Effective
(Team) Think-Work
in Organizations

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Part I: Initial Perspectives

Two sequences of activities are very similar: the sequential management functions involved in the Managerial and Leadership (Integrative) Process; and the sequential phases of the Problem-Solving Process. **Part 1** of this booklet first describes the relationships between the two processes and then describes the main types of problem situations.

Managerial/leadership and problem-solving activities can be performed either by an individual (a manager, a leader, a subordinate, a superior, or a colleague) or by a team (a manager or leader and one or more subordinates, a manager and several colleagues, a group of subordinates, or a mixed group of superiors, colleagues, and subordinates). **Part 2** of this booklet therefore discusses the advantages and disadvantages of both individual and team think-work. **Part 3** presents basic concepts and guidelines for making team processes more effective. In addition, it presents a detailed description of a team leader's and participants' roles and responsibilities.

An understanding of principles, concepts, and guidelines presented in Parts 1 through 3 enables managers and leaders to improve their own and their subordinates' thought-oriented performance in several ways.

First, as managers and leaders confront problem situations either alone or with subordinates' participation, they can better relate their problem-solving activities to their managerial/leadership functions, thereby improving both.

Second, they can more effectively identify types of problem situations and approach each in a more effective and successful manner.

Third, they can make more appropriate decisions about which problems or decisions they should handle themselves, and which they should tackle with superiors, colleagues, and/or subordinates.

Fourth, they can more effectively guide (structure and facilitate) thought-oriented processes in which their subordinates participate, and can make more effective contributions to processes in which they participate with superiors and colleagues.

Relationships Between the Managerial/Leadership Process and a Problem-Solving Process

Several problem-solving approaches are commonly used by both individuals and organizational groups:

a. using a solution that seemed to work well in previous, similar situations;
b. doing nothing, hoping that the problem will work itself out over time;
c. using a common-sense solution (a commonly accepted solution to the same or similar problems);
d. trial and error/success (trying hypothesized solutions until one works);
e. cutting through the complexities of a situation and dealing only with those elements or causes that are most obvious or are seen as being most important; and
f. using the full-blown analytic approach, which is the most powerful of all the approaches.

When the analytic approach is used, problem-solving is not just one activity. Instead, it is a process composed of phases—each involving specific steps—that are performed in a logical sequence.

The Problem-Solving Phases

These phases are performed in the following sequence:

1. Preparation
2. Situation analysis (problem/situation description, situation analysis, identification of causes)
3. Formulation of alternative solutions (and action plans for their implementation)
4. Decision making (analyzing/testing hypothesized solutions and choosing which to implement)
5. Implementation of chosen alternative solution(s)

Relationships with the Managerial/Leadership (or Integrative) Process

Modern management can be described as "integrating tasks with tasks, people with their tasks, people with people, and people with their organization." It can also be

viewed as a process. The m**anagerial/leadership (integrative) process** (shown in **Table1**) consists of basic integrative functions performed in a sequence:

1. Analyzing operations
2. Setting alternative (sets of) goals/objectives
3. Formulating alternative (sets of) plans/programs
4. Formulating alternative (sets of) budgets
5. Formulating alternative policies, procedures, rules
6. Decision making (choosing among alternative goals, plans, budgets, policies, procedures, rules, and then finalizing those chosen)
7. Organizing
8. Staffing
9. Guiding activities (guiding one's own and subordinates' coordinated efforts to implement plans, budget allocations, policies, and procedures)
10. Guiding control functions (guiding one's own and subordinates' measurement, reporting, and evaluation of unit results and individuals' performance)

If the managerial process were to be equated with a problem-solving process, what would constitute the "managerial problem?" The following is one way it can be stated: "How do I (we) go about utilizing financial, material, facilities, and human resources—and how do I (we) go about influencing task-related, individual, social, organizational, and outside factors or variables that affect personnel's performance—so that I (we) can achieve organizational, unit, and personal objectives most successfully?"

With this question in mind, let us relate the functions or activities involved in the two processes.

Analyzing

Within a problem-solving context, analyzing means "to look at what has happened or what is going on and to determine why." "Determining why" first involves identifying the factors, variables, or forces that are involved in, and could possibly have caused, the situation. It then calls for analyzing the facts that correspond to the various factors (and any relationships among those factors) and identifying the really important, underlying causes of the problem situation.

Within the context of the managerial process, analyzing means much the same. It involves looking at task-related, individual, social, organizational, and outside factors or variables (and the facts associated with them) and then identifying what has been, is, should be, and can be happening in the organization—and why.

Formulating Alternative Solutions

The next phase in the problem-solving process is formulating alternative solutions and incorporating a plan for implementation into each. Put another way, this phase involves identifying alternative courses of action.

The equivalent of this problem-solving phase, within the context of the managerial/leadership process, is the planning function. The planning function includes setting goals/objectives, planning or programing, budgeting, and formulating policies, procedures,andrules. Goals and objectives are statements of intentions or expectations about results that should be accomplished within a specified time frame. Alternative plans, programs, or projects represent alternative courses of action for reaching goals. Together with alternative budgets, policies, procedures, and rules, they outline various things that can be done and how to go about doing them (in terms of, for example, organizing, staffing, guiding activity, and guiding control functions).

Decision Making

This next problem-solving phase involves analyzing and testing alternative solutions/plans (mentally and/or on paper) by anticipating the possible consequences of each. Consideration of the recognizable uncertainties, advantages, and disadvantages of each alternative enables selection of the most appropriate course(s) of action. Through these decision-making steps, problem-solvers determine which way(s) to do things in order to get the desired results.

Decision-making, within the context of the managerial process, is the integrative function in which managers analytically test and compare alternative goals, plans, budgets, policies, and procedures, choose among the various alternatives, and then finalize those that they have chosen for implementation.

The thought-oriented phases and functions described briefly above are essential to both processes. Thought, however, is not enough. Action is also necessary. Within a problem-solving context, taking action involves implementing the chosen solution(s). Within the context of the integrative process, it involves implementing the chosen plans,

Table 1: Relationships Between Management & Leadership Functions and Phases of the Analytic Approach to Problem Solving

	Problem-Solving Process	Managerial/Leadership Process
What has happened, or what is going on — and why?	**Analysis of situation**	**Analysis of situation** (including evaluation of past results and performance)
What needs to be done, or what might be done — and how?	**Formulation of alternative solutions** (including plans for their implementation)	**Planning (alternatives)** **Goal setting** **Formulating strategies and tactics** **Formulating programs, projects, action plans, and budgets** **Formulating policies, procedures, and rules**
What course of action should be taken?	**Decision making** (Analytically test, compare, and select among the alternatives)	**Decision making** (Analytically test, compare, and select among alternative sets of goals, plans (scenarios), budgets, policies, and procedures
Take action; do something	**Implementation of chosen solutions**	**Implementation (of Plans)** **Organizing** **Staffing** **Guiding and coordinating activities** **Guiding control processes**

budgets, policies, and procedures either during or through such functions as organizing, staffing, guiding activity, and guiding control processes.

Relationships between the integrative process and a problem-solving process are summarized in **Table 1**. It indicates that, in both processes, thought should precede action, thereby making action more effective. In fact, the more effective that initial thought and subsequent action are, the less need there is for corrective thought and action later.

Table1 also indicates that decision making is only a part of the problem-solving and integrative processes. Its effectiveness largely depends upon the effectiveness of the analytic and planning phases that precede it. The table also makes it evident that *the managerial process is indeed a problem-solving process*.

Types of Problem-Solving Situations

Most problem situations fall within one of four basic categories:

a. preventive
b. creative/innovative
c. improvemental
d. corrective-preventive

All four types require much the same activity.

Preventive

Obviously, preventive problem solving is aimed at keeping a problem from occurring at all. Prevention first requires analyzing a situation in some depth and then iden-

tifying and considering those factors (elements, activities, variables) that tend to exert the most significant desirable and undesirable influences on the situation. Once the major influences have been determined, the next step is to look for trends in those factors that could eventually lead to problem situations. Preventing anticipated problems then becomes a matter of changing, modifying, or otherwise influencing key factors so that they exert their influences in a more desirable manner.

Creative/Innovative

Often called "brainstorming," creative thought first involves describing the characteristics and/or uses of known or familiar objects, activities, ideas, concepts, or theories. It then involves comparing or relating the characteristics and/or uses. In finding previously unrecognized relationships between things, activities, and/or ideas, one arrives at fresh insights and ideas.

"Innovative thought" amounts to the creation or invention of a new object, activity, process, or idea. "Innovation," however, also involves moving something from the drawing board to general acceptance, availability, and use. This requires further analysis, planning, decision making, and action.

Improvemental

Improvement of something also involves various phases of problem-solving. First it is a matter of analyzing the object, activity, process, idea, or situation that one wishes to improve, identifying the elements or parts of the whole (the associated parts or characteristics of the object; the subactivities involved in the main activity; the elements or steps in the process; the elements of the idea; or the important factors/variables involved in and/or operating on the situation). Next it becomes a matter of identifying those parts, elements, factors, or variables that could actually be improved. Improving the "parts" brings about improvement in the whole. Actually improving the parts generally requires further analysis, a certain amount of planning and decision making, and subsequent action.

Corrective-Preventive

Probably the most common type of problem-solving in organizations, this type deals with problems that have already occurred and have just been recognized. Something that was neither intended nor expected has happened. "The cat is already out of the bag" and there is a "fire to fight." In these situations, there are actually two problems to solve: (1) what to do right away to remedy the immediate situation (circumstances/effects), and (2) what to do to prevent the same situation from occurring again. The first of these two problems calls for corrective problem solving and the implementation of short-term solutions. The second calls for preventive problem solving and longer-term solutions.

Because two problems are involved, corrective-preventive problem solving can consume twice as much time and effort as preventive problem solving. Thus, individuals and organizations could save tremendous amounts of time, effort, and money by recalling that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" and then incorporating preventive, creative/innovative, and improvemental problem-solving activities into their analytic, goal-setting, and planning processes.

The four types of problem situations are related to each other in various ways. Prevention can involve creativity, innovation, and improvement. Innovation can stem from a need to improve or correct something. Correction may require innovation and improvement as well as prevention. It becomes evident, then, that *the type of problem-solving approach being used is largely dependent upon the problem-solver's objectives in a particular situation*.

Part 2:
Individual vs.Team Think-Work

Preliminary Definitions

Group or team processes include meetings, group sessions, and group discussions. They even include "committee meetings," a term that we will not use here for reasons mentioned later. Group processes in organizations revolve around the following thought-oriented integrative functions: (a) analyzing situations; (b) goal setting; (c) planning or programing; (d) budgeting; (e) formulating policies, procedures, and rules; (f) formulating solutions, improvements, or innovations; (g) decision making; and (h) evaluating results or performance.

Participants in group processes can be (a) a manager or leader and his or her immediate subordinates; (b) colleagues or co-workers; (c) line and staff personnel; (d) management and union representatives; or (e) any other combination of individuals having different roles, levels, functions, or units within an organization. Participants may

also be persons outside the organization, such as suppliers, distributors, customers, inspectors, and consultants.

Groupthink (which we prefer to call *"teamthink"*) essentially refers to group processes aimed at creatively "brainstorming" a problem, a potential innovation, or a possible change. Although "groupthink" is often used synonymously with "group process," it puts more emphasis on in-depth analysis and "free-wheeling," exploratory, creative thought.

Group processing (note the "ing") generally refers to behavior of participants that is aimed at improving the conduct or dynamics of a group process. Participants are "processing" each other when, for example, they (a) attempt to get another group member to stick to the point, (b) attempt to deal among themselves with interpersonal conflicts that are interfering with effective discussion, (c) apply various sanctions to a member who will not compromise or agree with the rest of the group, or (d) apply sanctions to a member who is not conforming to group norms regarding proper conduct of a group process.

Individual Advantages (Group Disadvantages)

An individual manager or leader can analyze, set goals, plan, make decisions, and initiate action independently and/or unilaterally. He or she can also involve others (subordinates, colleagues, superiors) in think-work functions. Each approach has its advantages and disadvantages, especially under certain conditions.

The following are the advantages of individual think-work (and the disadvantages of group or team think-work).

Time

An individual requires less time than a group. Organizing and holding group meetings takes time. Individual analysis, planning, and decision making are more streamlined and take less time, largely because an individual need not deal with the various methodological and interpersonal problems or the differences of opinion that generally occur in group meetings. This advantage of individual think-work becomes particularly important in emergency or high stress situations, where time cannot be wasted because lives may be at stake.

Interpersonal Conflicts

Conflicts occurring in groups do not interfere with individual think-work. Even if individuals do not bring existing interpersonal conflicts with them to group meetings, conflicts often develop between participants' wills and egos during meetings. Such conflicts are generally due to differences between the individuals' feelings, attitudes, knowledge, values, opinions, goals, interests, and expectations. When conflicts develop and surface, the communication of ideas, information, and honest feelings tends to break down, limiting the effectiveness of group thinkwork. This is not a problem for the person who is thinking on his or her own.

Extraneous Matters

An individual does not get bogged down with extraneous matters that group participants often inject into discussions. During group meetings, participants tend to (a) bring up side issues or extraneous problems, and (b) turn the discussion toward their own personal agendas. As a result, group think-work gets side-tracked, becomes more complicated, bogs down, and takes more time.

Input Overload

An individual does not get bogged down with information overload and additional alternatives often introduced in groups. Group participants often introduce more than enough information into group discussions and often raise more alternatives than can be dealt with effectively. Time is often wasted in trying to sort out appropriate information and viable alternatives.

Competing Responsibilities and Pressures

The competing organizational pressures and responsibilities faced by an individual manager are multipled in groups, whose participants are also faced with competing responsibilities and pressures. This interferes with group members' attention and concentration, even if they are interested in the situation because they will be affected by the solution or decision.

Expertise

An individual manager's expertise may be greater than group participants' expertise. If a problem or a decision falls more within the area of the individual's technical or professional expertise, and if the individual's problem-solving abilities are greater than group participants' abilities, participants' contributions may be limited, and the quality of the individual's solution/decision may be greater (but not necessarily).

Control of the Thinking Process

An individual has more control over his or her own process than a group process. An individual has complete control over personal thought processes and is free to approach solving a problem or making a decision as he or she thinks best. In group processes, however, a manager (group leader) can tend to lose some "control," because of (a) the social interactions and pressures that are inherent in a more socially-oriented group process, and (b) the various personal objectives and agendas of subordinates, which may differ considerably from those of the manager or leader. Span of control is also a factor. For example, if three or four of a manager's subordinates participate (a narrow span of control), a group can get bogged down easily enough for the reasons mentioned above. If more than four or five subordinates participate (a wider span of control), a group process can become even less efficient and effective.

Dysfunctional Compromise or Consensus

Groups can tend to arrive at dysfunctional compromise or consensus. Groups often seek compromise or consensus so that no one completely "wins" or "loses." The most comfortable decision for all involved, however, is not always the best. Quality can be sacrificed in order to reach a compromise or consensus. The extent to which quality is sacrificed depends largely on how compromise or consensus is reached. If facts and differing attitudes or opinions are not considered openly and honestly, quality will suffer. The probability of this happening is greater when one or more participants are relatively more determined, verbal and persuasive, dominant, prestigious, knowledgeable, or powerful than others. Such persons can either knowingly or unknowingly suppress good ideas and honest disagreements that could contribute to more fruitful deliberations.

Consistency with Organizational Goals, Policies, or Procedures

An individual leader's solution or decision may be more consistent with organizational goals, policies, and proce dures than that of a group. If a leader is more concerned and knowledgeable about organizational objectives, policies, and procedures than other participants, his or her individually formulated solution or decision is more likely to be consistent with them. Group participants, perhaps being less knowledgeable or concerned about them, often reduce consistency by tending to inject their own goals, opinions, feelings, and expectations into solutions or decisions.

Responsibility for Results

Responsibility for results is clear-cut for an individual, but is diffused within a group. When responsibilities for formulating and implementing a decision are shared by a group, it is generally more difficult to monitor results, pinpoint any ensuing problems, and assess group members' individual performance. This makes effective implementation difficult. Shared responsibility can also hamper a problem-solving or decision-making process. Some individuals "hide" in groups so that their performance cannot be easily measured and evaluated. In order to hide, they must make few contributions during a group process and shoulder as little responsibility for results as possible. When a manager thinks independently, however, the responsibility for results is much more clearly definable.

Rewards

Rewards are diffused and unclear for group members, but are clear-cut for an individual. When responsibilities for formulating and implementing a solution or decision are shared, any resulting praise or other rewards get divided among group participants. Thus, no one individual receives maximum reward and satisfaction. This can be frustrating, especially to "high achievers" who have worked hard to make significant contributions and who seek positive feedback for their efforts. Many group members, therefore, will try to compensate by (a) dominating group discussions, (b) working harder in order to make more significant contributions, and (c) taking more credit than they perhaps deserve. Regardless of whether or not useful competition results, this behavior can adversely affect group effectiveness. On

the other hand, because responsibility is clear-cut for the individual, an individual can take all the credit for good results—if he or she so desires.

Distance From Subordinates

Thinking individually, a leader can maintain some distance from subordinates. Many leaders would rather keep some distance between themselves and their subordinates. This is more difficult to do when one is involved with subordinates in a group process.

Manager's or Leader's Image

A manager's image may be adversely affected by using a group approach. In an organization where participative (team) processes are the exception rather than the rule, a manager's superiors, colleagues, and subordinates may view the manager as being "permissive" or "indecisive" if he or she engages with subordinates in group thinkwork. The manager's effectiveness may be reduced in such an atmosphere.

Skill Required

Guiding (and participating in) group processes requires more skill than individual think-work. Structuring group think-work, dealing effectively with interpersonal obstacles, and overcoming other problems associated with group processes all require more sophisticated skills than many managers and leaders possess. Individual problem solving and decision making do not require the development of skills involved in guiding and participating in group processes.

Group Advantages (Individual Disadvantages)

Knowledge/Experience Inputs

A group's collective knowledge and experience is greater than that of an individual. Because everyone's knowledge and experience are somewhat limited, two or more heads contain more information, experience, and ideas than one. Thus, group processes have numerous input-related advantages over individual think-work:

a. consideration of a larger number of important factors or causes involved in a situation;
b. analysis of a greater amount of useful information;
c. development of deeper and broader insights into a situation;
d. consideration of a larger number of potentially effective solutions or plans;
e. recognition and consideration of more advantages and disadvantages of alternatives; and
f. recognition and consideration of more of the possible consequences and obstacles associated with alternatives.

More and better inputs contribute to more effective thinkwork in the short term, which in turn reduces the need for corrective problem solving and decision making later.

Integration/Synergy

Groups can often formulate more comprehensive, more systematic, and better integrated solutions and plans than individuals. Especially when situations involve several interdependent jobs or groups of jobs, it becomes necessary to formulate comprehensive, systematic, well-integrated solu-tions or plans. Notwithstanding problems associated with group dynamics, this can generally be accomplished most successfully through a "meeting of the minds" involved. Through group processes, participants (e.g., subordinates) can determine with whom they must coordinate on what.

Understanding/Acceptance of, and Commitment to, Solutions or Decisions

People's understanding of, acceptance of, and commitment to solutions and decisions is greater when they take part in formulating them. When people participate in and contribute to a group process, they are much more likely to understand the situational objectives, the problem causes, the alternative solutions or plans formulated, and the bases for final decisions than they are when these things are simply explained to them by an individual decision-maker (e.g., their boss). Because they understand the solutions or decisions better, because they were involved in the process and became more interested in the situation, because they made contributions to the plans or solutions being considered, and because they had an opportunity to incorporate personal opinions, feelings, and goals into the chosen alternatives, they tend to be more accepting of them, more

committed to them, and more motivated to implement them as effectively as possible.

Understanding/Acceptance of, and Commitment to, Change

People's understanding of, acceptance of, and commitment to change are greater when they participate in identifying the need for it and in planning it. Change of some sort is an inevitable by-product of most problem-solving and decision-making processes. People generally fear and have difficulty accepting change, especially when they do not know the reason for the change and are not sure how it will affect them. For the reasons already mentioned in the paragraph above, group processes generate more acceptance of and commitment to change.

Functional Compromise and Consensus

Compromise and consensus reached in groups can be beneficial in many respects. People involved in or affected by a solution, decision, or change generally have something to gain or to lose. If a group decision results in a "loss" to one or more participants, their acceptance of and commitment to it may be relatively low. Therefore, reaching a compromise (in which no one particularly loses) can be advantageous, especially if the decision must be accepted by all concerned in order to make it work successfully. Consensus is basically agreement among participants regarding facts, estimates, points of view, solutions, and/or decisions. Arriving at group consensus can involve explanation, argument, persuasion, and compromise. Reaching consensus tends to generate feelings of accomplishment and security in a group, which contribute to the members "pulling together."

Effective Implementation and Successful Results

More effective implementation and better results can often be obtained through a group process. Especially where job interdependencies exist and a relatively complicated solution or plan requires coordinated implementation (e.g., by subordinates), the probabilities of effective action and successful results tend to be greater when all persons involved (a) understand and accept the chosen course(s) of action, (b) understand and accept the activities for which they will be held responsible, and (c) fully understand how their activites must be coordinated with others' activities. For reasons already discussed above, group think-work is more likely to produce these results than individual think-work followed by long explanations and persuasion.

Time Implications in the Short and Long Term

Group think-work can actually save time in the short term and the long term. When a manager unilaterally decides on a solution, plan, policy, or procedure, he or she is often asked by subordinates to explain it. This can take more than just a little time, especially if the matter is relatively complicated. If subordinates' acceptance and commitment are required for the sake of effective implementation, the manager may also have to take the time to justify the decision and to persuade (do a "sales job" on) subordinates—and even then may not get the desired results. In the short term, therefore, the time wasted in explanation and persuasion could well have been saved through the use of the group approach.

For several reasons, the group approach can also save time over the longer term. First, the consideration of more (if not also better) informational and experiential input available in group processes tends to generate better solutions and plans. The implementation of better solutions and plans tends to produce better initial results, thereby reducing and often precluding the need for time-consuming corrective thought and action later. Second, group processes usually generate greater understanding of and commitment to decisions. This, too, contributes to more effective implementation, better initial results, and less need for time-consuming corrective thought and action later.

Note that all of the following points can be related to the development of an effective management or leadership team.

Superior/Subordinate Relationships

Participative processes offer a leader opportunities to improve relationships with subordinates. When a leader unilaterally makes a decision, subordinates may feel that they have been treated unfairly. They may also resent the leader's apparent lack of trust in, and concern or respect for, them. Such feelings can undermine boss/subordinate relationships and widen any gaps that already exist. Par-

ticipative processes, on the other hand, provide a leader with opportunities to demonstrate trust in, and concern and respect for, subordinates. In turn, this enables the leader to earn subordinates' trust, respect, and loyalty. Participative processes also provide a leader with opportunities to observe subordinates' behavior and to develop deeper insights into their feelings, fears, concerns, and attitudes. This leads to more sensitive, people-oriented leadership behavior, which contributes to better boss/subordinate relationships.

Orientation, Training, and Cross-Pollination of Ideas

Subordinates learn more during group processes than during individual think-work. Problem solving is a major mode of learning. Therefore, analyzing situations, formulating solutions or plans, and making decisions are all learning situations. When subordinates are involved in team think-work, they (a) learn more about the technical and integrative aspects of their jobs; (b) learn about, and develop a greater understanding of, others' jobs and problems; (c) learn from others' knowledge, experience, and ideas; (d) develop a better understanding of the interrelationships among their own and others' jobs; and (e) learn more about their organization's structure, objectives, policies, and procedures. In addition, they can find out what they know, what they do not know, what they need to learn, and from whom they might learn it. During participative processes, both the manager and subordinates have opportunities to contribute to each other's knowledge and experience and to reinforce existing knowledge and experience. Such learning and reinforcement contribute to better individual and team development and performance.

Conflict Resolution; Working Relationships; Team Spirit

Group processes provide opportunities to resolve interpersonal conflicts, to improve working relationships, and to improve team spirit. Interpersonal conflicts within a group hamper individual and team performance by (a) interfering with effective communication, (b) interfering with technical and integrative tasks, (c) undermining working relationships, and (d) undermining people's job satisfaction and group morale. Interpersonal conflicts can stem from differences (and sometimes similarities) between personalities, from differences between tasks, and from a lack of understanding and acceptance of these differences (or similarities). Group processes provide opportunities to identify, confront, and resolve interpersonal conflicts. They also contribute to conflict resolution by enabling participants to understand more fully each other's characteristics, jobs, and problems. In addition, they are conducive to conflict resolution to the extent that group members exert social pressures on other members to resolve their interpersonal problems. As conflicts are confronted and resolved, both working relationships and team spirit improve.

Development of Subordinates

Group processes provide a manager with opportunities to develop subordinates' thinking skills. During participative processes, a manager or leader can observe subordinates' behavior and determine (at least to some extent) what they know, what they do not know but need to learn, what they are thinking, how well they are thinking, what guidance they might require, and what thinking skills they might need to develop further. Having identified subordinates' developmental needs, the leader or manager can provide the informational, methodological, or skill-related inputs—often during subsequent group processes.

Major Issues

Two main issues weave in and out of discussions about the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches. One is the level of *need for quality* in resulting solutions, plans, or decisions. The other is the level of *need for acceptance* of the resulting goals, plans, solutions, or decisions.

The *need for quality* revolves around the technical impact of think-work outputs on the organization. The *need for acceptance* revolves around the feelings, attitudes, needs, and motivation of people who will be affected by the outputs or results. Combinations of levels of these needs vary from situation to situation.

High Quality Need / Low Acceptance Need

Where technical quality is important, but people involved will not be affected significantly, individual managerial decision making can be justified. This is especially the case when subordinates' and/or colleagues' situational expertise is low and their contributions would be minimal. In such a case, the manager could seek outside expertise. On the other hand, if subordinates and/or colleagues did have sufficient expertise, a group process could very well improve the quality of the results or outputs.

Low Quality Need / High Acceptance Need

In this case, technical matters are relatively unimportant, but the potential effects on subordinates and/or colleagues require their acceptance. Participative problem solving or decision making is most appropriate here, particularly if solutions or decisions must be implemented successfully either by or through subordinates and/or colleagues.

High Quality Need / High Acceptance Need

This situation calls for the participative approach for two reasons. First, technical quality will be improved by whatever expertise subordinates or colleagues do have. Second, since their jobs, needs, feelings, and motivation are likely to be affected, their acceptance of the decision is more likely to be assured through the use of the team approach.

In our opinion, more organizational problem-solving and decision-making situations are higher in the needs for both quality and acceptance than many managers andleaders think they are. The reason: Many leaders and managers do not recognize that their subordinates' and colleagues' performance, development, and satisfaction are highly interrelated, that task-related and people-related results are interdependent, and that most if not all technical decisions have the potential for affecting people's attitudes and behavior in many subtle and not-so-subtle ways.

Conclusions

Acknowledging that there are exceptions to most generalizations, we draw the following conclusions from the discussion above.

First: In far too many situations, when both quality and acceptance are important, people will try to solve problems or make decisions by themselves. A few situations, however, do come closer than others to justifying an individual (rather than group) approach: (a) emergency or high stress situations, such as surgery, firefighting, police actions, and combat; (b) situations in which the needs for quality and acceptance are both unquestionably low; and (c) specific situations that were delegated or assigned to particular individuals during previous group processes conducted by a leader with and for his/her subordinates and/or colleagues.

Second: Most if not all thinking situations lead to some type and degree of change. Change, whether technical, attitudinal, or behavioral, usually affects people in some way and to some degree. Thus, there are few organizational problem-solving, goal-setting, planning, or decision-making situations in which acceptance is of little concern.

Third: Due to interdependencies among jobs and units in most organizations, improvement (or change) within an organization usually requires coordinated implementation. Effective implementation is facilitated by participative analysis, planning, and decision making.

Fourth: Since the integrative process is a problem-solving process, participative processes develop subordinates' and colleagues' individual and team integrative (managerial and leadership) skills.

Fifth: The major disadvantages of group processes lie in faulty "mechanics." Effective processes depend upon the absence of methodological and interpersonal obstacles. These obstacles can be minimized if not overcome by developing participants' problem-solving, communicative, and interpersonal skills.

Sixth: Group processes are superior to individual think-work processes in most respects and in most situations—particularly when the participants' group think-work skills have been adequately developed. Both managers and leaders should seriously consider using the team approach before deciding to think things out entirely on their own and make unilateral decisions affecting the jobs and lives of people with whom they work.

Part 3:
Improving TeamThink-Work Processes

Before discussing what group leaders and participants can do to improve the effectiveness of their group proesses, let us identify and discuss briefly the following: (1) the personal inputs or characteristics that individuals bring to a group process, and (2) the methodological and emotional obstacles that must be overcome, compensated for, or minized during a group process.

Inputs and Ostacles

Personal Inputs of Leaders and Participants

In other segments of this series we have identified various characteristics that every individual brings to any thinking,

learning, or behavioral situation. These include:

Motivational inputs such as needs and drives, values, interests, goals, hopes, and expectations.

Knowledge/attitudinal factors such as knowledge of the Analytic Approach (or lack of such knowledge), factual knowledge, experience, assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and biases.

Basic mental abilities such as sensory/perceptual abilities, thinking abilities (e.g., deductive and inductive logic), and learning abilities.

Personality traits such as dominance, self-confidence, sociability, original thinking, social conscientiousness, adaptability, social maturity, respsonsibility, emotional stability, and self-control.

In reviewing this abbreviated list of inputs, we can see that there are both rational and emotional aspects involved in thinking processes (just as in the cases of communication and learning processes). When rational and emotional inputs are not either fully developed, minimized, compensated for, or overcome, certain methodological and emotional obstacles to effective group think-work are almost bound to occur.

Symptoms of Methodological and/or Emotional Obstacles

As shown in **Table 2** (next page), all of the following symptoms indicate that there are either methodological problems, emotional problems, or combinations of both problems interfering with effective group think-work.

Selective perception: One or more participants are only paying attention to—or are only responding to—those parts of the process that are gaining their interest and attention.

Tuning out: One or more group members are not paying attention to any of the discussion.

Defensiveness: One or more participants are rationalizing or justifying something that they have said or done.

Disagreement: Members are disagreeing with each other over issues, facts, opinions, ideas, probabilities, etc.

Polarity: One or more participants are developing and clinging to exactly opposite points of view.

Exaggeration: One or more group members are making exaggerated statements or are exhibiting exaggerated emotional responses.

By-passing: Participants are misinterpreting each other's communications.

Non-acceptance: One or more members are not accepting someone's inputs or expressions of feelings.

Arguments: Disagreements have degenerated into less rational, more emotional arguments.

Side-tracking: Discussion is off course due to the introduction of side issues, extraneous problems, personal agendas, and/or differences of opinion regarding objectives.

Interpersonal conflict: Dysfunctional, emotion-charged interpersonal exchanges are taking place due to personality clashes and battles between wills and egos that may or may not relate directly to matters under discussion.

Wheel-spinning: Discussion is going around and around, but is not really leading anywhere.

Confusion: One or more participants do not understand what is going on or where they are in the problem-solving or decision-making process.

Limited input: Participants are not identifying enough influential or causal factors, corresponding facts, alternative solutions, or advantages and disadvantages of alternatives.

Socializing: One or more members are socializing instead of dealing with the problem, matter, or decision at hand.

Resistance: One or more participants are resisting, arguing against, ignoring, obstructing, or otherwise not accepting a majority view, an apparent change, a compromise, or group consensus.

Superficial or poor analysis: Participants are cutting through too much important detail, are not considering

Table 2: Symptoms/Effects and Causes of Faulty Group Processes

Symptoms of Faulty Processes

Selective attention and perception

Tuning out

Disagreement

Polarity

Exaggeration

By-passing

Non-acceptance (of ideas or feelings)

Arguments

Side-tracking

Interpersonal conflict

Confusion

Wheel-spinning

Limited input

Socializing

Resistance

Major Effects (also Symptoms)

Superficial/poor analysis

Too many, too few, or poor alternatives (plans/solutions)

Too quick agreement

-- or --

Failure to arrive at an effective decision, compromise, consensus

Major Causes of Faulty Processes

Methodological Obstacles

1. **Meeting poorly planned** (agenda; attendees; time; place; facilities; etc.)
2. **Inadequate knowledge of and ability to use the analytic approach**
3. **Inadequate ability to process information, ideas, feelings**
   a. Insufficient/ineffective elicitation and contribution of input (ideas/information/feelings)
   b. Inadequately dealing with and relating details (factors/facts)
   c. Inadequately dealing with participants' feelings

Emotion-Related Obstacles

1. **Attention/motivation problems**
   a. Real vs. perceived importance of topics or issues being covered
   b. Perception of personal risks (change; ego/status threat)
2. **Attitudinal problems**

Ego (who's right vs. what's right)
Personality conflicts
Frame of mind (mood)
Meta-talk (hidden meanings)
"Allness" (know it all, said it all)
Stereotyping (indiscrimination)
Agreement/acceptance conflicts
Double standards
Condescension

Obstacles in Surroundings

Inadequate conference facilities
Noise; lighting; seating; etc.
Interruptions

all the important factors that could be causes, and/or are not looking for important cause and effect relationships among the factors or variables that they have identified.

Too many or too few alternatives: Group members have suggested more than enough viable (perhaps non-viable) alternatives to deal with effectively (especially within a reasonable time constraint). Or, they have tossed out only a few, half-hearted suggestions, perhaps overlooking some of the more insightful possibilities.

Too quick agreement: Participants have arrived at a decision, a compromise, or consensus too quickly—and without enough in-depth exploration of the pros and cons of various alternatives.

Failure to arrive at compromise or consensus: The discussion is going around in circles as group members fail—for various reasons—to reach some compromise or some consensus of opinion about a final decision.

These and other symptoms can be traced to methodological problems, emotional problems, or problems involving some combination of the two basic problems (in which one may be creating the other).

Methodological Obstacles

The methodological, procedural, or "mechanical" aspects of group think-work involve (a) the approach or "phased procedure" used; (b) procedures for processing informational inputs; and (c) procedures for communicating information, ideas, and feelings being processed.

1. **Inadequate knowledge of and ability to use the Analytic Approach**

   The less that participants know about the phases and steps of the analytic approach, and the less that they have practiced following them, the greater are the chances for most of the symptoms mentioned above to occur.

   A good example is a phenomenon that occurs not only in group processes, but also in many social conversations. It can really be considered a cultural phenomenon, because we have all learned to say it—and we say it almost all the time: Based to a large extent on preconceived personal opinions (well-founded or not), a person will say, "I think the problem is _____ [states one cause] and _____ is what should be done about it." Another person, asserting his or her own preconceived opinion and challenging the first speaker, then says, "No, I think the problem is really _____ [states another cause] and _____ should be done instead." Not recognizing that each has probably identified only one causal factor involved, that both may be right to some extent, and that there may actually be many other important causes, each continues to challenge the other's viewpoint while strenuously defending their own. Meaningful, in-depth exploration of all facets or aspects of the situation has been completely by-passed. An argument develops, effective discussion breaks down, and very little is accomplished—except perhaps the solidifcation of each person's original viewpoint. If both parties had explored the situation more fully, looking for a system of possible causes (factors/variables/forces), and then had formulated and considered various alternative solutions, the discussion would have been much more productive—and amicable.

2. **Inadequate ability to process information**

   Assuming that participants have adequate knowledge and experience to contribute to a group process, they may still have difficulty (a) contributing their information, ideas, opinions, and feelings, and/or (b) keeping track of and relating their input.

   a. Inadequate elicitation/contribution of input

      A sufficient amount of quality input (information, ideas, opinions, etc.) is often not contributed during group processes. It is the group leader's responsibility to (a) elicit input, (b) guide the flow of ideas, and (c) promote objective consideration of different points of view.

   b. Inability to deal with and relate details

      Confusion and superficial analysis are common to individual and group think-work. These phenomena are largely due to the inability of the human mind to keep track of, juggle, and relate more than a few factors and their corresponding facts at one time. Undoubtedly the most beneficial tools for helping people to generate and handle details are visual analytic, planning, and decision-making diagrams or models (e.g., drawn on a whiteboard or flipchart). By indicating factors, corresponding facts, relationships be-

tween factors, facts, ideas, and other inputs diagrammatically, a group leader can not only enable participants to keep track of and to relate detailed bits of information, but can also guide participants' discussion more effectively through think-work phases and steps and improve their learning processes.

3. **Ineffective communication**

Most of the symptoms mentioned on pages 11 and 12 can occur when participants do not know and/or cannot apply (methodological) procedures for effective communication. In such cases, they tend to make these mistakes:

a. Cite inferences (assumptions, conclusions, opinions) instead of citing necessary or useful facts.

b. State inferences as though they were facts, not making the distinction clear to listeners.

c. By-pass listeners (miscommunicate what they really mean to say) by . . .

1. using words that are not in others' vocabularies;
2. using words that are not within others' experience fields;
3. not being precise in their usage of words; and/or
4. either under-defining or over-defining (using words that are too abstract, general, or all-inclusive—or—using words that are too restrictive, exact, or non-inclusive).

d. Use improper word order, sentence structure, grammar, and/or punctuation.

e. Do not express ideas in a manner that is clear, concise, accurate, and to the point.

f. Do not illustrate, elaborate on, or give examples of what they mean.

g. Do not check to see if what they meant was understood (if it actually "got through").

h. Do not pay close attention to others' communications.

i. Do not focus on central ideas.

Emotional Obstacles

In addition to certain knowledge factors and basic mental abilities, participants also bring their needs/drives, values, interests, goals, hopes, expectations, feelings, and personality traits to group processes. Just like communication processes, therefore, *group processes involve emotional as well as rational aspects*. Thus, most of the symptoms mentioned on pages 11 and 12 can often be traced in some way to the following practices or phenomena, all of which can adversely affect participants' emotions, and, therefore, their behavior during group processes.

1. **Attention/motivation problems**

These problems stem from the following:

a. Relevance or importance of situation: One or more participants do not perceive how the problem-solving or decision-making situation involves or will affect them.

b. Personal risks

1. *Perception of the possibility (threat) of change*: One or more participants sense a forthcoming change that will, for example, disturb their routine, alter their responsibilities or position, interfere with existing personal or working relationships, or increase their workload or performance goals.

2. *Status or ego threat*: A group member feels that his or her personal status, identity, or ego is being either challenged or threatened — perhaps by (a) another participant, (b) impending change, (c) being "helped," or (d) being found mistaken about something.

2. **Attitudinal problems**

These problems tend to underlie dysfunctional responses or interpersonal behavior.

a. Ego and the "Who's Right vs. What's Right Syndrome": Because of their egos (part of everyone's "human nature"), one or more participants apparently think that their own perceptions, assumptions, opinions, or conclusions are "right" and that the others'

are "wrong." Like the person we mentioned earlier who said, "I think the problem is _____ ," and the other person who said, "No, I think the problem is _____ ," these participants have gotten embroiled in a "who's right argument." But they could have avoided it if, instead of immediately taking a stand that they now feel obliged to defend, they had explored the situation fully to determine what's right or what's best. This is a key point. *What really counts in a successful group process is determining "what's right"—not "who's right."*

b. Personality conflicts: A personality clash has surfaced in the form of a heated argument (or a deafening silence) between the individuals involved. The underlying feelings have become fairly apparent to the group and are obstructing effective communication of information, ideas, or feelings—even among other participants, who are being made uncomfortable by the situation.

c. Frame of mind: Because of other organizational problems or personal problems, an individual is not in the mood to think or to interact with others.

d. Metatalk (hidden meanings): Regardless of what an individual might have said, other participants are not certain what he or she was really thinking and feeling. Their uncertainty could be due to either verbal or non-verbal behavior that seemed ambiguous, veiled, circumspect, vague, insincere, subtly apologetic, insinuative, or implicitly prophetic.

e. "Allness": One or more participants resent another participant's implication that he or she knows it all or has said it all.

f. Indiscrimination (stereotyping): Group members tend to form negative attitudes toward a participant who over-emphasizes either the differences or the similarities between people, things, or activities (and, as a result, appears to be prejudiced).

g. Acceptance vs. agreement: Other members' unwillingness to accept a participant's views or feelings—let alone agree with them—can tend to make the participant defensive and perhaps argumentative.

h. Double standards: Participants tend to react negatively to another group member who seems to think that he or she is OK, but that others are not—or seems to think that when he or she does something, it's OK, but if others do it, it's not OK.

i. Condescension: Few people appreciate condescending comments made to them by others.

Table 2 (page 14) summarizes (a) symptoms of faulty group processes, (b) major effects of faulty processes, all of which are also symptoms, and (c) major causes of faulty processes, including various methodological, emotional, and environmental obstacles.

Improving Team Processes Through Leader Guidance

By following some basic procedures, a group leader can guide a team think-work process so that (a) various factors which influence group effectiveness are either maximized, minimized, reduced, or compensated for, and (b) methodological, emotional, or methodological/emotional obstacles are dealt with effectively.

The procedures recommended below take into account the above discussion and synthesize the phases and steps of the analytic approach with procedures for improving interpersonal communications and working relationships within groups.

Leader Preparation Steps and Procedures Prior to a Meeting

1. **Identify** that a goal-setting, planning, decision-making, or problem-solving situation exists.

2. **Do a brief preliminary analysis** to determine:

   a. the situation's nature, scope, and depth;
   b. the importance of the situation to the unit or organization;
   c. the time frame in which action should or must be taken;
   d. the situation's priority in terms of its importance and any time constraints involved;
   e. the general objectives to be achieved through think-work;
   f. the advisability of conducting a group process instead of doing individual think-work;
   g. who should participate in the group process because

they are (a) involved in the situation, (b) have pertinent input to the think-work process, and/or (c) will probably be affected by the decisions to be made.

3. **Advise participants** of the need for group think-work and your preliminary estimates of items a though g above.

4. **Arrange a meeting time** that . . .

   a. gives participants enough time to do a preliminary analysis of their own;
   b. rovides adequate time for actually conducting the meeting;
   c. ill permit timely action once a decision has been reached;
   d. s convenient for and agreeable to participants.

5. **Request that participants do a brief (or possibly in-depth) preliminary analysis of the situation** (and perhaps formulate some alternative plans or solutions).

6. **Request that participants organize** and/or prepare relevant materials (e.g., references, data sources, visual aids).

7. **Plan for holding the meeting** in the most conducive environment possible (e.g., a quiet, comfortable, distraction-free conference room that is equipped with appropriate visual aids such as a chalkboard, flipchart, overhead projector, and projection screen).

8. **Consider the characteristics and roles of participants**, and anticipate how best to guide the meeting, taking into account the following:

   a. who is likely to make what kinds of contributions;
   b. who will most likely be affected by, and perhaps fear and resist, possible changes; and
   c. who has existing interpersonal conflicts with whom.

Leader Steps/Procedures at the Outset of a Meeting (Preparation Phase of a Meeting)

1. **Briefly review the situation**, stating your initial impressions (subject to further discussion) regarding . . .

   a. a description of the situation;
   b. the type of think-work appropriate (goal setting, planning, and budgeting; problem solving; decision making concerning policies and procedures; innovation; problem prevention);
   c. the nature, scope, and possible complexities of the situation;
   d. the apparent or possible importance of the situation to the participants/unit/organization;
   e. any known or anticipated limiting parameters or constraints involving, for example —

      1. time available for the group process;
      2. time by which action might have to be, or should be, taken;
      3. long- and short-term organizational objectives that might influence the analysis, the alternatives formulated, and the final decision; and
      4. resource availability (in terms of personnel, budgets, and facilities) that could affect decisions to be made and their implementation.

2. **Establish an informal team atmosphere**.

   a. Behave in an informal, congenial, trusting, cooperative manner.
   b. Promote a team spirit: "Each of us has something worthwhile to contribute to this process that will help us all improve our individual and team performance, development, and satisfaction."

3. **State in detail (or review) several basic ground rules for the process**:

   "First, whatever decision we arrive at will be a product of the group. My basic role will be to guide the think-work process and facilitate our arrival at the best possible decision."

   "Second, consensus will be sought. The final decision must be acceptable to all participants, including myself. We will discuss organizational constraints, but this doesn't mean that we can't make every effort to overcome them."

   "Third, let's all contribute to the enforcement of these (and other) ground rules. They guarantee everyone the freedom to express their ideas, opinions, and feelings openly and honestly. This enables us not only to arrive at the best possible decision, but also to arrive at a decision that is acceptable to all and to which all can be committed."

   "Fourth, decision making usually results in change and

possible risks to those involved. If, as we discuss alternatives, you become apprehensive about any perceived risks to you, we will explore and deal with them."

4. **State in detail (or review) the basic phases of the Analytic Approach** (reviewed here in **Table 3** on page 18).

   "First, we'll set a guideline time limit on discussion."

   "Second, we'll analyze the situation or problem in depth to determine what the real, underlying causes are—or — what key elements should be changed or improved. All inputs, however diverse, will be sought, but no solutions should be suggested or discussed at this stage."

   "Third, having formulated an acceptable statement of 'the problem' (causal factors or things that could be improved), we'll seek possible alternative solutions and formulate action plans for the implementation of each, but we won't evaluate the alternatives until we've listed as many good ones as possible."

   "Fourth, when we've listed all the possible solutions, we'll evaluate each alternative in terms of its possible outcomes, the probabilities of its outcomes, its advantages, and its disadvantages. We'll then synthesize solutions where appropriate and seek consensus on a final decision."

   "Fifth, we'll summarize our decision, review it, and modify it if necessary, so that it's acceptable to everyone."

5. **State in detail (or review) basic roles and responsibilities of the group leader**.

   a. Providing procedural guidance during think-work phases and steps.

      Example: "We're jumping ahead in this process by suggesting alternative solutions too soon (or by evaluating alternatives too soon). Let's identify more causal factors and then talk about possible solutions (or identify more alternatives and then evaluate each in its turn).

   b. "Gatekeeping" the flow of ideas. During each phase of the process, doing the following:

      1. Eliciting inputs (getting ideas);
      2. Facilitating discussion (idea evaluation);
      3. Facilitating arrival at group consensus.

   c. Fostering a team atmosphere.

   d. Contributing inputs (information, ideas, suggestions) when appropriate.

   e. Reinforcing functional problem-solving behavior of the group (and calling attention to dysfunctional behavior as well).

      [A more detailed description of these responsibilities follows the description of participants' roles and responsibilities.]

6. **State in detail (or review) basic roles and responsibilities of participants**.

   a. Making contributions (expressing information, ideas, opinions, and feelings) openly, honestly, clearly, and concisely.

   b. Being open-minded, exploring possible causes and solutions thoroughly, and not taking a stand too quickly (so as not to bog down discussion by arguing, defensively "saving face," or rationalizing what you have said or done).

   c. Avoiding any inclination to find fault or to blame, concentrating instead on improving the situation at hand.

   d. Accepting and looking for merit in others' contributions, exploring their ideas and feelings with them, and not taking disagreement with your own contributions too personally.

   e. Sticking to the point, repressing the tendencies to raise side issues, to introduce extraneous issues or problems, and to swing the discussion toward matters of greater personal than group concern.

   f. Sticking to the facts as much as possible, indicating to others when you are actually stating an inference (assumption, opinion, or conclusion).

   g. Listening closely to what others are saying.

   h. Speaking out spontaneously (without being urged), but thinking before speaking.

Table 3: Summary of Planning and Problem-Solving Phases, Steps, and Recommendations

Phase I: Preparation

Step 1: **Awareness / think what you're doing --** so will actually use methods and tools for structuring and improving thought processes (awareness based on brain's comparison of actual with planned, intended or desired stimuli)
Step 2: **Describe** situation -- i.e., the unintended, undesired, or unexpected events or effects that signalled the problem situation
Step 3: Increase **motivation**: Determine importance in terms of organizational and/or personal goals and plans
Step 4: Seek a conducive **environment**
Step 5: Get **organized** (participants, materials, equipment, references, etc.)
Step 6: **Preview**: do a brief preliminary analysis (to determine actual importance of situation -- and time and money to commit)

* Resist making decisions before actually performing adequate analysis and planning (which can change or even nullify decisions).
* **Perform the entire sequence**: (1) analyze situation; (2) formulate alternative objectives/goals; (3) formulate alternative sets of strategies and tactics, programs and projects, action plans, and budgets (for each alternative goal/objective); (4) choose among the alternative sets of goals and associated plans.
* **Perform each phase in its turn. DON'T jump back and forth among them.**

Phase II: Analyze -- Define and Reduce the (Planning / Preoblem) Situation

Step 7: Do an initial **qualitative analysis**. Think "multi-causality," not just a single cause. Identify system of possibly causal or influential variables involved and the sequential or cause-effect relationships among them
  * use checklists to augment knowledge of factors
  * think "**big picture**" ("outside the box"; sub-systems of variables operating within larger systems in the "meta-system")
  * **diagram (model)** variables and their sequential and/or cause-effect relationships, making analysis **visual**

Step 8: Collect important **facts** (associated with factors)
  * use facts and observations (rather than opinions);
  * use "working assumptions" as necessary (based on facts to greatest extent possible)
  * add facts or data to situation model

Step 9: **Analyze** information and identify the real, underlying, multiple causal or influential factors (in chains of causes and effects)

Step 10: Formulate **decision-making criteria** for Phase IV (Decision Making)

Phase III: Plan -- Alternatives (Solutions) Formulation

Step 11: Formulate **Goal(s)/Objective(s)**: identify the desired end results of implementing solution(s)
  - **Prioritize** goals/objectives (in terms of, for example, importance vs. urgencyand quality vs. quantity)

Step 12: **Plan**: Identify what must DO to improve, change, correct, or adjust variables and their relationships
  - Formulate alternative sets of broad **strategies** (for each alternative goal or objective)
  - Formulate more specific **tactics** for each strategy
  - Translate strategies and associated tactics into broad **programs**
  - Translate each broad program into one or more specific **projects**
  - Formulate alternative **plans/courses of action** for each program/project (assuring compatibility among them) (very specifically, who do what, (perhaps how), when, by when, and in what order)
    * use appropriate **diagrams**: Gantt/bar charts, PERT networks, etc.
  - Cost out programs/projects and action plans into program/project **budgets** (time and resources)

Phase IV: Decision Making -- Test and Select Alternatives

  * Use appropriate visual tools (such as scenario diagrams, decision trees, and tabular decision matrixes) to . . .
  * Use propositional logic to consider "what might happen if . . . we do this or that")

Step 13: Anticipate **scenarios** (sequences of actions & subsequent events) as alternative plans/solutions are implemented
Step 14: Identify possible **outcomes** of alternative plans/solutions
Step 15: Assess realistic **probabilites** of possible events (don't let "wishful thinking" taint assessments) (don't let preferences for, or aversions to, events or outcomes influence assessments of the chances that they'll occur)

Step 16: **Test and compare** alternative goals/plans or solutions
  - Identify and compare all possible **advantages and disadvantages**
  - Weigh each alternative plan or solution against **decision-making criteria (**formulated during analysis phase)
  - Also test/weigh combinations of alternatives

Step 17: **Select** appropriate (sets of) goals and associated plans—or (sets of) solutions—for implementation

Phase V: Implement Chosen Plan(s) or Solution(s)

Step 18: As Implement plans and/or solutions, **monitor and evaluate feedback**
Step 19: **Adjust plans or behavior** (based on analysis/evaluation of developing situation)

i. Trying to build on and synthesize (integrate) ideas being expressed.

j. Avoiding arguments — making your point clearly and logically, but listening to others' reactions (points of view) before pressing your own point.

k. Not changing your mind simply to reach a quick, easy agreement; instead, yielding only to positions that have withstood careful evaluation and are considered by the group to be the most sound.

l. Not opposing an idea simply because you either (a) didn't think of it yourself, or (b) took an early stand and now cannot admit that you were wrong.

m. Avoiding "I win, you lose" solutions; instead, looking for alternatives that are fairest and most acceptable to all and through which everyone wins to some extent (consensus).

n. Reinforcing behavior of others that contributes to an effective group process, and, in cooperation with the group leader, confronting and dealing with dysfunctional behavior (rather than ignoring it and allowing it to continue to disrupt the process).

o. Trusting other participants, making the assumption that they are honest and want to do what is best for the group and the organization.

More on a Group Leader's Roles and Responsibilities

While it is true that participants have important roles and responsibilities during group processes, it is also true that guidance of the group is a major responsibility of the group leader. Whether or not the leader fully understands how to guide the process and has the necessary skills can mean the difference between a successful group process and the traditional, wheel-spinning, generally ineffective "committee meeting."

Leader Responsibilities That Generally Apply to All Phases of a Group Process

1. **Eliciting input (idea-getting)**

   a. Encouraging spontaneous, free expression of input (information describing the situation; identification of causal or influential factors; supporting evidence; possible solutions or plans; opinions about possible outcomes of alternatives; opinions about probabilities of outcomes; opinions about advantages and disadvantages; etc.)

   b. Asking for all relevant input, including diverse thinking and unusual ideas.

   c. Being patient and tolerating silences while participants are thinking (formulating contributions in their minds).

   d. Acknowledging and accepting each idea, no matter how unusual or potentially controversial.

   e. Requesting specific illustrations of, elaboration on, or clarification of an idea being voiced.

   f. Rephrasing or summarizing a contribution in one's own words and posting or diagraming the idea as objectively as possible on a whiteboard or flipchart.

   g. Testing for accuracy of, and other participants' understanding of, each contribution made (after each has been made).

   h. Personally not judging input or allowing other participants to evaluate it (until all contributions have been elicited).

   i. Protecting minority views or views that are generating unfavorable reactions, giving them an opportunity to be heard.

   j. Reinforcing idea-building behavior (participants adding to, building on, or refining contributions made by other group members).

   k. Posting extraneous contributions (to the side on the whiteboard) for later consideration (or sometimes a quiet death).

   l. Refraining from making (immediate) personal contributions (until after the ball gets rolling).

   m. Checking to see if all relevant contributions have been made and if the group is ready to evaluate them all, one by one.

2. **Guiding/facilitating discussion (idea evaluation)**

   a. Identifying, surfacing, and dealing with dysfunctional feelings

      1. Constantly testing for frustration and adverse emotional responses, and then, having recognized their existence, . . .

      2. Encouraging participant(s) to express (describe) feelings and get them out into the open so that they can be dealt with.

      3. Being tolerant of an initial silence, and drawing out a response with non-verbal behavior (such as a questioning, expectant facial expression).

      4. Not interrupting or evaluating; hearing out and not hurrying the person whose feelings are being explored.

      5. Not questioning expressed feelings by asking for evidence, but instead, perhaps requesting elaboration or illustrations.

      6. Expecting and allowing some face-saving or rationalizing behavior.

      7. Helping to clarify vague or ambiguous expressions of feelings by restating them in more objective terms.

      8. Asking other participants if they share the same feelings.

      9. Protecting those who express feelings, partly by encouraging others to empathize with (to put themselves in the shoes of) the other person.

      10. Reinforcing (acknowledging) expressions of feelings offered by hesitant or shy individuals.

      11. Exploring with the group how to deal with problematic feelings being expressed.

      12. Complimenting participants on the effectiveness with which they have dealt with their emotions.

   b. Evaluating posted contributions (possible causes; alternative solutions; pros and cons)

      1. Allowing each contribution to be evaluated in its turn.

      2. Using controversial ideas as springboards for generating evaluation, new ideas, and recognition of possible implications.

      3. Allowing disagreement — and even stimulating disagreement if there is too much, too quick, or too easy agreement.

      4. Protecting (certainly not attacking) the personality and/or ego of any contributor when there is disagreement.

      5. Refusing to become embroiled in irrational, nonproductive arguments; instead, throwing back questions to those who are disagreeing with something said.

      6. Asking exploratory, non-judgmental questions to stimulate objectivity and insight.

      7. Posting and/or diagraming information and ideas in order to guide discussion and to help participants keep track of and relate ideas and details.

      8. Describing interpersonal conflicts (disagreements) in situational rather than behavioral terms, and then seeking reasons for the disagreement (thereby dissipating emotions that could lead to more hostility, jealousy, suspicion, or resentment).

         Example: One participant says to another, "You idiot, that crazy idea would have disastrous results." The leader mediates (intervenes) saying, "You obviously have an objection to the other person's idea, but wouldn't we be better off if we could stick to the issue rather than getting personal about disagreements? Please back up and tell us how you see the situation."

      9. Helping resolve disagreements by suggesting further exploration (suggesting digging deeper for causes or formulating fresh ideas/alternatives).

      10. Occasionally summarizing various points that have been raised.

      11. Occasionally reviewing the group's progress.

3. **Guiding arrival at consensus**

   a. Not allowing voting or bargaining on ideas or alternatives.

   b. Seeking to synthesize ideas or alternatives, so that they contain the positive points (of previous ideas or alternatives) that all members can accept.

   c. Not letting one participant or faction dominate arrival at consensus.

   d. Testing for consensus (but not until there appears to be a strong likelihood that it exists).

      Example: The leader says, "You all seem to be in agreement (on the causes of the problem—or—on the solutions that we should implement—or—on the decision we seem to have reached). Are we ready to accept it (or them)?" [Chorus of "yes."] "What about you, John . . . and you, Anne?" [They didn't say "yes" with the rest of the group, but now they nod their heads in approval.] "OK, does anyone disagree?" [Pause . . .] "Then are we ready to go on to . . (the next idea—or—the next alternative for testing—or—the next phase in the process)?"

Additional Leader Responsibilities That Specifically Apply to the Analysis Phase

1. Eliciting a thorough description of the situation or problem (the unintended or unexpected events or effects that signalled a need for think-work activity).

2. Eliciting in-depth identification of the system of factors or variables (possible causes) involved.

3. Guiding the association of facts that correspond to factors to identify (a) the most important factors/variables, or (b) the actual, underlying causes.

4. Guiding the formulation of criteria for testing and selecting among alternative courses of action (solutions/plans).

5. Keeping the suggestion of solutions out of the discussion until the situation has been explored (analyzed) fully.

6. Keeping the discussion focused on the situation or problem at hand.

Additional Leader Responsibilities That Specifically Apply to Formulating Alternatives

1. Guiding identification of what needs to be done, changed, or improved — and by whom.

2. Making certain that plans for implementation are incorporated into each alternative solution.

3. Asking for additional alternatives if only several have been proposed.

Additional Leader Responsibilities That Specifically Apply to the Decision-Making Phase

1. **Facilitating evaluation of a**:

   a. Promoting anticipation (identification) of possible outcomes of each alternative.

   b. Promoting estimation of the probabilities of possible outcomes of each alternative.

   c. Guiding examination and comparison of advantages and disadvantages of alternatives (e.g., using a two-column approach).

   d. Guiding exploration of supporting evidence.

   e. Using stalemates constructively—to generate further exploration of pros and cons.

   f. Guiding exploration of potential problems that could be created by implementing each alternative.

2. **Guiding the selection process**

   a. Reviewing (comparing) alternatives' advantages and disadvantages.

   b. Suggesting integration (synthesis) of alternatives.

   c. Reducing the number of alternatives (preferably by consensus, but possibly by voting) if too many alternatives have been listed.

d. Guiding the elimination of unacceptable alternatives (based on consideration of decision-making criteria or constraints involving, for example, organizational objectives, budgets, time, present workloads, and personnel's skill levels).

2. **Reducing the threat of change**

a. Being honest about implications for change involving participants' jobs and or lives.

b. Guiding anticipation of risks and exploration of various means for avoiding them.

c. Getting fears out into the open and dealt with.

d. Clarifying the objectives of any proposed change.

e. Emphasizing pleasant or constructive aspects of impending change.

f. Asking which changes might benefit all concerned.

g. Indicating the change not need not be totally accepted; not trying to "sell" it.

h. Entertaining additional alternatives, in which change is brought about in stages/steps rather than all at once.

i. Suggesting trial periods or experimentation, during which allowances would be made for an orientation and the possibility of making mistakes.

j. Promoting consensus on chosen (possibly modified) alternative(s).

4. **Finalizing the decision**

a. Summarizing the decision in detail—to the satisfaction of all group members.

b. Engaging participants in setting performance objectives (including standards and conditions) for implementing the decision.

Additional Leader Responsibilities That Specifically Apply to the Implementation Phase

1. Making summary notes and or diagrams (model, such as a PERT network) available to all participants for immediate use and future reference.

2. Holding follow-up meetings to evaluate progress or results, helping to correct any problems that might have arisen.

3. Reinforcing rewarding, giving positive feedback to those who are successfully implementing the decision plan, policy, or procedure).

Summary

Table 4 summarizes the entire discussion about how to improve team think-work processes. It has been developed for leaders and participants to use as a handy guide during group processes.

The left-hand column of the table lists symptoms of faulty group processes (many of which are also the symptoms of faulty communications). The middle and right-hand columns indicate possible causes of faulty think-work, which are often the result of the group leader not carrying out his or her responsibilities properly. The middle column lists the process leader's responsibilities during *all phases* of the process. The right column lists responsibilities during *each specific phase* of the analytic approach (preparation, analysis, formulation of plans/solutions, decision making, and implementation). Note that item 8 in the preparation phase outlines participants' responsibilities.

Left Column – Symptoms of Faulty Think-Work Processes: While there are *thought-related symptoms* directly associated with problem-solving phases, most of the symptoms listed in the left column are basically *symptoms of faulty communications*. The obvious reason: Group processes require communication among participants, and faulty communications contribute to faulty processes. Table 4, however, categorizes communication-oriented symptoms and other symptoms somewhat differently. The three major

categories are shown in bold type: "symptoms of attention/ motivation problems" (first page); "symptoms of methodological problems" (second page); and "symptoms of ineffective or inefficient interpretive and information processing problems" (second page). All the categories include symptoms of faulty communication. Even symptoms of methodological problems can develop because of faulty communication. It is most important to note, however, that nearly all symptoms of faulty group processes *can occur at any point during the entire process*. They are not necessarily associated with the phases directly across from them in the right-hand column. Also note, however, that there are major (highlighted and indented) symptoms for each particular phase—for example, "superficial or poor analyses" in the case of the analysis phase.

Middle Column – Leader's General Responsibilities in All Phases: These begin at the top with "advance/ongoing improvement of inputs" and go down to "effectively guide arrival at consensus." Two major responsibilities are shown in bold capital letters. The primary responsibility is "know, be able to use, and be able to guide participants' use of the analytic appproach." The secondary responsibility is "know how to facilitate the processing of information, ideas, and feelings during the process." We have broken the second down into the five categories below (beginning with "effectively alleviate attention and motivation problems"). Here again, it is important to note that all of these general responsibilities *apply to each phase of the analytic approach*, not just the phase directly across in the right-hand column.

Right Column – Leader's Responsibilities Specific to a Particular Phase: Each phase is highlighted. Given **Table 3** (page 18) and the booklet on (individual) problem solving and decision making, these responsibilities should require no further discussion here. However, it should be pointed out that the primary responsibility is "know, be able to use, and be able to guide participants' use of the analytic approach" (during each particular phase).

It is difficult to say whether communication errors and underdeveloped soft skills (such as interpersonal awareness and sensitivity) cause more faulty think-work processes than improper use of phases and steps of the analytic approach. However, the author has concluded the following: While it is true that participants can bring a host of dysfunctional feelings and attitudes to group processes, many of these problematic influences can be minimized by performing each phase of the analytic approach in its turn (without jumping back and forth between phases). For example, jumping immediately from one person's identification of a causal variable to formulating a solution for it—and not attempting to identify all the possibly significant causal or influential variables first—simply exacerbates some emotional obstacles and can generate new ones. On the other hand, simply using phases and steps of the analytic approach to deal with competing wills and egos and dysfunctional feelings and attitudes is like trying to solve problems with one hand tied behind the back. This has been especially true when managers and leaders use the analytic approach to confront and deal with interpersonal conflicts. After all, resolving conflicts between individuals or units is the same as resolving an interpersonal problem situation. In these cases, where feelings can run high, it is particularly important to "know how to facilitate the processing of information, ideas, and *feelings* during the process" (middle column of first page).

Table 4: Conducting Effective Team-Think Processes

Symptoms of Faulty Processes (Most are found in Most Phases)	**Responsibilities for Preventing Causes of Faulty Team-Think Processes**	
	Leader's General Responsibilities in ALL Phases	**Leader's Phase-Related Responsibilities**
	Advance and Ongoing Improvement of Inputs	
Unrecognized problems/threats and opportunities to improve things	1. Do personal & organizational goal setting & planning	**Know, be able to use, and be able to guide participants' use of the methodology (phases and steps) of the Analytic Approach** ↓
Only occasional use of (full) analytic approach	2. Habituate own and subordinates' use of analytic approach	
Little or limited knowledge of variables and their interrelationships	3. Increase own and subordinates' knowledge/experience	
Illogical reasoning; overly simplistic solutions	4. Further develop own and subordinates' thinking abilities	
Dysfunctional traits, attitudes, behavior	5. Adjust own, guide subordinates' adjustment of, personal characteristics and behavioral tendencies	**Know how to facilitate the processing of information, ideas, and feelings during all the phases** ↓
Faulty implementation, communication, coordination; problems, contingencies	6. Further develop implementation and communication skills	
Ill-conceived or poor meetings →		**Prior to a Team Think-Work Process**
Meeting not well attended Appropriate participants not in attendance	**Know, be able to use, and be able to guide participants' use of the methodology (phases and steps) of the Analytic Approach** ↓	Identify that a think-work situation exists Perform an initial **preview analysis** of Situation: nature, scope; importance/priority, possible objectives; time have to act; need for group process. Analyze potential participants; determine who invite based on how involved, what inputs provide, how will be affected by decisions, how affect process. Advise participants and **plan** meeting time/place: Tell agenda, importance; request do preliminary analysis, collect info, and organize what need; determine mutually convenient time; agree on conducive place (where minimize noise, distractions, interruptions, have adequate seating, lighting, and so forth)
Experience distractions, interruptions Participants not at ease or comfortable	**Know how to facilitate the processing of information, ideas, and feelings during all the phases** ↓	
Poor or incomplete iontroduction →		**Preparation (at Meeting's Outset)**
Symptoms of attention/motivation problems Selective attention/perception Tuning Out / Daydreaming Socializing Dysfunctional frame of mind or mood	**Effectively alleviate attention/motivation problems** a. Discuss real vs. perceived importance of topic/situation b. Discuss perceived risks (e.g., change; ego/status threats)	1. Describe what will be planning/deciding/solving 2. Increase **motivation**; outline . . . how organizational objectives are involved; seriousness of planning/problem situation; what results of process will do for participants 3. Get all **organized** (data, matls, refs, equip) 4. Establish a **team atmosphere** (congenial, trusting, cooperative; emphasize team spirit and needed contributions by all)

5. Provide **preview** of situation:
(description; type think-work involved; nature, possible scope, possible complexities; constraints such as time, resources available)
6. **Review approach** — "we'll take one phase at a time and not jump back and forth between them; we'll seek consensus"
8. **Review participants' responsibilities**
(make contributions; be open-minded; avoid blaming/fault-finding; accept and look for merit in others' contributions; stick to facts; stick to point; listen; speak out, but think first; build on others' points; avoid arguments; explore differences in perceptions, ideas, feelings, opinions, conclusions; avoid "I win, you lose" decisions; trust others; reinforce functional group behavior)

7. **Review leader's roles/responsibilities**
(provide procedural guidance; gatekeep the flow of ideas -- e.g., elicit inputs/ideas; facilitate discussion/evaluation and arrival at consensus; foster team atmosphere; contribute inputs after others do; reinforce functional behavior)

Superficial or poor analyses

Too few variables and their relationships considered

Symptoms of methodological problems
Disagreement over method/steps
Disagreement over when to proceed to the next phase

Symptoms of ineffective or inefficient interpretive and information processing problems
Disagreement over information or ideas
Disagreements over opinions/conclusions
By-passing
Side-tracking
Confusion
Wheel-spinning
Limited input
Meta-talk (hidden meanings)

Too many, too few, or poor alternatives (plans/solutions)

Effectively elicit contributions of inputs (info,ildeas) (all phases)
(Help participants identify, deal with, and relate factors and associated facts/data)
1. Encourage spontaneous, free expression of inputs
2. Ask for all relevant, even diverse or unusual input
3. Be patient; tolerate silences while participants thinking
4. Acknowledge and accept each idea, observation, other input
5. Request specific illustrations, elaboration, clarification
6. Rephrase or summarize a contribution in words all group would understand; post idea on whiteboard/flipchart
7. Test for participant's understanding and agreement with input
8. Personally not judge inputs or allow others to evaluate until all inputs contributed
9. Protect minority views or views received unfavorably by group
10. Reinforce idea-building or idea-refining behavior
11. Posting extraneous contributions to side of flipchart for later consideration (or slow death)
12. Refrain from making personal contributions until ball has gotten rolling and group has contributed its inputs
13. Check to see if all relevant contributions have been made and group is ready to go on to next phase

Effectively guide evaluation of posted contributions (all phases)
1. Allow each contribution to be evaluated in its turn
2. Use controversial ideas as springboards for generaing evaluation, new ideas, recognition of implications

Analysis Phase

1. Elicit in-depth description of situation
2. Elicit both broad and deep identification of potentially causal variables involved and their interrelationships — use checklists as necessary
3. Diagram or model factors and their relationships
4. Connect facts and data with factors/variables
5. Identify which factors to correct and which obvious and underlying causes to correct or improve
6. Guide formulation of criteria for testing, comparing, and selecting among alternative plans/solutions
7. Keep suggestions of alternatives from discussion until situation has been fully explored for causes
8. Keep discussion focused on situation/problem at hand

Formulation of Plans/Solutions Phase

1. Guide identification of which variables need changing, adjusting, improving, correcting
2. Identify end results (objectives) desired
3. Formulate Plans for reaching objectives: strategies/tactics; program/projects; action plans; budgets

3. Allow disagreement; even stimulate disagreement if there is too quick, too much, or too easy agreement
4. Protect the ego and personality of any disagreeing contributor
5. Not become embroiled in irrational, unproductive disagreements
6. Ask non-judgmental questions to stimulate objectivity, further analysis, insight generation, and greater understanding
7. Post or diagram information and ideas in order to guide discussion, keep participants on track, and maintain role

Too quick agreement
— or —
Failure to arrive at an effective decision, consensus or compromise

8. Describe disagreements (conflicts) in non-personal and non-judgmental terms
9. Promote deeper exploration of disagreements and the possible rational and emotional reasons for them
10. Occasionally summarize points being raised
11. Occasionally review the group's progress

Symptoms of other problems stemming from participants' feelings or attitudes

- Exaggeration
- Resistance
- Non-acceptance (of ideas/feelings)
- Agreement/acceptance conflicts
- Arguments
- Polarity
- Stereotyping (indiscrimination)
- Interpersonal conflicts — values, beliefs
- Interpersonal conflicts — personality
- Interpersponal conflicts — egos:
  - Who's right vs. what's right
  - "Allness" (know it all, said it all)
  - Double standards (OK for me, not for you)
  - Condescension

Effectively identify and deal with dysfunctional feelings (all phases)

1. Constantly test for frustration, other negative emotions
2. Encourage participanmts to express and describe feelings, so can get them into the open and deal with them
3. Tolerate initial silences; draw out discussion with non-verbal questioning or expectant facial expressions
4. Not interrupt or evaluate person's feelings until fully expressed
5. Not question expressed feelings by asking for evidence; instead, request elaboration or illustrations
6. Expect some face-saving and rationalizing behavior
7. Help clarify vague or ambiguous expressions of feelings (partly by asking others to describe themselves in person's shoes)
8. Ask other participants if they share the same feelings, and why
9. Protect those who express feelings (asking for empathy, etc.)
10. Acknowledge expressions of feelings as valid perceptions
11. Guide group exploration of reasons for feelings and how group can deal with them
12. Compliment participants on their effective handling of feelings

Effectively guide arrival at team consensus (all phases; esp DM)

1. Not allow voting or bargaining on ideas or alternatives
2. Guide effort to synthesize ideas or alternatives (so that synthesized alternatives contain positive points all group can accept)
3. Not let any one individual or faction dominate arrival at consensus
4. Test for consensus (but not until it appears fairly likely)

4. Assure that action plans are part of any solution (specify who do what, when, in what sequence)
5. Ask for more alternatives if just a few suggested

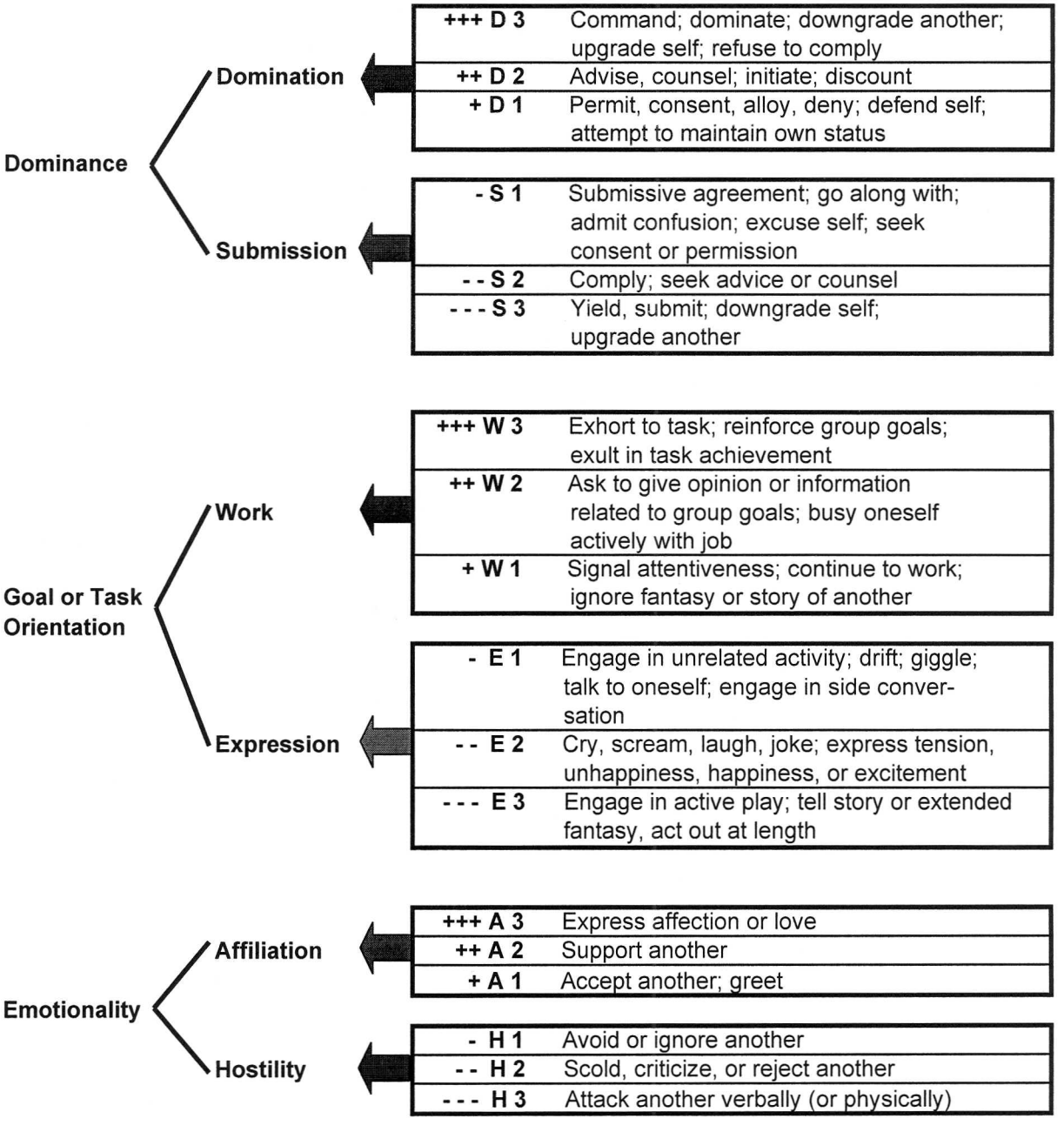
Decision-Making Phase

1. Facilitate evaluation of alternatives
   a. Guide anticipation of possible outcomes
   b. Guide estimation of probabilities of events
   c. Guide comparison of both advantages and disadvantages of alternatives
   d. Seek supporting evidence, experience
   e. Use stalemates constructively to further explore pros and cons
   f. Guide exploration of potential problems that could be encountered during implementation
2. Guide the selection process
   a. Guide exploration of combining alternatives
   b. Guide reduction of alternatives if too many
   c. Guide recognition and elimination of unacceptable alternatives
3. Deal with change and ego/status threats
   a. Be honest about implications for those affected
   b. Guide anticipation of risks and exploration of ways to deal with them
   c. Get fears out into the open and explored
   d. Explore modifications that deal with concerns
   e. Suggest a trial or experimentation period
   f. Promote consensus, not just compromise
4. Guide finalization of decision
   a. Summarize aspects in detail
   b. Guide formulation of standards and conditions for evaluating implementation and results

Implementation Phase

1. Make summary notes/visuals available to all
2. Conduct follow-up meetings to evaluate progress, identify problems and make adjustments
3. Reward successful behavior/efforts

Appendix A: Group Process Interaction Categories



The table above is a frame of reference for analyzing and understanding how participants in a group process are behaving toward, or relating with, each other.

The right-hand column lists various behavior patterns. These behavior patterns are categorized as shown to the left. The three major categories of interactions are dominance, goal or task orientation, and emotionality. Each of the main categories has two subcategories. Each of the subcategories has three positive or negative levels: "3" is the strongest or highest level; "1" is the weakest or lowest level.

Compiling data that can be used to analyze what has occurred between group participants involves the following:

A. Since there may be an enormous number of interactions between participants, a single observer should be assigned to interpret and record transactions of only one particular group participant. For example: Observer A should interpret and record transactions from participant A to participants B, C, and D.

Observer B should interpret and record transactions from participant B to participants A, C, and D. And so on.

Sample Tabular Log for Recording Interaction Categories

Observer: _____

Transaction #:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Participant (A)																				
(_____) to B	A1	W3		D2								etc.								
to C		W3	W1		A2		W2													
to D		W3					A2													

B. Once assigned to a particular participant, each observer should construct a tabular log for recording the natures of interactions emanating from his or her assigned participant. (See the sample format above.)

C. Observers should become familiar enough with the transaction categories that they need constantly refer to the table as they interpret transactions and assign them alpha-numericcodes (which they record on their log). For example: If a participant turns his or her back toward another pareticipant, the observer should recognize that the interaction/behavior constitutes "avoiding or ignoring another," and record an "H1." If a participant says to the entire group, "Come on, let's get back to the point," the observer should identify "exhort to task" and record a "W3."

Once each participant's interactions are recorded, the data can be analyzed to determine the following:

a. who interacted most with whom;
b. what were the primary and secondary natures (contents) of each particular individual's communications;
c. how many interactions in a particular category (e.g., W3 or H1) took place;
d. who tended to be . . . most dominant; most submissive; most work-oriented; most expressive; most affiliative; most hostile — and to how great an extent;
e. toward whom was a particular group member . . . most dominant; most submissive; most work-oriented; most expressive; most affiliative; most hostile — and to how great an extent.

Having arrived at these and other insights, one can then analyze why ther various interactions (behavior patterns) occurred. To do this, one must consider factors such as . . .

a. participants' organizational functions and job objectives;
b. participants' values, personalities, and attitudes;
c. participants' group think-work skills;
d. the group leader's attitudes and skills;
e. existing interpersonal relationships between participants;
f. the nature or type of group process situation;
g. the importance and/or urgency of the situation to individual members and the group as a whole.

Additional insights can be gained by utilizing Eric Berne's concept of Transactional Analysis, from which the concept of Interaction categories was an outgrowth. Berne pointed out that differentinterpersonal transactions are underlain by different ego states: *parent*; *child*; and *adult*.

When individuals are displaying their **parent state**, they are being evaluative. In this state, they can be either (a) nurturing (understanding, caring, supportive), or (b) critical (of another's behavior or personality).

When individuals are displaying their **child state**, they are behaving emotionally. In this state, they can be either (a) a happy child (non-disruptive, non-destructive), or (b) a destructive child (disruptive or destructive).

When individuals are displaying their **adult state**, they tend to be analytic, logical, reasonable, and self-controlled. During this state, people will analyze situations and reach rational decisions, taking into account both their child state emotionality and their parent state values and attitudes.

Appendix B: Group Process Evaluation Checklist (Sample)

	1 = (-) Low/Poor Dysfunctional Inadequate Unacceptable									10 = (+) High/Excellent Functional Adequate Best Possible
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GENERAL / OVERALL										
Nature of Decision										
Need for quality										
Need for acceptance										
Planning of Meeting										
Agenda										
Attendees										
Time of meeting										
Time allocated for meeting										
Place of meeting										
Meeting/conference facilities										
Conduciveness of environment										
Conduct/Mechanics of Meeting										
Leader's performance (overall)										
Participants' performance (overall)										
Group's methodological effectiveness (e.g., performed analysis, formulation, and decision-making phases in that sequence)										
Group's interpersonal effectiveness										
Group's communicative effectiveness										
Quality of analysis										
Consensus on causal factors involved										
Quality of alternatives										
Number of alternatives										
Results										
Quality of final decision										
Consensus on (acceptance of) decision										
Decision functional for long term as well as for short term										
Improvement in boss/subordinate relationships										
Increase in participants' knowledge/understanding (in terms of own and others' jobs, problems, and attitudes)										
Increase in participants' think-work skills										
Increase in participants' interpersonal skills										
Degree to which conflicts resolved, working relationships improved, team spirit increased										

Extent of Dysfunctional Phenomena										
Selective attention/perception										
Tuning out										
Disagreement/polarity/argument										
Exaggeration										
By-passing (miscommunication)										
Non-acceptance										
Side-tracking (personal agendas)										
Interpersonal conflict										
Wheel-spinning/confusion										
Limited input										
Socializing										
Resistance										

Leader's Performance										
Planning of meeting										
Preparation for meeting										
Opening meeting (review situation, method, and roles; establish team atmosphere)										
Knowledge of and ability to use (and guide use of) the analytic approach										
Elicitation of input										
Guiding/facilitating discussion										
Dealing with and relating input										
Evaluating contributions										
Dealing with people's feelings										
Guiding arrival at consensus										
Reinforcing functional group behavior										
Effectiveness of communication										

Participants' Performance										
Preparation for meeting										
Knowledge of and ability to use the analytic approach										
Contributing input										
Processing ideas and information										
Dealing with own and others' feelings										
Reinforcing functional group behavior										
Effectiveness of communication										

Interactions										
% & Strength of dominant interactions										
% & Strength of submissive interactions										
% & Strength of work-oriented interactions										
% & Strength of expressive interactions										
% & Strength of affiliative interactions										
% & Strength of hostile interactions										