

# Self-Directed Teams

A self-directed team is another form of an organization structure that has gained popularity in recent years. Though the idea has been abused or misunderstood.

Although many organizations claim they work in teams, often times what they refer to is a work group led by a single person leader. It is like window dressing or using teams as a new name, without changing the structures.

## What is a Self-Directed Team

What is a self-directed or self-managing team? A self-directed team is a group of interdependent, highly trained employees who are responsible for managing themselves and the work they do.

The central organizing fact of a team is that it has a common purpose and measurable goals for which the team can be held accountable, independent of its individual members.

## Tasks of Self-Directed Teams

Employees on a self-directed team handle a wide array of functions and work with a minimum of direct supervision.



demands and to reduce costs in terms of faster product development, eliminating waste and generating better ideas.

To illustrate, a company may set as one of its goals as finding new ways to use the scientific breakthroughs in genetic engineering to produce a medicine that cures

Self-directed teams have authority to make decisions, unlike, the traditional structure where workers have to rely on the supervisor for decisions.

## Benefits of Self-Directed Teams

One of the most commonly stated benefits of implementing teams is its ability to respond quickly to customer

cancer.

In the traditional organizations, different departments like research, production, marketing, and finance would tackle the problem as separate units like an assembly line.

Doing it this way, however, would be slow and costly because of the usual artificial barriers people create to protect their departments or the costs would be high

# Self-Directed Teams

*Continued ...*

because of the unnecessary problems like poor coordination and mistakes.

## How Self-Directed Teams Work

To tackle the project on a team-based approach, a self-directed team is organized with members picked from each functional area. The team decides on its goals, timelines, and resource requirements. It also decides on how it plans to do the work.

Instead of working in serial steps, team members work parallel or simultaneously on different aspects of the problem.

Decisions on the product are made considering marketing, finance, and production information. Communication and resolution of problems is faster.

Because of its fluid structure, the team has a better chance of coming up with the new product at the least expense of money and in shorter time.

## More Job Satisfaction

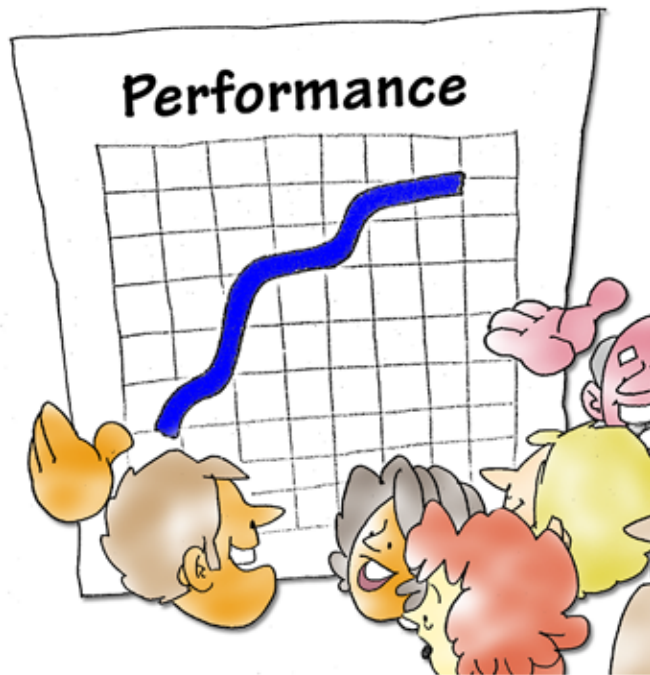
satisfaction in what they do. The team structure allows members to feel that they are contributing to the accomplishment of a goal.

Although many organizations have successes in implementing self-directed teams, a lot more organizations fail.

The failure stems from the challenges in transitioning top-down and one-person leader structures to an organization that promotes self-directing teams.

For self-directed teams to succeed, they must have clear goals, authority to take action and flex-

ibility to decide on how best to do the work.



Another benefit of using self-directed teams is that team members achieve more job-