Welcome to this audio visual presentation on teams.

**Norms** control group member behavior by establishing standards of right and wrong. If managers know the norms of a given group, the norms can help to explain the behaviors of its members. Where norms support high output, managers can expect individual performance to be markedly higher than where group norms aim to restrict output. Acceptable standards of absenteeism will be dictated by the group norms. Status inequities create frustration and can adversely influence productivity and the willingness to remain with an organization.

The **impact of size** on a group’s performance depends upon the type of task in which the group is engaged. Larger groups are more effective at fact-finding activities. Smaller groups are more effective at action-taking tasks. Our knowledge of *social loafing* suggests that if management uses larger groups, efforts should be made to provide measures of individual performance within the group.

Cohesiveness can play an important function in influencing a group’s level of productivity. Groups differ in their cohesiveness. Cohesiveness is “the degree to which members are attracted to each other and are motivated to stay in the group.”

The primary contingency variable moderating the relationship between group processes and performance is the group’s task. The more complex and interdependent the tasks are the more that inefficient processes will lead to reduced group performance.

The relationship of cohesiveness and productivity depends on the performance-related norms established by the group. If performance-related norms are high, a cohesive group will be more productive. If cohesiveness is high and performance norms are low, productivity will be low.

In order to encourage group cohesiveness, try the following tactics:

- Make the group smaller.
- Encourage agreement with group goals.
- Increase the time members spend together.
- Increase the status of the group and the perceived difficulty of attaining membership in the group.
- Stimulate competition with other groups.
- Give rewards to the group rather than to individual members.
- Physically isolate the group.

Most people prefer to communicate with others at their own status level or a higher one rather than with those below them. As a result, we should expect satisfaction to be greater among employees whose job minimizes interaction with individuals who are lower in status than themselves. Larger groups are associated with lower satisfaction.

As size increases, opportunities for participation and social interaction decrease, as does the ability of members to identify with the group’s accomplishments. At the same time, having more members also prompts dissension, conflict, and the formation of subgroups which all act to make the group a less pleasant entity of which to be a part. A group is defined as two or more individuals who are interacting and interdependent and who have come together to achieve particular objectives.

Groups can be either formal or informal. **Formal groups** are those defined by the organization’s structure, with designated work assignments that establish tasks. The behaviors that one should engage in are stipulated by and directed toward organizational goals. An airline flight crew is an example of a formal group.
Informal groups are alliances that are neither formally structured nor organizationally determined. Natural formations in the work environment develop in response to the need for social contact. Three employees from different departments who regularly eat lunch together is an informal group.

Group development has five stages:

**Forming** is characterized by a great deal of uncertainty about the group's purpose, structure, and leadership. Members are trying to determine what types of behavior are acceptable. This stage is complete when members have begun to think of themselves as part of a group.

**Storming** is a stage of intragroup conflict. Members accept the existence of the group, but there is resistance to constraints on individuality. There may be conflict over who will control the group. When the stage is completed, there will be a relatively clear hierarchy of leadership within the group.

**Norming** is a stage in which close relationships develop and the group demonstrates cohesiveness. There is now a strong sense of group identity and camaraderie. The stage is complete when the group structure solidifies and the group has assimilated a common set of expectations of what defines correct member behavior.

**Performing** is the stage at which structure is fully functional and accepted. Group energy has moved from getting to know and understand each other to performing. For permanent work groups, performing is the last stage in their development.

**Adjourning** is for temporary committees, teams, task forces, and similar groups that have a limited task to perform. In this stage, the group prepares for its disbandment. Attention is directed toward wrapping up activities. Responses of group members vary in this stage. Some are upbeat, basking in the group’s accomplishments. Others may be depressed over the loss of camaraderie and friendships.

Many assume that a group becomes more effective as it progresses through the first four stages. While generally true, the factors that make a group effective are more complex. Under some conditions, high levels of conflict are conducive to high group performance.

Groups do not always proceed clearly from one stage to the next. Sometimes several stages exist simultaneously, as when groups are storming and performing. Groups even occasionally regress to a previous stage.

Organizational context influences group effectiveness. For instance, a study of a cockpit crew in an airliner found that, within ten minutes, three strangers assigned to fly together for the first time had become a high-performing group. A strong organizational context provides the rules, task definitions, information, and resources needed for the group to perform.

The shift from working alone to working on teams requires employees to cooperate with others, share information, confront differences, and exist for the greater good of the team.

Effective teams have been found to have common characteristics. The work that the members do should provide freedom and autonomy, the opportunity to utilize different skills and talents, the ability to complete a whole and identifiable task or product, and do work that has a substantial impact on others. An effective team requires individuals with technical expertise, problem-solving, decision-making, and interpersonal skills; high scores on the personality characteristics of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability also are important.
Effective teams have members who fill role demands, are flexible, and who prefer to be part of a group. They also have adequate resources, effective leadership, and a performance evaluation and reward system that reflects team contributions.

Finally, effective teams have members committed to a common purpose, specific team goals, members who believe in the team’s capabilities, a manageable level of conflict, and a minimal degree of social loafing. Because individualistic organizations and societies attract and reward individual accomplishment, it is more difficult to create team players in these environments. To make the conversion, management should try to select individuals with the interpersonal skills to be effective team players, provide training to develop teamwork skills, and reward individuals for cooperative efforts.

There are a variety of different types of teams including: problem-solving teams, self-managed work teams, cross functional teams, and virtual teams.

**Problem-solving teams** have been around for over 20 years. They are typically composed of 5–12 hourly employees from the same department who meet for a few hours each week to discuss ways of improving quality, efficiency, and the work environment. Members share ideas or offer suggestions on how work processes and methods can be improved. Rarely are they given the authority to unilaterally implement their suggested actions.

**Self-managed work teams** evolved because problem-solving teams did not go far enough in getting employees involved in work-related decisions and processes. This led to experimentation with truly autonomous teams. These groups of employees (typically 10-15 in number) perform highly related or interdependent jobs and take on many of the responsibilities of their former supervisors. These responsibilities include planning and scheduling of work, assigning tasks to members, collective control over the pace of work, making operating decisions, and taking action on problems. Fully self-managed work teams even select their own members and have the members evaluate each other’s performance. As a result, supervisory roles become less important.

**Cross-functional teams** are made up of employees from about the same hierarchical level, but from different work areas, who come together to accomplish a task. Many organizations have used horizontal, boundary-spanning groups for years. IBM created a large task force in the 1960’s made up of employees from across departments in the company, to develop the highly successful System 360. A task force is really nothing other than a temporary cross-functional team. The popularity of cross-discipline work teams exploded in the late 1980’s. Cross-functional teams are challenging to manage.

**Virtual teams** use computer technology to tie together physically dispersed members in order to achieve a common goal. They allow people to collaborate online. Virtual teams can do all the things that other teams do. They can include members from the same organization or link an organization’s members with employees from other organizations. They can convene for a few days to solve a problem, a few months to complete a project, or exist permanently.

Once teams are mature and performing effectively, management’s job is not over. This is because mature teams can become stagnant and complacent. Managers need to support mature teams with advice, guidance, and training if these teams are to continue to improve.

Twenty years ago, teams made news because very few organizations were using teams. Today, it is the organization that does not use teams that has become newsworthy. The current popularity of teams seems based on the evidence that teams typically outperform individuals when the tasks being done require multiple skills, judgment, and experience. As organizations have restructured, they have turned to teams to better utilize employee talents.
The motivational properties of teams are a significant factor. The role of employee involvement serves as a motivator, and teams facilitate allow for employee participation in operating decisions.

End of presentation