

## 1.6: Performance of Individuals and Groups

### Learning Objectives

1. Understand the key dimensions of individual-level performance.
2. Understand the key dimensions of group-level performance.
3. Know why individual- and group-level performance goals need to be compatible.

Principles of management are concerned with organization-level outcomes such as economic, social, or environmental performance, innovation, or ability to change and adapt. However, for something to happen at the level of an organization, something must typically also be happening within the organization at the individual or team level. Obviously, if you are an entrepreneur and the only person employed by your company, the organization will accomplish what you do and reap the benefits of what you create. Normally though, organizations have more than one person, which is why we introduce to you concepts of individual and group performance.

### Individual-Level Performance

Individual-level performance draws upon those things you have to do in your job, or in-role performance, and those things that add value but which aren't part of your formal job description. These "extras" are called extra-role performance or organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). At this point, it is probably simplest to consider an in-role performance as having productivity and quality dimensions associated with certain standards that you must meet to do your job. In contrast, OCBs can be understood as individual behaviors that are beneficial to the organization and are discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system.

In comparison to in-role performance, the spectrum of what constitutes extra-role performance, or OCBs, seems to be great and growing. In a recent review, for example, management researchers identified 30 potentially different forms of OCB, which they conveniently collapsed into seven common themes: (1) Helping Behavior, (2) Sportsmanship, (3) Organizational Loyalty, (4) Organizational Compliance, (5) Individual Initiative, (6) Civic Virtue, and (7) Self-Development. Definitions and examples for these seven themes are summarized in Table 1.2 "A current survey of organization citizenship behaviors".

Table 1.2 A current survey of organization citizenship behaviors

(Taking on the forms of altruism, interpersonal helping, courtesy, peacemaking, and cheerleading.) Altruism

- Voluntary actions that help another person with a work problem.
- Instructing a new hire on how to use equipment, helping a coworker catch up with a backlog of work, fetching materials that a colleague needs and cannot procure on their own.

#### Interpersonal helping

- Focuses on helping coworkers in their jobs when such help was needed.

#### Courtesy

- Subsumes all of those foresightful gestures that help someone else prevent a problem.
- Touching base with people before committing to actions that will affect them, providing advance notice to someone who needs to know to schedule work.

#### Peacemaking

- Actions that help to prevent, resolve, or mitigate unconstructive interpersonal conflict.

#### Cheerleading

- The words and gestures of encouragement and reinforcement of coworkers.
- Accomplishments and professional development.

#### Sportsmanship

A citizenlike posture of tolerating the inevitable inconveniences and impositions of work without whining and grievances.

<b>Organizational Loyalty</b>	Identification with and allegiance to organizational leaders and the organization as a whole, transcending the parochial interests of individuals, work groups, and departments. Representative behaviors include defending the organization against threats, contributing to its good reputation, and cooperating with others to serve the interests of the whole.
<b>Organizational Compliance</b> (or Obedience)	An orientation toward organizational structure, job descriptions, and personnel policies that recognizes and accepts the necessity and desirability of a rational structure of rules and regulations. Obedience may be demonstrated by a respect for rules and instructions, punctuality in attendance and task completion, and stewardship of organizational resources.
<b>Individual Initiative</b> (or Conscientiousness)	A pattern of going well beyond minimally required levels of attendance, punctuality, housekeeping, conserving resources, and related matters of internal maintenance.
<b>Civic Virtue</b>	Responsible, constructive involvement in the political process of the organization, including not just expressing opinions but reading one's mail, attending meetings, and keeping abreast of larger issues involving the organization.
<b>Self-Development</b>	Includes all the steps that workers take to voluntarily improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities so as to be better able to contribute to their organizations. Seeking out and taking advantage of advanced training courses, keeping abreast of the latest developments in one's field and area, or even learning a new set of skills so as to expand the range of one's contributions to an organization.

As you can imagine, principles of management are likely to be very concerned with individuals' in-role performance. At the same time, just a quick glance through Table 1.2 "A current survey of organization citizenship behaviors" should suggest that those principles should help you better manage OCBs as well.

## Group-Level Performance

A group is a collection of individuals. Group-level performance focuses on both the outcomes and process of collections of individuals, or groups. Individuals can work on their own agendas in the context of a group. Groups might consist of project-related groups, such as a product group or an entire store or branch of a company. The performance of a group consists of the inputs of the group minus any process loss that result in the final output, such as the quality of a product and the ramp-up time to production or the sales for a given month. Process loss is any aspect of group interaction that inhibits good problem solving.

Why do we say *group* instead of *team*? A collection of people is not a team, though they may learn to function in that way. A team is a cohesive coalition of people working together to achieve the team agenda (i.e., teamwork). Being on a team is not equal to total subordination of personal agendas, but it does require a commitment to the vision and involves each individual directly in accomplishing the team's objective. Teams differ from other types of groups in that members are focused on a joint goal or product, such as a presentation, completing in-class exercises, discussing a topic, writing a report, or creating a new design or prototype. Moreover, teams also tend to be defined by their relatively smaller size. For example, according to one definition, "A team is a *small* number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they are mutually accountable."

The purpose of assembling a team is to accomplish bigger goals that would not be possible for the individual working alone or the simple sum of many individuals' independent work. Teamwork is also needed in cases where multiple skills are needed or where buy-in is required from certain key stakeholders. Teams can, but do not always, provide improved performance. Working together to further the team agenda seems to increase mutual cooperation between what are often competing factions. The aim and purpose of a team is to perform, to get results, and to achieve victory in the workplace and marketplace. The very best managers are those who can gather together a group of individuals and mold them into an effective team.

## Compatibility of Individual and Group Performance

As a manager, you will need to understand the compatibility of individual and group performance, typically with respect to goals and incentives. What does this mean? Looking at goals first, there should be compatibility between individual and group goals. For example, do the individuals' goals contribute to the achievement of the group goal or are they contradictory? Incentives also need to be aligned between individuals and groups. A disconnect between these is most likely when individuals are too far insulated from the external environment or rewarded for action that is not consistent with the goal. For example, individuals may be seeking to perfect a certain technology and, in doing so, delay its release to customers, when customers would have been satisfied with the current solution and put a great priority on its timely delivery. Finally, firms need to be careful to match their goals with their reward structures. For example, if the organization's goal is to increase group performance but the firm's performance appraisal process rewards individual employee productivity, then the firm is unlikely to create a strong team culture.

### Key Takeaway

This section helped you understand individual and group performance and suggested how they might roll up into organizational performance. Principles of management incorporate two key facets of individual performance: in-role and OCB (or extra-role) performance. Group performance, in turn, was shown to be a function of how well individuals achieved a combination of individual and group goals. A team is a type of group that is relatively small, and members are willing and able to subordinate individual goals and objectives to those of the larger group.

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