

Not All Groups Are Teams!

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Teams have become the primary units of performance in economic enterprises, particularly where organizational structures are flatter, and where information is complex, dispersed, and rapidly changing.

Teams are supposed to benefit from the combined expertise of members to get the job done more efficiently or to come up with new ways of doing things - the idea that, 'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts'. Yet the team experience is often one of 'turbulence'. Rewards, goals, and context are often unclear. There are discrepancies, incompatibilities, and conflicts among members over priorities, resources, beliefs, and even identities. It can feel a lot like the playground at school!

But what distinguishes a *team* from a *group*? Sometimes a team-based structure will be the best way to get the job done, and other times a working group will be the most appropriate framework to use. How do you tell the difference?

Working Group	Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong, focused leader • Individual accountability • Commitment to own silo/function/goals • Groups purpose is the same as the organizations mission • Performance is a function of individual work effort • Efficient meetings • Measures its effectiveness via influence on other indicators (e.g., business unit financial performance) • Shares information, discusses, decides and delegates to enhance individual performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared leadership roles • Individual and mutual accountability • Common commitment • Specific team purpose that the team itself delivers • Performance is a function of collective work product • Time spent in open-ended discussion and active problem solving • Measures performance directly by assessing collective work products • Discusses, decides and does real work together

"Success flows from clear intention"