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Leadership in Teams at Owen and Minor, Inc.

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As interns in both the summer and fall semesters 1996 at the corporate headquarters of Owens & Minor, Inc. in Richmond, Virginia, we had the opportunity to observe the application of the teamwork concepts that we studied in our leadership courses. For our senior project, we have conducted a research project to examine and evaluate leadership in the teams at Owens & Minor. Our analysis provides a unique outlook because we have points of view as both "insiders" and "outsiders" at Owens & Minor. It is an asset that we both have experience as interns at Owens & Minor. We are "insiders" because we learned much about the company's history and day-to-day operations through this intern experience. We are "outsiders" because we have never been fully integrated into the work environment, and have only a limited view of the entire operation of the company. In brief, because of our dual outlook, we feel that we are in a unique position to conduct research exploring leadership in teams at Owens & Minor.

In this paper, we researched concepts directly linked with the idea of leadership as it relates to teams. As a result of our initial reactions to leadership in teams at Owens & Minor, we decided to explore the relationship between teams and organizational culture, communication, motivation and empowerment. However, we did not limit ourselves only to these concepts. We selected the above leadership and team concepts based on a review of research that explored issues associated with the use of teams in organizations. With direction provided by our supervisors and other members of the Jepson faculty, we narrowed the plethora of teamwork publications into a core of scholarly material. Based on our review of the literature, we then developed a functional definition of teams for the purposes of this paper.
Subsequent to reviewing the scholarly literature on teams and leadership, we attempted to decipher Owens & Minor's definition of teams and the organization's view of the role of leadership in teams. To gain a better understanding of teams at Owens & Minor, we analyzed the history of teams at Owens & Minor. In the pages that follow, we reveal why a teamwork approach was instituted at Owens & Minor, who began the approach, when this approach was adopted and how the program was implemented.

In our analysis, we applied and tested existing theories of leadership and teamwork to Owens & Minor's corporate teams. Our analysis includes consideration of the Owens & Minor management as well as their use of teams. We employed many different methods to gather data for our investigation. Interviews and observation were our primary tools for gathering information, although we examined company publications, reports, journal articles and newspaper articles that describe how the teamwork concept was implemented at Owens & Minor. We used company literature to guide us in identifying the successes and failures of the teamwork approach, as well as to give us insight into the culture and leadership approach of Owens & Minor.

We interviewed Owens & Minor's teammates, and in particular those involved in leadership positions at Owens & Minor. We interviewed G. Gilmer Minor III, chairman, president and Chief Executive Officer, as well as a selection of vice presidents, directors, and teammates from a cross-section of the teams at the company's corporate headquarters. Our interview protocol allowed for a series of standard interview questions, but also allowed us to probe into topics based on the answers of interviewees.

As noted above, we also observed teams in action. In-depth observations provided us with tangible, naturalistic data, which we then compared and contrasted with the
archival and interview data we collected concerning the use of teams at Owens & Minor.

We recognized that there could be possible biases in our research. We focused on diminishing these biases by promising confidentiality to our interviewees. Furthermore, we recognized that because we each had individual internship experiences at Owens & Minor, we might have developed our own opinions and biases of the company that could affect our research. By discussing our evolving results with one another, throughout the data collection process, we tried to limit personal biases that may have skewed our results.

After beginning our project, we recognized several possible limitations that could possibly hinder the successful completion of our research. We realized that because we were still students, some teammates at Owens & Minor might not view our research as legitimate. Therefore, we sought a project sponsor, an Owens & Minor manager, to provide legitimacy and credibility to our project as well as to introduce us to team leaders. Also, we had to limit the scope of our project. Owens & Minor is a large Fortune 500 company with a corporate headquarters and 47 divisions across the United States. Even with two researchers, it was impossible, in our limited time frame, to research teamwork at every Owens & Minor division. Nor did we have the temporal or financial resources for such extensive research. Given our resources, we decided to limit our research to the corporate headquarters in Richmond.

In sum, we framed our research around three central research questions:

1) How does the conceptualization and the functioning of teams at Owens & Minor's corporate headquarters compare to how the contemporary theories and research indicate a team should operate?
2) Do the teams at the corporate headquarters fit both structurally and functionally into Owens & Minor's definition of teams?
3) Do the teammates' perceptions of how their teams function match how
we observed the team operating?
The following sections of our paper outline the contemporary theories and research on
teams, organizational culture, communication, motivation and empowerment, a history of
Owens & Minor and the company's definition of teams, as well as the results and
discussion of our research. All of these elements contribute to answering the above posed
research questions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to provide a theoretical framework for understanding of the role that
leadership plays in teams at Owens & Minor, we conducted a search of literature on teams
and teamwork. We also investigated some of Owens & Minor's own literature on teams.
We conducted a literature review on teams in order to determine how scholars define
teams and the leadership concepts they consider to be associated with teamwork. Based
on this review, we identified theoretical definitions and characteristics of teams. We have
combined these definitions and characteristics into our own definition of teams which we
used for functional purposes in the examination and evaluation of leadership concepts and
teams at Owens & Minor.

DEFINITIONS OF TEAMS

In the examining the literature on teams and team leadership, we identified
qualities and characteristics associated with them. Scholars overlap a great deal in their
recommendations of desirable team characteristics. All of the scholarly works that we
examined suggest that fundamentally a team is a group of people. The characteristics and
processes that the group goes through to achieve their desired goal(s) makes that group of people a team. Some scholars have provided clear definitions of teams. For instance, Parker describes a team as "a group of people with a high degree of interdependence geared toward the achievement of a goal or completion of a task" (Parker, 1994). Katzenbach and Smith define a team as "a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable" (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p. 45). Francis and Young suggest that a team is "an energetic group of people who are committed to achieving common objectives, who work well together and enjoy doing so, and who produce high quality results" (Francis and Young, 1979, p. 8).

To define teams, most scholars simply outlined the characteristics and processes that they believe are required of a team. The attributes of teamwork that overlap the most are establishing a clear mission, performing tasks interdependently, maintaining open communication, creating a sense of trust, and having an established rewards system. More specifically teams are considered to have highly visible and clear missions (Beck, 1994; Tubbs, 1994b; Frohman, 1995; Hughes, 1993; Katzenbach and Smith, 1993; Francis and Young, 1979) that should be agreed upon by the group and serve to focus attention and effort. Missions provide strength and direction for teams as well as give teammates a sense of ownership of the purpose and goals of the team (Francis and Young, 1979; Katzenbach and Smith, 1993).

Task interdependence is an essential ingredient of teams (Frohman, 1995; Hughes, 1993). At least two people must be involved in completing the task in order for the task to be considered a team task (Beck, 1994). Working interdependently requires each team
member to realize that he/she has responsibilities to the task and that another teammate depends upon his/her individual part of the project in order for the project to be completed successfully.

Open communication is vital to the success of teams. The communication channels between team members should be "open" and information should flow frequently, quickly and accurately from teammate to teammate (Beck, 1994; Frohman, 1995; Hughes, 1993). Frequent interaction among teammates makes open communication all the much easier (Beck, 1994). Such open communication also provides for a common knowledge base among the teammates (Tjosvold, 1993). Moreover, because tasks are so interrelated, open and frequent communication must exist in order for the task to be successfully accomplished in a timely manner.

Many of the authors also suggest that a sense of trust between teammates is a characteristic of teams (Tjosvold, 1993; Blake, 1987; Frohman, 1995; Katzenbach and Smith, 1993; Harrington-Mackin, 1994; Zenger, 1991). Trust allows individuals, especially the team leader, to be able to share authority with other teammates and thus feel confident that the task will be completed without direct supervision. Zenger believes that "Only in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect can a group of diverse individuals develop into a cohesive, fully functioning team" (Zenger, 1991, p. 36). It is difficult for a team to have a sense of trust at the inception of the team. Each teammate has an "ingrained individualism" that prohibits them from immediately relinquishing power to the team (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993). However, trust can evolve when the team works together toward a common goal.
In our literature review, we noted that many of the contemporary theories and research mentioned rewards when discussing teams. Rewards do not specifically distinguish teams from any other group, but serve to enhance and support the aforementioned characteristics of teams. Most of the research that we examined agreed that teams as well as individual team members should be rewarded for their efforts toward the achievement of the team goals (Beck, 1994; Tjosvold, 1993; Tubbs, 1994b; Frohman, 1995).

Team leaders are working members of the team but individually exercise “influence in a group that seeks to accomplish organizational goals through inter-related tasks” (Tubbs, 1994a). Team leaders can be both formal or informal leaders. Formal team leaders are generally appointed as directors of the team, while the informal team leaders fulfill the duties prescribed to team leaders, but not in an official capacity. The informal team leaders generally surface as the team matures because individual teammates become increasingly capable of handling new challenges (Francis and Young, 1979). Within a single team, it is possible to have both informal and formal leaders. Regardless of the formality of the leader, he/she should serve to bring together individuals who can contribute to the team objectives (Francis and Young, 1979).

The basic duties of the team leader are to “act to clarify purpose and goals, build commitment and self-confidence, strengthen the team’s collective skills and approach, remove externally imposed obstacles, and create opportunities for others” (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p. 131). The team leader also has the responsibility of articulating the vision, creating a clear mission, and developing goals and objectives for the team (Parker, 1990). The most effective team leader, however, would consult team members for their
participation in the creation and development of these visions, missions, and goals (Blake, 1987). Team leaders strongly encourage their teammates to produce quality products and provide excellent customer service (Parker, 1990). They also must communicate with all team members as well as other people integral to the task at hand (Parker, 1990). Effective team leaders are usually excellent listeners, skilled in conflict resolution, and good consensus builders (Parker, 1990). Also, it is recommended that they should create an open and supportive environment for their teammates (Parker, 1990). Another important characteristic of a team leader is his/her ability to build trust among members of the team. When the team leader trusts the team and members trust one another, then the leader can delegate authority to teammates and know that the team will complete the task to the best of its ability without direct supervision (Zenger, 1991). In short, effective team leadership comes down to the basic issue of “whether the exercise of leadership uses the resources of the team effectively to produce positive results” (Blake, 1987, p. 11).

In order to apply the above material to the philosophy of teamwork at Owens & Minor and how teamwork is enacted at Owens & Minor, a generalization of the scholarly research must be made. Based upon our review of these contemporary theories and research, we developed the following definition of teams to use in our study:

*A team is a group of people who have identified a clear mission and goals which are achieved through task interdependence, open communication and a sense of trust. Teams celebrate their successes through both individual and team rewards and recognition.*

**HISTORY OF OWENS & MINOR**

In the sections that follow we provide a brief history of Owens & Minor and its implementation and definition of teams. This information is provided because we believe
that in order to examine and evaluate leadership in teams at Owens & Minor, the history of the organization must be understood. Owens & Minor has a very rich organizational history that has been key to the development of their culture as a "family" organization and one that has always valued teamwork.

Owens & Minor, Inc. is a medical/surgical supply distribution company with corporate headquarters in Richmond, Virginia, and forty-five distribution centers across the United States. In 1882 Otho Owens and George Gilmer Minor, Jr. founded Owens & Minor in Richmond, as a drugstore that carried patented medicines and filled prescriptions. In 1887 the company became a limited partnership with twenty four investors, such as well known Richmonders T. C. Williams and Lewis Ginter. Owens & Minor was incorporated in 1927 and the Owens family sold its interest in the company.

With the post World War II market shift from the armed forces to the domestic public, Owens & Minor began to flourish. The tremendous advances in medicine, the discovery of penicillin and sulfa drugs increased sales and interest in the pharmaceutical field. The 1950s marked the birth of tremendous growth for Owens & Minor. In 1955 the company made its first acquisition with the purchase of Bodeker Drug Company, a company twice the size of Owens & Minor, and established their first distribution centers outside of Richmond in 1959 and 1962. Owens & Minor continued to grow between 1964 and 1981, acquiring ten other companies. The most significant of these purchases was A & J Hospital Supply, bought from Mr. August H. Berling. This alliance introduced Owens & Minor to the new and developing market of wholesale medical/surgical supply distribution.
This acquisition marks Owens & Minor's slow shift of their focus from drugs to distribution. In the 1980s, the company began an aggressive acquisition program that placed Owens & Minor on a national level in the medical/surgical supplies industry. In January of 1988, Owens & Minor began to be traded under the new symbol OMI on the New York Stock Exchange; that year, company sales surpassed $731 million. In the 1990s the company focus shifted from aggressive expansion to internal development, concentrating on technological modernization. In 1992 Owens & Minor began to concentrate solely upon medical/surgical supply distribution. The company sold its pharmaceutical divisions and its pharmaceutical subsidiary, Vangard Labs. Owens & Minor's latest and perhaps most significant acquisition was a merger with its second-largest competitor Stuart Medical, Inc. in 1994. This acquisition doubled the company's sales and greatly expanded its customer base and national distribution network.

As noted above, Owens & Minor began as a small family business, its leadership being shared by Otho Owens and George Gilmer Minor, Jr. Even though the company has expanded monumentally over the years, the leadership has continually been assumed by the founders' families, retaining Owens & Minor's reputation for a closely-knit, family-oriented culture. Otho Owens was the first president of Owens & Minor, directing the company for twenty-four years until his death in 1906. George Gilmer Minor, Jr. took over until his death in 1911. The presidency was then assumed by Conway Knox, a man who had been with the company since its inception. From 1941 to 1942 the leadership shifted from Mr. Knox back to the Minor family when G. Gilmer Minor III assumed control. He was followed by James B. Bower who had begun with the Owens & Minor in 1902. In 1947, G. Gilmer Minor IV assumed the office of president. He served in this
capacity until 1976. During his tenure, other family members rose to positions of leadership within the company. Philip Minor, the brother of G. Gilmer Minor IV, became a vice president as did Gamble Bower, the son of James Bower. Frank Fife, an executive vice president, was the next person to become president of Owens & Minor. Fife served as president from 1976 until 1981 when the fourth generation of Minors assumed the position of president. In 1981, G. Gilmer Minor V (known as G. Gilmer Minor, III) became president and Chief Executive Officer of the company, and is still serving in this capacity. Owens & Minor has also welcomed the family members of some of the companies that it has bought. Robert Anderson, the son of the owner of Powers & Anderson, a 1968 acquisition, is a senior vice president as well as Henry Berling, the son of aforementioned August H. Berling. Over the years, Owens & Minor has remained a company led by the legacy of its founders.

This family legacy and the values that accompany the family atmosphere of the organization are at the crux of Owens & Minor's teamwork philosophy. Even though Owens & Minor has experienced tremendous growth in size and diversification of services over the last decade, it retains the same values and vision as its founders: "a reputation for integrity, hard work, concern for our community, caring about quality, loyalty to customers and suppliers, teamwork, communication" (Owens & Minor, 1992, p. 3). These values are also relayed in Owens & Minor's mission:

"To provide our customers and suppliers with the most responsive, efficient and cost-effective distribution system for the delivery of healthcare products and services in the markets we serve; to earn a return on our capital consistent with being an industry leader; and to manage our business with the highest ethical standards in a socially responsible manner with particular emphasis on the welfare of our teammates and the
communities we serve” (Owens & Minor, 1992, Cover).

About five years ago, Owens & Minor developed its newly adopted vision and mission statement to help implement a quality process and company-wide teamwork philosophy. The company's leaders believed that by developing these statements at the beginning of these initiatives, the vision and mission would help guide Owens & Minor through the cultural shift and continue to provide direction for years afterward.

As is evident from its mission statement, Owens & Minor identified and adopted quality as the foremost value in its organizational culture. To help fulfill this mission and place a central focus upon quality, Owens & Minor developed an organizational structure that mirrors the company’s emphasis upon quality and the customer. This structure is represented by concentric circles placing the customer in the innermost circle; teams appear in the outer layers, all feeding into the customer level (Appendix A). Each team performs a specific function for the company and is overseen by managers, directors, and vice-presidents. According to the Quality Handbook, Owens & Minor defines a team as:

“a group of people who agree on a goal and agree that the only way to achieve the goal is to work together” (Owens & Minor, 1994).

Similar to what is suggested by the contemporary theories and research that we examined, Owens & Minor suggests that effective teams possess certain attributes or characteristics, including:

- **Information**: Flows freely up, down, and sideways; Full sharing; Open and Honest
- **People relationships**: Trusting; Respectful; Collaborative; Supportive
- **Conflict**: Regarded as natural, even helpful; On issues, not persons
- **Atmosphere**: Open; Nonthreatening; Noncompetitive; Participative
- **Decisions**: By consensus; Efficient use of resources; Full commitment
- **Creativity**: More options; Solution oriented
Power base: Shared by all; On competence; Contribution to team
Motivation: Commitment to goals set by team; Belonging needs satisfied; More chance for achievement through group
Rewards: Based on contribution to group; Peer recognition (Owens & Minor, 1994).

These characteristics further define the Owens & Minor view of teams. Moreover, these characteristics address many leadership concepts related to teams and offer direction as to the concepts one might seek to explore in observing the operation of teams at Owens & Minor.

Throughout the Quality Handbook similar leadership factors are emphasized but the greatest emphasis is placed upon communication and its necessary relationship to teamwork. Communication is so essential because in “truly successful teams, anyone with a good idea feels that he or she has the freedom and responsibility to communicate this idea with any other team member” (Owens & Minor, 1994). Furthermore, Owens & Minor believes that strong communication between teammates through sharing, listening and working together makes solving problems easier (Owens & Minor, 1994).

LEADERSHIP CONCEPTS IN TEAMS

In order to examine and evaluate the role of leadership concepts in teams at Owens & Minor, we first identified and then sought to understand those leadership concepts embedded in teamwork theories. From the literature reviewed earlier, the Owens & Minor characteristics of teams, as well as from our own leadership studies background, we have extracted four leadership concepts that play a large role in the effective functioning of teams: organizational culture, communication, empowerment and motivation.
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

A reciprocal relationship exists between leadership and organizational culture. In an organization, leadership often encompasses "influence processes involving the determination of a group's or organization's objectives, motivating task-oriented behavior to accomplish these objectives, and influencing group maintenance and culture" (Waldman, 1993, p. 66). As indicated previously, leadership influences organizational culture. Often leadership helps create the culture of the organization (Waldman, 1993). Leadership, and most often transformational leadership, is a tool that is used to embed the cultural values and norms into the organization (Waldman, 1993). The most suitable for organizational cultural change, transformational leadership, "has been identified as an important catalyst to encourage the change, provide an inspiring vision of the change and probable outcomes, and to help people work through the discomfort that often accompanies the change" (Waldman, 1993, p. 71). In other words, leaders should manifest the culture of the organization and serve as role models for their followers. The followers should be able to identify with the leader and be able to internalize the values and assumptions that the leader embodies (Waldman, 1993).

Just as much as leadership influences culture, the organizational culture influences leadership. The organizational culture can determine leadership behavior. Certain cultures are conducive to certain types of leadership. Transactional leadership would be the most suitable for a very bureaucratic culture. Transformational leadership fits well in a culture that values its employees, their thoughts and their actions. A team-oriented culture creates an atmosphere well-suited for transformational leaders because transformational leaders recognize change as being possible and desirable, are vision oriented and believe in
rewarding behavior (Waldman, 1993).

Similar to the relationship between leadership and culture, organizational culture and teams go hand-in-hand. Tubbs identifies organizational culture as one of the internal causal variables of teamwork (Tubbs, 1994a). Culture is the “pattern of beliefs and expectations shared by organizational members...the organizational ‘norms’” (Watson, 1994, p. 135). Plainly, organizational culture is the way that companies do things (Deal and Kennedy, 1995). The culture of an organization plays a strong role in the shaping of behaviors, ideologies, and policies of the organization. The culture must also be widely held and deeply shared by the members of the organization (Waldman, 1993).

Many elements of organizations affect and determine the culture of an organization. The physical environment of the organization is part of the company’s culture (Deal and Kennedy, 1995). The layout of offices, the decor, the lighting, and sound create the atmosphere of an organization. Organizational culture is largely value-based. The beliefs promulgated by the organization are central to its culture and oftentimes define success for that organization (Deal and Kennedy, 1995). Rites and rituals are also an integral part of organizational culture. The organizational culture ultimately defines a system of informal rules and accepted procedures of behavior within the organization (Deal and Kennedy, 1995).

In part, American organizations have been spurred into the teamwork philosophy because of the Japanese success with teams and the theory of Total Quality Management (TQM) movement. In the 1980s and 1990s a team revolution has been occurring in American businesses as they have been adopting the team approach and Total Quality Management within their organizations. Though widely believed to be so, TQM is not a
program to be implemented, but a philosophy to be adopted (Watson, 1994). This philosophy embodies a basic set of values and principles, of which quality is foremost, that should be adopted by the organization. These values along with values central to the effectiveness of teams must be assimilated into the organizational culture. The culture of an organization with teams should value support of others, empowerment, as well as respect for individuals (Tubbs, 1994a). In order for teams to work effectively, the culture of the organization must embody the values and principles that are conducive to teamwork.

COMMUNICATION

As noted in our discussion above, communication is vital to the effectiveness of teams. Communication is a process that begins with the intention to exchange certain information with others (Hughes, 1993). In an organization there are generally two paths of communication-- a formal network and an informal network. A communication network is the regular pattern of information exchange that occur between members of a group. It often correlates with role, status and attraction patterns (Forsyth, 1990). The formal communication network generally follows the formal organizational structure. The informal communication network consists of informal relationships that one has with others within the organization. A leader should encourage and foster opportunities to develop these informal communication networks because it increases teammates perception that "everyone is in this together" (Kouzes and Posner, 1995, p. 171). Informal communication is the first step to building trust within the team and between the team leader and team members.
Sharing information helps to develop group norms and the mutual relationships between the team leader and team members (Mink, 1987). Communication also affects the degree of mutual influence between a leader and a follower (Hughes, 1993). The quality of communication between leaders and followers correlates with subordinate satisfaction and productivity (Hughes, 1993). Kouzes and Posner assert that high-performing groups have significantly more communication among members than the low-performing groups. However, this communication is not only within the team, but also with external stakeholders that directly affect the team and its performance (Kouzes and Posner, 1995).

There are many types of communication that are suitable to teamwork situations. For the purposes of our study we only recognized oral and written mediums of communication. We identified communication as occurring in either a formal setting or in an informal setting. We considered formal settings to be meetings, telephone calls, voice mail messages, or electronic mail messages. Informal settings were the settings in which those communicating either came together by chance or were not employing a formal mode of communication.

We further divided the formal and informal communication into sub-categories. We recognized that communication in the workplace either could be related to the task of the teammate or to a more social situation. Task related communication is the exchange that occurs about a task that individuals are working on together or wish to share information with others about that task. Social communication includes discussions of subjects not related to work such as movies, the weather, families, etc.
In our analysis we categorized communication into four areas: formal task related communication, formal social communication, informal task related communication, and informal social communication.

MOTIVATION

Motivation has been identified as a key component of teamwork. Motivation, by definition, is "anything that provides direction, intensity, and persistence to behavior" (Hughes, 1993, p. 257). This motivation can be initiated by oneself or by the team leader. Self initiated motivation is referred to as intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the general concept that an individual is self-motivated by internal factors associated with personal satisfaction. The qualities and levels of personal satisfaction differ between individuals (Hughes, 1993). Though we recognize that intrinsic motivation occurs within teams, it would be impossible to observe. Thus, we have not included intrinsic motivation as an element to be observed.

Teammates can also be motivated by external factors. Extrinsic motivation includes concepts as simple as goal setting and the more complicated path-goal theory of leadership. Motivation can center around the very simple concept of goal-setting. A responsibility of the team leader is to share the organization's vision, mission and goals with his teammates, and, most importantly, to motivate team members to work towards these goals. The vision statement, the mission statement, as well as smaller goals should be developed collaboratively by the team members and their team leader. By including teammates in the development of these goals, the leader assures that his followers have had input as to the direction in which the team is heading and that the values of the followers are considered in these goals (Kotter, 1995). In order to use these goals as
motivators, the team leader must convince teammates that they can achieve these goals if they concentrate their efforts toward the fulfillment of these goals (Hughes, 1993). Neither the goals themselves or the task of establishing these goals serve singly as motivators. There must be a strong goal commitment from the teammates (Hughes, 1993). By including the teammates in the formulation of a vision, mission and goals, there is a greater chance that they will be committed to them. The team leader also must provide feedback on the progress that the team is making toward achieving their goals (Hughes, 1993). Without such feedback, the teammates could lose sight of their goals and could become discouraged.

Leaders may adopt many different methods to motivate their team members towards the vision, mission and goals of the organization and team. Leaders often choose to support their teammates' efforts to fulfill their goals (Kotter, 1995). This role of supporter can be associated with that of a coach or a cheerleader. Just as do coaches and cheerleaders, a team leader often use language and actions to encourage his/her followers to accomplish a task (Fairhurst, 1993). Team leaders also can motivate their teammates by serving as role-models (Kotter, 1995). The supportive efforts of the team leader not only prove to motivate the team members toward their immediate goal, but also help the teammates to grow and advance professionally and enhance their self esteem (Kotter, 1995).

The path-goal theory of leadership focuses upon the relationship of leader, follower and situation. A basic assumption of path-goal theory is that the only way to increase performance is to increase follower motivation levels (Hughes, 1993). Following this assumption, the theory explains "how the behavior of a leader influences the
satisfaction and performance of subordinates" (Yukl, 1994, p. 285). This influence is a motivational one.

First, the path-goal theory identifies four types of leader behavior: Directive Leadership, Supportive Leadership, Participative Leadership, and Achievement-Oriented Leadership (Yukl, 1994). In directive leadership, the leader tells the follower what to do, how to accomplish the task, and when that task should be accomplished. To so direct the followers, the leader provides specific guidance to the followers through rules and regulations (Yukl, 1994). In supportive leadership, the leader considers the needs of the followers by treating them as equals, creating friendly interactions between leader and follower, and by expressing concern for the followers' well-being and individual needs (Hughes, 1993). When a leader adopts the behavior described as participative leadership, he/she shares work problems with the followers, solicits suggestions and recommendations from followers and weighs these inputs in the decision-making process (Hughes, 1993). In achievement-oriented leadership, the leader sets challenging goals for the team, invariably seeks improvement from the team, and expects high performance. In this behavior, the leader also exhibits a high level of confidence in the team (Yukl, 1994). If used in the appropriate context, these leader behaviors "should strengthen followers' beliefs that if they exert a certain level of effort then they will be more likely to accomplish a task, and if they accomplish the task then they will be more likely to achieve some valued outcome" (Hughes, 1993, p. 410). Thus, serving as motivation for high performance.

The most important aspect of the path-goal theory in relation to motivation is the intervening variables that are dependent upon follower expectancies and valences. At this point, the expectancy theory is intertwined with path-goal theory. Expectancy theory
explains that the motivated performance of a follower is the direct result of a conscious choice. That choice is based upon the idea that individuals will opt for the action that will bring them the highest or the surest rewards (Hughes, 1993). A follower's motivation stems from the degree to which a certain follower behavior is perceived as leading to various outcomes and the evaluations of these various outcomes (Hughes, 1993). The expectancy theory fits into the path-goal theory in that the followers are motivated by the leader behavior that illustrates the probability of followers achieving expectancies and valances. Thus, in order to motivate teammates, the team leader should be able to appropriately direct his/her leader behaviors to fit the motivational needs of the teammate.

Rewards can be intricately related to motivation and tend to be the valences, or evaluations of the task performance. As observed in our review of teamwork literature, rewards are also strongly associated with teams. Most of the works that we examined agree that teams as well as the individual team members should be rewarded for their efforts directed toward the goals of the team (Beck, 1994; Tjosvold, 1993; Tubbs, 1994a; Frohman, 1995). Organizational reward systems are based upon the Law of Effect. When a teammate’s behavior is followed by a pleasant consequence, then that behavior increases in frequency. When a teammate’s behavior is followed by an unpleasant consequence, then that behavior decreases in frequency (Tubbs, 1994a). Thus, rewards systems shape the behavior of teammates (Tubbs, 1994b).

The rewards used to shape behaviors can be informal or formal. Examples of informal rewards would be simple verbal congratulations or compliments on a job well done. Formal rewards take the form of more formal recognition, such as a plaque, a promotion, or a financial reward. Tubbs (1994b) states that there are five specific types of
recognition: interpersonal recognition, task-related recognition, status-related recognition, and financial recognition. Interpersonal recognition can be informal and includes talking to employees, saying hello and learning names (Tubbs, 1994b). This type of recognition leads the teammate to perceive that others have accepted and validated him/her as an individual. Task-related recognition can be both an informal reward or a formal reward. Informally, this is usually a simple recognition of ability, but more formally this recognition can be shown by an increase in job responsibility (Tubbs, 1994b). Status-related recognition is a type of formal reward. It often takes the form of advances in position as well as the opportunity for additional training (Tubbs, 1994b). Financial recognition is the ultimate form of reward and takes the form of a bonus or a permanent raise in wages (Tubbs, 1994b).

Rewards can also be divided into categories of contingent and non-contingent rewards. Contingent rewards are those rewards and recognition that are inspired or earned by specific actions (Hughes, 1993). Non-contingent rewards are not associated with any specific action (Hughes, 1993). Earning the same monthly paycheck, regardless of the effort put into your work, would be an example of a non-contingent reward.

Scholars believe that recognition and rewards should be given to the team as a whole as well as to individual teammates. The individual recognition makes it known to the teammate that their contribution to the team project was worthwhile. It makes the teammates proud of the effort that they have invested into their final product. Rewards given to the team as a whole recognize their efforts to work together, and encourage them to work together again.
Leaders can use any of these types of rewards to motivate their followers towards a goal. The method by which leaders use rewards and punishments to direct behavior is referred to as the operant approach (Hughes, 1993). Leaders employ the operant approach to specify the behaviors that are important to working as a team or to achieving the set goal (Hughes, 1993). By rewarding a teammate for an appropriate behavior, the leader communicates to the teammate that that behavior should be repeated. If appropriate behaviors are not rewarded, the teammate will deem them inappropriate and stop behaving in that manner. Those unrewarded yet appropriate behaviors will soon become extinct (Hughes, 1993).

The theories of motivation presented are very diverse in their treatment of the leader-follower relationship. Considering the many different motivational theories, the leader must take the responsibility to determine the system that will most successfully motivate each individual teammate to strive towards goal achievement.

EMPOWERMENT

The concept of empowerment is heavily intertwined in leadership theories and especially in theories about teams. Most scholars agree that effective empowerment requires exemplary leadership, but disagree on an exact definition of empowerment.

Randolph (1995) reports, "At its most practical level, empowerment is recognizing and releasing into the organization the power that people already have in their wealth of useful knowledge and internal motivation" (p. 20). It is the leader's responsibility to tap the power present in teammates' minds and motivation and to convince the teammates that they truly have that power. To enhance the environment for empowerment, it is helpful to create new structures that better recognize and release the
talents within each individual. Randolph (1995) further explains that empowerment involves people working together, evidenced through information sharing. Information sharing creates a trust between leaders and followers within the organization because the followers feel as though the leader has shown confidence in their relative worth in the completion of the task or to the organization as a whole. Feeling like one has information is equal to feeling like one has power.

Goal setting is an important element of effective leadership and empowerment and is also closely related to information sharing. To effectively set goals, a leader must collaborate with his/her followers. This collaborative effort stems from both parties giving input and only happens if both groups share the same available information. The structures of an organization must be set up so that subordinate autonomy may be experienced, negating feelings of powerlessness. (Barge, 1994; Randolph, 1995)

Parker and Price (1994) offer a more precise definition of empowerment: "Empowerment refers to the belief that one has control (i.e., the belief that one can influence decisions)" (p. 913). Parker and Price believe that the amount of control people think they have, directly correlates to their ability to act independently and make autonomous decisions. The perceived amount of control a person has often reflects their ability to perform at higher levels. Parker and Price cite studies showing that perceived control contributes to the person's mental health and sometimes their physical well being. Perceived control also correlates to a person's ability to successfully handle stress.

Keller (1995) agrees that perceived control is related to empowerment (Keller and Dansereau, 1995). She believes that leaders empower followers by providing support for self-worth and negotiating latitude. Self-worth is the extent to which superiors pay
attention and champion the efforts and personalities of the subordinates. Negotiating latitude is the extent to which subordinates are allowed to direct their activities so that they fit in with their own predilections.

For the purposes of this paper, empowerment is the perceived ability to make autonomous decisions on important matters. Empowerment also means that subordinates feel that they make important contributions to the decision making process as a whole.

At this point in our paper, we have identified the contemporary theories and research related to teams and compiled that information into a functional definition for the purposes of our study. We have introduced Owens & Minor's history and teamwork philosophy. From our examination of the research on teams and from Owens & Minor's teamwork philosophy, we identified and explained four concepts, organizational culture, communication, motivation and empowerment, that are integral to the team process. At this point, we will explain our methodology of data collection and analysis and then proceed to present the results and analysis of our research.

**METHODOLOGY**

The first step in conducting research is to identify the key issues that relate to the investigation (Cassell & Symon, 1994). These issues are expressed in our initial research questions:

1) How does the conceptualization and the functioning of teams at Owens & Minor's corporate headquarters compare to how the contemporary theories and research indicate a team should operate?
2) Do the teams at the corporate headquarters fit both structurally and functionally into Owens & Minor's definition of teams?
3) Do the teammates' perceptions of how their teams function match how we observed the team operating?

In order to collect the necessary data to answer our research questions, we adopted a three-pronged approach to our research efforts. Each of these components of our research concentrated upon the collection of data from Owens & Minor. The information that we collected is contextual in that a great deal of the information is based upon individual behaviors and personal perceptions and experiences. Qualitative methods are associated with the collection and analysis of written or spoken text or observation of behaviors (Cassell & Symon, 1994). Because of the subjectivity and contextuality of our research, we felt that qualitative methods best suited our research intention. Specifically, we employed the qualitative interview and observation methods to gather our data.

Qualitative research interviews allow the interviewers to perceive the research topic from the perspective of the interviewee and to understand how and why the interviewee arrived at that perspective. We used such qualitative interviews to identify the perceptions of Owens & Minor teammates regarding teams, team leaders, and the leadership concepts in teams. There are many types of qualitative research interviews. In a structured or standardized interview, the interviewer asks prepared questions in a definite order using the exact same words and tone of voice in each interview. These are the only questions asked in the interview. The interviewer exerts this control over the interview in order to avoid biasing responses (Oppenheim, 1992). This type of interview seems too restrictive for our research intentions.

Depth interviews were more suitable to our research intentions because they are intended to “collect perceptions and ideas and to improve the conceptualization of the
research problem” (Oppenheim, 1992, pp. 70). The interviewer approaches the depth interview with an outline of concepts to be discussed with the interviewee. The interviewer is allowed to ask questions that spawn from an answer given by the interviewee.

The semi-structured interview appears to be a middle ground between the depth interview and the structured interview. The interviewer approaches the semi-structured interview with prepared questions, but is free to create new questions as the interview progresses. The semi-structured interview gave us the opportunity to gather consistent data from the answers to the planned questions, but also allowed us to discover new information and areas of interest in our freedom to ask new questions that crossed our minds during the interview. By asking the same questions of each interviewee, we were better able to analyze the information obtained through the interview aspect of our research. The new questions served to illuminate ideas and concepts of which we had not previously postulated.

In our first step of qualitative research, we conducted semi-structured depth interviews. Depth interviews were particularly useful in our research efforts because they allowed exploration of teammates' perceptions and ideas about teams, team leaders, and leadership concepts in teams. They were also useful because of their flexibility. We conducted depth interviews with a selected sample of Owens & Minor teammates. Selection of these teammates was facilitated by our project supervisor at Owens & Minor. He recommended four teammates from each level at Owens & Minor. We asked our project supervisor to suggest teammates who were familiar with Owens & Minor and how things work within corporate headquarters. We preferred that the teammates would have
been employed by Owens & Minor for a significant time period, but that was not our only selection criterion. We asked him to provide four names, from the corporate phone list, because we wanted to speak with two people from each level. With four names, we were sure to be able to get in touch with two teammates to interview. In talking with these teammates, we sought to discover teammates' perceptions of teams, the history of the teamwork philosophy at Owens & Minor, as well as suggestions of teams to observe in the next phase of our project.

After completing our depth interviews, we used the recommendations of the teammates' interviewed to focus our observations. We used qualitative observation methods to gather data about how the Owens & Minor teams function. Cassell & Symon (1994) identify four types of observers, the complete participant, the participant-as-observer, the observer-as-participant and the complete observer. These categories define researchers with regards to participation and recognized observation. The researchers can range from high participation and low recognized observation to researchers with low participation and high recognized observation. Since we have already established relationships from our internships, but are not hiding the fact that we are doing a research project, our classification was as observers-as-participants. As we observed the teams at Owens & Minor, we watched the teams perform their duties from a third person observer position. As third person observers, we had to be receptive to the environment in which we were observing. The less conspicuous we were, the more natural was the data collected from our observations. This allowed us to watch each team perform its task and take note of how the teammates related to each other to facilitate the completion of that task.
Our sample of teams to observe was derived from our earlier interview respondents. In our depth interviews, we asked each interviewee to suggest six teams for us to observe, three relatively effective teams and three less effective teams. We requested that the interviewee not indicate which teams were effective or ineffective.

Before we observed the five teams at Owens and Minor, we developed guidelines for our observation that delineated what behaviors, processes, activities, etc. would be the foci of our observations. These guidelines were based upon our four leadership concepts: organizational culture, communication, motivation, and empowerment. The following questions served as our guideline for observation (although they were not the only focus of our observations):

* How frequently did teammates communicate with one another?
* What type of communication (i.e. formal task-related, formal social, informal task-related, and informal social) was most used and what was the relative distribution of that type of communication?
* What behaviors did teammates display when working together?
* What was the "atmosphere" like in the team (e.g. formal or relaxed)?
* What kind of "rewards" were given to teammates? How often were people rewarded?
* How were decisions made? Who was involved?
* Did the leaders share information with their followers?
* What sorts of things did teammates say or do that might indicate their attitudes towards teamwork and the workplace?

When we were observing meetings, we specifically looked for:

* How did the teammates share information?
* Who in the group was giving or exemplifying task direction?

Each of the researchers observed each team for six hours. In total, each team was observed for twelve hours. The daily routines of the teams, as well as meetings involving team members, were observed.
After completing our observations, we began the final prong of our research, follow-up interviews. In this second set of interviews, we interviewed two members from each of the teams that we observed. We used semi-structured interviews for the follow-up interviews. We developed our standard interview questions from the data collected in our observations (Appendix B). The follow-up interviews served the purpose of clarifying the "meaning" of what we observed, and allowed the team members to help us understand their respective views of teamwork in their groups. Hence, we were able to determine if the teammates' perceptions of the way that their team functioned were in sync with our perceptions.

After we collected and compiled the data from the follow-up interviews, we analyzed the information. We examined the interview content and the notes from our observations. In this examination, we looked for similarities between what was illuminated in the teammate interviews and the behaviors that we observed in the teams. By making note of the similarities and differences between interview data and observation data, we were able to answer our three basic research questions.

Qualitative observation, by its very nature, directs us to subjective recording of data. Therefore, it was important to understand our potential biases, such as our theoretical background and our previous internship experiences. We tried to be as objective as possible, yet were aware that some of our analyses may have reflected biases. An asset of working together on this project was that our two perspectives, often very different, made us more aware of our potential biases, and helped us minimize the extent to which our subjectivity may have tainted results.
RESULTS

During our interviews and observations, we sought to answer our three basic research questions. We wanted to know how the conceptualization and the functioning of teams at Owens & Minor's corporate headquarters compared to what the scholars indicated a team should be and how it should operate. Secondly, we sought to discover whether or not the teams at the corporate headquarters fit, on both structural and functional levels, Owens & Minor's definition of teams. Finally, we wanted to find out if the teammates' perceptions matched how their teams actually functioned.

We discovered the answers to our questions through preliminary interviews, observations, and follow up interviews. We report our results through profiles of each of the five teams. Please note for the purposes of anonymity all teammates are referred to by an assigned number. The correlating list of teammates and their teams is found in Appendix B. To further try and provide anonymity, we refer to every person, whether female or male, by using masculine pronouns.

PROFILES

TEAM A

Team A consists of 5 teammates, of which one is considered the team leader. He is officially titled the director of the department and is referred to as Teammate #5. The overall task of Team A is to collectively produce a project. They accomplish this through each individual performing his own tasks and then compiling them into a completed product. This type of working together is called pooled interdependence.
In order to research the question we posed for this project, we examined elements of Team A's organizational culture. The most obvious contributor to their culture was the layout of their office space, referred to in this paper as cubicles or cubes. Team A's cubicles are centrally located and in close proximity to the office of their team leader. The cubes all share common walls, but have separate, individual entrances. Teammate #4 indicated that the team designed the layout themselves, and that he thought it contributed to the openness of the team.

The culture of Team A appears to be very supportive. They appear to help each other through problems. Teammate #1 cited an episode in which he was working independently on a project for the Chief Operating Officer and ran into difficulties in completing the tasks. Two of his teammates interrupted their own projects to help Teammate #1 through his difficulties.

We observed most of Team A's communication as informal in nature. Most of this informal communication took the form of face-to-face, personal communication. About half of their observed communication time was spend discussing personal or social issues. For example, Teammate #2 asked about the daylight savings time, Teammates #1, #3, and #4 all responded with an answer. This led them into a discussion about spring. The other half of their interactions centered around issues or questions related to a specific task. Teammate #3 experienced a computer problem that was going to inhibit his ability to complete his part of the project. To help remedy this problem, Teammate #4 began talking over the cube and giving Teammate #3 advice on how to fix the problem.

Team A has developed some personal relationships that leave the office. Teammate #4 indicated that the team gets together approximately once every two months or
sometimes when traveling. Last year they had a Christmas party that was well attended by
the teammates. Team A keeps a poster up that has pictures from when the entire team
took a day to go golfing together.

There was very little formal communication during our observation of Team A.
For the purposes of our observation, we considered meetings, phone calls, voice mail,
written memos, and electronic mail to be mediums of communication which might indicate
communication that is of a more formal nature. Both Teammates #1 and #3 indicated that
it is rare for them to engage in formal communication. Exceptions to that rule are
meetings and if a teammate is out of town. Teammate #3 said that he does not like it
when teammates around the office call other teammates, who are only a few cubes away,
on the telephone. He would prefer that they use face-to-face interaction.

Motivation was difficult to observe. Instead of observing motivation holistically,
we observed acts that could lead to motivation. Within Team A, we were able to observe
feedback. Team A has a moderate amount of positive feedback, generally in the form of
compliments. This is evidenced when Teammate #1 congratulated Teammate #4 on
receiving a new certification. The teammates are very participative in the team tasks. We
also observed reward sharing among the teammates of Team A. As they were working
together on a project, Teammate #1 and #4 would informally thank and congratulate each
other as the day progressed. In their interviews, both Teammate #1 and Teammate #4
indicated that they felt intrinsically motivated and received personal satisfaction from
knowing that they did a good job and completed their task well.

Empowerment, too, was difficult to observe. We were able to observe acts that
could be indicative of empowerment like the decision-making process of the team, trust,
effective information sharing and goal setting. The most obvious aspect of empowerment during our observation of Team A was that the team leader left the Team A teammates unsupervised for the ten of the twelve hours that we observed the team. This could indicate that Teammate #5 trusts his teammates to perform their tasks accurately and effectively without his supervision. In an introductory interview, Teammate #3 shared that he felt as though they were a self-directed and self-motivated team that did not need their formal leader present to accomplish their tasks.

Teammate #3 shared examples of information sharing from the team leader when he indicated that he receives enough information about the activities of the organization primarily from his team leader. Another example of Teammate #5 sharing information with his teammates occurred during our observation time. When Teammate #5 returned from a staff meeting, he immediately went to inform Teammate #1 and #2 of what he had learned. As the team leader was sharing important, pertinent information with his teammates, he was providing them with a sense of power over their tasks. Though we did not observe any goal-setting within the team, Teammate #3 indicated that he and Teammate #4 together set time goals for finishing their group projects.

In speaking with teammates, we learned that Teammate #1 feels as though he is empowered. This teammate also was observed saying that he allowed his team leader to prioritize his tasks and viewed the team leader as his boss. Teammate #1 also believed that Teammate #4 is empowered.

TEAM B

Team B is made up of seven teammates. One teammate is a vice president and one teammate as a manager. In this profile, we refer to the vice president as the team leader.
The tasks of the seven Team B teammates are different from one another. Teammates #9, #10, and #11 work together on specific projects. Teammates #12, #13 and #14 work as support for the team and work on other projects that fall under the responsibility of the team. The team leader oversees these projects and also works on other smaller projects. Because there are so many different types of tasks that fall under the responsibility of Team B, the team has an interesting task interdependence. Teammates #9, #10, and #11 have pooled task interdependence. They each work on their individual task for the project and then put those individual parts together into a collective whole. The other teammates tasks are independent of each other and of Teammates #9, #10 and #11. However, because of the supportive nature of their duties, Teammates #12, #13 and #14 do interact with their other teammates and help them out with their projects. We also noticed that each teammate does an extensive amount of communication and interaction with teammates outside of Team B.

The physical layout of Team B is revealing of the team's culture. The cubicles of Team B are situated in an "L" shape. The team leader's office is at the top of the "L", then the cubes proceed down the vertical leg of the "L". The horizontal leg of the "L" is thick, with two rows of cubicles. In the middle of the horizontal leg is a cubicle inhabited by a teammate from another team. We noticed that this physical layout of Team B may be limiting their interaction and possibly their performance. For example, the team leader and Teammate #9, who are located at the top of the "L" regularly communicate, particularly on an informal basis, with each other. Teammates #10, #11, #12 and #14, who are located on the horizontal leg, also communicate with each other regularly, with emphasis upon the informal aspect of communication. These two groups do not interact with each other.
nearly as much as they interact with those teammates most proximately located.

The atmosphere of Team B appeared to be relaxed yet formal. The atmosphere seemed relaxed and open when the team leader is in the office and he seemed to facilitate this open, relaxed atmosphere. When he comes into the office, Teammate #8 cheerfully and boisterously says hello to all of the teammates. He stops into their cubes for a quick check on how they are doing. It is his loud, boisterous and jovial attitude often accompanied by laughter and light hearted jokes that creates the relaxed atmosphere. Teammate #8 makes it seem as though on Team B is fun. The atmosphere of Team B can also be formal. We noticed that the attire of the teammates is much more formal than that of the other teams. The teammates tend to wear dresses and business suits, rather than the skirts and coat and tie attire of other teams. We also attribute the formal atmosphere of the team to the physical layout of the cubicles.

Team B communicated formally and informally on both a task and social level. Informal task communication occupied the majority of the communication time that we observed. Teammates #10 and #11 had the most interaction of those teammates that we observed on both an informal task related and social level. They share a cubicle and in an interview, Teammate #11 cited that he believed that he had developed an informal relationship with Teammate #10. They often share odd stories and help each other on projects. The teammate shared that he believed that this informal social relationship allows trust to develop between the teammates and makes it easier to accept criticism. In our interviews, feedback was also identified as a type of task communication used by Team B.
Although some formal communication occurs between the teammates of Team B, we did not observe many such occurrences. One example of formal communication is that Teammate #9, located on the vertical leg of the "L", called Teammate #10 on the telephone. We were not able to observe as many instances of formal communication because we did not observe any formal meetings of the team. In an interview, Teammate #11 expressed that substantive communication occurs during the team's Monday morning staff meetings.

Team B has a team leader, Teammate #8, who exhibits individual leader behaviors that relate directly to motivation. The leader behavior that we noticed most often with Teammate #8 was a supportive behavior, although he provided many elements of directive leader behaviors as well. For example, Teammate #8 adopted what appeared to be a directive behavior when interacting with Teammate #10. Teammate #10 was summoned by Teammate #8 into his office. There Teammate #8 explained to Teammate #10 the task that he should undertake, exactly who he should contact to help him with the task, and exactly what he should say to that contact person. Teammate #8 acts supportively when he inquires as to how the teammates are doing.

On another level, positive feedback in the form of compliments is constantly flowing from one teammate to another within Team B. The team leader and Teammate #9 are always complimenting their teammates on a job well done, praising the work of the teammates, and thanking the teammates for doing such a great job. Teammate #11 confirmed this feedback in the interview, but also elaborated upon how feedback occurs within the team. He indicates that feedback about a project generally occurs either halfway or three-quarters of the way through the project. This feedback can be positive or
negative and lets Teammate #11 know what about his progress is good and what needs improvement.

Finally, we observed elements of empowerment within Team B. Teammate #8, the team leader, places tremendous emphasis upon empowerment. He states that he truly trusts each of his teammates and also is concerned for their well-being. Teammate #8 chose to illustrate his care for his teammates by explaining that he has established goals for each of his teammates. His goal for Teammate #9 is for Teammate #9 to one day be the vice president, even if it means that he (Teammate #8) would have to give up his job. He also wants each of his teammates to develop their skills and abilities to the fullest. For example, one of the former teammates of Team B had reached the stage in his job at Owens & Minor in which he was no longer being challenged. Teammate #8 recognized this lack of challenge and growth and suggested that this teammate look for another job that would have challenged him and made him happier. In that instance, Teammate #8 placed the interests of the teammate above the interests of the company.

Though Teammate #8 espouses empowerment, we also noticed, as noted in the above discussion of motivation, that he adopts a directive leader behavior when interacting on a task level with Teammate #10. Though Teammate #8 indicates that he has an explicit trust of his teammates, this directive behavior does not illustrate this trust to an observer.

Some empowerment occurs within Team B. We observed that on a fairly regular basis Teammate #8 and Teammate #9 engage in information sharing sessions. Initially, these sessions appear to be Teammate #9 reporting what has been happening to Teammate #8, but they degenerate into interactions in which both teammates share ideas and information with each other. Both Teammate #9 and Teammate #10 readily provide
access to information and share information with other teammates. During our
observation time, there were several occasions on which either teammate offered to the
other or to Teammate #11 the opportunity to attend a meeting that he would not
ordinarily attend.

TEAM C

Team C consists of ten teammates. Teammate #15 is the director of the
department and we considered him to be the formal leader of Team C. Teammate #21 is
the manager of the team. The group as a whole produces individual services for
customers that are outside of the corporate office. Each teammate has the same task
responsibility differing only by the different external customers that they serve. There is
not a lot of interdependence, except for those involved in a tutor and tutee program.

The culture of Team C is affected by the office’s physical layout. Team C’s area is
set up in two adjacent squares, with a walkway running through the middle of each square.
Six of the teammates are located in close proximity to each other, all with their cubicle
entrances opening to the same walkway, while the other four teammates are separately
located along a parallel walkway. The director and manager of the team each have an
individual office. The layout of Team C is set up so that creates privacy for each
teammate. Standing in the open walkway between rows of cubicles, a passerby or even
someone in the next cube can hear very little that goes on within the individual cubes.

The culture of Team C appears to be supportive. The teammates are constantly
helping each other with their daily, individual tasks. Three of the teammates are new to
the team. In order to help the new teammates become acclimated to the task and the
culture of Team C, a system has been set up so that Teammates #17 and #18 are
considered the tutors of the new Teammates #18, #19, and #20. We observed Teammates #17 and #18 frequently answering questions and helping their untrained, fellow teammates to become acquainted with their new tasks.

Informal relationships have developed within Team C. While we were observing, Teammate #21 was trying to organize a duck pin bowling tournament for the members of his team. Teammate #15 noted that at Owens & Minor, there are a lot of opportunities to participate in fun activities outside of work, though he rarely takes advantage of them. He feels that his teammates do not participate in these activities as a specific team, but that all involvement is on an individual basis.

Team C appeared to communicate with each other frequently. Most of the observed communication was in the form of oral, face-to-face interactions. Most of the topics of the interactions were related to task understanding and accomplishment. There seemed to be a great deal of information sharing within the group, focused around helping one another to complete tasks. For example Teammate #21 came over to Teammate #16 and gave comments that assisted him in dealing with a task related issue. We did not observe a great deal of interaction between the teammates and the team leader. Though teammate #17 indicated that the present levels of interaction between the leader/manager and the teammates is higher than what it was before, it has improved.

There appeared to be a fair amount of social communication occurring within the team. Most of the social interaction occurred during breaks and in the lunchroom. Teammate #15 feels that there is a lot of personal sharing within the team. He also feels that these informal relationships highly impact how the team functions.
The team leader of Team C acts in an achievement oriented fashion. He helps to set challenging goals and expects his teammates to put in a lot of effort to meet their goals. Teammate #17 stated how he feels that his leaders expect much of him. Another indicator of this style of leadership, is that the followers of Teammate #15 clock over three hundred hours of overtime per month. Teammate #17 feels that Teammate #15 is also a directive leader because he is makes sure that they complete their tasks and is less laid back then the previous team leader. The teammates themselves tended to give lots of interpersonal feedback to their co-workers, especially through the mentor and mentee relationships.

The behaviors of Team C show some elements of empowerment. The leader and manager seem to trust the teammates of Team C. This was illustrated when they sent Teammate #17 to the field to do a specific task that was new to him. They allowed him to go to the job individually without someone looking over his shoulder to double check that he did it correctly. However, they did make it known that if he ran into problems the team leaders would be there to assist him. Another example of empowerment is that all of the teammates on Team C have been given the authority to make task-related, monetary decisions up to one thousand dollars without consulting their superiors. Teammate #17 indicated that his ability to make autonomous decisions has increased her perceived control over her tasks and personal actions.

**TEAM D**

Team D consists of seven teammates, one of whom is a manager. We refer to the manager, Teammate #25, as the team leader. The teammates of Team B each have individual tasks. Even though the tasks are individual, the team has created an element of
task interdependence. Each teammate has a task in which he is a specialist. There is also another teammate who serves as the secondary specialist for that task. This system creates an atmosphere in which information about tasks can and should flow between at least two teammates and in which teammates can easily work together to solve problems.

The atmosphere surrounding Team D is friendly and open. Many times during the day teammates can be seen joking and laughing with one another and generally having a good time. The team has also created rituals their own team rituals. Every Friday morning the team has breakfast together. They alternate which teammate provides breakfast for everyone else. This is a primarily social and fun time spent with teammates. The open atmosphere was made particularly evident when the team leader and Teammate #31 conducted a brainstorming session at a table in the middle of a pathway outside of the Team D cubicles.

The physical layout of Team D's workspace contributes to the open and friendly atmosphere. The cubicles are arranged in two parallel rows with a common wall. Each teammate has an individual entrance to their cube, which allows privacy. A team decision has been made to adopt a new cubicle structure. The cubicles will be arranged to resemble a bull pen. Each entrance will spill out into a central area.

Regarding communication, we observed numerous occurrences of informal task communication. The teammates frequently talked to each other over their cubicles or went to visit teammates in their cubes to discuss problems or questions regarding their task. We noticed a comparatively high frequency of informal task communication between the team leader and his teammates. Teammate #25 went to the individual teammates' cubes to discuss new information regarding their task or to hear how they
were coming along on their task.

The only formal communication that we observed was in the form of a staff meeting. Each teammate shared information and provided suggestions in this meeting. Teammate #30 indicated that he believed that the most task related communication occurred in their staff meetings. Teammate #26 cited that in addition to informal, face-to-face communication, the team also used formal methods such as email or a telephone bulletin board. Only once during our observations did we see or hear anything regarding such formal communication. Teammate #26 left a voice mail message for Teammate #29.

Motivation is almost impossible to observe so we identified two observable elements that could motivate the teammates: leadership behavior and feedback. The team leader interacted with his teammates very often during our twelve hours of observation. He conducted a brainstorming session with Teammate #31. Teammate #26 reported that the team leader consulted the teammates and requested their input when the team was developing their goals for 1997. These are examples of participative leadership behavior by Teammate #25. We also took note of any feedback that occurred, be it positive or negative. Teammate #25 gave three compliments to different people during our observation. He also provided a small amount of feedback during the staff meeting.

There seemed to be little observable motivational activity between teammates.

Team D engaged in four major activities that can be related to empowerment. Two of the activities concern information sharing and two concern participative leadership. Team D teammates share information with each other constantly throughout the day. When they learn something new regarding their task that they think might help another teammate, the teammates readily share this information. This is evidenced by the
regular informal task communication that occurs over the cubes and when they solve problems together. A tremendous amount of information sharing occurred in the Team D staff meeting. The team leader indicated that the staff meetings serve the purpose of introducing problems that teammates are having with their task and soliciting support for those problems. This causes collaborative effort among the teammates to solve problems. The prime example of information sharing in the staff meeting was that the team leader openly shared a reorganization of specialties. He explained to the teammates that he was removing a teammate from a certain specialty and another teammate would be assuming specialty responsibility for that task.

The team leader of Team D seems to employ participative leadership in his interactions with most of his followers. Two examples excellently illustrate this participative leadership. First, we noticed that the team leader conducted a brainstorming session with Teammate #31. Teammate #25 and Teammate #31 tossed around ideas about how to tackle a project. This is only one example of the conferences the team leader had with his individual teammates. The structure of these informal meetings was that the team leader just sat down to “talk” with the teammate about how they were progressing on their task. Another example of participative leadership was cited by Teammate #26. He explained that when the team was developing their 1997 goals, the team leader consulted and sought the input of each of the teammates. This gave the teammates a voice in the direction that the team would be heading for the year.

TEAM E

Team E is composed of six teammates. Teammate #34 is the director of the team and for our study, we considered him to be the formal team leader. The teammates of
Team E have little task interdependence. They all perform similar tasks but with different customers outside of Owens & Minor's corporate office.

The physical layout of Team E's cubicles is very sporadic. There is no centrally located work space. Two cubicles are attached to one another. A third cubicle, not attached to the other two, is located in the same room. The fourth teammate works in an office positioned adjacent to this room. The remaining two teammates work in the other wing of the building. One teammate has a separate office while the other works in a cubicle in another room.

There did not appear to be social relationships within Team E. All relationships and communication seemed to be task related. They do not appear to have informal relationships and ties. In an interview, Teammate #33 indicated that informal relationships inevitably form in the workplace. He said that if the relationships are good then your work is enhanced by those relationships. If the relationships are bad, then your work is negatively affected by those relationships. He did not seem to be very concerned with the issue of relationships and teamwork. Teammate #35 noted that his team does not interact outside of the office. He doesn't think that it is good idea for co-workers to spend too much time together. In terms of office interaction, he feels that his team has a good rapport with one another. They respect each others' opinions and abilities, but that is where their relationship ends.

Team E teammates have less informal interaction than any of the other teams that we observed. Teammate #35 does indicate that they ask a lot of the questions of each other in passing. Most of Team E's interaction occurs within formal meetings. They have inter-weekly meetings and/or bi-weekly meetings. Out of our total observation time of
twelve hours, we observed nine hours of meetings.

The team leader of Team E, Teammate #34, is a very participative leader. He shares many of the same tasks of the other members of Team E. We observed that there was little feedback between the teammates and that feedback was negative in nature. For example, Teammate #34 admonished Teammates #33 and #35 for not planning enough time for the planned meeting. Besides these negative comments, the team has positive motivation regarding goal-setting. At the beginning of the year, the team collectively sets monetary goals for the year and also divides these goals by quarter. Throughout their interaction in meetings, Teammate #32 always seeks to see how they are measuring up to their goals. As we were observing at the end of the first quarter, we noticed how excited Team E was that they had met and surpassed these goals for the first quarter, putting them well on track to meet their yearly goals.

The tasks of the Team E teammates are very individual. The teammates complete their jobs individually and then they share information with their other teammates generally during meetings. Most of the information seemed to be shared in the form of updates as to what was happening with their specific external customers. It appeared that only the director seemed actively interested in the other teammates' information. The teammates almost seemed to be checking in with him. The teammate who is giving the information often presents problems that they have encountered and sometimes other teammates will respond with suggestions. Most of the time, Teammate #34 will be the one to respond with an answer or advice.

The teammates of Team E seem to make a lot of independent decisions. They do not tend to defer these decisions to a supervisor. However, we did notice Teammate #32
and Teammate #34 consulting each other often, both in and out of meetings, as to the best
move to make. In that aspect, these decisions could be understood to have a collective
element to them.

**DISCUSSION**

In order to understand the team process, we need to examine our results in
comparison to the contemporary theories and research that we examined and the
teamwork philosophy implemented by Owens & Minor. We will analyze how the team
processes of Teams A, B, C, D and E fit the processes that the scholars prescribed. We
will also determine if the team processes parallel the descriptions provided by Owens &
Minor. Finally, we will compare how the actual processes compare to what the
teammates perceive is happening.

**TEAM A**

To comprehend the holistic team process of Team A, we must compare the
elements of leadership and teams to those touted by the scholars, Owens & Minor, and the
perceptions of the Owens & Minor teammates. The scholars say the physical structure of
a team area contributes to organizational structure. The physical layout of Team A is
positive because it promotes informal communication. The centrality of the cubes makes
it easy to stand up and talk to other teammates. The leader's office is in close proximity
to the entire team, this also makes informal interaction easier. The privacy that the
cubicles afford, helps to create an atmosphere of trust. This is a trust that the teammates
are doing the work that they are supposed to be doing.
Team A’s supportive atmosphere concurs with the scholars’ definition that the culture of an organization must be widely held and deeply shared. It is important to have strong values because these values dictate how a team will operate. Values act as a guiding and support mechanism for the decision making and task accomplishment process.

It appears that being supportive is a deeply held value of Team A. This was illustrated when Teammate #4 asked everyone on his team if they had all the supplies that they needed before he went to replenish the supply cabinet. He was making sure that everyone’s needs were being met (i.e. he was being supportive).

The organizational culture of Team A matches Owens & Minor’s definition in many ways. First, Owens & Minor indicates that an effective team should have an open, nonthreatening, and participative atmosphere. Team A exemplified this by having a physical layout that is easy to get around and teammates who readily communicate with one another. For example, Teammate #1 was constantly getting up to go consult with Teammate #2 on their joint project. Secondly, the culture directly reflects Owens & Minor’s idea that a team should have a supportive atmosphere, this was illustrated above.

The perceptions of organizational culture, shared by Team A’s teammates, appears to somewhat congruent with what actually exists in Team A. Teammate #4 was very pleased with the layout of his team. He felt that it helped them to communicate and be productive. We observed this and agree with him. Teammate #1 feels that the overall culture of Owens & Minor is a rumor mill. He cited an example that a few months before, there was a rumor that Teammate #15 (the team leader) was leaving corporate and going to a division. Immediately, Teammate #1 and his teammates gathered in small clumps and discussed, very worriedly, what was going to happen with them, whether or not they were
going to be fired, etc. We did not observe any actions that would support this statement.

Team A’s communication fits into the scholar’s theory of informal communication. Scholars suggest that informal communication fosters informal relationships which in turn promote the idea that the team is working together. Team A has both good informal communication and positive informal relationships. Teammates #1 - #4 were constantly sharing information and visiting one another. They expressed their informal relationships by the personal knowledge and concern of their teammates. For example, Teammate #1 wanted to know all about Teammate #3’s upcoming foreign vacation. Teammate #1 showed a knowledge of his teammate as well as a concern for his well being.

Team A’s high levels of communication might reflect to the scholarly theory that higher communication levels correlate to higher performance. Because we were not observing team output and performance we can neither validate or discredit this theory.

Owens & Minor did not overtly address the issue of communication and team effectiveness. However they did indicate that information should flow freely up, down and sideways; that there should be full open and honest sharing. For this to happen one might assume that there must be good levels of communication. Teammate #4 indicated that he feels there is a good information flow within his team. He is satisfied with amount of information he receives.

Teammates #1 and #5 both indicated that most of the team communication was verbal. We observed this and agree with their conclusion. Teammate #4 indicated that there was also significant note leaving for his teammates. We did not observe actions that concurred with this statement. Overall though, we would agree with them that Team A’s
communication is good.

Most of the scholarly motivation theories center around the leader behaviors and the follower reactions. The official team leader for Team A was not present for 9 of our 12 hours of observation. Therefore most of the acts, that we could observe, that could lead to motivation were done by the teammates themselves. It is hard to categorize how the leader would fit into the path-goal model because we observed very little leader behavior. Because of our lack of observation we can not specify a particular leadership style.

The team paralleled the scholarly theory that collaborative goal setting assured that the teammates would buy into the goal. We discovered that the teammates set incremental goals for themselves to complete different projects. We were unable to discern whether true motivation was experienced because motivation is a personal feeling that is felt by the individual teammates. Furthermore we had no mechanism to gage if the teammates had a strong commitment to specific goal achievement. But we did observe that they continued to work on their tasks even when their leader was not present, this might be indicative of a strong commitment to achievement.

Within Team A, we observed a lot of informal feedback that was in reaction to actions that directly related to the goal. As scene in the results section, Teammate #1 and #2 were constantly thanking each other for work done during the day. This reinforces the theory relating contingent rewards to motivation.

Owens & Minor refers to reward only in relation to rewards. They feel that rewards should be based on contribution to the group and should involve peer recognition. Team A’s actions fit Owens & Minor’s reward description because they usually relate to
goal achievement. For example, Teammate #3 has an award hanging in his cubicle recognizing him for extraordinary service to Owens & Minor.

Both Teammate #1 and #4 feel that they are self motivated, intrinsically motivated. We found that we could not observe or measure this, therefore we can neither confirm nor deny that they experience internal motivation. Teammate #1 said that his leader motivates him to do his job well. We did not observe the leader, so once again we cannot confirm his perception.

While watching Team A, we observed actions that could lead to empowerment. Empowerment is a perceived sense of control. Scholars indicate that information sharing, trust, goal setting, autonomous decision making, and a sense of perceived control. Team A had a lot of information sharing, this contributes to a sense of perceived control because when person has information they can feel like they are included in the important functions of the team. Secondly we saw that the team leader displayed trust of his followers. He left them, to work on their own, for most of our observation time. This allowed and encouraged them to make autonomous decisions. Scholars indicate that making autonomous decisions contributes to a feeling that they play a vital part in operation of the team. Some of the teammates may have felt an increase in their self-worth because of the positive feedback and the non-contingent rewards that they received. Self-worth may be important to empowerment because a person who does not feel good about themselves will not feel that they have the power or ability to make decisions. Overall it appeared that the teammates of Team A perceived that they had some control over the work that they were doing.
Owens & Minor does not officially discuss empowerment, but they do talk about factors that can lead to empowered teammates. Owens & Minor feels that teammates should be trusting, respectful, collaborative, and supportive. The teammates of Team A trust one another. For example the team leader trusts that his followers will do their work, when he is not there to supervise them. Teammates #1 - #4 trust each other to satisfactorily complete their part of the project. Team A deviates from Owens & Minor's prescriptions in that they tend to make individual autonomous decisions about their task. The teammates may take advice as to what do, but all decisions are not made by consensus. Team A resembles view Owens & Minor's view on shared power. The power within Team A is relatively shared by all members of the team. The team leader still holds the ultimate power to direct the actions of the team but most of the time the followers make their own decisions on how to handle and direct their daily tasks so that they are in line with the group's goals.

Teammate #1 stated that he felt that he and Teammate #4 are empowered. Through the observable actions of free information sharing, collective goal setting, and autonomous decision making. We can agree that they are possibly empowered teammates.

TEAM B

As illustrated in our above profile of Team B, the concepts of organizational culture, communication, motivation and empowerment are intertwined to create the process used by Team B on a day-to-day basis to work towards their goals.

Because of the nature of organizational culture, it penetrates all aspects of Team B and can directly affect communication and motivation. The physical layout of the workspace of Team B is in the shape of an “L”. This layout could be limiting to
communication between teammates. We observed that those teammates with offices on
the vertical leg communicated with each other as did those with offices on the horizontal
leg. Although communication occurred between the two legs of the “L”, it was limited.
We attribute this limitation in communication to the physical layout of Team B’s
workspace.

We described the atmosphere of Team B as being relaxed, yet sometimes formal.
Owens & Minor suggests in their characteristics of effective teams that the atmosphere
should be open, non-competitive, non-threatening, and participative. When the
atmosphere of Team B is relaxed, they fit well into the criteria set forth by Owens &
Minor. However, we feel that when the atmosphere is formal, Team B does not exemplify
these characteristics. When the team is acting formally, there is less communication
between teammates. Also, we noticed that when entering the office of Teammate #8,
Teammate #10 appears to be nervous and uncomfortable. This possibly would not occur
in a non-threatening atmosphere.

According to the research that we examined, organizational culture can affect
leader behavior and leader behavior can affect organizational culture. We noticed
Teammate #8 to adopt two types of leader behavior: supportive leader behavior and
directive leader behavior. The majority of the time Teammate #8 acted supportively. We
did notice directive behavior occurring particularly when he was meting with another
teammate in his office. We never observed directive behavior outside of his office.
Though the atmosphere inside Teammate #8’s office is not formal, the general setting of
an office is formal. When a teammate meets with the team leader, they enter an office, not
a cubicle, like everyone else has, and see their leader sitting behind a big desk. This
creates a formal atmosphere even if the leader does not intend it to do so. It could be that the formal atmosphere of the team leader’s office affects his leader behavior and makes him act more directive. As noted in our profile of Team B, the relaxed atmosphere of Team B generally occurs when Teammate #8 is in the office. His fun attitude and supportive leader behavior seem to contribute to the informal nature of the team’s work area. As the research suggests, leader behavior and organizational culture have a mutually influential relationship.

The scholarly research that we examined also indicated that an organizational culture that would be friendly to the team process should value the support of others, empowerment, and a respect for individuals. The leader’s supportive behavior indicates that the team values support of others. In our interview with Teammate #8, he placed great emphasis upon empowerment and along with it his concern for each teammate’s individual development. This continues to correspond with our theoretical research.

Team B's communication is an interesting element to examine because of the two distinct communicative groups, the vertical leg of the “L” and the horizontal leg of the “L”. Within each leg of Team B, communication does occur frequently, quickly and accurately. The communication between teammates located on different legs of the “L” does not happen as frequently or as quickly as does that within the leg. Because of this limitation in communication, Team B does not align perfectly with Owens & Minor’s perception of team communication. Owens & Minor suggests that communicated information should flow in all directions, up, down and sideways. Communication seems to flow well sideways within Team B. Since there is limited communication between the two legs of the “L” and the team leader and the manager are the two teammates who
occupy the vertical leg of the “L”, then the up and down communication is also limited. Team B follows the suggested methods of communication of both the scholars and Owens & Minor to a degree. We attribute the difference to the strain that the physical layout of the work space places upon communication.

The teammates of Team B perceive their communication to be better than we observed it to be. Teammate #8 feels as though he communicates well with all of his teammates. He indicates that communication is not merely talking but is also listening and that he spends a great deal of time listening to what his teammates are saying. Teammate #8 accurately cites face-to-face, informal communication as the most frequently used by his team. Teammate #11 only cites communication regarding specific tasks and the Monday morning staff meetings. Although Teammate #11 is consistent with our observations in that the majority of his communication is with Teammate #10 who is located on the same leg of the “L”. The teammates interviewed do not seem to recognize the limitation of communication that the layout of their workspace creates. We observed such a limitation, but because we observed Team B for only twelve hours, our observations could be incorrect. It could also be that because the teammates are submerged in their work environment, they do not notice the limitation on their communication.

The largest aspect of motivation in Team B is the path-goal aspect. The team leader adopts two types of leader behavior: supportive and directive. Teammate #8 most often employs supportive leader behavior. In our interview with him, he cited many times his true concern for his teammates as individuals. This was manifested, as described in the earlier profile, when he suggested that a former teammate seek other employment that
would allow for further individual growth and happiness, even though the team leader knew that he would be losing one of his best teammates. This supportive behavior could be a motivator for his teammates to perform certain tasks.

We also noticed that Teammate #8 adopted directive leader behavior when meeting with some teammates. This generally occurred when he was in his office. The incident described in the profile in which Teammate #8 directed Teammate #10 step-by-step how to accomplish a task is an example of the team leader’s directive behavior. Just as with the supportive behavior, this directive behavior can serve as either a positive or a negative motivator. We cannot determine which behavior motivates which teammates because of the personal nature of motivation. Nevertheless, the team leader should be aware that he is using two types of leader behavior and that they could have either positive or negative effects upon individual teammates. These behaviors can motivate a teammate to a certain task outcome.

We were able to observe the third aspect of path-goal motivation: the evaluation of the task outcome. This generally takes the form of rewards or compliments. Team B is a very complimentary group. Both the team leader and the manager offered compliments for jobs well done and extra effort to their teammates. Such compliments indicate positive approval of the task outcome or the behavior and could lead the teammate to repeat that behavior.

Regarding Owens & Minor’s perspective on motivation, Team B does not comply very well based upon our observations. Owens & Minor’s motivation tenet centers around commitment to team goals and goal achievement. We did not observe any behavior regarding commitment or achievement of goals. Because we did not observe the
behavior does not mean that such behavior does not occur, but that it did not occur in the
twelve hours that we observed the team. If, in fact, such behavior does not occur, then
Team B’s motivation efforts are not in sync with those espoused by Owens & Minor.

The team leader identifies empowerment as one of the central values of Team B.
Information sharing is one of the central theoretical aspects of empowerment. As reported
in the team’s profile, frequent information sharing occurs between Teammate #8 and #9.
The sessions begin as Teammate #9 reporting in to Teammate #8 but digress into
information sharing and brainstorming sessions. This seems to be the only information
sharing in which Teammate #8 engages. Because he is information sharing with a manger,
it may not be his responsibility to share information with those teammates that fall under
the manager’s jurisdiction, but he should be providing information to the other teammates
on his team. We did observe a few instances in which he directed one of the support
teammates to a task, but we would not qualify that direction as information sharing. On
the teammate level, many occurrences of information sharing, primarily between
Teammate #9, #10, and #11, were observed.

Team B’s efforts at empowerment do seem to coincide with those prescribed by
Owens & Minor. Owens & Minor relates empowerment to decision making and says that
decisions should be made by consensus. We did not observe a large number of decision
making incidences, but did notice that most of the decisions regarding the tasks of the
manager and his teammates are made autonomously. The other decisions that we
observed concerned the company cleaning competition. Teammates decided on their own
where things should be stored or if items could be thrown away. These decisions were
autonomous and not based upon consensus. Therefore, we conclude that Team B does
not abide by Owens & Minor's recommendations about empowerment.

In our interview with Teammate #8, he placed great emphasis upon empowerment. He views empowerment differently than we observed the elements of empowerment occurring within the team. Similar to our theoretical research, Teammate #8 identifies trust as a key element of empowerment. By saying that he truly trusts his teammates, Teammate #8 explained that he meant that he trusts them to do their tasks well. However, we noticed Teammate #8 employing directive leader behavior with Teammate #10. This behavior, telling Teammate #10 exactly how to undertake the task, does not serve as a good example of the incredible trust that Teammate #8 says he places in his teammates. We did not observe any incidences in which we could see the trusting relationship manifested. We must qualify that this does not mean that such relationships do not exist, just that we did not observe any in our twelve hour observation time.

Overall, Team B does not completely follow any of the prescribed characteristics of an Owens & Minor team. The team partially coincides with the Owens & Minor tents in the areas of organizational culture and communication. Regarding the contemporary theories and research, Team B is basically on target. Although we interviewed two teammates from Team B, Teammate #11 provided us with none of his perceptions of the elements of team process. We feel like he either had developed no perceptions or was afraid to share those perceptions with us. Teammate #8 provided us with perceptions, primarily about empowerment and communication. His perceptions seemed to be starkly different from the behaviors that we observed.

TEAM C
To analytically discuss the team process of Team C, we must again consider our three research questions pertaining to the scholars, Owens & Minor, and the teammates views on leadership in teams.

The organizational culture of Team C seems to be semi-decent. The physical layout of the cubes somewhat promotes a group culture. The office area is designed so that the cubicles form shapes that resemble two adjacent rectangles. The entrance to each cube is from one of two main walkways that go down the middle of each rectangle. Even though the entrances are off the main pathway, most of the cubes still afford privacy. Because of the rectangular set of the cubes, communication and interaction of the teammates within each rectangle is made easy. But because the Team C is separated into two sections, it takes more effort to have personal communication with teammates in the other rectangle of cubes. Never the less, Team C teammates do interact with teammates who are not in their immediate area. This is illustrated by Teammate #23 who constantly consults with Teammate #17. The scholarly definition of organizational culture stresses that a good culture involves widely held and deeply shared values, usually manifested through specific behaviors or team rites and rituals. We did not see to be either of these. Possibly because of this, Team C appeared to lack an active culture.

According to the characteristics of an effective team defined by Owens & Minor (they are a nonthreatening, noncompetitive, open and participative atmosphere), Team C could have an effective organizational culture. We see through constant teammate interaction that Team C has a participative atmosphere. It does not appear that they have a completely open atmosphere because most of their interaction is task related. If it was a truly open atmosphere then the teammates should theoretically feel free to share anything
and everything, both task and socially related. The teammates of Team C do not seem to be very competitive with one another. They are constantly asking each other questions and sharing information. For example, we observed Teammate #18 wheel her chair over to Teammate #19's cube so that he could tutor him.

Teammate #17 believes that the culture of Owens & Minor's corporate office is felt, to a degree, in his team. He stated that his area feels like a family. He implied that his area felt more comfortable than the rest of the corporate office. Specifically Teammate #17 feels comfortable giving suggestions to his manager, Teammate #21. We can not attest to the comfort level of each teammate but it seemed that they acted in a very businesslike fashion. Furthermore, the walls were very plain, devoid of the many company posters that adorn other parts of corporate. The spirit that most people associate with a comfortable atmosphere seemed to be lacking with Team C. Teammate #17 suggested that Team C's atmosphere is open and supportive. He says that all of the teammates on Team C go to each other and try to help them when they are in a crunch. We observed this many times. For example, Teammate #22 came over to Teammate #18's cubicle to help him move his computer so that he could clean his cube for the "Operation Mop Up" (an activity where the entire corporate office cleaned their work areas).

Scholars suggest that higher communication levels correlate to higher performance. We observed that some of the teammates of Team C appeared to communicate a lot, most of that communication was informal and task related. We might assume that since a significant amount of this communication occurred between the new teammates and their tutors, that increased interaction would help them to become better acquainted with their tasks. Without good communication/interaction the new teammates
would not have their questions answered and therefore probably would not perform their
tasks to the best of their abilities.

The scholars also suggest that informal communication helps to establish informal
relations which help to unite the team and instill a sense of togetherness. We cannot
measure or assert what the teammates are feeling. But what we did observe is that
Teammates #19, #20 and #24 have some form of informal relationships would share their
lunch breaks together.

Both Teammate #15 and #17 feel that most of the communication, that occurs
within Team C, is verbal. Teammate #15 specifically stressed that the communication was
informal and not necessarily during structured meetings. We feel that the teammates
perceptions match what is actually going on. Both also agree that communication and
cooperation increase towards the end of the year when they have more pressure and
project deadlines.

Motivation was difficult to observe. We were able deduce that, within Team C,
there does not seem to be a lot of collective goal setting. In this aspect Teammate #15
may be considered to be a directive leader. He alone set the goal for the followers. He
believes that Though it should be noted, Teammate #17 feels that because his manager and
director are fairly new that they are still learning about the issues within their department.
Therefore they must listen to advice given by teammates who have been with the
department for a longer while, but are not in positions of authority.

There was not a lot of visible positive feedback from the team leaders or from
teammates themselves. Only four rewards were given during our 12 hours of
observation. Of those four rewards, one was given by the leader, one was given by the
manager, and two were given by Teammate #18 to his mentee. This indicates that the teammates of Team C probably have high intrinsic motivation because it does not appear that they receive significant feedback or rewards.

Team C did not completely fit Owens & Minor's definition of how the motivation process should work. Owens & Minor suggests that motivation is a commitment to goals set by the team, that belonging needs are satisfied, and that there is a more opportunity for personal achievement through the group. Team C does not match this definitions because there is not a great deal of collective goal setting. We can not measure if there is any commitment to the goals that have been set by the team leader. Whether or not the belonging needs of a teammate were met is an internal issue that we could not measure, so therefore we can not analytically address it. We do see that the atmosphere is trusting and supportive, as explained earlier, which can increase a teammates feeling of self-worth and perhaps there levels of intrinsic motivation. The few rewards that were given related to Owens & Minor's characteristics of effective teams. The rewards directly or indirectly related to a contribution to the group goals. But at the same time, the rewards differ from Owens & Minor's list because most of them were given by a person who was in a relative position power.

Teammate #15 cited three things that motivate him. Most of those things could be classified as intrinsic motivators. His paycheck can be considered an external non-contingent reward, which can act as an intrinsic motivator. Teammate #17 indicated that the team leader motivated her to do her job well. We did not see any feedback, interaction, or rewards that would support this statement. But is possible that the leaders directive and achievement oriented behaviors could be motivating for Teammate #17.
This conclusion can only be inferred, it can not be overtly observed or supported with examples.

According to the scholars, Team C fits some of the description of empowered employees. There is a lot of information sharing within the Team. This is supported by the high interaction that is task related. The high levels of task communication may increase feelings of trust because the teammates could perceive that they are privy to important and pertinent information related to their tasks. Trust was also shown when the leader and manager let Teammate #17 go to the field without a supervisor, to complete an important task. The scholars assert that trust contributes to the perceived control that a teammate will think that they have. Team C also coincides with the scholars' definition of empowerment because they are given the latitude to make autonomous decisions. The teammates of Team C are encouraged to make individual decisions without each time having to consult the manager or leader. They have this freedom for matters up to $1000 dollars. The only area that Team C falls short in is the group goal setting category. It appears that the leader is setting the goals and determining the direction that the team is going in.

Team C does not completely fit Owens & Minor's classification of empowerment factors. In Team C, the power base does not seem to be shared by all the teammates. The teammates do make some decisions, but they do not equally share the responsibility for making all the decisions within the team. The larger monetary decisions and other important decisions are made by the manager or leader. Secondly the decisions are not made by consensus, most of the daily decisions within Team C are of a more individual nature.
Teammate #17 said that he feels empowered and cites his autonomous decision making ability. Yet he also said that he must provide justification and details for all the decisions that he makes. It almost seems like the teammates have to show why they were right and not wrong in making their decision. It does not sound like they are one hundred percent trusted to make good decisions, it is more like they are trusted with reservations.

**TEAM D**

As illustrated in our above profile of Team D, the concepts of organizational culture, communication, motivation and empowerment are intertwined to create the process used by Team D on a day-to-day basis to work towards their goals.

The contemporary theory and research that we examined proposes that communication within a team should flow frequently, quickly and accurately so that a common knowledge base exists for those teammates with interdependent tasks. The teammates of Team D communicate frequently, quickly and accurately. As presented in the profile, teammates spend a great part of their day sharing information with each other and helping each other through problems. For example, Teammate #27 and Teammate #29 share the same specialty. Many times during the day, they will share information and consult each other on the best way to solve the problems presented by their tasks. This regular communication related to problem-solving helps Teammate #27 and Teammate #29 to accomplish their tasks more efficiently than if they did not have one another to consult. The communication that occurs between these two teammates fulfills Owens & Minor's view of effective communication in that it makes solving problems easier. The team leader and teammates communicated in similar ways as well. We were impressed by the frequency with which Teammate #25 communicated with his teammates. Because
these interactions generally focused upon problem solving regarding the teammates' tasks, we believe that this indicates the team leader's active interest in the successful completion of his teammates' task. By conferencing with his teammates, the team leader is fulfilling Owens & Minor's requirement for information to flow up and down and is, ideally, making solving these problems easier. We believe that this communication is particularly notable and sheds light on the nature of Team D's process because we only noticed such frequent task communication between team leader and teammates in Team D and Team E. Though most of our emphasis has been placed upon the informal task communication that occurs within the team, they also employ formal communication, particularly the staff meetings, as an opportunity for intensive information sharing sessions.

The information that we collected from our interviews with Teammate #26 and Teammate #30 supported the communication that we observed. Both teammates indicated that informal task communication occurred the most. Teammate #26 did cite formal communication methods such as email and phone bulletin boards, but we did not observe these types of formal communication. Teammate #30 accurately cited the staff meetings as the time when the most intensive task communication occurred. Thus, the teammates perceptions of the operation of communication within Team D are in sync with what we observed.

The open atmosphere and physical layout of Team D affect or are affected by the communication of the team. The frequent informal task interactions between Teammate #25 and his teammates could be a cause of the open atmosphere of Team D. The team leader makes it known, through his routine visits with teammates, that he is willing to answer their questions and to hear any concerns or problems that they are experiencing.
By communicating openly with his teammates, the team leader is also setting an example for other teammates to be open and receptive to questions, concerns and problems.

Owens & Minor prefers an open atmosphere, similar to that of Team D.

The physical layout of the workspace of Team D teammates enhances the informal task communication that occurs so commonly. Because the cubicles are located so closely together, the teammates can speak to one another over the cube or visit a teammate in their cube with very little effort. If such informal communication can occur so easily, this reduces the need for formal communication.

Motivation and empowerment center around the participative leadership behavior of Teammate #25. In the profile, we defined his behavior as participative from the examples of the staff meeting and the goal-setting example. By setting up the staff meeting as an opportunity for all teammates including the team leader to introduce problems and solicit support for these problems, the team leader acts participatively. The soliciting of opinions to help in the decisions surrounding goal setting is also evidence of his participative behavior. Because Teammate #25’s leadership behavior is participative, the concepts of motivation and empowerment are intertwined. The participative leadership behavior is a motivator. Because we cannot observe exactly what motivates an individual, we can only conclude that this behavior can serve as either a positive or negative motivator for teammates. Because of the nature of motivation, we could not observe the middle step in which the teammate is motivated to a certain task outcome. However, we did see the reward aspect of motivation occur. These rewards took the form of compliments for a job well done. These compliments could be considered the evaluation of the task outcome. The team leader was pleased with the outcome, so he
complimented the teammates who were responsible for that task outcome. From this, we understand that Team D’s attempts at motivation are consistent with those of the path-goal theory.

Owens & Minor’s view of motivation is slightly different than that proposed in the contemporary theories and research. They identify two elements of motivation: commitment to the goals set by the team and achievement through the group. The goal-setting element of motivation and that of achievement through the group corresponds with that of the scholars. Commitment to the goals of the groups enhances the motivation of teammates. Team D adheres to this Owens & Minor goal in that the team leader directly involved his teammates in the setting of goals. This increases the probability that the teammates would be committed to the goals of the teams. However, Owens & Minor does not focus at all upon the path-goal theory aspects of motivation. Because they do not identify the path-goal aspects of motivation and Team D employs the path-goal aspects of motivation, the operation of Team D regarding motivation is not consistent with the motivation proposed by Owens & Minor.

Both teammates that we interviewed indicated that they were intrinsically motivated. We could not observe intrinsic motivation within Team D. We could not accurately compare the teammates’ perceptions of motivation with the operation of motivation within the team.

The participative nature of motivation for Team D correlates with Team D’s empowerment. As presented in the Team D profile and in the discussion of motivation above, the team leader and teammates of Team D readily and easily share information with one another. The prime example of empowerment is the goal setting scenario. Teammate
#25 sought input from his teammates in order to establish goals for the entire group. This corresponds with the contemporary theories and research on empowerment because it allows the teammates to believe that they had an influence in the decision-making process of the leader. We did not witness autonomous decision making within Team D. However, we did not observe the opposite, the teammates deferring to their team leader for decisions.

Owens & Minor does not directly address empowerment in *The Quality Handbook*, but addresses decision making, an observable element related to empowerment. Owens & Minor says that decision making should be made by consensus. The decision making process of Team D does not correspond to this statement. Teammate #25 considers the input and suggestions of teammates when making his decisions, but we did not observe or hear about any decisions by consensus.

The only team perceptions on empowerment that we gathered was that Teammate #30 believed that empowerment occurs within Team D. He cited the he has applied for another position within the company and Teammate #25 has been very encouraging of this pursuit because he feels that it would be in the best interest of Teammate #30.

Overall, Team D adheres to the elements of the team process prescribed by the contemporary theories and research that we reviewed. Their process did diverge from some of the characteristics emphasized by Owens & Minor, namely motivation and empowerment.

**TEAM E**

We must now contemplate how Team E relates to our three research questions to fully understand their team processes. Organizational culture is effected by many things
the physical environment, rites & rituals, the atmosphere, and the vision. The physical environment of Team E is very detrimental to their culture. The fact that they are separated all over the building does not help them to communicate or build relationships (task or social related). Team E does not openly promote or embody a directed vision. We do not know for sure that Team E does not have a vision. But because it is not present we might conclude that they don't have one. Team E does not have any team rites or rituals. This could be due in part to the individual nature of their tasks or the fact they have little interaction and communication with one another. The leader of Team E, Teammate #34, acts a role model for how a teammate on this team acts. He does this simply because he shares a parallel task to what most of his followers do.

Team E fits some of Owens & Minor's characteristics for a good organizational culture. They have a decent information flow when they are in meetings. Outside of their inter-weekly and bi-weekly meetings they normally only have interactions in passing. In their meetings they appear to be collaborative and supportive. Often they share ideas on how to handle certain problems with customers. For example Teammate #34 gave Teammate #33 advice on how to deal with a certain customer. There is no evidence to indicate that there is or is not trust within the team. The teammates on Team E appear to be respectful of each other. The atmosphere of Team E does not exactly fit. Because of their lack of proximity they do not seem to have a very open atmosphere. Teammate #35 indicated how the team is somewhat competitive in nature. Because each person shares a similar task, there is the opportunity for comparison and competition.

A lot of the teammate perception of the organizational culture of Team E was not completely positive. Teammate #33 feels that there are good, basic, underlying concepts
about teamwork, but that in reality they fall short. Teammate #36 expressed that he thought the whole team concept was not worthwhile. He felt that they worked individually. Teammate #35 also alluded that they did not have a great collective vision, that due to the physical environment their individuality was accentuated.

The interaction of Team E occurred mostly during formal meetings. The scholars indicated that high levels of communication is often indicative of a formal organizational structure. They also say that informal communication leads to informal relationships which lead to a feeling of team togetherness. Team E provides support for this theory because they have very little informal interaction. Nor do they appear to have an especially noticeable feeling of togetherness. The scholars indicate that higher levels of communication correlates to higher performance. Team E has decent interaction and communication when they are in meetings but not when they are outside meetings. Yet they consistently surpass their monetary goals.

Owens and Minor indicates that in an effective team process, information flows up, down, and sideways. Information only seems to flow during these meetings. In fact these meetings constitute most of the interaction between the team. Teammate #35 indicated that the most substantive interaction occurs during meetings. There should be full sharing of information. Team E shares, during their meetings, what activity they have had with their customers of the last week. Though most of the other teammates only seemed interested in giving their information. Therefore some of the meetings appear to be sessions where the individual teammates report their progress to the team leader, Teammate #34.
Most of the teammates of Team E recognize that the wealth of their communication occurs during meetings, though Teammate #35 feels that a lot of questions are asked in passing. Contrary to Teammate #35’s perception, we did not observe, during the four hours we did not observe meetings, a tremendous amount of casual questions were not casually asked in passing. This might correlate to there lack of informal relations.

The scholars define motivation as anything that provides direction, intensity and persistence to behavior. As stated before, we can not overtly observe motivation because it is different for every individual. But we can view elements of motivation (i.e. goal setting, role modeling, leader behaviors, and rewards). Team E meets and surpasses their monetary goals, but that appears to be their only goal. We do not know if this goal is set collaboratively or by the vice-president, Teammate #32. Perhaps if there was more collaboration in the goal setting the goals might reflect some aspects of personal or team development.

Team E’s leader seems to be a primarily achievement oriented leader, stressing task completion and positive cash flow. At times he also appears to be directive, telling the other teammates when to schedule meetings or how to handle different customers. And still yet, at other times, the team leader reflects a participative approach because he has to deal with customers in the same way that his followers do. Teammate #34 exemplifies the scholars expectancy theory which indicates that the leader will have to adapt his specific leadership style to per different followers and situations.

Team E did not experience good levels of feedback. During our observations, the level of feedback was quite low. The feedback that was given tended to be contingent to
the task and were delivered in a negative way. Sometimes negative reinforcement can help to cease less desirable follower behaviors.

Owens and Minor says that motivation is a commitment to goals set by the group. They indicate that it is also peer recognition. Teammates on Team E each complete their tasks to reach their goals, but there is no evidence to prove, either way, that they are committed to their goals. There was very little peer recognition or feedback. This could be due in part to a low level of communication and almost non-existent informal relationships.

Both Teammate #33 and #35 indicated that they were self motivated. This could be supported by the fact that there does not seem to be a significant amount of motivating behaviors expressed by the teammates or the team leader.

The scholars define empowerment as many elements contributing to an overall sense of perceived control. Information sharing, trust, collective goal setting, power to make autonomous decisions and a sense of self worth. Team E does do a fair amount of information sharing, though sometimes the other teammates do not really listen. There is a high level of trust. Teammate #36 commented on how since everyone has individual tasks that you need to trust that they will complete their task and contribute to the group effort. As stated above, we do not know whom sets the group goals, this may or may not be a collaborative process. The teammates of Team E definitely display that they make autonomous decisions. Because of their individual task and spread out locations they must make autonomous decisions in order to complete their work in a timely manner.

Finally, we consider a sense of self worth. We know that this effects how people work, but unfortunately since it is a person sense/feeling we were unable to measure it.
O & M feels that there must be trust and respect to be empowered. As stated above, Team E is both those things. O & M also feels that the team needs to be collaborative and supportive. They are somewhat collaborative in that they come together to share about their tasks and to see how they interrelate. They are somewhat supportive in that sometimes they give advice or help other teammates deal with trouble customers. O & M feels that the power base should be shared by all. In Team E, Teammate #34 definitely exercises more power with in the group. Finally Owens & Minor suggest that effective teams make decisions by consensus. Team E teammates may collect advice for some of their problems but they definitely exercise their own decisions and judgments.

The Team E teammates never officially said that they felt empowered. But they did indicate that they had the control to make independent decisions. This correlates to some of our observations and theories of empowerment. The teammates perceptions appear to be congruent with what actually happens.

CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of our study of leadership and teams at Owens & Minor, we have found answers to our three research questions. First, we conclude that each team's process of teamwork is unique to that team. The process centers around who the teammates are as persons and what they value, the type of task that the team sets out to accomplish and adapts to organizational restraints such as the layout of office space. Because of the built-in difference among teams, it is impossible to evaluate one team's processes as being better or worse than those of another team.
To answer our first research question, we conclude that the teams at Owens & Minor adhere fairly closely to the characteristics of teamwork identified in the contemporary theory and research that we examined. Of course, some teams follow these theoretical models closer than others, but all are relatively on track. The conceptualization and functioning of teams at Owens & Minor reasonably follows how the contemporary theories and research indicate a team should operate.

Regarding our second research question, we conclude that the five teams that we examined at Owens & Minor exhibit very few of the characteristics that Owens & Minor prescribes for an effective team. We first suggest that Owens & Minor realize that because their teams cover so many different areas and have starkly different tasks and goals, there should not be a company wide prescription of appropriate team characteristics. But rather, a functional list of such characteristics would be more appropriate. Following with this suggestion, we also believe that the characteristics that Owens & Minor lists are appropriate characteristics for effective teams. However, the descriptions of how these characteristics should fit into the team process rarely explain the functional relationship between the characteristics and processes that we observed. Thus, we suggest that Owens & Minor reevaluate how their effective team characteristics should be operationalized into the team process.

Based upon our observations and our interviews with teammates, we conclude that the alignment of how teammates' perceptions of how their teams function and the actual way (what we observed) the teams to function differed by teammate. Some of the perceptions were consistent with our observations; some of the perceptions were inconsistent with our observations. We attribute this to the attitudes and perceptions of
the individual teammates and feel that we can draw no generalizable conclusions from this comparison.

In conclusion, it is important that Owens & Minor continue to provide direction and resources for team development, in order for its teams to remain efficient and effective. They should concentrate their focus on effective processes instead of effective characteristics. We assert that at the present time, the teams at Owens & Minor do have fairly good team processes. But in the future, the teams and team process can flourish and grow if the Owens & Minor teammates take the time to evaluate, understand, and continually fine tune the process of how they work together and attain their goals.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX B

TEAM REFERENCE LIST

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APPENDIX C

PROTOCOL FOR INTRODUCTORY INTERVIEWS

1. What is your name?

2. What is your official position/title at Owens & Minor?

3. How long have you been employed at Owens & Minor? In what capacity?

4. Were you employed by Owens & Minor when the change to a teammate structure occurred?

5. When did the change to the organizational structure occur? Why did this change occur? Who initiated this change?

6. What type of organizational structure existed before a teamwork structure was implemented?

7. How would you define team?

8. How does your team operate?

9. What qualities would you attribute to an ideal teammate?

10. Can you identify your team leader?

11. What qualities would you attribute to an ideal, effective team leader?
APPENDIX D

PROTOCOL FOR FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS

Standard Follow-up Interview Questions

1. How does organizational culture affect your team?

2. Who or what motivates you to do your job well? How do they or it do that? Why do they or it do that?

3. What medium of communication does your team primarily use?

4. When does your most substantive communication occur?

5. We understand that informal relations affect work? How do the informal relations of your team affect the way you work?
Interviewee #1
February 27, 1997

Interviewee #1 is an analyst for an Owens & Minor team. He has been employed by Owens & Minor for five and a half years. He originally worked on another team within Owens & Minor and was hired, in 1991, specifically to develop, distribute, and analyze questionnaires for an organizational study. Interviewee #1 attributes this study as one of the first steps in the implementation of the team process at Owens & Minor.

Interviewee #1 feels that the teamwork philosophy has helped to "proliferate the bureaucracy". Prior to the implementation of the team philosophy, there was an "executive row" on the third floor. There were only three director positions: the Director of Human Resources, the Director of National Accounts, and another position that he does not remember. These were very coveted position within the company. Now, there are two or three layers of administration consisting of many directors and senior vice-presidents.

Interviewee #1 defines a team as a group of people that works together every day toward a functional goal. The team has a major sense of direction and is not too large. They answer to a clearly defined supervisor. To him, a team is a work group. At Owens & Minor, there are departmental teams that function as units themselves, but there are also cross-functional teams. Within a team, each teammate has an assigned area, but the teammates are aware of what everyone else is doing. They get help from each other. Often, they have an immediate area of expertise.
Interviewee #1 believes that an ideal teammate should be flexible. They should have at least one major area of expertise, preferably more, but also understand how things work. A teammate should have a good work ethic and be willing to work. He expects complete honesty and integrity in a teammate and requests that that teammate approach things from a problem solving standpoint.

The respondent thought that his team does not need their formal leader so that they can do their work. They are self-directed and self-motivated. Informal team leaders arise with the different situations. Teammates defer to the informal team leaders for expertise. Overall, the teammates depend upon each other.

He believes that the ideal team leader should understand the big picture and at the same time comprehend the elements that make up that big picture. The team leader should be able to work with problems and define the area of concern within that problem. They need to be able to quickly assess resources, time, and whether or not the project is realistic. A team leader should have experience and wisdom. If the team leader has been promoted through the ranks, then they must be able to leave the workbench. They may not be good supervisors. Team leaders need to learn how to leave behind the hands on.

Interviewee #1 perceives the team concept to be very effective at Owens & Minor, provided you are a member of a dynamic team. He sees some teams at Owens & Minor as monolithic as individuals. These teams do not relate well to the other teams within the company. Interviewee #1 sees as a drawback to teams the fact that the teams become so focused on what they do, that they have no occasion to and do not understand the entire corporate network.
Regarding communication, Owens & Minor has a decentralized structure. Stuart, the company that they acquired most recently was a centralized structure. This has caused a great deal of problems. He feels that there is a great emphasis on the family concept at Owens & Minor. There is a deep affection for the people in the field and a lot of mutual respect exists between corporate and field.

Proximity has a lot to do with communication. When he worked on a different floor, he always knew what was going on. When he worked across the street in the Aetna building, he felt like out of sight, out of mind, played a large role. He feels that information is successfully shared at the monthly teammate meetings. However, Interviewee #1 feels that everyone should know what is going on and why and that this is not always accomplished at Owens & Minor. He recognizes that sometimes you should not share too much information. A good leader will help people understand what is going on and why things are happening. This leader must recognize that some people are not mature enough to handle all of the information.

Interviewee #1 feels that Hugh Gouldthorpe spearheaded the implementation of the team process. He feels that recognition and reward are important. Owens & Minor has a good identity and maintains the family atmosphere. It is a unique company in the marketplace.
Interviewee #2
February 28, 1997

Interviewee #2 is a manager at Owens & Minor’s corporate headquarters. He has worked with Owens & Minor for eight years and has held two positions. Interviewee #2 began by explaining the structure of the Treasury Department. There are three groups within the department, they are tax, finance and credit. Interviewee #2 is the supervisor of three people. In turn, he is informally supervised by a director. Above this director is the formal leader of his department. Interviewee #2 has daily interaction with the formal leader, but the director gives him his performance reviews.

Interviewee #2 considers the people that report to him to be a team. The people that he interacts with are primarily in the field. His daily tasks are not interdependent with his team, nor does he feel a daily need for interaction. Yet they do come together to solve and brainstorm complex situations.

Interviewee #2 then explained some of the communication networks within his area. He feels that his group does not interact much with others teams in his department. Although he does work with other corporate teams, 80% of his interaction is with people in the field while the other 20% is with people at corporate. Interviewee #2 feels that some of the communication problems that he has experienced in the past are being rectified by committees that have recently been created by the executive officers. In his specific area, the a particular committee was established to enhance communication between the officers and the employees.

Interviewee #2 feels that a leader is someone who assigns projects to various people. The leader manages the scope of tasks and informs people what needs to be done to accomplish their respective tasks.
He feels that the concept of having a “teammate” is a good one. He illustrated this by indicating that when the number of divisions doubled, the concept of teammates became essential for Owens & Minor to maintain its small company feeling. He also feels that the move to teams and teammates at the Corporate Office was a good one. He indicated that a lot people had trouble functioning as the company grew exponentially, the switch to teams made people feel part of the big picture. He felt that the structure of the his department did not change because the teammate concept had already been adapted before the official change took place.

Finally, Interviewee #2 talked about how his department was affected by the Stuart Medical acquisition. He indicated that the whole department had to be restructured and that new teammates had to be hired. Stuart’s analogous department used different systems, and it took a lot of work to get everyone on the same plane, but now he feels that the amalgamation of the two companies is complete.
Interviewee #3
March 5, 1997

Interviewee #3 is the a director at Owens & Minor. First, he diagrammed his branch of Owens & Minor from Gil Minor down to the teammates. Interviewee #3 reports directly to a vice president. Within his team, he has four managers who head four teams. Each team has a set of goals. The manager sets his own goals and the individual teammates also have goals.

Interviewee #3 has been employed at Owens & Minor for six years. He began working with another team, then became a regional manager. Two and a half years ago, he became a director.

Owens & Minor was a small family owned company. In 1987 they made $300 million. In 1988 they made a large acquisition. In 1996, Owens & Minor made $3 billion. There was a lot of growth in a short period of time. Before 1988, the company tended to rely on heroes. These heroes were almost like little dictators and did not delegate very well. When you grow, you need more little heroes. It is at this point that Owens & Minor recognized that they could not afford to have little heroes and began to implement a team environment. There was a lot of turnover when this happened because it caused a huge cultural shift. The people who did not want to change left.

A team to Interviewee #3 is any group that is striving toward a common goal. They can chose the way to get to that goal that is most effective for them. He believes that a challenge arises for managers to know when to come in and out of a situation.

A teammate should be open and honest to a fault. They must have an investment in the team, have a similar value system, have great integrity, and have open and honest communication. The teammate will get a reward, whether tangible or intangible, from a
Informal leaders are situation. They have expertise and rise to the occasion for a very short amount of time. There are a lot of informal leaders within a team.

A team leader should possess the same qualities as a teammate. He is not the boss. Everyone works together. Interviewee #3 says that the concept of team gets overused. Good teams arise out of adversity and challenge. Owens & Minor has a history of adversity. The challenges and troubles associated with the Stuart merger only made the company stronger. The weak people left. Trust is a great element in teamwork.
Interviewee #4
March 7, 1997

Interviewee #4 is an executive vice president at Owens & Minor. He began his employment with Owens & Minor eight years ago when he joined the team from an acquisition. He has been promoted many times within the company.

Interviewee #4 attributes the adoption of the quality process to 1991. He said that cross-functional teams at corporate dove-tailed on the adoption of the quality process. This all came about because Gil Minor, the president and Chief Executive Officer of Owens & Minor, read a book Teaching an Elephant to Dance. This book concentrated upon the concepts of empowerment, teams, and encouraged making decisions. At this point, Owens & Minor adopted an inverted pyramid structure in which the teammates were placed at the top, the management in the middle, and Gil at the bottom. Interviewee #4 indicated the former structure was as follows:

Gil Minor, Bobby Anderson, Henry Berling) decision makers

officer management team

managers

teammates

In the switch to the inverted pyramid, a Director level was added. They added the director level because in the former structure there were very few job classifications. This switch was very controversial. By doing this they indicated that the Directors were skilled above the others. Much of this was done to appease the outside world. When customers would call in, they want to speak to someone with a title. The promotion was based upon
a point system for job responsibilities. The Director level began with four directors and has evolved into fifteen directors. Interviewee #4, personally, did not think that a Director level needed to be added. This is still a sensitive issue. Presently there is a very young officer group, so that there is really no where to put people beyond the Director level. This presents a challenge because you have to keep the individuals in their thirties motivated. A goal is to keep the Directors happy and continue to develop their skills. Interviewee #4 would like to flatten the organization even more. Overall, the director level has worked very well. It keeps the middle level of the organization focused and directed in terms of their job.

Interviewee #4 sees the team process at corporate as a failure. He truly believes that it has been more effective in the field. The field worker wears many hats and a team effort is needed there. However, the team concept is being used by the officer group presently because to work on problems that they are facing. For many years, and especially because of the Stuart acquisition, Owens & Minor has been so focused upon operational excellence that they have been ignoring the teamwork concept. They are now focusing on teams and identifying corporate's common goal as serving the field. The fact that teams have been slow starting at Owens & Minor is a very typical problem in any organization. Teams did work well in the conversion teams with the Stuart acquisition.

Presently Owens & Minor is trying to resurrect the quality process. They have been focusing on the hard skills such as finances, and now they are beginning to concentrate on soft skills like leadership development and productivity.

Interviewee #4 denotes that there is a difference between a good manager and a good leader. A leader steps forward in a time of crisis. It is difficult to get a consensus in
a time of crisis so the leader must step forward and rally people around his battle cry. A leader leads by example. He holds people personally accountable, makes tough decisions, is charismatic, and has a passion for the mission and goals of the group.

Good managers work for good leaders. They have drive, confidence, and initiative. They help the team develop a vision and continue to underline and validate that vision.

A team is a group of people who support a common vision. The team establishes a project to help to reach the objective that they have identified. The teammates support their team leader. In a team each member holds the other members accountable and should be made up of similar or multi-functional people.

Interviewee #4 views an ideal teammate as having a high sense of commitment to the team, perseverance, a hard worker. They need to be well-rounded, developing their family, their work, their spirituality, and their physical health. A teammate should feel as though they are making a difference. A team leader should be confident and have a focus and strong belief in that goal. They should be passionate, have initiative and be empathetic.

Regarding communication, Interviewee #4 believes that Owens & Minor has a weak communication network. Everyone is so busy that they do not share what they are doing with others. Teammates do not share their successes very well. The tools to do so are present, but they do not use these communication tools effectively. He would rate the communication at Owens & Minor five on a scale of one to ten, ten being the best. He believes the communication between the officers to be very good. Communication exists between officers and teammates at the monthly teammate meetings. He views the
communication between managers/directors and teammates as the weakest link. The biggest challenge is for the directors to effectively communicate with their teammates.

Regarding empowerment, Interviewee #4 sees empowerment as improving. The successful people at Owens & Minor are the empowered ones. The ones that readily accept empowerment are the self-starter and self-motivators. Those who try to play the political game do not win. 85% of the officers are in favor of empowerment, but so often you find that people like to be told what to do. Interviewee #4, personally, would rather have his teammates make the decisions, rather than have them fall upon him. Accepting empowerment is a big cultural change.
Interviewee #5
March 7, 1997

Interviewee #5 is a manager at Owens & Minor corporate headquarters. He began working at Owens & Minor in 1969. He has always worked in the same department but has changed management positions.

As we were talking about my internship experience, Interviewee #5 expressed his opinions about downsizing. During his time at Owens & Minor, he had never seen people let go. There were stiff criteria, so that if anyone was fired, you knew that it was either for stealing, terrible misconduct, or if you were drunk on the job. Around the 1980s, he began seeing layoffs. He says that downsizing really affects him and that it is never a comfortable thing.

The structure at Owens & Minor before there were teams, Interviewee #5 classified as a dictatorship. He acknowledged that this was a harsh word, but that he could not think of another word to describe the structure. He drew a triangle diagram for me and indicated that the executives were at the top point of the triangle and that, with this structure, things were managed from the top down. When the teammate concept was implemented, there was great emphasis place upon empowerment. He feels that the empowerment made the teammates feel like they were able to express themselves. With this, he has noticed that the teammates are not afraid to speak up. They take this empowerment opportunity seriously and often use the opportunity to express themselves. This input from the teammates is valuable because the teammates provide ideas as to how to better service the customer. It creates a more comfortable relationship between teammate and manager.
Interviewee #5 believes that the teammate concept began at Owens & Minor around 1993. In 1993, Owens & Minor had purchased Colley's. The Colley's employees expressed that they did not feel as though they were a part of the organization. It was at this point that Gil and other members of top management "turned everything around".

He defines a team as being a group of people in which everyone works toward the same goal. They play together and know what each other is doing. An ideal teammate would be a good communicator who has a strong knowledge of the subject matter. He should be a good team player, not a power seeker. The teammate should get everyone's input and want everyone to feel comfortable sharing their input.

Interviewee #5 thinks that a manager, or team leader, must recognize that he can only look as good as his people perform. The teammates under his make his shine. As a manager, he allows his teammates to help significantly in the decision-making and encourages them to make decisions on their own, rather than consult his for everything. A team leader must truly know and understand the subject matter and must allow participation and expression from all of the teammates.

Regarding communication, his team generally uses verbal communication rather than written communication. Although, sometimes written communication is necessary. He would rate the communication at corporate as a 6 on a scale of one to ten, ten being the best. When I asked him to qualify why he gave a rating of 6, he hesitated and then said that he had made a mistake, that communication was not that bad. He re-evaluated the communication and gave a rating of 8. He gave this 8 because of the monthly meeting conducted by the officers at which all teammates are present. He says that anything that you need to know is shared there and if you have a question or problem, you are free to
ask or express your concerns in that arena. His department specifically tries hard to communicate. There is a monthly managers meeting within the department and he conducts a weekly staff meeting of his team.

He recommended that we observe the Finance and Accounting teams.
Interviewee #6
March 3, 1997

Interviewee #6 is a Director at Owens & Minor. He has teammates, both in the field and at corporate, who report to him. He reports to a fellow director who is under the supervision of one of the vice-presidents.

He came to Owens & Minor during the Stuart Medical acquisition. He noted that a lot of the Stuart leadership joined Owens & Minor during the merger.

Interviewee #6 feels that he concentrates mostly on customer issues. He communicates with the Owens & Minor executives as well as the Division Vice Presidents.

Interviewee #6 feels that a team is a group of people who work together for a common goal. He feels that at Owens & Minor, the teams are more self-directed. It is difficult to get the senior management involved because they have teams of their own. He feels that his team is a project oriented team, which makes it a cross-functional team because they frequently have different tasks and goals.

Interviewee #6 believes that a leader is a person that people follow. He associates honesty, integrity, having a clear vision and ability to communicate it well, and being able to set a good example as being essential characteristics of a leader. When Interviewee #6 looks for direction he turns to his immediate supervisor, or the vice-president, or the Chief Operating Officer. Interviewee #6 feels that the senior leadership of Owens & Minor has good communication with themselves, but they need to be more involved with the teams. He feels that none really orchestrates or integrates all the activity that is going on.

As a team he feels that his team has good communication. He feels that outside of his immediate team, his team interacts with other departments.
In 1990, Owens & Minor went through a tough acquisition on the West Coast.

Things were not running smoothly. Interviewee #7 read Jim Bilasco's book *Teaching the Elephant to Dance*. He says that Bilasco draws an analogy between elephants and corporations. They are big, fairly stationary, and not easy to change. Dancing symbolizes change and excitement. Interviewee #7 has maintained contact with Bilasco and generally talks to him about every two weeks. Owens & Minor built their quality process around this book. The quality process demands results and you need teams to get these results.

He admits that sometimes the team concept works and sometimes it does not work.

The team structure established at Owens & Minor is centered around the idea that there are a large number of people who do the work. There are few people in management positions, and fewer executives. It is the middle managers that are protective of their position and title. The middle managers are often the area in which conflict arises because of their protectiveness. They must learn to give up some of their responsibility to their team so that the finished product will be better.

Interviewee #7 believes that a team is a group of people working together for a collective result. The team is not effective unless it reaches a result. He identifies another team characteristic as being that teammates feel gratified for their accomplishments. There is a sacrifice of power involved in teams, but everyone has a certain role to play. Each teammate should bring different skills to the table. You do not have to like each other to be a team, but the teams that do the best are those that like each other.

Interviewee #7 views his team as those he works with on a given day. He also recognizes as teams he is a member those who report directly to him, the shareholders, and the Board.
of Directors. His team changes everyday and that requires him to be creative. He also views the entire company as his team.

Interviewee #7 believes that a leader should have integrity and humility and be confident and optimistic. The leader should be willing to be out front and willing to stand up for his team or organization. The leader must have tremendous strength of character and have sensitive, empathetic feelings about people.

Interviewee #7 says that he is motivated to do his job well because it is fun and enjoyable. He also has an obligation to the people around him who have entrusted him with responsibility for the organization. He is also motivated by his father. He was expected to become the leader of Owens & Minor and it is convenient that he enjoys doing that. He also recognizes that having power is one thing, but how you use that power is another.

As a leader, Interviewee #7 tries to be a coach. This is a challenge for him because he is better at titled positions. He likes to be directly involved in the project at hand.

Interviewee #7 sees values as the center of Owens & Minor's organizational culture. Some of these values are loyalty, integrity and teamwork. As a leader you must continue to teach followers about these values and to embody these values so that they stay in place. He, personally, does a lot of reaching out to maintain these organizational values. Both he and the officer group do a lot of traveling into the field and the field management strongly supports the organizational values. Since the recent Stuart acquisition, it has been difficult to maintain the Owens & Minor values in the former Stuart areas. Stuart had a completely different values system than does Owens & Minor
and it has been difficult to integrate the Owens & Minor values into the existing Stuart system.

The Stuart acquisition has further defined in the mind of Interviewee #6 the importance of organizational culture to an organization. Stuart had a very different decision making process and a very centralized management style. One of the biggest challenges since the merger has been to blend the cultures. In blending the two cultures, Owens & Minor has had to be conscious of not compromising their own organizational values and to remain a trustworthy company.

Interviewee #7 communicates with the corporate teammates through the voluntary monthly teammate meeting. He also conducts a meeting of all officers once a month and a meeting of the Senior Vice Presidents and up once a month. Interviewee #7 recognizes that he needs to personally make a greater effort at communicating within the corporate office. He feels that he does a better job when he travels. He just need to transfer these skills into the corporate office so that he would not have this void in his corporate communications.

On a scale from one to ten, ten being the highest, Interviewee #7 would give the teamwork principle at Owens & Minor a rating of four and a half. He explains that before the Stuart acquisition he would have given a rating of six. In the midst of the challenges associated with the Stuart acquisition, he believes that teamwork fell to a three. Since the problems have slowed down and the company has had more time to focus upon values and teamwork, they have climbed back up to a four and a half. He recognizes that they have to make a recommitment to quality and emphasize training to keep on the rise regarding teamwork.
Team A
Teammate #1
April 7, 1997

Teammate #1 identifies the organizational culture of Owens & Minor as being that of a rumor mill. It is a very reactionary culture. He sees this aspect of the culture getting in the way of the successful functioning of the different Owens & Minor teams. As an example, he told about how a few months ago it was rumored that teammate #5, his team leader, was leaving corporate and going to a division. Immediately, he and his teammates gathered in small clumps and discussed, very worriedly, what was going to happen with them, whether or not they were going to be fired, etc.

Teammate #1 believes that his team leader pulls all of the teammates together. He sets a common goal of whatever their present project is and pulls all of their diverse talents together to achieve that goal. He comments that Teammate #5 always says that Team A is a great team.

Teammate #1 is a self-motivator. However, his team leader inspires his to do a good job. He is very complimentary and never hesitates to let Teammate #1 know when he has done a good job. Teammate #1 also performs well because he does not want his work to reflect negatively on his team.

Team A engages primarily in face-to-face communication, when interacting with other team members. He feels that this personal level of communication is the most meaningful, and that it is easier to miscommunicate if you use more of the modern,
technological communication tools such as e-mail and the phone. Because of their diverse skills, Teammate #1 feels that most of Team A's task-related communication occurs in the initial stages of their project. It is in these planning stages that the teammates communicate what they need from each other and the feasibility of getting that type of information. Teammate #1 cites their social relationships as being friendly. Everyone has a good attitude, they get along well. He thinks of his team as a family. They all care about each other on more than a simply work related level.

Teammate #1 sees the duties of the team leader as setting the goals for the group. His team leader sets the goal for the project, then each teammate adjourns to complete their part of the project. In this adjournment, they do communicate with each other about the progress of their part. Then they meet back with the team leader. At this point, the team leader provides further direction and guidance for the project. Each teammate understands what part his/her skills play in the final project. They know how it relates to the other sections, thus they understand the whole. When the project is winding up, the team comes together to bring the task to completion.

An instance when Teammate #1 truly felt teamwork working was when he was working on a project for some of the vice presidents. He had hit a snag, even though it was not their responsibility, his teammates voluntarily helped him out.

He feels like he and Teammate #4 are the most empowered members of Team A. the Logistics Team. He thinks that empowerment is part of your personal make-up. If you have the initiative to do something, then you take that initiative. To him, positions do not mean much. He thinks that everyone is a person. He does not think that the leaders in Owens & Minor recognize that the teammates are empowered and do not act accordingly.
Teammate #4 feels that it organizational culture highly affects his team. They were able to design the lay out of the office and their cubicles. Teammate #4 feels that the physical openness is a great aspect of his team. The way his team is located in reference to the other teams in his area is good. It is positive because each team makes up a unit that is part of the entire department.

There are many different factors that motivate Teammate #4 to do his job and to do it well. First he is motivated by his paycheck, he needs to work to live. Secondly he is self-motivated, he feels that if he does not do his job well, the project will reflect negatively upon himself. Finally he is motivated by group success. He indicated that if one teammate of the group does not do their job well, or doesn’t complete their task, that the entire project is not finished. Therefore it will not be an individual failure, but rather a group failure.

Teammate #4 feels that most of the communication within his team is oral. It is easy to have face-to-face communication because, you merely have to stand up and talk over the cubes. In addition to the verbal face to face communication, there is a lot of note leaving for other teammates. Teammate #4 indicates that verbal (i.e. telephone) and electronic communication is used with the teammates in the field. He is annoyed by teammates who, instead of getting up and talking to other teammates in person (who are only a few cubes away) call them on the telephone. The sound from the calls reverberates off cubes.

When asked about substantive communication, he indicated that when he and
Teammate #3 are in the middle of a project that they communicate a lot. He also noted that when in the middle of a project, Teammate #3 and Teammate #2 have to share a lot of information and exchange questions. As a general rule, Teammate #4 feels that his team does their most substantial communication is done in the morning. He feels that they are least productive between four and five in the afternoon.

Teammate #4 feels that interaction outside the office is good. He feels that it is good for them to get together because it helps to build the team. He notes that, it makes it difficult to do work for people who you do not like. Outside activities help establish personal relationships that minimize these negative relationships. Teammate #4 notes that his team is a smaller team, therefore they have become close friends with one of the other two teams which are in his area. He says that his team does not do a tremendous amount of activities outside of the office (approximately once every two months or sometimes when traveling).

According to Teammate #4 a leader is a person who can bring different people to work together. The leader should have a solid knowledge base, and be able to talk on a multitude of topics. The leader should be organized but should not act like a "stuffed shirt." The leader should be easy going and not overbearing. He/she trusts you, he/she does not have to look over you shoulder for you to get the job done.

Teammate #4 recognizes that there is a leader within his team. The leader is the formal director of the team. In practical terms, the director is the person to whom he reports and for whom he works. Teammate #4 clarifies that the director of Team A is the leader not only because of his title but rather, because of who he is and what he does.
When asked to rate Team A (on a scale of 1-10), Teammate #4 gave it a 9.75. Teammate #4 feels that there is not enough personal interaction within the team, so it cannot receive a 10. He feels that there is relatively good communication within the team. The information flows relatively freely, from the director and the vice-president of that area. Overall, he feels that he receives enough information to do his job well and be satisfied.
Team B

Teammate #8
April 7, 1997

Teammate #8 generally communicates face-to-face with his teammates. He believes that the lines of communication must be open and he achieves this by always talking with people. When he comes into the office, he chatters with everyone. He thinks that informal gatherings are the most productive regarding communication. As the team leader, Teammate #8 tries to keep his team loose and informal. He feels that most messages are relayed in this informal atmosphere. He recognizes that formal communication occurs in their once a week during team meetings, but he does not think that this formal communication matters the most. In the team meetings, people have the opportunity to share their ideas, but he thinks that you must communicate with your teammates regularly for them to understand that you care about them. He also thinks that the use of handwritten notes lets teammates know that you care about them. Teammate #8 believes that you can never communicate too much, and that a very important aspect of communication is listening. He always tries to listen to what his teammates have to say to him. He also recognizes that the bigger the group is, the harder it is to communicate.

He believes the responsibilities of a team leader are to serve as a mentor and coach to his teammates. He should help the teammates achieve their goals and keep in mind the question, “What can I do to help you succeed?” Teammate #8 wants the best for his teammates. He does not want them to be unhappy or under-challenged. He wants them to move on to bigger and better things. He encourages his teammates to grow, even if it means taking his job, or leaving the company. He thinks that a leader should nurture his teammates so that they have this opportunity to grow. He also recognizes that he needs to
provide his teammates with the opportunity to make mistakes, because the teammates can
learn that way.

Teammate #8 prefers to refer to empowerment as entrustment, because empowerment is such a buzzword. To him, entrustment is a shared responsibility. The leader must trust the follower to complete the task well, but also must be readily available to serve as mentor or facilitator. He feels that empowerment is different from entrustment because with empowerment, you must set boundaries as to where the teammates' responsibility ends and the leader's begins. He thinks that a leader should not set boundaries, so a leader should not engage in empowerment. A leader should trust his followers and with that trust goes power.

Teammate #8 also believes that a leader should provide the proper environment for his teammates. This should be an environment of care, trust and excellence. It is also important for a leader to positively recognize the accomplishments of his teammates.

On a scale of one to ten, ten being the highest, Teammate #8 would give his team a ranking of seven. He gives this ranking because he recognizes that there is always room for improvement. He knows that they are not the greatest team.

He additionally notes that the team leader sets the pace of the team. He also states that it is important not to get stuck on titles and positions. Everyone is a human being and should be treated that way.
Teammate #11 feels that the corporate culture of Owens & Minor encourages a team approach. This is evidenced through the "Ideas Pay Off Program." He feels that it is a good motivation for teammates to become involved with the company and actively share their ideas. Furthermore, the culture of the team is illustrated by the fact that he sits with one other team member but far away from the team director and another team member; yet he does not believe that the physical distance affects how they work together. Finally, he feels that there is little power distance between the team leader and himself. He emphasized that on a grander, company-wide scale it has been emphasized to him that if he so desired, he could go and freely talk to Gil Minor. He believes that the corporate culture emphasizes a small power distance.

Teammate #11 says that there are many things that motivate him. The first is that he is interested in pulling his weight within the team. Secondly, he is motivated to do his tasks well so that he will keep his job. Finally, he feels that he is intrinsically motivated by his desire to achieve perfection.

Teammate #11 feels that the most used and most productive medians of communication for Team B are weekly staff meetings and discussions about specific tasks. He feels that he gets specific feedback one-half to two-thirds of the way through the project. Teammate #11 categorized the communication that he has with his team leader as being rather informal. The team leader often is the one who stops by to talk to Teammate #11.

When asked how the informal relations of Team B effected the way they worked,
Teammate #11 replied, "it is very hard to say." First, Teammate #11 feels that he and the team member who shares his cube share random stories and conversations. Teammate #11 feels that in general, informal relations make it easier to talk to one another. He feels that it makes it easier to accept criticism from each other. Furthermore, he feels that informal interactions help to establish a trust between teammates.

Teammate #11 feels that a leader is a person who has a clear idea of where they want to go, i.e. a vision, mission, and goal. The leader should be a person who can communicate with everyone. He should be able share the vision, mission, and goals so that everyone believes in them. A leader should be a person who will accept others input when creating direction. Yet at the same time the leader should be able to accept the consequences of their own actions. Finally, Teammate #11 feels that a leader is a person who should be able take risks.

When asked if there was a leader within Team B, Teammate #11 responded that Teammate #8 is the leader of Team B. This is because he has official positional power within the team. Teammate #11 feels that even though Teammate #8 has positional power he still is a true leader. Teammate #11 said that the leadership of Team B is as close to egalitarian as it comes.
Teammate #15 feels that the team concept works well within his department. Although, he feels that a major obstacle that his team faces is that approximately 20% of his team is working out in the field. He feels that centralizing his team and bringing them in from the field would make monitoring them easier. Having his team be more decentralized and in the field allows for them to be closer to their customers. Teammate #15 feels that centralizing his team would make most sense.

Teammate #15 said that there are three things which motivate him. First, he feels that he answers to God, this leads to an intrinsic and ethical motivation. Secondly, his paycheck motivates him to do his job well. He needs the money to survive and finds that money incentives tend to motivate him. Finally, he is motivated by a sense of accountability, a sense that he is responsible for his own actions.

Teammate #15 says that Team C communicates primarily through verbal interaction. He stressed that communication was informal and not necessarily during structured meetings. Teammate #15 feels that most of the communication occurs during the morning, what he categorized as start-up communication. The team also seems to communicate during breaks and when task related questions arise. On a more general level Teammate #15 feels that communication picks up at the end of the year as their tasks and deadlines increase.

Teammate #15 notices that informal relationships are very important within his team. He feels that there is a lot of personal sharing. He feels that cliques used to be more present at corporate, yet lately they have been diminishing. On a general level, he
feels that there are fun informal activities at Owens & Minor. He feels that there is occasional outside activities which people participate in, but participation is not necessarily categorized by his specific team.
Team C
Teammate #17
April 7, 1997

Regarding organizational culture, it must be noted that Team C is located across
the street from the corporate headquarters building, in a rented space. Teammate #17 says
that the culture of Owens & Minor crosses the street to a degree. He says that they feel
like a family in the Aetna building. It is more comfortable because you do not have all of
the “big people” around.

Teammate #15 and Teammate #21 are the new directors for Team C. They push
the teammates more than did the former directors, who were more laid back. He says that
Teammate #15 and Teammate #21 push them to get things done and you know that they
are listening to you. He says that Teammate #15 motivates his to do his job well. Neither
new director knows anything about the issues, but are both eager to learn. They always
listen to what the teammates have to offer. Because of this, learning is reciprocal. The
teammates are teaching Teammate #15 and Teammate #21 about the Team C side of
things and Teammate #15 and Teammate #21 are bringing new perspectives from their
former disciplines. Everyone is learning from everyone. He thinks that the switching of
the management has been good.

Teammate #17 feels that there is a very open atmosphere within the team. All of
the teammates go to each other and try to help each other out when they are in a crunch.
He also feels very comfortable giving suggestions to Teammate #21. For example, the
other day, Teammate #17 pulled Teammate #21 into a phone call in which he was having
difficulty with a vendor. He did this so that Teammate #21 could understand what kind of
problems the teammates encounter.
Teammate #17 communicates with his teammates using oral, face-to-face communication and through the phone.

All of the teams that fall under the same director as Team C, all help each other because they are so inter-related. Everyone helps one another. They all have good relationships. He says that he feels the most like a team when deadlines are approaching. The whole team pulls together to finish things for the upcoming deadline, regardless of their individual priorities.

Teammate #17 says that empowerment happens within his team. Any issue under $1000 is decided upon by the teammate. The directors want the teammates to do what they feel is right, but always want justification with details about the decision that they made. The teammates make most of their decisions on their own, but sometimes utilize the other teammates for suggestions. They often ask what the other would do in order to evaluate the decision with which they are presently faced. He really felt empowered when he was sent to a division in the field to do a major task all by himself. It was the first time that this had happened. They trusted him to do the conversion, but reassured him that if he ran into any problems he was free to call Teammate #21 for help.

Overall, Teammate #17 thinks that the team atmosphere has changed a lot with the new management. When you are being led by someone who does not care about his teammates or about the job that is being done, tension is created. Everyone on the team feels it. He truly believes that Teammate #15 and Teammate #21 care for the individual teammates, are interested in what they are doing, and care for the tasks at hand.
Teammate #26 feels that the organizational culture of Team D is very good. He feels that the set up of the team's cubicles is very positive. The set up provides for easy face-to-face interaction, people only need to stand up to talk to one another. Yet people still have needed privacy. Teammate #26 feels that the overall organizational culture of Owens & Minor is great. He feels that there is a forward looking atmosphere, yet there is not a constant pressure. He also notes that in general, everyone feels like they belong in the organization.

Teammate #26 sets high intrinsic goals for himself. He tries to push himself to do 150%. He acknowledges that he is probably his own worst enemy and biggest critic. He feels that everyone must set their own personal internal goals. Teammate #26 said that his formal team leader took input from the teammates and then set the team goals for the entire team (for the calendar year 1997). One of their team goals is to help each other by sharing problems that they face during the week at their weekly staff meetings. They hope to learn from each other, eliminating duplicate mistakes. On top of their task goals, the team seeks to interact more outside of work. They want to establish better relations between each other. Teammate #26 said that informal relationships are good. When his team interacts in the mornings, they spend time updating each other on their lives.

Teammate #26 says that Team D communicates primarily through e-mail, the phone bulletin board, and personal interaction. He said that most of the communication occurs during the morning. He said it serves the purpose of letting people know that you are there and that you wish them a good day.
Finally Teammate #26 shared what characteristics he believes a leader to have. A leader should listen objectively, should be able to see the whole situation (the sum of the parts), and has an easygoing personality. The leader makes it easy to learn. The leader needs to be a well rounded person who is aware of all his staff's needs. Teammate #26 feels that his formal leader fits the description of a leader. In addition, he feels that he and another senior teammate act as leaders because they try to set good examples of a good teammate, which resembles a good leader.
When asked what effect organizational culture has on teamwork, Teammate #30 explained that the organizational culture at Owens & Minor is very rich. It is the biggest aspect of Owens & Minor. Everyone tries hard to be considerate and friendly. The culture is one of the reasons that he likes it at Owens & Minor. They really stand by their culture.

Teammate #30 indicates that he is self-motivated, with a particular focus upon moving-up within the company. His leaders help with that motivation. He says that at Owens & Minor, the leaders expect you to work your way up and are very eager to help you accomplish that goal. In fact, Teammate #30 has applied for another position within the company. Teammate #25 encouraged his to do so and has been very helpful in his application for the position.

Most of the communication within Team D is face-to-face oral communication. He believes that most of the task-oriented communication occurs in their weekly staff meetings. This is because, to his, it is the only time that the team can come together to discuss issues in depth.

On a social level, Teammate #30 feels that the D Team teammates are all friends. He does feel that the teammates have paired up and are better friends with one person or another. Sometimes these friendships cause conflicts within the group. The impact of these conflicts is tremendous, but they turn to Teammate #25 to resolve those conflicts.

Some physical changes are going to occur with the physical layout of Team D. Presently their cubicles are in two parallel lines and they are all joined by a single wall.
The plan is to invert these cubes to create a “bull pen”, so that all of the entrances to the cubicles are facing each other. He thinks that this is both a good and a bad move. He thinks that the team will work better if they are all there together, but that it will create a more stressful relationships. He does not like the idea of losing his privacy. As the area is arranged now, if you want to be alone, then you can sit in your cube quietly. The new way, you would always have someone knowing what you are doing. He thinks that the team is somewhat divided as to whether or not they are in favor of the “bull pen” arrangement. Even though he does not strongly agree with this idea, he is willing to go along with it for the benefit of the team.

Teammate #30 views empowerment as an opportunity for the teammate to believe in herself and to increase their confidence. He believes that Teammate #25 actively empowers his teammates. The way their team works fits well into empowerment. Each teammate has a specialty application. They are the person that knows the most about that particular application and he/she fields the majority of the calls regarding that application. However, each of the teammates participate in constant education about all of the applications that Owens & Minor supports. Every D Team teammate understands, to some degree, all of the applications. They specialize in one application and also have specialization in a secondary application. The secondary application specialty is to serve as a support and help to the teammate who specializes in that application. Teammate #30 feels confident when people come to his about making decisions regarding his specialty application and he readily consults his other teammates when he runs into a problem.

Teammate #30 defines a team as being a group of people, whose personalities mesh, working together towards the same goal. A team leader is someone who can step
back and let the team work. When the team has a project, the leader should be able to step back and let the team accomplish the task. The leader should also facilitate group interaction.

When asked how teams fit into a somewhat hierarchical organization, he explained that you have to have a hierarchy so that the ultimate decisions can be made. At Owens & Minor people are very humble about their positions, though. He cited Teammate #41 and Teammate #8 walking around dressed as Easter Bunnies and handing out eggs as an example of that humility.

Teammate #30's overall perception of his team was that everyone embraces the philosophy and works well together to achieve their goals.
Teammate #33 believes that the organizational culture at Owens & Minor is lacking regarding teamwork. He believes that the groundwork has been laid to facilitate a teamwork philosophy. By reading the company literature and viewing the corporate mission statement and the like, it would lead you to believe that teamwork thrives at Owens & Minor. He feels that there are good, basic, underlying concepts about teamwork and a good intention, but that in reality, Owens & Minor falls short. He says that there is no guidance as how to effectively work in a team or how to effectively create a team. There is little positive or negative feedback as to how a group is functioning as a team. No one has ever identified a good example of a team and there is no standard for evaluation. Owens & Minor is a very decentralized organization and its workers tend to function decentralized by working independently.

Teammate #33 is a self-motivator.

The most effective method of communication for his team is face-to-face personal interaction. He also sees meetings as a very efficient and structured mode of communication. Teammate #33 recognizes that social relationships occur in the workplace. You either get along with someone or you do not get along with them. This either helps or hinders the functioning of teams.

Teammate #33 defines a team as a collaborative group of people with diverse experiences and knowledge who are working toward a common goal. He believes that a team leader’s responsibilities should be to establish an appropriate team and to facilitate the team process. He views a team leader as a project manager. They must also serve as
a mentor. A team leader must tap everyone’s potential to the fullest, motivate them to complete their task and to make the job fun. The leader should not be dictatorial, but be someone that a teammate can look to for guidance and know that they are viewed as equals. Teammate #33 believes that a team leader should recognize everyone's efforts and exceptional efforts as well. These exceptional efforts should be recognized in front of the whole team. When a teammate is not performing as expected, the leader must also let that teammate know, but not in front of the entire team. This should be handled privately. Showing such positive and negative recognition establishes accountability within the team.

Regarding empowerment at Owens & Minor, Teammate #33 states that empowerment happens by default. The seem to be empowered because the duties fall upon them because the leaders allow those duties to fall upon the teammate. The team does the best that they can.

Overall, Teammate #33 perceives his team as effective. He was confused as to whether or not they were truly effective. If effectiveness is determined by the accomplishment of goals, then his team is very effective because they have met and are surpassing their goals. If effectiveness is determined by teamwork, then he would give his team a B-. He questions whether or not they need to be in a team to be effective. If they are surpassing their goals without 100% teamwork, then do they even need teamwork. He recognizes that there are certain functions where a team is not the best idea; however, he does believe that his team benefits from the small amount of teamwork that they do have.
Team E  
Teammate #35  
April 8, 1997

Teammate #35 feels that the physical layout of his team is a problem. He feels that because his team is so spread out, it negatively effects the organizational culture of the team. As a whole, he feels that the culture of Owens & Minor has improved dramatically over the years. The organization used to be very top down and the employees did not feel free to share their opinions. He feels that now the teammates are not afraid to express themselves. This is something that has been encouraged over the last four years.

When asked about motivation, Teammate #35 said "Owens & Minor is a part of me." He is motivated by idea of making money for the company, being efficient and reducing costs. He also indicated that he felt that he was customer motivated. Teammate #35 wants to produce good services for the customer.

Teammate #35 feels that his team primarily uses voice mail and e-mail to communicate. He added that it is hard to gage because the level and type of communication depends on the individual task. He feels that there are a lot of questions that are asked in passing. Teammate #35 feels that the most substantive communication occurs during there inter-weekly and bi-weekly meeting. This is mostly because they take the time to sit down and talk to each other.

When asked about informal relations at work, Teammate #35 said that his team does not interact outside of the office. He does not think that it is good idea to spend too much time together. In terms of office interaction, he feels that his team has a good rapport with one another. They respect each others opinions and abilities. He understands that everyone has different styles and personalities and believes that the
different viewpoints is what makes a team strong. He feels that they act in a very professional manner.