

Virtual Team Collaboration

Team 7

Earth Ship Seven

Logan Byam

Christina Chee

Sky Huvard (804-938-9802)

MGMT-319-002

Organizational Behavior

Dr. Randy Sleeth

Project Team Analysis Paper

December 7, 2004

Introduction.....	1
VIE Evaluation Reveals Achievement-Motivated Team: (3) VIE Expectancy Theory and Numerical Application.....	1
The VIE Questionnaire.....	1
Questionnaire Results.....	2
Possible Changes.....	3
Individual Goals Align with Team Goals in Successful Teams: (25) Goal Setting.....	4
Rewards and Timing of Their Implementation in Shaping Behavior: (5) Learning and Shaping of Behavior.....	6
Successful Psychological Contracts Require Consensus and Clear Role Expectations: (1) Psychological Contract and Roles of Members.....	8
Selling Approach to Leadership Important in Building Trust: (23) Blanchard's Leadership Model.....	10
Virtual Management: (12) Development of Management Skills.....	12
Technology.....	12
Training.....	12
Motivation.....	13
Power.....	13
Virtual Collaboration: (14) Technology Types and Implications.....	14
E-organization.....	14
Trust.....	14
Conflict.....	15
Life Cycle.....	15
Knowledge Sharing: (15) Mechanistic and Organic Features.....	16
Organizational Structure.....	16
Communication.....	16
Team Seven's Organizational Culture Grows Strong Within Weak Overall Culture: (10) Organizational Culture.....	17
Introduction.....	17
Team Seven's Organizational Culture.....	18
Overall Organizational Culture.....	19
Team Seven's Decision Making Process a Mix of Rational and Action-Based Models: (16) Decision Making Methods and Types.....	20
Job Redesign Responses to Decreased Empowerment: (6) Diagnostic Approach to Job Redesign.....	21
Virtual Politics: (19) Managing Change, Conflict and Negotiation.....	23
Change.....	23
Negotiation.....	23
Conflict.....	24

## Introduction

Lack of trust in interpersonal relations, difficulties with decision-making, and conflicting work schedules are special challenges to virtual teams. With the increasing adoption of virtual teams, learning how to address collaboration problems is important to improve quality and efficiency. Individuals felt isolation associated with membership in the virtual team that shifted group dynamics considerably. Staying informed on task progress is necessary to improve performance and increase trust. Several interventions during the team life cycle influenced turnover, absenteeism, productivity, and motivation and these factors will be analyzed. Virtual collaboration will increase productivity within our team and organization.

### VIE Evaluation Reveals Achievement-Motivated Team: (3) VIE Expectancy

#### Theory and Numerical Application

##### *The VIE Questionnaire*

For the VIE Expectancy segment of this paper, Team Seven's manager suggested that it center on the Employee Empowerment exercise he assigned at the beginning of the semester, which called for the team members to each write a short essay describing how they perceived their roles within the team. In doing so, they were forced to sit and give some thought as to exactly what was meant by their job titles and to make any additions or alterations to the job descriptions they felt necessary. Since its primary purpose was motivational, it seemed a prime candidate for VIE analysis.

For the VIE exercise, a questionnaire was designed to assess each team member's feelings regarding the three relationships comprising VIE expectancy theory. Nine possible valences were chosen with an eye toward McClelland's described needs of Achievement, Power, and Affiliation, choosing three possible valences representative of each need.

The questionnaire polled the team on their feelings of motivation both before and after the empowerment exercise was administered. (Appendix)

### *Questionnaire Results*

Based on how our team answered the questions, the empowerment exercise increased the expectation that a high level of effort would translate to a high performance level from 53% to 70%. There was a 57% expectancy that a low level of effort would lead to a low performance level.

After multiplying the three sets of percentages together, the total of the set beginning with the expectancy that a low level of effort would result in a low level of performance was still the lowest at 2.11. The next highest set, based on the expectancy that a high level of effort would result in high performance (without the influence of the empowerment exercise), totaled 2.25. However, the empowerment exercise sent this total to 2.98. (Appendix)

The end results are as to be expected. As a team motivated by high achievement and a job well done, it is likely that we would have been driven to exert a high level of effort to begin with. However, in the unlikely situation that we would have been motivated to

only exert low effort, the boost given by the empowerment exercise would probably have given enough motivation to really do our best.

### *Possible Changes*

At the time this questionnaire was administered, the team was near the midpoint of the semester. According to the punctuated equilibrium model, this is where the team is likely to experience a transition, making many changes to the way it does business and adopting new perspectives. Since the team is primarily motivated by a need for achievement, it makes the most sense that this transition center around its ability to perform – to finish the paper and training module to the best of our ability.

Indeed, around this time the team began to experience shifts in its behavior. It began to require more communication between members, sending emails whenever the Wiki page was updated. The team made it a priority to accomplish each task on its To Do list at least 48 hours before the due date. It also started placing more focus on understanding all of Wiki's capabilities, ensuring it could be put to the best possible use as a tool in accomplishing goals. And the team began placing more emphasis on personal responsibility, asking each member to notify the others when making a contribution and holding them accountable when tasks went uncompleted.

The valences surrounding friendship and fun were ranked very low in the team's responses, and indeed the team has not made them a priority in its interactions. Team meetings tend to be rather formal and task-oriented.

In the final analysis, the team seemed to be very well on track at this point in its

development with a high emphasis on achievement. The best way to react to these findings is to continue to focus on tasks, assigning tasks with a moderate level of challenge, and constantly providing feedback for fellow team members.

### Individual Goals Align with Team Goals in Successful Teams: (25) Goal Setting

The team chose the Earth as its ship metaphor because of its dynamic characteristics. The organization poses new challenges to the team everyday, but the team evolves accordingly, like the Earth, for survival. This is what Darwin called “survival of the fittest”. It is not the strongest or the most intelligent that survive, but the ones who can adapt to change and therefore overcome challenges the best.

The use of Wiki in the creation of the ship metaphor allowed ideas to be shared whenever they occurred to team members and not at one forced time. This freedom of time to think about other team member’s ideas as well as one’s own ideas allowed for the creation of a wonderfully creative compilation of elements for the ship metaphor, which ranged from feng shui elements to gravity. The team goal of Wiki collaboration to record, analyze, and improve productivity within our team and organization was met in this assignment. More specifically, our performance goal for this assignment was to create a unique and creative ship metaphor by the first due date given by the executive team.

No matter how short notice the due date, the team proved that it could adapt and overcome any challenge the executive team could pose. Unfortunately, there were no

visible rewards or feedback for the hours of work put into the ship metaphor assignment, but the team was satisfied with itself nonetheless. It was the achievement of small yet challenging goal that gave the satisfaction. Due to the lack of visible and timely rewards, the team learned to adjust to the fact that it would have to rely on its own individual satisfactions of reaching challenging goals for any sense of motivation. Similar specific and challenging goals were set for every assignment. In the process of reaching goals every week, a difference between individual goals and team goals was discovered.

Equal division of work among team members gave each member individual goals of completing his or her work with an internal locus of control. Because members of the virtual team worked on their own schedules, all parts of the work did not get completed at the same time. This made it slightly difficult to achieve team goals of completing entire assignments because time had to be set aside to integrate all the work. In the end, the team discovered that goal commitment, timetables, and alignment of individual goals with team goals were necessary for a virtual team to be successful. A team is not composed of independent individuals, but rather interdependent members who share a priority of team goals.

## Rewards and Timing of Their Implementation in Shaping Behavior: (5) Learning and Shaping of Behavior

Attempts were made to change some team member's unproductive and unmotivated behavior through shaping by positive reinforcement. Effective positive reinforcement requires rewards that team members are responsive to, but the organizational structure and policy did not allow for the rewards needed for this intentional shaping. Bonus points seemed to be an effective reward with the thought that team members could increase their participation points through this way. All team members had the same value for getting a good grade in the class, so it was not difficult to elicit motivation out of team members to do bonus point activities. One way that the leadership team offered bonus points was for completing quizzes via variable-interval reinforcement of learning. The team diligently completed all the activities that offered bonus point activities to the best of its abilities. However, it was discovered that bonus points were ambiguously distributed and that the amount of bonus point activities completed and the amount of bonus points given did not match. The class and TQM committee asked the leadership team repeatedly for justification of the distribution of bonus points, but none were given. A large discrepancy between the average of bonus points distributed in the night class and morning class was also discovered. Bonus points used as a reward in this way inevitably caused the desired behaviors that would promote increased productivity and motivation to become extinct. Large time differences between desired behaviors and rewards, or the complete absence of rewards makes it impossible for behavior to be



shaped.

Difficulties shaping behavior within the team also resulted from the lack of power given to the manager. The manager had no individual powers of reward or punishment to influence team members with for performing desired behavior or not. Only words of praise or criticism could be used, but it was found that words had no effect on team members due to the virtual team's lack of verbal inhibition. Team members also put no value on the manager's praise or criticism due to his lack of power.

With no individual power, the manager opted to work with the evaluator to use class participation points as a reward; however, some team members were unresponsive to this reward even though it was visible. This may be because class participation was not a priority for the team members in question, or because they had other priorities in their lives that they placed a higher value on. The vice president also offered bonus points to team members that the manager felt did something special. However, that reward was not effective or visible because the vice president had the power of final say in whether or not the bonus point should be given, and no justification was given.

For shaping of behavior to occur, a visible and effective reward must be available and given in a timely manner. In the organization, no such rewards were available to elicit desired responses by management. Leadership must also have incentive to reinforce desired behaviors, which was not present. Although leadership was not able to intentionally shape behavior, behavior was nonetheless shaped by the structure of the organization. The lack of organization and guidance caused individuals to fight these

elements, which were the rewards in a variable-ratio schedule. Occasional improvements in the organization reinforced behavior, but no one expected great changes to appear immediately, so individuals continued to exhibit desired behaviors to improve the organization.

### Successful Psychological Contracts Require Consensus and Clear Role

#### Expectations: (1) Psychological Contract and Roles of Members

“A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately at peace with himself. What a man can be, he must be.”

– Abraham Maslow

Team Seven began with three out of four members vying to take on the role of manager for the experience and knowledge that no textbook can offer. One nominal manager was chosen based on the criterion of who could provide the best resources for the greatest learning experience. The remaining roles were assumed by team members based on individual strengths and interests. The broad spectrum of abilities, strengths, and interests possessed by individuals on the team allowed each role to be taken on without conflict. Though each member accepted a nominal role in the team to accomplish tasks in an organized fashion, whenever a situation came up in which one member felt confident in leading, he or she did so without inhibition. In this way, the position of leader was dynamically assumed whenever appropriate.

Many times, the act of taking initiative as the producer/leader was the only way work

was completed. This dynamic quality was mostly contributed to the use of Wiki and other online forms of communication because they allowed team members to interact by name only and not by role. Without the labels that typically hinder communication in typical face-to-face communication, our virtual team had the freedom to view each other as equals with different tasks. However, a few problems were encountered as a result of the individualistic nature of the medium. One-sided communication and lack of trust made it necessary to reestablish and strengthen an originally weak psychological contract.

The only expectation in team seven's first informal psychological contract was for each member to do his or her fair share of the work with the team goal in mind. The manager provided the main idea for the team goal. Due to role perceptions and identities, team members tended to accept the manager's goal as the team's, with just a few negotiations by team consensus. By accepting the team goal, team members agreed to function as a virtual team. However, team members without a true understanding of a virtual team did not exactly know what they had agreed to.

Fortunately for some, the virtual team allowed work to be done around busy schedules and not at set times. Unfortunately for others, the lack of personal interaction created by the absence of a facilitator produced a lack of trust and a dissolved psychological contract between some team members due to a decline in motivation. Extroverted team members thrived on the energy of other people, and not from the energy within themselves. The individualist manager expected all team members to be

self-motivated and not expect much help unless they asked for it. Therefore, the clashing of some personal values and beliefs created a very weak or non-existent psychological contract.

In order to reestablish a stronger psychological contract, a time was set to find a common ground among the team member's beliefs, values, and personal goals. Some team members who found it difficult to find a common ground simply left the team. From this experience, it became evident that a successful virtual team required members that shared similar beliefs, values, and goals in terms of how team work would be completed. Without these elements, interpersonal conflicts could greatly decrease motivation and productivity.

### Selling Approach to Leadership Important in Building Trust: (23) Blanchard's Leadership Model

It is often desirable and effective to lead based on the situation. The manager's beliefs regarding leadership coincides in part with Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory. Expectations of team members were to be self-motivated and to take initiative, which would allow the manager to simply participate and delegate. On the other hand, the manager disliked telling and selling to team members, even when the situation called for this more personal approach.

The Wiki adoption diminished a static role of leader because roles are not very visible in virtual teams. The role of leader rotates among the members depending on the task

and on who is most capable to lead or complete the task. This allowed tasks to be performed to the best of the team's abilities. Most tasks were completed solely because individuals took the initiative to take charge. Otherwise, work was only completed by team members when they were delegated by the manager. In this way, the manager led by situation, depending on whether team members took the initiative to complete tasks on their own or not.

When asked to rate the readiness of team members on a scale of 1 –10, ten indicating the most readiness, the manager gave a range of 4-8, including himself. The individual receiving the lower readiness score has a willingness to complete the tasks, but needs more guidance and personal support from the manager. The use of Wiki did not allow for interpersonal relations because team members used Wiki on their own time, which did not allow for one on one interaction. To address this issue, weekly face-to-face meetings were implemented to have a time for more trust building communication and to discuss tasks. After a short while, time conflicts caused the low readiness team member to stop attending the meetings. The situational theory suggested that the manager find other ways to be more persuasive and direct in what the individual should be doing, however, the task-oriented manager's personality made it difficult to use the selling leadership style. Instead, the manager found it easy to leave high readiness team members alone and only intervene for minor deviations from expected behaviors. The manager's lack of intervention for lower readiness team members also arises from the lack of incentive from the position of manager in the organization. There were no

benefits for the manager to take extra time to be an intervening leader. Instead, the organizational policy rewarded individuals who picked up the slack of other team members, so there was actually more incentive to do more of the team's work. If a manager did not want to gain any experience as an effective manager, he or she could disregard the team members altogether, and just do all the work him or herself.

## Virtual Management: (12) Development of Management Skills

### *Technology*

Wiki maintenance was the largest technical component of management. Several hours per week were dedicated to analysis and redesign of existing pages to improve readability. Constant expansion of content required archives to be created as "History" to reduce the busy feel of pages with antique content. Initially, the theme of the site was neutral, with minimal formatting. This was criticized as being "boring" and "tough" to read, so steps were taken to glamorize the theme. Plain text was replaced with a modern typeface, tropical colors and background imagery to give the site a warm feel. Visual enhancements boosted positive thoughts towards the Wiki concept as a virtual collaboration tool.

### *Training*

A short initial training session took place to instruct the team members how to best take advantage of the available technology. The Wiki collaboration tool was well accepted, and members stated their comfort with the chosen platform.

### *Motivation*

Motivation suffered as a result of the organizational policy. Recognition was maintained with a bonus point system, but because most of these points were given out for unknown reasons, members did not understand their distribution. Suspicion of favoritism and lack of justification discounted the members' motivation by reward. Responding to these obstacles by publishing a weekly report outlining the justifications for bonus point assignments and highlighting an outstanding member would enhance the motivation of all.

### *Power*

Power was difficult to exert and maintain within the team and organization as a whole. The executives tended to embrace absolute power, failing to accept suggestions developed by the total quality management team. Reason, the most powerful tactic, did not exist within the executive team. Assertiveness instead, was used to enforce deadlines and actions. Executives failed to recognize this happening and lost a considerable amount of informal power as a result. Initially the manager focused on assertiveness, reminding individuals of due dates. During the norming stage, reason was embraced as the preferred method to exert power over other members. An important consideration within virtual teams is that lack of face-to-face meetings has lessened the ability of managers to display their power. In an effort to increase managerial power, "Your Grade So Far" was developed to summarize members' standings, giving them a chance to bring up any issues before the final report.

## Virtual Collaboration: (14) Technology Types and Implications

### *E-organization*

Rather than a traditional face-to-face team, the team decided to commit to an alternative work form, the virtual team. Initially this idea was well accepted because several advantages were gained from using the Internet to communicate. The virtual student team provided an increased ability to share knowledge. Because the team was competent with word processing and browsing the web, a "Wiki wiki" ('quick' in Hawaiian) platform was employed. A Wiki wiki web site is one that any visitor may collaborate on any content. Wiki technology thrives on the ease with which pages can be created and edited. Each team member was given a basic overview to the technology, and started using it right away. The ability to update the entire team with updated information without requiring face-to-face contact worked well for several students with busy schedules. However, asynchronous communication within the Wiki caused a significant delay in the response time of other members. Team members who were quick to respond felt that the others were not committed and this created frustration. Each member was instructed to send an email to the Team when they posted something on the Wiki and team members were required to reply to these communiques within 48 hours.

### *Trust*

Interpersonal issues typical of virtual teams relate to establishing effective working relationships without face-to-face communication. The team had an advantage in this



regard because class meetings took place twice a week allowing for this crucial bond, providing a stage for nonverbal communication queues. Members suspected of lack of task commitment were given a chance to build trust by recommitting verbally. Were the team truly virtual, a sense of trust could only be established by members timely completion of tasks and appropriate responses to electronic communication.

### *Conflict*

Conflict resolution was the most difficult part of virtual team work, some issues could not be confronted because individuals choose not to participate. This was disastrous when certain members began to ignore the virtual team and offered no explanation of their activities. Empathy would have been more likely were this situation confronted in a face-to-face team building session, but a refusal of participation did not allow this to happen.

### *Life Cycle*

During the transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2 of the Punctuated-Equilibrium model, several challenges specific to the virtual team were apparent. Logistical problems trying to communicate and coordinate work, interpersonal issues such as lack of trust, and technology issues relating to our Wiki collaboration platform were all visible and needed to be confronted. Individuals completed work was posted online and sometimes went unnoticed. This logistical challenge was overcome by developing a team policy specifying a specific time of the day that team work should be posted. This policy reduced slack time between tasks by ensuring members would have the necessary

materials for the next task. During a face-to-face meeting, a template was developed for each member to reaffirm their commitment by including their specific task requirements, individual accountabilities, and expected completion dates. This helped the manager by providing an additional measure of progress towards the teams goal and allowed issues to be confronted proactively.

### Knowledge Sharing: (15) Mechanistic and Organic Features

#### *Organizational Structure*

While the classroom is an unconventional organizational setting, strategy, size, technology, and environment still play a role in determining its structure. The organization was aligned with a mechanistic model because stability and centralization were required. This structure created a significant lag in decision making and led to several communication failures when chain of command and high formalization conflicted with traditional teacher-student roles. As the course progressed, formal roles were assumed and conflicts started to lessen. Executive membership within the organization was based on volunteers and their position within the organization is not considered special as a result. This failure to create dependency based on importance has reduced the executive power within the organization. If executive team membership was based on formal selection, expert power and importance would contribute to a significantly more powerful leadership ability.

#### *Communication*

Blackboard, a top-down communication technology was used as the primary policy dissemination structure within the organization. Limited opportunities for elaboration and clarification within this medium led to low efficiency, compounded by its contents not being updated with new descriptions when available. The team gained an advantage within the organization by using a Wiki. Often a team member would update a component of the Wiki and not get any response. Responses create trust in a virtual environment by indicating involvement, and research indicates that rapid responses are especially effective. Often times in a virtual setting, email may be sent without considering how it will be interpreted by the receiving party, resulting in unclear messages with an unintended meaning. Framing is an important consideration because it strives to form messages in a way that other members can better share perception of the information.

## Team Seven's Organizational Culture Grows Strong Within Weak Overall

### Culture: (10) Organizational Culture

#### *Introduction*

This section of the analysis will describe aspects of the organizational culture of Team 7, the culture of the organization as a whole, and finally how the two integrate.

It is worth noting, at start, that the team's culture seems to have sprung up of its own accord. At no time did the team members sit down and outline any system of meaning, and they do not have the advantage of having existed for years and having become

institutionalized, yet their culture is quite definite. It seems likely that this would be the case for many teams in the organization.

### *Team Seven's Organizational Culture*

The team's culture, itself, is primarily focused on achievement. Its shared sense of values seem to all center around the accomplishment of goals, as evidenced in the team goal and the fact that most if not all interaction between team members is centered around their current to-do lists and accomplishments.

There is also a high emphasis placed on the process by which these goals are accomplished, which is remarkable when considering that in most college courses, how the work is done is considered not nearly as important as the fact that it is completed on time. The team's primary modes of communication, email and the online Wiki page, are the centerpieces of its work process. The fact that the team is a highly technically- and process-oriented team serves to distinguish it from other teams.

The text describes seven primary characteristics that can describe an organization's culture, each of which seem to be a balance between two completely opposite attributes. The team ranks moderately on several of these continua because it exhibits characteristics of both extremes: it is aggressive but not overly competitive; it is team-oriented but mindful of each individual; it is stable but find growth in that stability. These facts suggest that it is a well-rounded team.

Most notable from the list is outcome orientation: to describe this aspect of the team is to basically describe the team itself. Team Seven's primary purpose is, of course, to

master the material and produce the highest quality final product as possible. But the team goal states that it will use Wiki to do this in the most effective manner possible, and learning from the process of doing is one of its goals. The team is outcome-oriented and process-oriented: the process itself is an outcome.

### *Overall Organizational Culture*

The overall organizational culture is fairly weak—it's difficult to determine if it even has one. The interaction between individual teams is fairly low; for the most part, they function autonomously. Interaction with the executive and policy teams is common across all teams, and the TQM committee does serve as quality control. But there are nearly no common cultural threads running throughout the organization; as a whole, it is simply task- and effectiveness-oriented, without much shared meaning otherwise. This fact is ultimately beneficial to the class. The course could have been designed with a predetermined organizational culture, but then the students would have been forced into a culture that might not have been optimum for everyone. (Plenty of time for that in the workaday world after college.) By allowing teams to develop their own culture, an element of discovery and self-creation is added to the class, which will result in longer-lasting lessons and a more enriching learning experience.

## Team Seven's Decision Making Process a Mix of Rational and Action-Based Models: (16) Decision Making Methods and Types

This section of the analysis will focus on Team Seven's decision-making processes, with an emphasis on rational vs. action-based models.

The team's method of decision-making employed, to some extent, rational models. The decision-making process was always influenced by our collective knowledge.

Meetings were often informal in nature, with everyone being given an equal chance to put forth ideas. These ideas reflected all of the team members' personal experience, creative ideas, and knowledge gained from the class itself. Once everyone had been given their say, the group then reached the best consensus possible as to how to proceed in meeting our goals. These decisions were usually justified by information from the text or from various supplemental materials in other books and on the Web.

However, there were limits to the team's knowledge. We are, after all, in this class to learn, not to bring a complete understanding of the subject from the very start.

Therefore, team decisions were always somewhat intuitive, since most of us had little experience with the actual management of a team. There were also unforeseen problems with team members — time management, family issues, withdrawal from class — that had to be dealt with on the fly.

Thus, especially near the beginning of the class, the decision-making process was primarily action-based. The team made the most of its knowledge; but by meeting's end decisions had to be made, so they often went with what seemed the best alternative at

the time. Throughout the course, the team has used the knowledge and experience it has gained to make corrections to previous decisions; these corrections took such forms as the Effectiveness Inventory, the Job Redesign Analysis, and the Norming Interventions implemented.

Ultimately, the team could not have chosen a completely rational or a completely action-based mode of decision-making, as the two are inextricably linked. Making knowledgeable decisions results in more experience, and the analysis of past experience leads to more and better knowledge. In the final analysis, though a decision-making model based on solid, reliable information is a noble goal, team decisions were destined to be somewhat intuitive in nature—and all have been learning experiences.

### Job Redesign Responses to Decreased Empowerment: (6) Diagnostic Approach to Job Redesign

This section of the analysis will focus on the data acquired from the team's three Effectiveness Inventories, how that data relates to job redesign actions we have already taken, and redesigns possible in the future.

Throughout the semester, three Effectiveness Inventory questionnaires were administered. These consisted of a series of questions intended to evaluate team members' perceptions of the team's success in five categories. From the beginning of the semester to the end, the team's average responses in the Goal Achievement, Open Communication, and Positive Roles and Norms categories remained mostly unchanged.

The Team Mission category saw a marked increase over the semester, and Empowerment decreased somewhat.

The Team Mission increase seems easily explainable. This category regards the team's perception of its current goals and priorities; as the semester went on and the project due dates grew ever closer, the team's ultimate goals of producing a quality final product became much more prominent in our thoughts. Near the midpoint of the semester, the Norming Interventions the team implemented placed a much higher premium on the accomplishment of goals in a timely manner; this was not truly a job redesign, but an increase in personal accountability and stringency of deadlines.

The Empowerment category decrease is most likely explained by the conflict with and eventual loss of one of the team members late in the semester (described in the Managing Change section). This event made the team feel somewhat powerless, since there was nothing they could do to assist with the issues distracting the team member from accomplishing work. The event increased anxiety that with two fewer members than other teams, the team would face more difficulty in producing a final product of comparable quality.

The best way to effect an increase in employees' perception that they are in charge of what they do is a vertical job expansion, or job enrichment. However, Team Seven's current configuration leaves very little room for this, as there is already a large degree of ownership of the work and self-assessment. The end result of the reduction of the team was job expansion, as individual team members found themselves with a significant



increase in the number of tasks to accomplish by the end of the semester, which likely decreased the feeling of empowerment rather than increasing it.

However, near the end of the semester team work has become much more personal and collaborative, a result of the final “push” to produce a quality final project. If the Exercise were re-administered at this time, it is likely that the Goal Achievement category would see a marked increase.

### Virtual Politics: (19) Managing Change, Conflict and Negotiation

#### *Change*

An early decision was made to break away from the traditional method of face-to-face meetings in favor of virtual ones. Problems negotiating regular meeting times led the manager to suggest virtual meetings. Team discussions assessed technical ability and commitment to the new technology. During the early stages of development, individual resistance from habit and fear of the unknown threatened to unravel the virtual meeting space.

#### *Negotiation*

Resistance to the virtual team format change resulted in an integrative negotiation. The virtual team space was augmented with a weekly face-to-face meeting. Participation in timely Wiki contributions and thoughtful consideration for its structure was encouraged throughout the team life cycle .

### *Conflict*

A managerial intervention during the norming stage brought conflict to light. A request was made to have members announce their accountabilities, completion dates, and schedules brought conflict. One member was not committed to participation in these interventions, and stopped coming to the weekly face-to-face meetings. At first, this seemed to be a dysfunctional relationship conflict stemming from personal values. Insisting on an update, the manager was confronted with an assertive verbal attack. A decision to bring mediation from the other members was immediate. Several days later, it was determined that the conflict was not because of personal value differences once perceived, but personal issues outside the scope of the team. Managerial accommodations were attempted by suggesting discussions with the professor regarding an incomplete score for the course, and the manager contacted the teacher at this time. Discussions within the team resulted in continuing support for the troubled member. Several weeks passed no reaffirmed commitment was made by the member. As a result, the team was forced to exert special effort to recover.

## Appendix

### *VIE Questionnaire*

The questions should be answered according to the following scale:

1: Strongly Disagree 2: Disagree 3: Neutral 4: Agree 5: Strongly Agree

One set of questions is designed to determine the effort-performance relationship, one for performance-reward, and one for the set of valences.

#### *Set 1: Effort*

1. I need to improve my performance in this class in order to do well.
2. I am really pouring a lot of hard work into this class.
3. I think the professor is fair and equitable in his grading.
4. If I don't really understand what my role is, then all I have to do to perform well is to redouble my efforts.
5. If I don't put a lot of effort into this class but still do the work, I can perform at an acceptable level.
6. The empowerment exercise really helped me to understand what my role is within my team.
7. The difficulty level of this course is too high for me.
8. I feel I am putting more effort into this class than most of my classmates.
9. The empowerment exercise allowed me to partially define my role for myself, rather than just accepting a prescribed role.
10. The empowerment exercise really allowed me to understand my role in the team, better than I would have if I had not completed it.
11. If I don't understand my role well, then I can't do a very good job no matter how hard I try.
12. If my role can be partially defined by myself, then I will be able to perform to the best of my ability.

#### *Set 2: Performance*

1. A good grade in this course requires a high performance level.
2. Even if I don't perform well in this course, I can still leave it knowing I've learned a great deal.
3. If I'm falling behind in the course, then I can't make a quality contribution to the team project.
4. A high performance level is worthy of respect.

5. If I perform well in this class, my teammates will place more value on my opinions.
6. If I'm not doing well in the class, then my teammates won't want my help on important projects.
7. Nobody likes someone who can't pull his or her weight in the team.
8. A team works together best when everyone is showing a high performance level.
9. Work is most fun when you do well at it.

### *Set 3: The Exercise*

Each question should be prefaced with the phrase: "As a direct result of my having completed the empowerment exercise, it is more likely that..."

1. High performance will lead to a better grade.
2. Low performance will still lead to a high grade.
3. A high performance in the class will lead to increased learning.
4. I will learn a lot even if I don't perform well in the class.
5. I will produce a quality final project in this course, if my performance is high.
6. I will produce a quality final project even if I am not personally doing well in the course.
7. My teammates will respect high performance more.
8. My teammates will respect me even if I'm not doing well in the course.
9. My teammates will be more receptive to my ideas, as long as I am doing well in the course to prove that my ideas are worthwhile.
10. My teammates will probably listen to me more even if I'm not doing so well in the course.
11. My teammates will come to me with their problems as long as I'm doing well in the course.
12. My teammates will come to me even if my performance is not so high.
13. My teammates will reward high performance with their friendship.
14. My teammates will be my friends even if I'm not doing well.
15. My teammates and I will always help each other out, if I'm doing well in the course.
16. My teammates and I will help each other even if I don't do so well in the course.
17. My teammates and I will have more fun outside of class, as long as I'm doing well in the course so I don't worry.
18. My teammates and I will always have fun, even if I am not doing well in the course.

*Set 4: Valences*

1. It is important that I get a good grade in this course.
2. It is important that I leave this course more well informed than I was when I began it.
3. It is important that I produce a quality final product in this course.
4. It is important that I receive the respect of my teammates.
5. It is important that, when I have an idea I think would help my teammates, they listen to and follow it.
6. It is important that my teammates come to me when they have questions I can help with.
7. It is important that I make friends with my teammates.
8. It is important that my teammates and I consistently help each other out.
9. It is important that my teammates and I remember to enjoy ourselves and have fun in our meetings outside of class.

# VIE Analysis

High Effort - High Performance	High Performance -> Rewards	Rewards	Reward Valences	Total	Total N-Ach:	Total N-Pow:	Total N-Aff:
0.53	0.8	0.6666 Learning	0.8	0.3392	1.0411	1.24933	
0.53	0.8	0.6666 Learning	0.866666667	0.3061916			
0.53	0.8	0.5333 Respect of teammates	0.933333333	0.395733333			
0.53	0.6	0.5333 Respect of teammates	0.733333333	0.207275933			0.588875933
0.53	0.6	0.6 Opinions valued	0.6	0.1908			
0.53	0.6	0.6 Asked for help	0.6	0.1908			
0.53	0.6	0.4666 Teammates' friendship	0.666666667	0.164865333			0.628898
0.53	0.6	0.6 Working together well	0.866666667	0.2756			
0.53	0.6	0.5333 Fun	0.666666667	0.188432667			
		Overall Total		2.258898867			
High Effort - High Performance	High Performance -> Rewards	Rewards	Reward Valences	Total	Total N-Ach:	Total N-Pow:	Total N-Aff:
0.7	0.8	0.6666 Learning	0.8	0.448	1.3750	1.70667	
0.7	0.8	0.6666 Learning	0.866666667	0.404404			
0.7	0.8	0.5333 Respect of teammates	0.933333333	0.522666667			
0.7	0.6	0.5333 Respect of teammates	0.733333333	0.273760667			0.777760667
0.7	0.6	0.6 Opinions valued	0.6	0.252			
0.7	0.6	0.6 Asked for help	0.6	0.252			
0.7	0.6	0.4666 Teammates' friendship	0.666666667	0.217746667			0.770179333
0.7	0.6	0.6 Working together well	0.866666667	0.364			
0.7	0.6	0.5333 Fun	0.666666667	0.248873333			
		Overall Total		2.983451333			
Low Effort - Low Performance	Low Performance -> Rewards	Rewards	Reward Valences	Total	Total N-Ach:	Total N-Pow:	Total N-Aff:
0.57	0.8	0.5333 Good grade	0.8	0.2431848	0.7574	0.502	
0.57	0.8	0.4667 Learning	0.866666667	0.2305498			
0.57	0.8	0.5333 Quality final project	0.933333333	0.2837156			
0.57	0.6	0.5333 Respect of teammates	0.733333333	0.2229194			0.610508
0.57	0.6	0.5333 Opinions valued	0.6	0.1823886			
0.57	0.6	0.6 Asked for help	0.6	0.2052			
0.57	0.6	0.4666 Teammates' friendship	0.666666667	0.177308			0.788431533
0.57	0.6	0.7333 Working together well	0.866666667	0.3622502			
0.57	0.6	0.5333 Fun	0.666666667	0.202654			
		Overall Total		2.1101704			

Avg. N-Ach: 0.866666667  
 Avg. N-Pow: 0.644444444  
 Avg. N-Aff: 0.733333333