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Chapter 7: Group and intergroup behaviour

Fincham & Rhodes 2005: Principles of
Organizational Behaviour
HRM &OB module 2017/2018

Why do groups form?

- Functional reasons

- Psychological reasons

- Unconscious reasons

Group characteristics (1): Structure

- Structure reflects group identity
  - Group leader
  - Group members
  - Deviate
  - Isolate
- Team roles (Belibin):
  - coordinator, plant, implementer, monitor evaluator, shaper, teamworker, resource investigator, completer, specialist
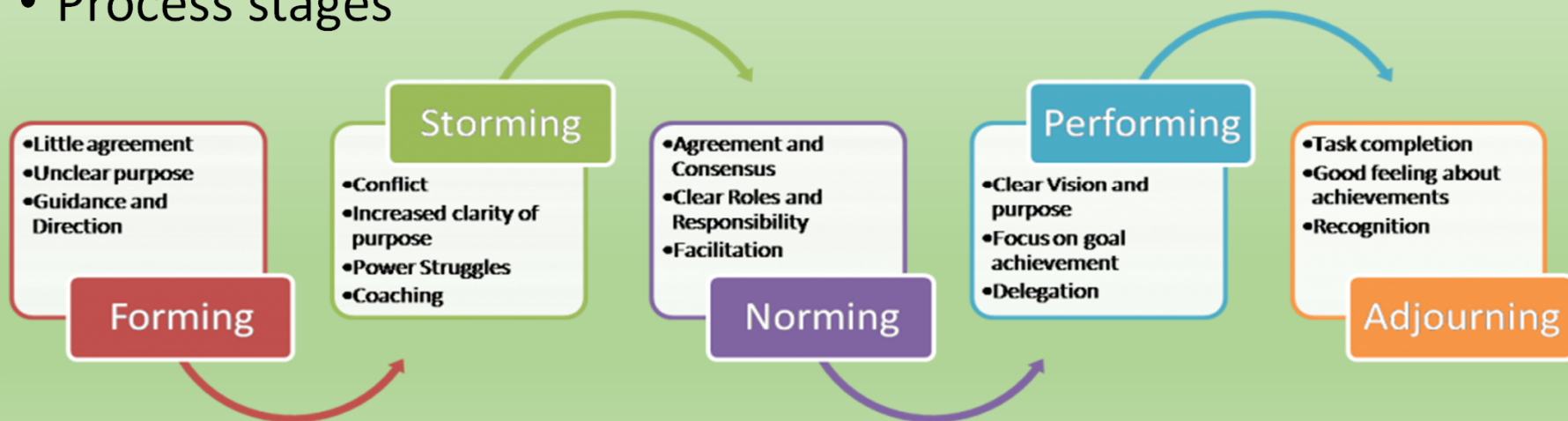
Group characteristics (2): Norms

Norms = expectations

1. Fairness

2. Reciprocity

3. Reasonableness

4. Role expectations

- Resistant to change

- Powerful mechanism of shaping behaviour

Group characteristics (3): Processes

Cohesiveness:

- Potency of group norms
    - Organizational support
- Process stages

Forming
- Little agreement
- Unclear purpose
- Guidance and Direction

Storming
- Conflict
- Increased clarity of purpose
- Power Struggles
- Coaching

Norming
- Agreement and Consensus
- Clear Roles and Responsibility
- Facilitation

Performing
- Clear Vision and purpose
- Focus on goal achievement
- Delegation

Adjourning
- Task completion
- Good feeling about achievements
- Recognition

Group positive outcomes (1): Synergy

Groups outperform even their

best member

- Discussion
  - Generate alternatives
  - Eliminate inferior contributions
  - Average out errors
  - Support creative thinking

- Stepladdering

Group positive outcomes (2): Reflexivity

- Reflexivity improves group effectiveness
- Reflect upon the task:
  - Group objectives, strategies, processes, the environment
- Reflect upon the social dimension:
  - Social support, conflict resolution, member development, team climate

Group positive outcomes (3): Innovation

Factors that affect innovation:

- Individual
  - Ability & confidence, role breadth, job control, trust
- Group & organizational:
  - Vision, participative safety, commitment in task excellence, support for innovation

Group negative outcomes (1): Groupthink

- Decision-making ability reduced

- In cohesive but not reflexive groups

- 'Symptoms':
    - Invulnerability
    - Collective rationalizing away of information
    - Inaccurate stereotyping
    - Self-censorship
    - Mindguards

Group negative outcomes (2): Polarization

Processes that produce group polarization:

1. Diffusion of responsibility

2. Social comparison process

3. Information exchange

4. Persuasive arguments

Group negative outcomes (3): Social loafing

Social loafing is the tendency for individuals to exert less effort when they work in a group than when they work alone

Causes of social loafing

- Lack of connection between inputs and outcomes – How do you keep track of who contributed what and how much to the project?

- Perception that individual efforts are unnecessary or unimportant

- Large group size

Conflict management
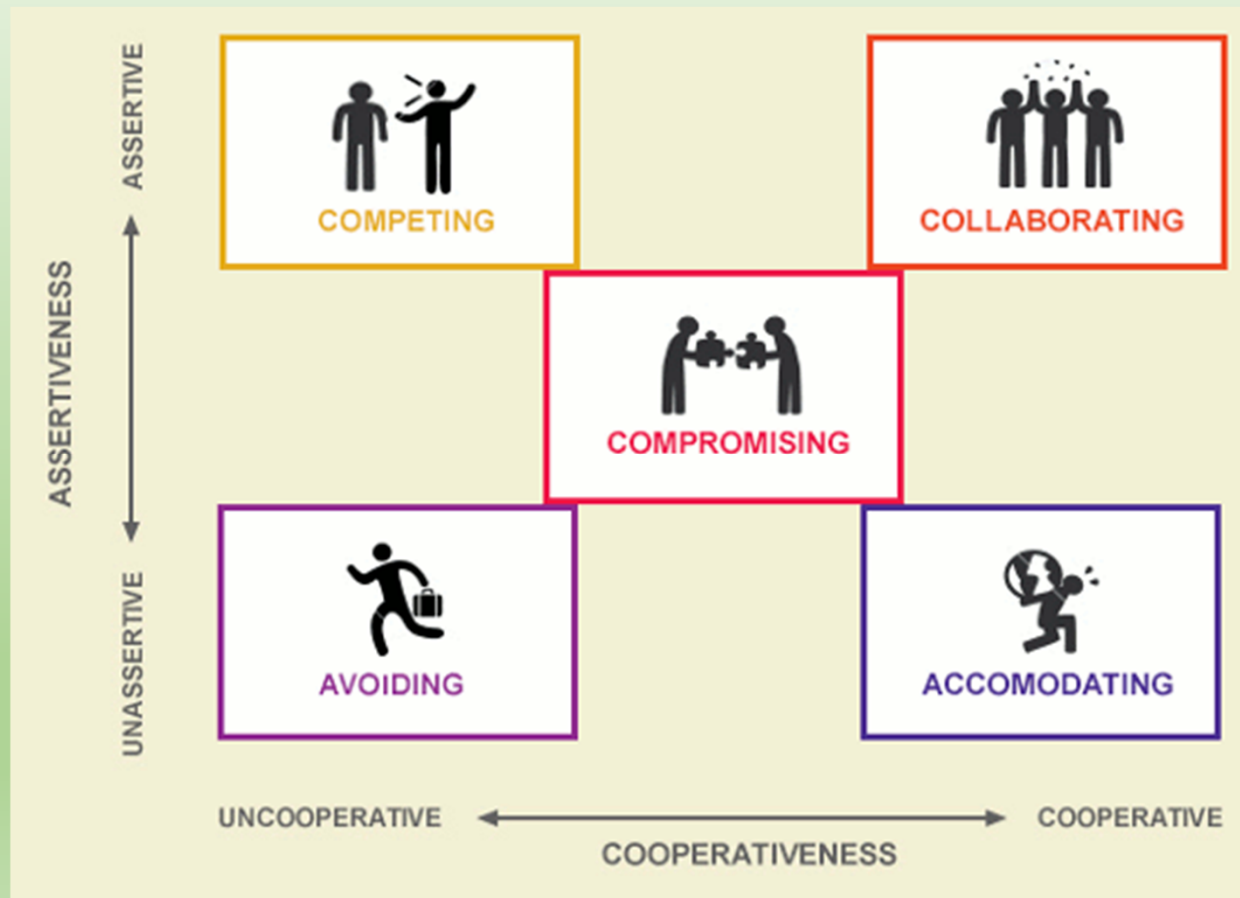
Group decision-making in organizations

- Most decisions made in a group context

- Meetings, committees, project teams, senior corporate group

Group processes should be seriously considered!