable where it would be risky or ineffective for the organisation to give any single individual absolute power; here are some of scenarios that require a committee [3]:

1. The problem or task requires extensive expertise in a specific area.
2. The decision is virtually guaranteed to be highly unpopular.
3. It would improve morale to have group input in the decision.
4. There is a necessity to coordinate the work of various departments.
5. It is undesirable to give full authority to just one individual.

4.4 Group Size

There appear to be a relationship between group size and performance. Teams that are too large or too small may not perform as well as reasonably sized team. A large team might splinter into subgroups whereas small teams may possibly suffer from lack of diversity. A large team is very effective at obtaining diverse input while a small group can effectively use that input [41]. Researchers have long debated an ideal size of a group with average recommendations of 5 to 8 members [51]. Some studies have shown that groups with 5 to 11 members usually make better decisions [52]. Research has also found that groups of five people have better member satisfaction [53]. This may be attributed by higher visibility or anxiety in a group of 2 to 3. As group size increases, communication becomes more difficult, and an agreement is less likely. See Table 5 below for group size effect on group dynamics [5].
### Table 5: Effects of Group Size on Group Dynamics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Size of Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group interaction</td>
<td>Increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group cohesiveness</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social loafing</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>No clear relation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.5 Group Composition

Group composition refers to the degree of similarities in the personalities of the individuals and the viewpoints they bring. Group dynamics are the forces operating in teams that influence the way members relate and work together. A group made up of individuals with different personality traits is more effective than a group with similar traits members [2]. Diversity usually improves group performance, but it can also increase the prospects for conflict.

A homogeneous team has members that are alike and teamwork is usually not a problem. However, if members are of the same background, age, attitudes, needs, and experience, performance might suffer.

In a heterogeneous team, members are dissimilar and teamwork problems may arise. Nevertheless, if a heterogeneous team manages to sort out its problems it has the potential to surpass a homogeneous team [54].

Using the right team for a task can radically improve performance over traditional approaches; the list below provides five guidelines on when to use teams [55]:

1. When there is a clear, engaging purpose.
2. When the task cannot be performed unless people work together.

3. When reward can be provided for teamwork and performance.

4. When there are sufficient resources available.

5. When teams will have clear authority to manage and change how they work.

4.6 Norms

Group norms are rules/standards adopted by a group to standardise and regularise members’ behaviour. Members must adhere to these norms to be accepted. Group dynamics research shows conclusively that fellow group members can greatly influence behaviour of an individual member [5]. These norms affect how well people will work towards achieving organisational goals.

When a norm is violated, it may be enforced by reprimands and other such sanctions. In extreme cases, it can result in expulsion from the group. However, group members sometimes allow certain members who make significant contributions to group goals to take liberties on the group (Idiosyncrasy credit) [56].

Some employees may feel that always agreeing with a superior is a sound behaviour that appears to show a high degree of loyalty. However, such a norm would in fact suppress good ideas and sound opinions.

4.7 Group Status

An individual can obtain status in a team or organisation for a number of reasons, including educational background, seniority, job title, social skills, and expertise. These factors can increase or decrease status depending on the values and norms of the group. Studies have indicated that high-ranking members influence group decisions more than those with low rank do [57]. Therefore, the group may have to make a concerted effort to ensure that philosophies of the higher status members do not dominate the group.

Status congruence occurs when an individual’s position within the group is equivalent in status to positions the individual holds outside of it. On the other hand, status incongruence exists when an individual is high on certain valued dimensions but low on others, or when an individual’s traits seem inappropriate for a particular job [5]. It occurs when we believe that there is an inequity between the perceived ranking of an individual and the status accoutrements that person receives in the organisation [41]. All in all, status congruity is present when the different statuses one hold falls at about the same level.
Cohesiveness: The Glue that Binds

Group cohesiveness is the degree to which group members gel together. It is an important factor in a group because it facilitates members to practice group norms [56]. Cohesiveness tends to be high in a homogeneous environment. A highly cohesive group generally works well as a team because it encounters fewer problems [58]. If group cohesiveness is lacking, the following can remedy the situation [41]:

1. Decrease the group size.
2. Encourage agreement with group goals.
3. Increase the time members spend together.
4. Raise the status of the group and the perceived difficulty of achieving group membership.
5. Incite competition with other groups.
6. Reward groups rather than individuals.
7. Physically isolate the group.

However, if groups’ objectives differ from those of the organisation, a highly cohesive group would negatively affect performance of the organisation. Table 6 below shows the relationship between group norms and cohesiveness [38] [7].
### Table 6: Performance Norms and Team Cohesiveness Relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Cohesiveness</th>
<th>Low performance</th>
<th>High performance</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low performance</td>
<td>High performance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate to low</td>
<td>Moderate performance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak commitments to harmful norms</td>
<td>Weak commitments to supportive norms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.9 Groupthink

A potential consequence of high cohesiveness is groupthink. Groupthink is the tendency for members to hold back on their real views to avoid disturbing the group's harmony [59]. It happens when a highly cohesive group loses its ability to evaluate situations or information critically. This is closely related to collective entrapment, which is the tendency by groups to stick persistently to ineffective decisions even when there is overwhelming evidence that the decisions are bad [29]. When groupthink befalls, there is likelihood for second-rate decisions that offend no one. Below is a suggestion list of what team leaders can do to prevent groups from drifting into groupthink [38].

1. Give each team member the role of critical evaluator.

2. Have the leader avoid seeming biased to one course of action.

3. Create subgroups that each work on the same problem.

4. Have team members discuss issues with others outside the group and report back.
5. Invite external experts to observe and react to team processes.

6. Appoint the “devil’s advocate” at each team meeting.

7. Organise “second-chance” meetings after apparently reaching consensus.

4.10 Social Loafing

Group size can influence how much effort members put in, in a phenomenon called social loafing, also known as “Ringlemann effect” [12]. Social loafing is the tendency for individuals to put less effort in a group than they would individually. This may be because individual contributions are less noticeable in a large group, assuming their tasks as being less important or simple, or merely expecting other members to loaf. This can be mitigated by keeping the group size to a minimum and redefining roles so that free riders are more visible [60]. As the social impact theory states, as group size increases, each member feels less and less accountable for the task on hand. The mere presence of others in a group setting can tend to influence behaviour of an individual by a process of social facilitation [29].

4.11 Cross-functional Team

A cross-functional team comprises members assigned from various functional departments who work together on a specific problem. Its main role is to achieve more horizontal integration and better lateral relations. Cross-functional teams are an approach of attempting to beat the functional silos/chimneys problem [38]. Functional silos problem happens when members of a functional unit puts too much focus on their department and minimise their interactions with other functions.

4.12 Virtual Team

A virtual team is a geographically dispersed team whose members make use of computerised (electronic) meetings rather than face-to-face interaction. This type of team requires some level of computer literacy between members. As a result, members with very low levels of education can find it challenging to get involved in this type of teams. It requires good support and organisational culture that create favourable conditions for technology use [61]. Virtual teams deals with issues in a time-efficient fashion and with less interpersonal problems that might otherwise occur [7].
4.13 Self-Managing Team

A work group design that is becoming more popular for achieving group effectiveness is the self-managing team [38]. These are small groups empowered to make decisions needed to manage themselves on a daily basis. They replace traditional work units. In this type of setting, multi skilling is important. Advantages of self-managing teams include better performance, reduced costs, and morale boost.

4.14 Performance

Teams should hold themselves accountable for their performances. An effective team is one that achieves high level of task performance, member satisfaction, and team viability. An effective team offers potential for synergy—combined effort that is greater than just the sum of its parts. It occurs when a team utilises its resources to the fullest and accomplishes through collective performance far more than it is otherwise possible. Another advantage of using teams is that it often leads to improved job satisfaction [62]. Figure 17 below indicates five stages of team development [38].

Figure 17: Five Stages of Team Development
4.16 Conclusions

A team is also referred to as a work group, depending on the context in which it is used. However, the word team should only refer to a group of people with complementary skills working on a specific assignment.

Before we even begin to compose a team, we need to ensure that a team is an appropriate tool for the task. Then decide on the type of a team that will be suitable.

When developing a team, there are two important physical items to consider, composition and its size. It is essential to have a team with the right mix of personality, cultural diversity, skills, competition, and just enough people to complete the task efficiently. Although diversity has its advantages it takes plenty of energy and time, rather keep it to a minimum where possible to promote team cohesiveness.

Large teams are very effective where strength and diversity is essential while small teams are very effective at reaching a conclusion faster. Therefore, in a task that requires huge resources and strength, an adjustable team should be used. This can be achieved by subdividing the team into smaller ones linked by team leaders. Effectively the team will start big and reduces as the task nears completion because those teams that have completed their tasks will dissolve until only the team leaders remain.

Teams need regular team building exercises to keep them energised. They are not only useful in executing task effectively, they can also be used to bring various departments together, or purely for motivational purposes.

The next chapter discusses how negotiation can help resolve differences between teams or individuals, and how this can be opportunity to form new relations.
Chapter 5: Negotiation

5.1 Introduction

Negotiation is one of the activities we perform unconsciously more often than we realise. At some point, people will have different views on a subject, which will require a useful conclusion. This process can be used to settle disputes or where parties need each other’s agreement to achieve their objectives, alternatively, where two sides with conflicting interests are trying to make joint decisions regarding the allocations of scarce resources, thus escaping conflict [63] [64].

There is a myth that negotiation will result in winners and losers, this is not the case [12]. During negotiation, participants can claim as much of the available benefits or increase the total available resources. An opening bid should be pitched well away from the expectations, to allow room for concessions. Moreover, always turnover an opening offer, even an attractive one [65].

Sometimes a party may pretend to negotiate even though it has no intention to compromise or simply use it as a delaying tactic; this party is negotiating in bad faith. Negotiating in good faith forms relations and paves a good path for future negotiations [7]. There are two types of negotiations, distributive (positional) and principled (integrative).

In positional negotiation, participants’ view each other as adversaries while in integrative they see each other as collaborators. Distributive is a hard bargaining win-lose approach while principled is an integrative win-win approach [7]. Distributive negotiation is often characterised by each side adopting an extreme position. Principled negotiation approach focusses on the underlying interests of the parties rather than positions and attempts to create value in the process.

A common approach in mixed-motive settings is to reciprocate the other’s level of cooperation. This situation evokes both competitive and cooperative motives in the parties involved. Mood states such as positive affect can have significant effects on negotiation. Positive affect are pleasant feelings typically induced by ordinary events such as hearing a joke.

Good negotiations leave all parties involved feeling as if they have won [66].
5.2 The Process

The process of negotiation is very much people-oriented. The negotiator deals with people from different backgrounds and perceptions. Look underneath the role that the other negotiating party is playing and ask what really motivates the individuals [67]. Chances of favourable outcomes can be improved by a high degree of mutual trust between groups engaged in the process. The ability to express firmness on your position (bluffing) is very important [68]. However, never position the other party where they cannot move without losing face.

The venue, team composition, period, and how the atmosphere might change in advance are some of the things to consider. The element of surprise only serves to delay the process. Identifying all the options available to forge an agreement is a vital part. Here are some of the widely used tactics during a negotiation process [66]:

1. Good-person/bad-person team; this is when the bad-person from one group advocates positions so much out of line that anything the good-person say sounds reasonable.

2. The nibble; the tactic involves receiving an extra concession after seemingly reaching an agreement.

3. Joint problem solving; all parties work together to resolve the problem.

4. Power of competition; negotiators can use competition to make the other group think that they do not need them.

5. Splitting the difference or meeting in the middle, it is usually useful when groups come to a stalemate.

6. Lowballing; using ridiculously low offers to lower expectations of the other group.

5.2.1 Mismatching and Matching

Negotiators always react to each other’s behaviour. These reactions can be expressed as matching and mismatching. Mismatching makes more demands when the other’s demands are lesser or conceding more rapidly when the other is slow to make concession. Mismatching usually appears at the beginning of the negotiation, as parties react to each other’s initial offers. Individuals tend to respond with moderate demand when the other is firm at first and demand more when the other is conciliatory at first [64].
Matching demands more when someone demands more and concedes more rapidly when the other is quick to make concessions. Negotiators follow each other’s lead, holding firm or conceding when the other does so. Matching can still be present, however, as one party tries to avoid looking like a pushover. As a result, a reasonable approach for persuading the opponent to concede should be to overbid first and then concede regularly as the other concedes [64].

5.2.2 Concession Making

To concede means to reduce demands. Some may assume that it moves the process towards an agreement. However, this may not be the case if the other party’s values are unclear. If one negotiator gives in easily to concessions, the firmer negotiator usually achieves larger outcomes. On the contrary, firmness can lengthen the process by making an agreement less likely. The most successful negotiators are between these two extremes, the ones who are moderately firm [64].

5.2.3 Impasse (Deadlock)

There is a point in negotiations where participants have to decide whether an agreement is better than no agreement at all. When negotiators are not able to move forward, they are at an impasse. It is not necessarily destructive, but it is often here where people begin to consider their choices more realistically [69]. Tactical impasse can happen whereby a disputant refuses to proceed with a resolution effort in an attempt to increase his/her negotiating power. This indicates a distributive approach and can be a risky strategy because it can escalate the conflict.

5.2.4 Streamlining

In most negotiations, there are limits to the integrative potential of a resolution process as well as boundaries outside of which distributive agreements are not possible [69]. Another way of reaching an agreement is through fractionalisation; breaking a conflict down into smaller parts without isolating major issues. It makes it more manageable and creates opportunities for incremental successes.

Alternatively, parties can agree in-principle or in general. This is an agreement reached on broad issues, so that issues can then be refined and specified until parties reach concrete agreements. In reaching closure, timing is critical. Premature closure can harden people’s resistance to a solution that they might have been more open to later [69].
5.2.5 Contending and Persuasion

Contending is the use of tactics like harassment, threats, positional commitments, and persuasive arguments. Persuasive arguments aim to change the attitude of the opponent towards the issues under dispute. The goal of contending is to persuade the other party to make concession or of resisting similar effort by the other. For a threat to work it must be credible and convincing. Positional commitment or irrevocable commitment are determined statements to stand firm by a specific offer; usually combined with a threat to break off negotiations if the offer is not accepted. This can be a hazardous tactic, which may lead to a deadlock [64].

These contentious tactics are very useful but can be particularly problematic once the other party imitates them. Evidence suggests that time pressures encourages both concession making and the use of contentious tactics, because their basic effect is to reduce the likelihood of inaction and increase the urgency of an agreement [64]. On the contrary, physical barriers tend to decrease contending under conditions that produce such behaviour because it eliminates nonverbal elements of contending.

5.3 Conflict

Conflict is a natural occurrence and an inescapable part of life. Conflict is the root of personal and social change, and the instrument through which problems are raised and subsequently resolved. Conflict is tensions between individuals caused by fundamental or emotional issues. Being attuned and open to ethnic, class, gender, and cultural differences is often vital to handling conflict. All conflicts revolve around human needs (see Figure 18) [69]. There are forces that fuel conflict, such as the way we communicate, emotions, values, interaction structures, and history.

Communication situations can turn into minefields when feelings rather than balanced reasoning dominates. This usually happens because of a misunderstanding or miscommunication rather than true differences in viewpoints [28]. However, some conflicts can be positive in that they encourage innovation, creativity, and leads to better decision making.

Misperception and misjudgement are some of the major factors that affect the course of the conflict. These include perceiving things out of context, self-serving biases, self-fulfilling prophecies, and the fundamental attribution error. Fundamental attribution error is the tendency by observers to give greater responsibility for the outcomes of actions to the actors rather than the situation [31]. The following are steps to take in order to understand the nature of conflict [31] [7]:

1. Identify the parties in conflict.
2. Identify the actual problem.
3. Separate people from the problem.

4. Identify the objectives, needs, and desires.

5. Identify possible outcomes and solutions.

6. Envision how each party would view and rank its objectives.

7. Envision how each party would view the outcomes and how they might address the objectives.

Figure 18: The Wheel of Conflict
5.3.1 Conflict Styles

Research indicates that there are five conflict styles characterised by two distinctive factors: assertiveness and cooperativeness [28] [7]. Assertiveness is the degree to which we pursue our own goals and interests while cooperativeness is the degree to which we are interested in maintaining relationships. People respond to conflict in different ways. Below are conflict management styles [28]:

1. Accommodating or smoothing style is characterised by a great interest in the relationship, and a corresponding low concern about one’s interests. This style favours harmony to conflict and it is effective in long-term relationship.

2. Dominating or authoritative command style is the exact opposite of Accommodating. People who adopt this style have a high degree of interest in their own goals, and a corresponding low interest in building relationships. This is a competitive win-lose approach.

3. Avoiding style shows a low interest in pursuing one’s goals and low interest in supporting the relationship. Users of this style avoid conflict at all costs. It is often useful if engaging in the conflict is not worth the trouble.

The three above approaches to conflict can be negative because they tend to either boost conflict or keep it just below surface [65].

4. Compromising style is characterised by a moderate degree of interest in own goals, and an equally moderate degree of interest in the relationship. Here the individual values harmony as well individual satisfaction.

5. Integrating or collaborating style (problem solving) is the dual-process model. Here individuals have strong interests in pursuing their own goals and an equal interest in supporting the relationship. The goal is for each person to get it all without compromising (win-win). Integration takes a considerable amount of energy and time, and as such, it should be set aside for important and long-lasting lasting matters.

Below are eight main approaches to conflict avoidance [69]:

1. Aggressive avoidance (don’t start with me or you will regret it). This behaviour is sometimes an effort to avoid conflict, although it may seem to provoke conflict. People use an aggressive behaviour as an effort to put off others from engaging in a conflict.

2. Passive avoidance (I refuse to Tango). Keeping a distance from and being nonresponsive to a situation is one way of avoiding conflict engagement.
3. Passive aggressive avoidance (*if you are angry with me that’s your problem*). This happens when an individual provokes another without owning up to his/her own actions.

4. Avoidance through hopelessness (*what’s the use?*). This method avoids conflict by viewing the situation as beyond repair or feeling powerless.

5. Avoidance through surrogates (*let’s you and them fight*). In this approach, individuals set others up to engage in a conflict while they remain on the sidelines.

6. Avoidance through denial (*it’s not that bad*). Denying that there is a problem, hoping that the situation will vanish. Alternatively, acknowledge its existence but underrate its magnitude.

7. Avoidance through premature problem solving (*there is no conflict; I have fixed everything*). In this approach, individuals try to solve the problem before the timing is right. It can be a very powerful mode of evading conflict. However, premature solutions may fail to address the real issue.

8. Avoidance by folding (*ok, we’ll do it your way; now can we talk about something else*). People can sometimes avoid engaging in conflict by caving in.

### 5.3.2 Conflict Resolution

Conflict can be either resolved or suppressed. However, true conflict resolution eradicates the actual causes of the conflict and lessens the possibility for related conflicts in the future. Conflict resolution is the removal of substantial or emotional reasons for the conflict [8]. Conflict management by avoidance and accommodation often creates lose-lose situation because no one achieves anything and the conflict may reappear in the future. Competition and compromise tend to create a win-lose situation because parties try to gain at the other’s expense. All these aforementioned styles fail to address the root cause of the problem.

### 5.4 Passive Aggression

Passive-aggressive behaviour occurs when a person acts passive on the outside, but secretly perpetrates some type of hostility. This behaviour does not solve much and the problem continues until it comes out into the open [28]. It is usually a result of unrealistic behaviour. In this approach, an individual creates a conflict and subsequently avoids it. Sometimes an individual can use hit and run tactics—making an emotionally charged statement without allowing for a direct response. Alternatively, raise an issue but refuse to have any part in problem solving.
5.5 The Rational Negotiator

A rational negotiator does not express feelings of emotion because it may be associated with weakness. It means to keep a “poker face”. In accordance with this view, being rational puts the negotiator in an advantageous position [70]. Never allow to be provoked into emotional bursts of anger, as this can overwhelm logic. This type of negotiator must have a high degree of emotional intelligence. The risk literature supports this view by advising an adoption of a risk-neutral attitude unless it leads to less than desirable outcomes, because showing signs of relief, satisfaction, and approval, you risk settling for a worse outcome [71]. However, a paradoxical effect can also occur because of an attempt to control thoughts and emotions. This strategy is most useful in situations where interests are directly opposed [70].

5.6 The Positive Negotiator

Here a different view is taken on the role of emotions. Social psychologists argue that expressing positive emotions can be more advantageous than a poker face. Three critical processes here are feeling positive emotion, expressing positive emotion, and begetting positive emotion on others. Research also shows that positive emotions boost the quality of negotiated agreements [70]. This advantage stems from the information processing theory, which maintains that we handle information differently when in a positive mood in contrast to a negative or neutral mood.

Frequently, negotiations come to a grinding halt because negotiators assume the worst of each other and take offence even when there is none intended. If negotiators feel positively toward each other, they are more likely to reach a mutual beneficial settlement [72]. Furthermore, Documented evidence suggests that people experiencing a positive mood are more creative [72].

Conflict can either take a constructive or destructive course (conflict spiral) and the negotiators’ actions define the most likely course. A common prescriptive maxim states that one should not sour the negotiations with an extreme offer as it may represent a bad first impression. On the contrary, some evidence indicates that this may be strategically advantageous. Another prescriptive maxim deriving from positive emotion is the advice to leave the other party feeling good. This view suggests that this will have benefits in future negotiations. The other reason is that people tend to put more emphasis on the end of an event and on the event’s peak moment when making an overall evaluation [73].
5.7 The Irrational Negotiator (“Rant ‘n’ Rave”)

A rather different view indicates that showing obvious negative emotion can be very effective at the bargaining table. This type of negotiator is irrational because she/he appears to be extreme, unreasonable, risky, reckless, and apparently out of control. This behaviour convinces the other party that the negotiator is willing to take great risks regardless of the consequences. The negotiator faced with such an opponent may succumb to end the interaction quickly. Nevertheless, according to the game theorists, the irrational behaviour must be convincing to work [70]. The expression “the squeaky wheel gets the grease” portrays this view.

Four psychological explanations that accounts for the effectiveness of this approach are perceptual contrast, negative reinforcement, self-regulatory theory, game theory and somewhat paradoxically.

The basis of perceptual contrast is that even when someone makes outrageous request, he or she is more likely to secure an agreement following a smaller request [74]. Negative reinforcement or escape behaviour occurs when you give in to avoid dealing with a difficult person [75]. Self-regulatory theory proposes that most people like to prolong a positive atmosphere and minimize negative moods [76]. The squeaky wheel principle depicts game theory well, which states that the negotiator must show a reluctance to move away from the stated position, by raising the hostility level and using threats [77].

5.8 Mediation

Mediation involves a third party who is directly involved in the communication process or problem solving process to help the disputants resolve their conflict in case of a stale mate. It differs from arbitration in that the mediator makes a binding decision about the issues while the disputants retain their rights to decide on the suggestions [64]. Mediation intervenes in the conflict without necessarily leading to an agreement. An effective go-between should have a conceptual understanding of the conflict and good relations with the parties.

A mediator need not be bias, but neutral, to avoid losing credibility and acceptability. Figure 19 below shows concern-likelihood of mediator behaviour [64]. Negotiators can find it difficult to reach an agreement for a number of reasons, ranging from too much hostility to aspirations being too high. A mediator will try to work out the root of the problem and then try to solve it.

Tactics such as controlling the communication process, suggesting new ideas, arguing for or against certain options, trying to shape relationships, and balancing power can be used. Listening carefully to the parties’ views will likely lead to a better understanding of their issues and interests as well as increasing the negotiators responsiveness to the
mediator’s suggestions. If parties show high levels of hostility toward one another, caucuses can help remedy the situation.

Figure 19: The Concern-likelihood Model of Mediator Behaviour
5.10 Conclusions

The process of negotiation gives parties involved an opportunity to develop a long-term relationship. It is about working together towards finding a win-win solution.

This can be quite a long and daunting process when the participants do not play fair or rather short but not premature when there is a rapport between them. Negotiation helps to prevent a conflict from spiralling out of control by giving the parties involved an opportunity to hear each other's perspective.

Good negotiators resolve the problem not postpone or sweep them under the carpet, therefore it is very important to choose an intelligent, trust worthy individual with excellent communication skills as a negotiator.

Preparations and gathering information about the situation and the other negotiator is essential so that contemplation of all possible scenarios and the best approach to the situation can be established.

Risky tactics such as passive aggression and irrational behaviour harm future relations. Consequently, these should only be used as a last resort or in adverse circumstances.

A best solution is the one where no party can realise any additional benefits except at the expense the other.
Section C: Case Study

Introduction

The main reason for the interest in personnel management was incited by the lack of productivity at the SPZ plant and subsequent report of low morale. The problem reached a stage where it was affecting the company's competitiveness. Owners have been injecting money into the business to cover for the losses for some time now, but they cannot afford to do this indefinitely.

The focus has now been on the factors contributing to low staff performance. In understanding people's behaviour, what causes that behaviour, and what can be done to turn it around to the benefit of the organisation and its workers? It might also be possible to replicate these characteristics in other situations and apply similar strategies to get comparable results. As noted earlier there are various concepts that can be used to explain behaviour of individuals at work that can be used as guidance to forecast the outcomes of various management styles.

After working for SPZ for 5 years, it became clear that management productivity study would be better suited to analyse the problem the organisation faces and how to improve from the status quo. In this case study, principles of personnel management will be applied to a group of fifteen people within SPZ.

A case study is structured approach of collecting and interpreting data to provide insight into a specific situation [1].
Company Background

SPZ is a global packaging engineering company based in the United States of America (USA), where they have a number of facilities. The owners saw the need to branch out of the USA following an increase in international customers. First, it branched to the UK and lastly they erected a plant here in South Africa. The South African plant is the bases for this paper.

The company is global Leader in packaging engineering, concentrating mainly on FMCG (fast moving consumable goods). The company has a reputation for outstanding Quality, innovative products, and has one of the best in technical support structures. This technical support is provided to customers no matter where they are.

Problem Case

“Welcome to South Africa”. One of the company directors commented to have heard this comment on several occasions during his inquiries on the problems experienced by the plant. It irritated him to a point where he barred everyone from using it.

The plant has top management mainly comprising foreigners, whom all of them are here for the first time. The plan was to establish a local management team at a later stage when things have stabilised. Most of the shop floor staff are South Africans with low-levels of education; some do not even have a grade 12 certificate.

Profitability also proved elusive not because of lack of sales but because of low manufacturing output even with the equipment and machinery that are in good order. This compromised product quality and machine downtime kept climbing. The owners began inquiring about the cause of the lack of productivity, and learned through the grapevine some of the possible causes. At the end of the day, a long list of issues emerged. Below are some of the prominent ones:

1. High staff turnover and absenteeism.
2. Low morale of workers.
3. Introduction of a workers union and a looming strike action.
4. Teamwork seems to lack.
5. Lack of effective communication.
6. Vague written and spoken work instruction.
There are many data collection methods available today; some of these are listed below in Table 7. A semi-structured face-to-face interview with a set of questions prepared in advance was used as a data collection method for the case study. An interview was most appropriate because it makes it easier to clarify items, build rapport, and explain the reason for the research in detail to the interviewee. According to Quinlan, this helps the researcher engage interviewee in the process [1]. Furthermore, this type of information collection method is very useful were the topics are sensitive in nature and the respondents come from different backgrounds such as in this case study; Welman and Kruger also support this view [78].

**Table 7: Data Collection Methods**

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<th>Observation</th>
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<td>Participant observation</td>
<td>Projective techniques</td>
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<td>Covert observation</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
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<td>Face-to-face interview</td>
<td>Field diaries</td>
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<td>Telephonic interview</td>
<td>Visual methods</td>
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<td>Group interview</td>
<td>Discourse analysis</td>
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<td>Postal questionnaire</td>
<td>Narrative analysis</td>
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<td>Group administered questionnaire</td>
<td>Semiotics</td>
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<td>Online questionnaire</td>
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<td>Focus groups</td>
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<td>Unobtrusive methods</td>
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<td>Case studies</td>
<td>Critical incident method</td>
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Sampling Method

Two main categories of sampling are probability and nonprobability sampling. In probability sampling, each individual from the population has an equal chance of being selected. When applied properly, it yields precise results from a fraction of the original population [1]. Techniques included here are simple random sampling, stratified sampling, systematic sampling, and cluster sampling. These works well when a complete list of the population is available. In nonprobability sampling, a sample is selected to represent the population, but not in a statistical sense. This is often useful were it is impossible to produce a complete list of the population. Methods included here are judgemental sampling, quota sampling, snowball sampling, and convenience sampling.

For the purpose of this study and due to time constrains, only one group comprising fifteen employees from manufacturing and quality department will be analysed. A simple random sampling method without replacement was used to select this group from a total of 87 employees because this method is not biased. Their names have been changed and replaced with numbers for the sake anonymity. Each number was written in a piece of paper, and then they were placed in a large beaker. The beaker was shaken. Numbered papers were picked one by one until there were fifteen of them.

To create a profile of how people view and feel about their jobs, management, and the company as a whole an interview questionnaire was generated.

Analysing SPZ

Each individual was met separately in private and interviewed according to the questionnaire. The style of questioning required a simple yes or no and some were multiple choice. Although, everyone was allowed to elaborate further or add any comments over and above their answers. The questions were the same for everyone. This particular style of questioning helped because it was the only way of getting the relevant answers without explaining things over and again, and ensured that the interview stayed within the topic in discussion at the same time with the freedom to express themselves.

Of all five chapters in this paper, each has its own set of questions, with 69 questions per individual in total. Each individual had to complete a set of five interview questionnaires before moving on to the next individual; it took just over two days to interview each person. However, they were not compelled to answer any question if they felt uncomfortable. In total, it took 37 days to complete the interviews for all fifteen employees.

For a complete list of questions, their answers, and graphical representations, see the Appendix under section D.
Leadership Results

Staff turnover is high at the plant. That was when one particular young man saw the opportunity to unionise the work force. Eventually the staff went on a 5 weeks strike. This indicates that management had more power and staff wanted to restore the balance. The questionnaire for this chapter was drafted to gain insight into how the employees allowed someone to influence them.

Almost everyone agreed that a good leader makes a good manager and that every manager should possess leadership skills. Just over half of the individuals see leadership as a two way process. Only 27% of the interviewed individuals have had power over their manager at some point, which could be because most of them would rather not challenge their superiors. Furthermore, it was not surprising to see that everyone on the interview refrain from advising his or her superior. Legitimate power is the biggest means of influence by most managers with strong-arm technique, and expertise hovering in the background.

It is encouraging to hear comments of some managers who put efforts to sell their ideas to their subordinates, although a few. They reported that they felt appreciated and it brought them closer to their managers. Majority of the individual do not believe in the notion that some people are born effective leaders, they mostly believe in luck and circumstances, contrary to the ‘great man theory’. This could explain why the young man who came up with the idea of a unionised workforce became their union representative and very popular solely because he had the strongest voice. Although the strike did not bring any fruitful results in the end, but a month’s worth in lost wages, he never lost his status and credibility within the group.

Managers mostly use Job centred approach followed by a constant leadership style regardless of the situation. They commented that some managers worry more about production output than their workers’ wellbeing. About a third of the individuals testified of their superiors treating them as different individuals, instead of just the same. In addition, a few managers manage to share their vision with their staff.
Communications Results

The communications questionnaire was drafted to gain insight into the effectiveness of the communication process within the organisation (SPZ).

Most individuals acknowledge that there is some effort placed in communicating, but it is not enough to render it effective. The main view is that about a third of the people does not actually listen to or read carefully the emails sent to them. Managers are guilty of poor listening skills too. This could be a direct result of their personalities as explained by a Type B style in interpersonal communication.

Most interviewee reported that their preferred channels in general are electronic and face-to-face with face-to-face taking preference. Moreover, when asked about their preferred channel with their immediate manager the overwhelming majority opted for a face-to-face meeting. It became apparent during the interview that people would take a verbal communication more seriously than the one communicated via an electronic channel. Another comment that came up often was that of those few formal communication sessions they are always about anything but good news.

Majority of the employees reported that managers are the ones who initiate most communications. One worrying issue is that when asked about their understanding of work instruction less than half of the employees reported that they find them difficult to understand. The contributors for this are a difficult language and noise in the communication language context. On the language, people have difficulty grasping foreign English accents, and most managers have to repeat themselves several times.

Moreover, different interpretations of body language/nonverbal cues confuses most of the staff, this has led to a number uncomfortable situations. A particular example mentioned was that of some managers that stare at their eyes, some people do this as a form of feedback method but in a black culture, it is rude. Although the interviewed individuals also look for nonverbal signs on others, they only use it on locals and not apply it to foreigners. More than two thirds see nonverbal cues making up a significant portion of the meaning, with at least half of the meaning derived from there.

Some individuals find it challenging to differentiate between urgent instructions, requests, and important jobs because of the way the instructions are presented. Other misunderstandings have simply led to conflicts while others led to things being done the wrong way. From the interview, the main causes of communication breakdown by order of dominance are cultural differences, manners, perception, language, and background.

The positive side for most managers is the practice of an open door policy, which everyone acknowledges. Information filtering occurs a lot, mainly because subordinates are not comfortable in communicating potentially bad news. This combined with the lack of effective formal communication led to increase in the use of the grapevine as
source of information. This explains why more than 80% of the people rely and believe in the grapevine.

**Motivation Results**

There seems to be a lack of enthusiasm and low morale in the plant. People ask permission for the slightest of things making most everyday tasks extremely complex. Adding high staff turnover to this situation led to the investigation of employee motivation.

Only about 33% of the people still enjoy going to work while the rest do not look forward to being there. This means that 67% cannot wait for their shift to end. When asked about what influence them at work, job security and recognition took precedence. It seems both lower order and higher order needs, according Maslow’s hierarchy, dominates on quite a number of employees in similar level.

Additionally, salary increase motivates 67% of the individuals. All of them will be highly dissatisfied by lack of job security. Almost the entire group wonder about how much their fellow colleagues are earning. This is in accordance with equity theory. In the event of a big pay difference, just over half would go to their superior for an increase to restore the balance while the rest would do nothing about it although it will still bother them. Furthermore, they mentioned that they would be motivated to perform better if there were some preferred rewards.

The positive aspect in this group is that a third is willing to work harder or increase their performance if asked kindly even if they will not be paid. However, if their hard work were not recognised they would not do it again. About two thirds of the managers use negative reinforcement while the rest use a positive reinforcement method to channel behaviour. Moreover, the use of reprimands is more often than not for not reaching targets. Few managers use extinction technique.

Just over half agree that under normal circumstances people like working. When I asked them to choose between job enrichment and a performance based pay as their main motivator, only a third preferred a pay for performance scheme and the other two third opted for job enrichment. However, they stated that performance based pay is very attractive but most have big concerns with unfair practice.

**Teams and Work Groups Results**

The plant operates on a continuous basis, 6 days a week with three teams that are further divided into sub team/groups working on shifts. Teams do not have machine hand over meetings, which make one wonder how they pass vital process information. It is therefore not surprising to hear about massive overproduction, teams struggling to solve problems, unhealthy competition, and very low efficiencies. They have many
challenges; group cohesion is one of them. Tasks are seldom executed right the first time; just about half of the products go through rework.

About 53% of the individuals agreed that their group or team influence their performance; they tend to follow the team’s trend. Almost everyone I interviewed seems to have the perception that some teams get special attention from management. About 60% of these individuals belong to some form of an informal group. The biggest reason for joining these groups is social interest and proximity at 27% followed by security at 20%, then mutual interest and economic self-interest at 13%. Just over 90% of the workers reside on one of the two surrounding townships.

Just 40% of the people perceive their teams to be united. However, no one reported the experience of groupthink. An average sub-team has membership of up to six people with a few comprising of more than six individual. Social loafing on the other hand is very much present even at groups this small.

Some of the biggest problems experienced by teams are low productivity and high staff turnover. Most of the teams are culturally diverse, in the sense that they do not originate from the same geographical areas and they speak different languages. However, they are all eager to learn each other’s languages. Just over half of the people continue to socialise with their colleagues outside of work.

The company trains most of its staff to gain the necessary skills required for their tasks. However, because of the high staff turnover the company is losing valuable skills. Some of the individuals confirmed this as they reported that their teams have critical skills shortage and that this contributes to the problems the company is facing.

They also confirmed that none of the teams conduct regular team meetings, they only occur when there are major issues. Even the teams from different sections seldom interact with each other.

**Negotiations Results**

Immediately after the introduction of the union, members wanted management to include them in the next round of salary increase negotiations. After management’s refusal, they went on strike lasting for 5 weeks. During this time, management did not concede to their demands and ultimately the workers returned to work with the condition that they will not go on strike for the next 18 months. The main contributing factor that favoured management was the timing of the strike, it was during an off peak period.

About 47% would turn down an opening offer because of the thought that people put low offers at first. Less than half of the people believe that for a winner to emerge there must be a loser. They all agree that trust is an important aspect during negotiations. Negotiations tactics they often encounter by order of frequency of use are splitting the
difference, competition, problem solving, good-person bad-person, and lastly lowballing.

Majority agreed that they try to match the level of cooperation of the other negotiator were possible. Most individuals seem to have reached deadlocks in a number of occasions. These explain the threat of a union strike during the early stages of the negotiations. Although in a number of occasions mediation occurred, the situation did not improve much.

They all believe that some conflicts do have positive outcomes at the end, but very few. This group would rather avoid conflict by default if they can. If it is not an option, they will dominate. Most individuals report to dislike problem solving. This explains why a number of individuals did not join the strike or union even though they believe it was justified. All of them refrain from the strike in fear of upsetting their managers.

The main fuels of conflict experienced are people’s attitude, uncontrolled emotions, misunderstandings, and behaviour. Every single one these individuals do experience passive aggressive behaviour from fellow colleagues. Positive negotiator behaviour has slightly more preference compared with a rational negotiator at 60% to 40%.
Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to gain insight in the effect the management of a work force can have on productivity. After researching the topics dealing with management productivity and conducting an interview with affected parties it became clear that there are employee management issues contributing to the low productivity. Majority of the workforce is not particularly happy with management.

Cultural diversity at SPZ is the main source of poor communication habits. Work instructions and policies do exists, however, they are copied from Europe and America instead and not adapted to the South African Environment. SPZ should educate their foreign staff about the destination country and the way of its people to reduce this type of problems. Since there is high staff turnover, the company can use virtual teams to train new employees instead of the costly exercise of flying of staff from one continent to another all the time.

Managers do show some good leadership skills but are let down by their background, they are used to dealing with people from developed countries of which the majority are well educated and South Africa is still a developing country with a lot of the workforce with lower levels of education and a completely different approach to life. It takes a change in perception, drive, intelligence, and plenty of practice for someone to adapt to manage and lead effectively on foreign soil, or else companies will have to endure running at a loss for the first couple of years in that new country.

The company had difficulties finding ways to motivate the workforce; eventually they only saw money as the only way around it. This method of motivation never lasts for it only buys time. Soon problems will erupt because the company cannot afford to give everyone big increases. People will not enjoy going to work anymore and some will decide to leave. Because training and replacing employees is not an easy task, the company may not end up with the best people. All of these affect productivity. When some managers run out of ideas to make people work, they resort to strong-arm tactics. This tactic might appear to work at first but if the fundamental issues are not dealt with the company will not reach its full potential.

A strike action is an indication of negotiation breakdown or deadlock and that there are many active underlying issues that have developed over time. Although most of the time people do not openly declare these underlying issues, the negotiators must dig deep to uncover the real issues. The company did not concede to the demands of the union, with valid reasons. However, the fact that many people joined the union indicates that there are many unhappy people at the plant. The company should not rejoice yet with winning the last round of negotiations, they should rather focus on solving the real issues and building relations with the workers and pave way for future negotiations to prevent future strikes.
The company utilises various teams to achieve its objectives, from production to management level. Members of a team must know and talk to each other and they must communicate with other teams otherwise they will not accomplish anything but waste time and resources. They can accomplish this by conducting team regular team meetings and handover meeting so that everyone can see where they are with the tasks and what others have accomplished.
Recommendations and Limitations

Management should promote and formally allocate time for team meetings and handover meetings.

They should ensure that all work instructions are clear and user friendly to avoid misinterpretation, where possible issue them verbally and confirm electronically.

Regular team building exercises should be conducted for the whole plant so that everyone from top-level management to shop floor can get to know each other.

Employee management is quite an extensive topic; to get the bottom of some of the problems each topic will need to be studied on its own. This will also necessitate and allow for a larger group sample study.
Bibliography


SECTION D: APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Leadership Interview Results

1. Do you think that a good leader makes a good manager?

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2. Should a manager be a good leader?

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3. Have you ever had power over your manager, if yes, what were the circumstances?

Those who responded yes said that it is when they possess expertise valued by their superior.

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4. Do you believe that leadership is a two way process?

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5. How does your superior influence you? Through:

a. Reward
b. Strong arm
c. Expertise
d. Character
e. Legitimate power

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6. Would you challenge/advise your superior in a topic of his/her expertise?

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7. Have your manager ever tried to sell an idea to you, how did you respond?

They felt good and valued when their managers involves them in that way.

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8. Do you think some people are born leaders?

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9. How is your manager on average?

a. Job-centred
b. Employee-centred
c. Autocratic
d. Democratic
e. None of the above
10. How best can you describe your superior’s leadership style?

   a. Rigid  
   b. Flexible

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11. Does your superior's managerial approach differ from person to person?

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12. Does your manager share his/her vision for you or the department with you?

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</table>
13. How did you get your union leader?

a. Elected

b. By default
Appendix 2: Communication Interview Results

1. How do you rate communication effectiveness between you and your superior?
   
a. Excellent
b. Fair
c. Poor

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2. Through which channel do you receive most of the organisational communications?
   
a. Electronic
b. Face to face
c. Messenger
d. Notice board
3. Which one do you prefer as form of communication with your supervisor?

4. How often do you fully understand instructions?
   a. Always
   b. Sometimes
   c. Barely
5. Of those you did not understand, what made them difficult to understand?

a. Channel

b. Language

c. Noise
6. Do you look for non-verbal signals when interacting with others?

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![Pie Chart]

7. How do you weigh nonverbal cues?

a. 0%

b. 30%

c. 50%

d. 70%

e. 100%
8. Who usually initiates communications between you and your superior?

a. Superior

b. Me
9. How often do you interact with those from other sections/departments?
   a. Very often
   b. Not often

10. Does your manager have an open door policy?

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Average: 60% for interaction, 40% for open door policy.
11. Do you filter information that goes to your manager?

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12. How true was most of the information you heard through the grapevine?

a. Most often  
b. Sometimes  
c. Less often

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13. Do you have confidence in the formal communications channels?

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14. Do you find yourself having to repeat any of the things you say?

   a. Very seldom
   b. Sometimes
   c. Often

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104
15. In your opinion, what do you think leads to communication breakdown or misunderstandings?

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<td>e is emotions</td>
<td>m is manners</td>
<td>p is perception</td>
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16. How are the overall listening habits of the people you interact with?

a. Excellent

b. Average

c. Poor
Respondent Code | 3 | 11 | 15 | 7 | 23 | 31 | 40 | 41 | 52 | 5 | 11 | 27 | 33 | 59 | 19
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Answers 16 | b | b | c | c | b | b | c | b | b | c | b | b | c | b | b
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Average | b | 10 | c | 5
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---

- 67% of the responses are in category b.
- 33% of the responses are in category c.

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG
Appendix 3: Motivation Interview Results

1. Do you enjoy coming to work here?

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2. Which of the following is the most influential to you currently?

a. Being the best

b. Recognition

c. Social needs

d. Security

e. Basic needs
3. If you get a salary increase today, will you be highly moved?
4. How will your reaction be if the following is lacking, decent base salary, good working conditions, status, or security?
   
a. Dissatisfied
b. No satisfaction

5. How will you react to your job, if it results in achievement, growth, recognition, and responsibility?
   
a. Satisfied
b. No dissatisfaction
6. Do you ever wonder about your colleague’s salary?

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7. What would you do if you discover a big pay difference?

   a. Reduce your performance
   
   b. Resign
   
   c. Ask for an increase
   
   d. Nothing

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53% 47%
8. Would you work overtime or increase your performance without a promise of reward?

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- Yes: 67%
- No: 33%
9. If the reward is not to your expectations, will you be motivated to work harder next time?

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10. Which reinforcement technique does your manager use when you reach your targets?

a. Positive

b. Negative
11. Which reinforcement technique does your manager use when you do not reach your targets?

a. Extinction

b. Reprimand
12. Do you think most people like working?

```plaintext
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13. Which of the following will keep you motivated at work?

a. Job enrichment

b. Pay for performance

c. None

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40% 60%

1 2

Chart Title

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG
Appendix 4: Teams and Work Groups Interview Results

1. Does your group influence your performance?

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2. Do you think there other groups/teams/persons that get special attention?

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3. Are you a member of an informal group?

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4. What would attract you to join a group?
   a. Security
   b. Proximity
   c. Self esteem
   d. Economic self interest
   e. Mutual interest
   f. Social interest
5. How many people are in your team?

a. 2-5

b. 6-10

c. 9-20

d. 21+
6. Do you have a unified team?

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7. Have you experienced a problem of groupthink?

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8. Does your team experience social loafing?

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9. What is the area of concern within your team?
   a. Absenteeism
   b. Punctuality
   c. Productivity
   d. Turnover
   e. Interaction
   f. None of the above

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- 7%
- 13%
- 20%
- 13%
- 27%
- 33%
10. Is your team culturally diverse?

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11. Is there a shortage of skills in your team?

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Answers 10
Average 11
Respondent Code
Answers 11
Average
12. Do you socialise with your fellow team members after work?

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13. Do you have regular team meetings?

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14. How often do you interact with members other teams?

   a. Often

   b. Sometimes

   c. seldom

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Appendix 5: Negotiations Interview Results

1. Do you always turn down an opening offer?

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![Pie chart showing 53% and 47%]

2. Should there be winners and losers at the end of negotiations?

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![Pie chart showing 40% and 60%]
3. Is trust a factor during negotiations?

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4. What tactic have you used the most?

   a. Lowballing
   b. Problem solving
   c. Good person bad person
   d. Competition
   e. Splitting the difference
5. On average, do you try to match the other negotiator’s level of cooperation?
6. How often have you reached a deadlock situation in the past?

   a. Often
   b. Not often
7. Would you promote negotiations that end quickly?

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8. Is there a positive side to some conflicts?

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9. What do you think creates conflict?

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10. How do you respond to a conflict?

a. Accommodation

b. Avoidance

c. Dominating

d. Problem solving

e. Compromise

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Respondent Code: Answers 10
Average: 60%
11. Have you experienced passive aggression?

12. Which behaviour do you find easier to deal with?
   a. Passive aggression
   b. Rational behaviour
   c. Positive behaviour
   d. Irrational behaviour
13. Have you ever needed a mediator in a negotiation process?

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13. Have you ever needed a mediator in a negotiation process?

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