

Interpersonal Dynamics

INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS influence workplace communication. Much of the stress experienced at work can be relieved when we learn to interact well with other workers. The best dynamics and highest level of productivity occur when people interact cooperatively and when they feel their work is appreciated. Most employees value being heard more than they value getting their way. Employees must respect their boss, but the boss should respect his or her employees to ensure the most productive interpersonal dynamics.



Objectives:



1. Identify concepts and assessments of interpersonal dynamics.
2. Summarize interpersonal dynamics as related to various team designs.
3. Construct design teams to improve performance.

Key Terms:



affection	inclusion	manager-led team
autonomy	interpersonal dynamics	motivation
control	interpersonal	self-directed team
decision-making	intelligence	self-managed team

Methods to Assess Interpersonal Dynamics

Interpersonal dynamics are the types of relationships people have with one another. At work, interpersonal dynamics enable people to perform their work effectively and achieve the organization's goals, mission, and vision. Good interpersonal dynamics can create high levels of worker motivation. **Motivation** is the level of enthusiasm and commitment people demonstrate in completing their work.

THEORY X AND THEORY Y

Interpersonal intelligence

is the ability to create productive and high-performing relationships. Douglas McGregor's Theory X, Theory Y provides anti-theoretical approaches for considering work-related interpersonal dynamics.

Theory X

Theory X assumes that workers are naturally unmotivated, lazy, irresponsible, passive, and dependent on authority. Based on Theory X assumptions, work managers should break tasks into small pieces and closely supervise workers, controlling their knowledge and actions.

Theory Y

Theory Y assumes people are naturally motivated; they value their jobs; and they like to see the “big picture” and how they affect it. Responsible workers wish to learn and grow. If given an opportunity, they will thrive independently to perform their work. Based on Theory Y assumptions, work managers should give more autonomy to workers to accomplish goals; they should share with workers “big-picture” information and performance feedback. In addition, they should give employees more trust and less supervision.



FIGURE 1. Construction workers display interpersonal dynamics, working cooperatively to accomplish the job.

INTERPERSONAL ASSESSMENT TOOLS

FIRO-B®, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®, and the Job Characteristics Survey® are examples of tools for assessing the fundamental elements of interpersonal dynamics.

- ◆ The Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior (FIRO-B®) surveys the extent to which people expect to give and receive interpersonal behaviors within the areas of inclusion, control, and affection.
- ◆ The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI) breaks personality characteristics into four categories:
 1. Extraversion and introversion: How people focus their attention on the outer world (extroverts) or the inner world (introverts)
 2. Intuition and sensation: How people prefer to learn things

3. Thinking and feeling: How people prefer to make decisions
 4. Judging and perceiving: How people are oriented to the outer world
- ◆ The Job Characteristics Survey® evaluates personal satisfaction in areas such as skill variety, task significance, level of autonomy, and type of feedback required to perform a job.

INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS

Elements of interpersonal dynamics analyzed using these assessment tools and many others are taken into consideration when designing various work relationships. Some other individual interpersonal dynamics concepts that affect work relationships are inclusion, control, affection, autonomy, and decision-making.

Inclusion

Inclusion is the act of using behaviors such as recognizing people, treating people as part of the “in” crowd, and providing or being provided with opportunities to participate in meaningful work activities, alongside others.

Control

Control is the use of behaviors that influence the decision-making process and include leading or being led as well as giving or taking responsibility.

Affection

Affection is behavior that includes conveying or experiencing openness and approachability as well as a level of warmth and sensitivity.

Autonomy

Autonomy is the amount of space a person is given to choose work tasks and methods for completing those tasks.

Decision-Making

Decision-making is the level of authority a person is given to make judgmental calls and decisions instead of relying on permission from a supervisor.

Interpersonal Dynamics and Team Designs

Interpersonal dynamics will be different on manager-led teams, self-managed teams, and self-directed teams.

MANAGER-LED TEAM

A **manager-led team** is a group that has a leader who is responsible for determining goals and work methods; the team participants are responsible for executing the work determined by the manager (boss). Interpersonal dynamics of a manager-led team are typically:



FIGURE 2. Interpersonal dynamics are displayed in a manager-led team.

1. The manager has more autonomy and decision-making responsibilities than team participants.
2. The manager has control over team participants.
3. The manager is responsible for monitoring, giving feedback, and motivating participants as they perform work challenges and assignments.

The level of affection and inclusion may vary based on the team leader's personal inclinations in those areas. A team leader who makes Theory X assumptions may be less inclined to show affection and build inclusive sentiments with participants. Meanwhile, a team leader who makes Theory Y assumptions will be more likely to show affection and build inclusive sentiments with participants.

SELF-MANAGED TEAM

A **self-managed team** is a group that has a manager who determines the team goals but allows team participants to decide what methods will be used in reaching goals. Interpersonal dynamics of a self-managed team are typically:

1. The manager retains autonomy, control, and decision-making responsibilities with regard to setting goals.
2. Team participants are given more autonomy, control, and decision-making responsibilities to accomplish goals and complete work projects.
3. Motivation shifts to participants as they assume the responsibility of determining work methods.

Levels of affection and inclusion are potentially higher since two-way communication takes place between the team manager and participants regarding methods to meet the manager's goals.

SELF-DIRECTED TEAM

A **self-directed team** is a group in which a manager is responsible for keeping the team oriented to the larger organizational context, but teams determine their own goals and work methods for achieving them. Interpersonal dynamics of a self-directed team are typically:

1. Autonomy, control, and decision-making responsibilities rest with the team participants.
2. Motivation is higher for participants as they assume their responsibilities.
3. Levels of affection and inclusion are shifted to the group of team participants rather than being the responsibility of a single manager. The team assumes open communication and makes efforts to include all participants.
4. Participants share feedback and give recognition to each other.

Structure of Teams

How do interpersonal dynamics influence the formation of design teams? Consider three components when assembling and working with interpersonal dynamics on design teams:

1. Understand the types of people who will potentially work together on a design project.
2. Understand the type of team structure best suited to the types of people assigned to the project.
3. Clearly communicate the expected interpersonal dynamics for a work team. If the team is not functioning well, training may be needed for the team to perform at its best.

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENTS

Personality assessments may be used to learn more about the people who would potentially work together on a design team. Personality types are important when considering interpersonal dynamics.

FIRO-B

The FIRO-B evaluates to what degree a person expects to be controlled and expects to control others.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator evaluates to what degree a person is introverted or extroverted. A work team comprised mostly of people who are introverted and who expect others to take control may have problems being assertive enough to reach goals. However, a work team comprised mostly of people who are extroverted and expect to take control may have problems with being too assertive, thus creating power struggles among coworkers. Yet a work team comprised of a mix of introverts and extroverts, with a mix of people expecting to give and take control, may be the balance that optimizes interpersonal dynamics in working together.

BEST FITS IN TEAM COMPOSITION

It is important to understand how interpersonal dynamics best fit into different team structures and for team members to understand what type of interpersonal dynamic is expected of them in their work environment.

- ◆ People who are introverted and expect others to take control are more likely to fit and function better in a manager-led team.



BROADENING AWARENESS...

AMAZING ASPECTS: Introversions and Extraversions

The Swiss psychologist Carl Jung (1875 to 1961) first developed the theory of extroverted and introverted personalities. In today's interpretation, an extroverted personality is manifested as outgoing and talkative, with energetic behavior. In contrast, an introverted personality is manifested as more reserved and quiet, with shy behavior. Myers-Briggs authors propose that all people have both extroverted and inverted sides, with one being more dominant.

Movies, television, and news media have popularized charismatic, extroverted personalities. Three-quarters of the American population are considered extroverts. Yet the status of quiet, introverted leadership is often undervalued. Recruiting and promotion decisions favor extroverted leaders, but research finds introverted, quiet leaders are more suited to today's workplace.

Frances B. Kahnweiler, author of *The Introverted Leader: Building on Your Quiet Strength*, says introverts are not the same as shy people. Shy people tend to be fearful, anxious, and self-centered. Introverts, says Kahnweiler, tend to process information internally, keep matters private, avoid showing emotion, and exhibit calm natures. Introverts tend to think first and talk later. They focus on depth, not superficiality. They exude calm and appear confident and reassuring in a crisis. Introverts prefer writing to talking.

- ◆ People who are extroverted and expect to take control themselves are more likely to function better as managers of manager-led teams or as participants in self-managed or self-directed teams.
- ◆ People who are overly extroverted and expect to take control may need to be coached to be less extroverted and to accept and cooperate when others have control, as in a manager-directed team.
- ◆ People who are overly introverted and expect others to take control may need to be coached to be more extroverted and to take more control when participating on a self-managed or self-directed team.

Training in assertive communication and conflict resolution are examples of training topics that would help coach interpersonal dynamics of design teams.

Summary:



Interpersonal dynamics describe the types of relationships people have with one another. At work, interpersonal dynamics enable people to do their work effectively and achieve the organization's goals, mission, and vision. Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to create productive and high-performing work relationships.

Interpersonal assessment tools analyze whether people are extroverts and introverts. Also, they determine their compatibility to work with various design teams. Interpersonal dynamics will be different on manager-led teams, self-managed teams, and self-directed teams. Some interpersonal dynamics concepts that affect work relationships are inclusion, control, affection, autonomy, and decision-making. Management must determine how to collectively leverage personalities and workers' skills to create the most productive interpersonal dynamics in the work environment.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. Why is it important for managers to consider interpersonal dynamics in the workplace?
2. Why are Theory Y workers more valuable to a design team than X Theory workers?
3. What are the four categories of personality characteristics that the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) analyzes?
4. Explain the differences between manager-led, self-directed, and self-managed teams.
5. In which team structures do you think introvert and extrovert personalities will best function?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Think about your participation in class, social situations, and family relationships. Is your behavior the same in every situation, or do you have a mixed bag of extroverted and introverted behavior? Do you know what career will best fit your personality? Visit the following: <http://jobs.aol.com/articles/2012/09/22/jobs-for-introvert-and-extrovert-personality-types/>. Consider the personality types of you and your friends. Determine what careers you think will be the best fit for each of you.

Web Links:



Interpersonal Dynamics

<http://www.interpersonal-dynamics.com/>

Insights and Relationships

<http://www.ipdi.com/>

FIRO-B

<http://www.jsevensconsultinginc.com/Pages/firob.htm>

MBTI Basics

<http://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/mbti-basics/>