

Footnote: The Team

With the appropriate resources, we are all able to acquire the general skills needed to run and manage the means of gaining our needs of life. However, our higher abilities are divided among us, making us all specialists. To make good use of these, we must combine them by forming ourselves into teams. [PDF]

The function of the [nuclear family](#) is generalised and contains only two economically active humans. However, there are many *economic tasks* which require more than the general skills and narrow specialisms of a single individual acting alone or even of the adult-pair of a nuclear family. They need the co-ordinated efforts of many individuals of similar and complementary abilities.

Several individuals who combine their efforts to perform a specific task or achieve a particular objective are collectively referred to as a team. The different skills-profiles of the team members must combine into a team-profile which contains, in balanced measure, all the skills needed to fulfil the objective for which the team was convened.

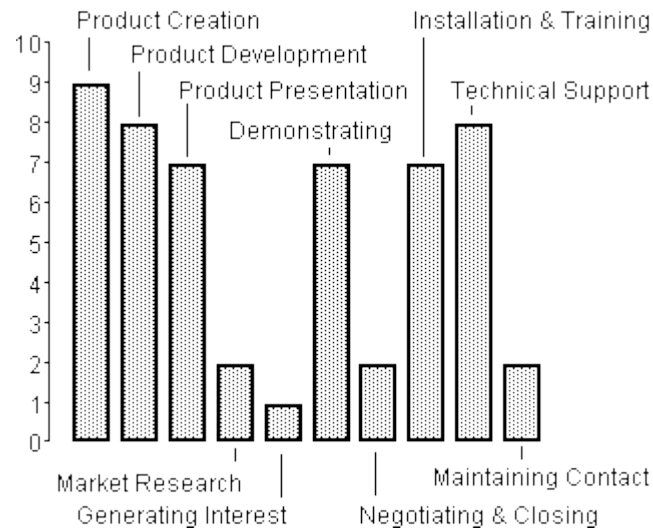
Teams exist for all kinds of purposes - economic, military, recreational, educational and many more. An economic team may be formed to reap a harvest or to transport felled trees. A military team is an army Section which is the smallest organised grouping of soldiers who work together on an immediate and specific task under the supervision of a corporal. Competitive team sports probably had their origins in the rehearsal of military skills through simulated conflict.

The need to maximise a team's effectiveness while maintaining immediate real-time co-ordination between its members determines its optimum size. A cricket team has 11 members. So does a soccer team. A Rugby team has 13 or 15 members. An army Section comprises 10 to 12 soldiers. There are 12 in a jury. Jesus Christ had 12 disciples. So whatever its task, the optimum size for a team seems to be around 12.

The team is fundamentally different from the family. I am a member of my own nuclear family. I am not a member of any other nuclear family. My position as husband to my wife and father to my children is total and exclusive. But my membership of a team is not. I can play one part in one kind of team and a totally different part in another kind of team. For instance, I could play as left wing in a soccer team and also work as a programmer in a computer software development team.

Why does the human individual need the team? As I mentioned before, each human ability does not appear equally in everybody. This causes each individual to have a limited and somewhat unique aptitude profile. My own relative abilities in some of the different skills I needed to run my software business are shown in the following chart.

From the following diagram it is clear that although I have many essential skills in good measure, I clearly lack some vital ones. To make the business work I need to be part of a team whose other members have aptitude profiles which balance the strength of each skill so that the team as a whole has 100% in each. The team thus provides the individual with the missing aptitudes and skills he needs to achieve an economic objective such as providing food, clothing and shelter. It is also the individual's main source of that essential item of mental food called social contact.



Whether its objective is economic, military, academic or recreational, the team is also the ideal crucible for specialist education and training, for skills development and improvement. As such it is the supplier of the higher class mental protein which the student or apprentice needs in order to grow in knowledge and skill through direct application.

Egalitarian vs Hierarchical

A team does not *need* a leader in order for it to perform a co-ordinated operation. Pack-hunting dogs may appear to have a leader, but they do not. The apparent leader does not - and indeed cannot - issue orders to, or instruct, the others. He cannot because he cannot talk. And he has no other way of signalling his wishes as to what he wants the others to do.

Each dog acts unilaterally. He decides for himself what to do and when to do it. His actions are decided by his instincts in response to sensory inputs from his environment. This environment comprises the lie of the land and the past or anticipated actions both of his prey and of each of his pack-mates. The dogs thus form an egalitarian team of peers whose unilateral actions co-ordinate because they are instinctively compatible.

Even *machines* work in egalitarian teams. For instance, computers on an Ethernet operate unilaterally without any central control device. Yet they are able to share a common transmission cable (the equivalent of their world) which joins them all together in a way which allows each to exchange datagrams with any of its peers quickly, efficiently and fairly.

Human beings too could in principle work together in egalitarian teams. But in fact they can't. Every human being is equipped with the inherent human drive for unlimited self-gain. Here, the word 'gain' is associated in most people's minds with the notion of possession. One gains possession of land, property, objects. However, what the possession of an object gives to the possessor is *control*. The possessor has control of what is or is not grown on his land. Who may, and who may not, enter his house. Who may, and who may not, use his tools and equipment.

But the thing that most fully satisfies the human desire for possession is to have *control over*, and hence, strictly speaking, *possession of*, other people. Of all objects in the world the most prized is the human being. Every individual whether openly or secretly really wants everything his own way. He wants everybody else to do things the way he thinks they ought to. He wants to *control* what they do. So although most are fully resigned to the fact they will never do so, each wants to rule the world. But given the unhindered opportunity, any one of them would take it.

In any given group of human beings, the aptitude profile of each will be different from the rest. However, there will be one member of the group who, while having adequate aptitudes for working out what to do, is far better endowed than his peers with the aptitude for dominant verbosity. This gives him the means of satisfying his natural desire for self-gain by enabling him to take control of the group and hence to become the sole determiner of what his fellow group members may or may not do.

The group has thus become a hierarchy. A single member has become its boss. He alone determines what the group shall do. The physical and mental resources of all the other members of the group have become no more than extensions of the boss's limbs and intellect. The result is that the boss has, in effect, become a vastly more powerful super-being.

An important distinction must be made here. A team can have a *leader*. A leader is not a boss. He is a person who is probably much older and certainly much wiser than the other members of the team. He leads by example. He plays his own part. The others observe how he does this. Each of the others thereby learns how to play his own part better by emulating the way the leader works. They won't do everything exactly the same way. Each will adapt the leader's methodology to suit better his own strengths and his different role or function within the team.

So there is a vast difference between an egalitarian team led by a leader and a hierarchical team under the control of a boss. An egalitarian team is a society of co-operating peers. A hierarchical team is merely an extension of its boss's mind and body.

In human society all teams are hierarchical. They are the only kind that work. While the human mind lacks the ability to consider its neighbour with equal concern to self, human beings are incapable of ever forming themselves into egalitarian teams of equals. The only kind of structure that can exist in human society as it stands is therefore the hierarchy.

It is therefore because of a shortcoming in human nature, rather than by necessity, that teams are invariably hierarchical.

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