

## Groups

EIGHTH EDITION

Retaining the broad yet practical approach of previous editions, this popular textbook has been fully updated with research and theory from the last two decades to guide students through the concepts and principles of group dynamics. It now includes a brand-new introductory chapter, three new chapters on diversity and inclusion, creativity and design, and virtual groups, and dedicated chapters on communication and perception. Each chapter features in-class “Try This!” activities that promote understanding of practical applications, new case examples from real-world organizations, and enhanced learning objectives to guide readers’ learning experience. Hundreds of new studies have been added throughout, and examples consider the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, remote working, the MeToo movement, social media, climate change, and political polarization. Suitable for both undergraduates and first-year graduates, this textbook is supported by an online test bank, PowerPoint lecture slides, activity worksheets, and suggested additional resources.

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# Groups

## Theory and Experience

EIGHTH EDITION

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## Preface

Management professionals face far more challenges today than at any other time in history. Heightened social and cultural intolerance, wide-ranging calls for social reform, recovering from a global pandemic, and an explosion in virtual communication tools that enable widespread adoption of remote work are just a few of the many issues confronting organizations today. In light of these and many other management challenges, particularly as they relate to the productivity of groups and teams, we are very excited to deliver a new edition of our groundbreaking, seminal textbook on group and team dynamics. As a management textbook it can be used in a wide variety of disciplines and organizational settings including business, healthcare administration, public administration, industrial psychology, and management of non-profits; in short, any organizational setting where people manage the work activities of groups of other people.

We are also pleased to announce the addition of Dr. Floyd Quinn to the project team for this edition. Dr. Quinn is a management professor with thirty years of strategic and operations management and consulting experience in the field of human resources. He specializes in the areas of individual and organizational development and explores factors that lead organizations of all types and sizes to higher levels of performance.

### Nearly Fifty Years of Learning

For a text to remain fresh and be a competitive force in any field, its authors must make a continued effort to reinvent it. It must reflect not only the changing nature of society but also the changing needs of the readers themselves. Continuing a practice begun in 1973, this eighth edition does just that. The challenge has been to extract from the profusion of new research those studies and related theories that we believe add the greatest understanding to a profoundly interesting and complex field of study. The new content reflects the extraordinary breadth and depth of interest in small-group theory as well as its application to real-life situations. Expanded discussions of the ways groups deal with problems, solve conflicts and make decisions, function as a system, and ultimately become teams add up-to-date dimensions to the core chapters and to our own evolving understanding of how groups function. In this textbook, we endeavor to prepare students for the real world and the many challenges they will likely encounter in their management of, or member interactions with, groups.

We find a good indicator of how things have changed in the field of leadership is its relationship to the ways groups function. Rather than earlier ideas like trait theory and leadership style, research today is focused on the arenas of transactional and transformational leadership, with attention to how participation and collaboration influence the outcome of what occurs in any group or team. Similarly, consensus building has moved group problem solving far beyond the highly controlled and structured formats of the early years, when command and control leadership still held sway in most organizations. Providing an understanding of these changing views of leadership along with specific tools of problem solving and decision making breathes life into what could otherwise be a set of theoretical abstractions.

Additionally, in the updating of content from the seventh edition, this new edition’s cases and examples consider the turbulence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the growing interest in and accommodating of remote work arrangements, the MeToo movement, the impact of social media on our daily lives, climate change, political polarization, and many other influences that have changed the world in the last three-plus years.

As authors, we are incredibly excited by all these changes in the field. And this, of course, is precisely where we started this intellectual adventure many years ago – with the belief that to continue to be the seminal authority, the go-to textbook after fifty years, we must continue to provide our readers with new material, articulated in an understandable and meaningful way, that continues to meet their needs.

## Updates to this Edition

The explosion of new research since the publication of the seventh edition is reflected in dozens of new studies cited throughout the text, in both core areas and newer areas of group development and conflict management. Our effort has been to identify those studies that add significantly to our understanding of a particular topic or shed new light on an area that has been given little attention in the past. Additionally, subjects like communication and perception now have their own chapters. We also acknowledge the changes in schools and workplaces that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic (and its aftermath), the trend toward working remotely, political polarization, climate change, and the MeToo movement (to name just a few) have brought. In addition to updates on theory and research, there is a new introductory chapter (Chapter 1) and new chapters on diversity and inclusion (Chapter 8), creativity and design (Chapter 11), and virtual groups (Chapter 14).

In these new chapters readers will learn, among other things, that:

- **Diversity can be quite beneficial to groups, but only when they come to appreciate their diversity.** This appreciation requires a context that allows for the open sharing of thoughts and opinions necessary to leverage diversity’s

influence. Greater group diversity can bring with it an increase in the quality and quantity of ideas group members put forth, which in turn can lead to better problem solving, decision making, and innovation. While diversity in groups can contribute to productivity gains, it can also lead to operational challenges. Those challenges can impede group process and productivity for groups unable to come to terms with their members' diversity.

- **In most meetings, group members often feel detached, uninvolved, and powerless.** They often perceive their meetings as unproductive and timewasters, a view that can lower group morale and productivity. Facilitators can influence this dynamic by changing the course of unproductive meetings and breathing new life into them. However, without planning, group facilitation can quickly devolve into a chaotic mess. Many group facilitations also include the implementation of change. Facilitators can use intentional design to guide change leaders as they confront the challenges inherent in advancing change in their organizations.
- **Meeting design is the most important aspect of preparation for any group session and is critical to achieving successful outcomes.** The power of meeting design in facilitation is in its ability to equip a facilitator with the tools necessary to help guide a group in this process. Facilitators can more effectively direct groups engaged in problem solving, aid groups in resolving intragroup conflict, and influence the quality of collaboration between group members.
- **Remote work arrangements are common in organizations today.** The organizations that embrace it are looking for alternative ways to gain a competitive advantage. They have turned to the use of remote workers and virtual groups in an attempt to better leverage their resources and reduce their costs. However, individuals working remotely who are members of a single group, or several groups interacting virtually in a coordinated manner, present significant challenges for any organization. There are multiple factors to consider in the planning, implementation, and ongoing operations of a single virtual group, as well as the coordinated efforts of multiple groups that interact virtually.

In this edition, we continue to identify not only the characteristics of an effective group, but also the pitfalls that must be overcome on the road to group success. We expand our discussion to include the increasingly virtual nature of their operations and the growing diversity among their members, and we offer strategies that lead to higher levels of performance and productivity. We illustrate the value of creativity and design in the quality of member interactions and their group outcomes. We provide models designed to help solve a problem, resolve a conflict, make a decision, and ensure a group can reach its goals. We explore the effects groups have in our daily lives, from both a positive and a negative perspective.



## Text Organization

### Part I: Understanding Groups

Chapter 1, *Introducing Groups and Setting the Stage for Further Discussion*, is a new introduction that surveys many of the topics and ideas discussed in the book. We cover the concept of a group and what differentiates it from a team or a simple gathering of people, and we explore the influence of social media on group establishment and membership. The chapter draws the reader in and sets the stage for deeper investigations in the chapters that follow.

*Selective Perception* now has its own chapter. In Chapter 2, we discuss the subject of perception and how an individual's selective perception of a situation influences their behavior. This discussion is expanded to include selective perception from a cultural perspective as well as from a group perspective. We also discuss the effects of selective perception on the degree and quality of communication that occurs in groups.

In Chapter 3, *The Evolution of Groups*, we describe the evolution and development of groups as well as the emotional connection that often develops between group members and their groups. We examine several theories associated with group development. We conclude the chapter with an expanded discussion of factors associated with group success and failure.

### Part II: How Groups Function

In Chapter 4, *Norms, Group Pressures, and Deviancy*, we take an in-depth exploration into norms at both the individual and group levels. The function and power of norms are among the most powerful aspects of group dynamics. They tell us so much about the group, team, or organization and are often overlooked. We discuss how they develop, how they are classified, and the factors that encourage their acceptance by group members. We also discuss the collusive behavior and deviance that can occur in groups and their connection to group norms.

Chapter 5, *Goals*, presents the topic of goals, both individual and group. We discuss how goals are formed and the various types of goals we establish. We discuss the difference between operational goals that are actionable, and nonoperational goals that are much less defined. We examine the agendas that members of groups often bring with them to a group and actively work to pursue. We discuss the effects that group goals can have on the productivity of groups, as well as the impact individual goals can have on the lives of groups.

*Communication* now has its own chapter. In Chapter 6, we delve deeply into the subject of communications in groups. We discuss the factors that hamper effective communications. We also explore the effects that member diversity can have on the nature of our communications. We have added a section on factors and techniques that improve the quality of member communication in a diverse society.

### Part III: The Factors Influencing Group Success

In Chapter 7, *Membership*, we explore why people choose to join groups and the factors that influence their membership decisions. We discuss factors that make

groups more attractive as well as less attractive in the eyes of prospective members. We also discuss the challenges and benefits that can be derived from multiple group memberships.

Chapter 8, *Diversity and Inclusion*, is a new chapter dedicated to the topics of diversity and inclusion. This critical addition to the eighth edition acknowledges the changing profile of organizational membership; the cultural, social, economic, and other differences influencing group member relationships and productivity; and the many social movements advocating for greater equity, inclusivity, and justice in society. We discuss the power groups can derive from diverse members and their experiences, but diversity alone does not provide this benefit. As the chapter will show, inclusion is the catalyst for leveraging the benefits of member diversity for higher productivity. We describe some of the challenges that diversity in groups can pose and factors that can exacerbate these challenges. We offer suggestions groups can employ to help them overcome these challenges.

In Chapter 9, *Leadership*, we discuss the concept of leadership and do so in the context of six theoretical views of leadership. We discuss the various styles of leadership as a segue into a discussion of transactional and transformational leadership. We also discuss the connection and importance of emotional intelligence to successful group leadership.

In Chapter 10, *Problem Solving and Decision Making*, we discuss methods of problem solving and decision making in groups. We explore some of the advantages and disadvantages associated with different approaches to problem solving and decision making. We discuss the factors that promote and discourage groupthink. We discuss basic problem solving using a variety of different approaches including the Rational Problem-Solving Process, the Nominal Group Technique, and several others.

In Chapter 11, *Creativity and Design*, another new chapter, we focus on creativity and design in the context of group operations and productivity. We have found that the single concept of design can differentiate the successful from the failed group leader, and its inclusion here differentiates our book from most other books in the field. We discuss the importance of structure to effective group performance and describe practices and considerations that, if implemented, promote the effectiveness of group facilitation. In addition, we discuss a wide variety of techniques that can be utilized to enhance group decision making, problem solving, and the building of trust and member engagement. We introduce strategies intended to aid in implementing organizational change, as well as in addressing conflicts among group members.

Chapter 12, *The Nature of Group Conflict*, provides readers with a discussion of conflict in groups. This chapter provides a foundation we believe is essential to any understanding of groups and the individuals who participate in them. We explore the sources and dynamics of group conflict as well as how to resolve it. We discuss the differences between positive and negative conflict. We address the importance of accurately diagnosing negative conflict when it arises in groups as well as providing readers with a strategy for diffusing and resolving it.

## Part IV: Groups and the Organization

Chapter 13, *A Systems View of Small-Group Behavior*, discusses the concept of group behavior. We describe group behavior in the context of a unit our readers can readily relate to, the family. We address the subject of culture and how it influences group behavior. We discuss the concept of systems thinking (viewing a particular situation not in isolation but in connection to and interrelated with other situations) beginning with general systems theory and moving into the realm of complex systems to better understand individual behavior in groups. As an aside, systems thinking has been hugely beneficial to our understanding of the group dynamics at work in most groups and organizations.

Chapter 14, *Virtual Groups*, is another new chapter for the textbook. We explore the advantages and disadvantages associated with virtual groups, the concept of distance (geographic, temporal, and socio-emotional), and important factors to consider in the establishment of any virtual group. We also describe the characteristics of high-performing virtual groups.

In Chapter 15, *From Groups to Teams: The Evolution of Working Teams in Organizational Life*, we focus on a particular type of group, the team. We discuss the differences between groups and teams, the importance of effective teamwork and how to encourage it, and why teams sometimes fail to achieve desired outcomes. We discuss the challenges that can come from multicultural and cross-functional teams. We also examine a variety of team-building techniques that readers can readily employ.

The following chapter from the seventh edition was removed from the eighth edition: Chapter 11, *Small-Group Processes: Two Contemporary Applications*.

## Pedagogical Features and Online Resources

This edition includes several instructional features, some new, that will advance the reader's understanding of and experience with the material. These are:

- An introductory chapter that previews the book's contents, setting the stage for further reading and discussion. Students can move directly from a section of interest to the corresponding chapter.
- Defined learning objectives for each chapter.
- 'Try This!' activities and exercises that promote relatability and an understanding of practical applications that are located throughout each chapter.
- Case examples, many from real-world organizations to further aid in understanding the material.
- Tables and illustrations that bring research and demographic data to life.
- Key terms that are italicized and defined in each chapter.
- A test bank, customizable PowerPoint slides, activity worksheets, and suggested resources to supplement the textbook.

## Intended Audience

This book has been adopted by many courses on group dynamics in management, psychology, education, and communications. In any of these disciplines, the reader must go beyond the written word and become an expert observer of the group process itself. Only by bringing the text to life through systematic observation can the student find the discipline fascinating and meaningful.

For example, *educators* have learned that teaching students seated in straight rows and listening to talking heads is less motivating and leads to less measured achievement than an effective blend of small-group or cooperative group discussions, lectures, and structured activities designed for the group. Student morale is often a function of classroom norms, which can dominate the way students relate to each other and the teacher. Failure to understand the classroom as a group limits the ability of the teacher to teach and the students to learn.

In the world of business, the past two decades have witnessed a move from silo-based competitive units within organizations to a more comprehensive and systemic view of organizations. *Managers* have seen this shift open the door to the use of groups as a means of promoting interdependency and cooperation across their units and within the groups themselves. It has changed the way leaders view leadership. The same results are being reflected in hospitals, colleges, and civil service organizations.

*Therapists* increasingly understand that effective group theory involves much more than undertaking individual therapy within the context of a group and simply drawing support from other members. Instead, building the group into a community of trusted members can increase the willingness of individuals to take risks, be vulnerable, and learn from each other. This effort can be maximized when the therapist understands how to intervene in the life of the group to increase membership, enhance group problem-solving skills, alter dysfunctional norms, and utilize such fundamental skills as feedback that are almost uniformly found in healthy groups.

In fact, the more we understand the need to work effectively in group settings, the more we become aware of just how ineffective many groups are in actual practice. Groups are difficult; they represent rugged terrain that must be traversed and overcome. What we bring in this eighth edition are new tools and insights that will help in the journey.

While this book is intended primarily for undergraduate students in a range of courses, it has often been successfully utilized with graduates because the examples and stories are relatable to both levels of learners. It works across disciplines and no prerequisite knowledge is required.



# Acknowledgments

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We would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the contributions and legacy of a wonderful former colleague and friend, Dr. Matti Gershenfeld. Matti passed away on November 9, 2008. Until she passed, she was the consummate teacher and consultant who utilized her creative views of groups and teams to solve every imaginable organizational problem. She authored or co-authored eight books, among them *Making Groups Work*, and all earlier editions of *Groups: Theory and Experience*. She was a highly sought-after speaker who made appearances on *Good Morning America*, *Oprah*, *Donahue*, and *Today*. She also served as president of the International Council of Psychologists and Hillel of Greater Philadelphia. This edition is dedicated to the memory of Matti Gershenfeld.

Finally, to my lovely and accomplished wife, Debbie, who was a ready source of advice, support, patience, and sage counsel, thank you. You are my rock and my love.

Floyd F. Quinn  
San Marcos, TX