GROUPS

Man is by nature a social animal. It is impossible for him to work in isolation of all the other people around him. Moreover, in the world today, it has become almost imperative for a professional to work in consonance with other professionals around. Organizations are nothing but a group of many professionals working together to achieve a common goal. Different departments comprise of smaller groups to work over a project/goal/ objective.

According to Stephen P. Robbins,

"A group may be defined as two or more individuals, interacting and interdependent, who have come together to achieve particular objectives".

According to Marvin Shaw,

"A group comprises of two or more persons who interact with one another in such a manner that each person influences and is influenced by each other persons".

A group is characterized by the following features:

1. a common motive or goal and shared attitudes
2. a hierarchical group structure i.e., clearly defined role for each member
3. standard norms of behavior
4. Influence of interaction with each other.

DECISION MAKING

Decision making is a daily activity for any human being. There is no exception about that. When it comes to business organizations, decision making is a habit and a process as well.

Effective and successful decisions make profit to the company and unsuccessful ones make losses. Therefore, corporate decision making process is the most critical process in any organization. In the decision making process, we choose one course of action from a few possible alternatives. In the process of decision making, we may use many tools, techniques and perceptions.

In addition, we may make our own private decisions or may prefer a collective decision. Usually, decision making is hard. Majority of corporate decisions involve some level of dissatisfaction or conflict with another party.

Steps of Decision Making Process

1. **Identify the decision to be made:** n this step, the problem is thoroughly analysed. There are a couple of questions one should ask when it comes to identifying the purpose of the decision.

   a. What exactly is the problem?

   b. Why the problem should be solved?

   c. Who are the affected parties of the problem?

   d. Does the problem have a deadline or a specific time-line?

2. **Information gathering:** A problem of an organization will have many stakeholders. In addition, there can be dozens of factors involved and affected by the problem. In the process of solving the problem, you will have to gather as much as information related to the factors and stakeholders involved in the problem. For the process of information gathering, tools such as 'Check Sheets' can be effectively used.

3. **Principles for judging the alternatives:** In this step, the baseline criteria for judging the alternatives should be set up. When it comes to defining the criteria, organizational goals as well as the corporate culture should be taken into consideration. As an example, profit is one of the main concerns in every decision making process. Companies usually do not make decisions that reduce profits, unless it is an exceptional case. Likewise, baseline principles should be identified related to the problem in hand.

4. **Brainstorm and analyse the different choices:** For this step, brainstorming to list down all the ideas is the best option. Before the idea generation step, it is vital to understand the causes of the problem and prioritization of causes.

5. **Evaluation of alternatives:** Use your judgement principles and decision-making criteria to evaluate each alternative. In this step, experience and effectiveness of the judgement principles come into play. You need to compare each alternative for their positives and negatives.

6. **Select the best alternative:** Once you go through from Step 1 to Step 5, this step is easy. In addition, the selection of the best alternative is an informed decision since you have already followed a methodology to derive and select the best alternative.

7. **Execute the decision:** Convert your decision into a plan or a sequence of activities. Execute your plan by yourself or with the help of subordinates.

8. **Evaluate the outcome of your decision:** See whether there is anything you should learn and then correct in future decision making. This is one of the best practices that will improve your decision-making skills.

NATURE OF DECISION MAKING PROCESS

1. **Continuous activity/process**: Decision making is a continuous and dynamic process. It pervades all organizational activity. Managers have to make decisions on various policy and administrative matters. It is a never-ending activity in business management.

2. **Based on reliable information/feedback**: Good decisions are always based on reliable information. The quality of decision-making at all levels of the organization can improve with the support of an effective and efficient management information system (MIS).

3. **Time-consuming activity:** Decision making is a time-consuming activity as various aspects need careful consideration before making the final decision. For decision-makers, various steps are required to complete. This makes decision-making a time-consuming activity.

4. **Needs effective communication:** Decision-taken needs to communicate to all concerned parties for suitable follow-up actions. Decisions taken will remain on paper if they are not

communicating with concern persons. Following actions will not be possible in the absence of effective communication.

5. **Responsible job:** Decision making is a responsible job as wrong decisions prove to be too costly to the Organization. Decision-makers should mature, experienced, knowledgeable and rational in their approach. Decision-making need not treat as routing and casual activity. It is a delicate and responsible job.

6. **Decision making implies choice**: Decision making is choosing from among two or more alternative courses of action. Thus, it is the process of selection of one solution out of many available. For any business problem, alternative solutions are available. Managers have to consider these alternatives and select the best one for actual execution. Here, planners/ decision-makers have to consider the business environment available and select the promising alternative plan to deal with the business problem effectively.

GROUP DECISION-MAKING

Decisions made by the members of the group in a collective way is known as group decision making. Groups offer excellent techniques for performing many of the steps in the decision making process. If the group is composed of individuals with diverse backgrounds, the alternatives generated should be more extensive and the analysis will be more critical.

TYPES OF GROUPS

Groups can be either formal or informal.

1. **Formal Groups:** A formal group is set up by the organisation to carry out work in support of the organization's goals. In formal groups, the behaviour that one should engage in are stipulated by – and directed toward – organizational goals. Examples include a bookkeeping department, an executive committee, and a product development team. Formal groups may be command groups or task group

   a. **Command Group**: A command group consists of a manager and the employees who report to him or her. Thus, it is defined in terms of the organization's hierarchy. Membership in the group arises from each employee's position on the organizational chart.

   b. **Task Group:** A task group is made up of employees who work together to complete a particular task or project. A task group's boundaries are not limited to its immediate hierarchical superior.

2. **Informal Groups:** An organization's informal groups are groups that evolve to meet social or affiliation needs by bringing people together based on shared interests or friendship. Thus, informal groups are alliances that are neither formally structured nor organizationally determined. These groups are natural formations in the work environment that appear in response to the need for social contact. Many factors explain why people are attracted to one another.

   a. **Friendship Groups:** Groups often develop because the individual members have one or more common characteristics. We call these formations 'friendship groups'. Social alliances, which frequently extend outside the work situation, can be based on similar age, same political view, attended the same college, etc.

b. **Reference Groups**: Sometimes, people use a group as a basis for comparison in making decisions or forming opinions. When a group is used in this way, it is a reference group. Employees have reference groups inside or outside the organisation where they work. For most people, the family is the most important reference groups.

FORMATION OF GROUPS

Bruce Tuckman proposed the model suggesting stages of group development or group formation in 1965. The model initially included 4 stages of group development – Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing. In 1977, Tuckman and Mary Ann Jensen added 5th stage to the model, which is named Adjourning. This stage shows how people form groups and how they behave from beginning to end. The five stages are explained briefly as follows-

1. **Forming:** This stage is the initial stage where the group is built. The group members try to get close and know each other. The members seek to know what the task is and what is the purpose and goal of the group. At this stage, members are shy and try to avoid conflict and controversies.

2. **Storming:** The members start interacting with each other regarding the task, duties and responsibilities. Positions and roles within the group are allocated. The members who dominate the group seek out for status, power, authority and influence. In this stage, disagreements and personality clashes occur.It is the most uncomfortable phase of groups life.

3. **Norming:** In this stage, group members seek responsibilities and understand their roles. Implicit and Explicit group norms are formed. Conflicts and controversies are resolved and everyone works in cohesive and co-operative manner. The stage is very crucial and if conflicts are not resolved the group may slip back to storming stage.

4. **Performing:** In this stage, a positive synergy is created among the members. The group becomes stable. Every member works towards the accomplishment of a goal. The members know each other very well and are able to handle any problem that comes before the team. The members are competent enough that they are able to handle the decision-making process without any supervision.

5. **Adjourning:** Once the purpose is fulfilled the group is terminated and members get separated. This stage is also called as "mourning or deforming," because, the sense of loss is felt by the group members after the separation.

GROUP DECISION-MAKING TECHNIQUES

1. **Brainstorming:** The concept of brainstorming was developed by Alex Faickney Osborn in 1942 in the 1967 book Applied Imagination. Brainstorming is a group creativity technique by which efforts are made to find a conclusion for a specific problem by gathering a list of ideas spontaneously contributed by its members. In other words, brainstorming is a situation where a group of people meet to generate new ideas and solutions around a specific domain of interest by removing inhibitions. Brainstorming is a good technique for generating alternatives.

The idea behind brainstorming is to generate as many ideas as possible, suspending evaluation until all of the ideas have been suggested. Participations are encouraged to build upon the suggestions of others, and imagination is emphasized. Brainstorming is meant to overcome pressures for conformity in the interacting group that retard the development of creative alternatives. Groups that use brainstorming produce significantly more ideas than groups that do not.

Advantages of brainstorming technique are:

a. It allows people to use maximum creativity to find solutions.
b. This method is easy to understand and not a complicated technique.
c. The person participating may not be highly qualified or a consultant but may find a solution.
d. Generates ideas and solutions that can be used elsewhere.
e. Provides an opportunity for widespread participation and involvement.
f. It is inexpensive.

Disadvantages of brainstorming technique are:

a. Some dump ideas may also be accepted for evaluation.
b. Can take too much time if the group is not properly controlled and is allowed to run for too long.
c. Raising expectations of the brainstorming group by considering ideas that will never be implemented

2. **Nominal Group Technique (NGT):** The NGT was developed by Delbecq and Van de Ven in 1968. The nominal group technique restricts discussion or interpersonal communication during the decision-making process, hence the term 'nominal'. Group members are all physically present, as in a traditional committee meeting, but members operate independently. NGT has the following discrete step

- Individuals silently list their ideas.
- Ideas are written on a chart one at a time until all ideas are listed.
- Discussion is permitted, but only to clarify the ideas. No criticism is allowed.
- A vote is taken by ballot or other recordable means

The chief advantage of the nominal group technique is that it permits a group to meet formally but does not restrict independent thinking, as does an interacting group. Research generally shows nominal groups outperform brainstorming groups. The most recent approach to group decision making blends the nominal group technique with sophisticated computer technology. It's called a computer assisted group, or an electronic meeting. the concept of electronic meeting is simple. Up to 50 people sit around a table, empty except for a series of networked laptops. Issues are presented to them, and they type their responses into their computers. These individual but anonymous comments, as well as

aggregate votes, are displayed on a projection screen. This technique also allows people to be brutally honest without penalty.

3. **Delphi Technique:** The Delphi technique originated at the Rand Corporation to gather the judgements of experts for use in decision-making. The Delphi method is similar to the nominal group technique except that it does not require the physical presence of the group's members. Experts at remote locations respond to a questionnaire. A coordinator summarizes the responses to the questionnaire, and the summary is sent back to the experts. The experts then rate the various alternatives generated, and the coordinator tabulates the results. The following steps characterize the Delphi technique.

- The problem is identified and members are asked to provide potential solutions through a series of carefully designed questionnaires.
- Each member anonymously and independently completes the questionnaire.
- Results of the questionnaire are compiled at a central location, transcribed, and reproduced.
- Each member receives a copy of the results.
- After viewing the results, members are again asked for their solutions.

The advantages of the Delphi Technique are:

i) The Delphi technique is valuable in its ability to generate a number of independent judgements without the requirement of a face-to-face meeting.
ii) The Delphi technique can be used for decision-making among geographically scattered groups.
iii) The cost of bringing experts together at a central location is avoided.

The disadvantages of the Delphi Technique are:

i) The Delphi technique is extremely time consuming, it is frequently not applicable anywhere a speedy decision is necessary.
ii) The method may not develop the rich array of alternatives as the interacting of nominal group technique does.
iii) Ideas that might surface from the heat of face-to-face interaction may never arise. On the other, introspection in isolation may produce sup.

Advantages and Disadvantages of group decision making

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Groups can accumulate more knowledge and facts.	• Groups often work more slowly than individuals.
• Groups have a broader perspective and consider more alternative solutions.	• Group decision involves considerable compromise which may lead to less than optimal decisions.
• Individuals who participate in decisions are more satisfied with the decision and are more likely to support it.	• Groups are often dominated by one individual or a small clique, thereby negating many of the virtues of group procedures.
• Group decision processes serve an important communication function as well as a useful political function	Over-reliance on group decision making can inhibit management's ability to act quickly and decisively when necessary.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL DECISION MAKING AND GROUP DECISION MAKING

Nature of decision	Group decision-making	Individual decision-making
Speed of decision making	Groups can often be slow to reach a decision. There is the possibility of over-deliberation and sometimes a reluctance to reach a decision which some members don't support	Individuals can often reach decisions more quickly than a group. However, there may not always be the time to consider all the factors involved
Knowledge required to make decision	Groups can share knowledge and foresee solutions to problems which may arise	Unless the individual is an expert on the subject, then groups are able to generate better and more comprehensive knowledge than an individual
Need for a complete decision	Because an effective group contains roles which monitor both the decision making process and the completeness of the decision, groups tend to produce more complete and feasible solutions	An experienced and knowledgeable individual can make complete and feasible decisions. Especially where they have confronted similar decisions in the past. Where expertise is not needed, then better decisions tend to be made by groups
Importance of decision for organisation	A group making an important decision may well be subject to the phenomenon of 'risky shift' and decisions may well be riskier than management may accept	It is easier for an individual to be held accountable
Need for commitment to proposed solution	Groups, especially those working collaboratively, will tend to gain commitment to their decisions because all group members have been involved in the decision making process	An individual will have to work very hard to gain the commitment of others to a decision they have made. Without involvement in the decision making process, commitment is uncertain

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MANAGING COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS IN ORGANIZATION

Below are some ways to manage communication effectiveness in organization

1. **Active listening**: It implies that the receiver of information engages in the following patterns of behavior.
    a) stop talking since it is impossible to talk and listen at the same time,
    b) remove the distracting elements as much as possible
    c) patient and lets the other person say whatever needs to be said,
    d) appreciate the emotion behind the speaker's words and is empathic,
    e) remain attentive,
    f) creates a positive listening environment
    g) uses feedback mechanisms to check understanding
    h) withholds judgment
    i) asks questions,
    j) Reacts to the message and not the person
2. **Parallel Channels and Repetition:** A major principle of communication technology is to provide parallel channels of communication that reinforce each other. Thus, a verbal request may be followed up with a memo. In this way, the sender has ensured getting the attention of the receivers and also ensured that the sender will have a record to refer to in case lie or she forgets in its order.
3. **Be patient and paying adequate attention**: When choosing a style of language, the sender must give a due consideration to the listener's intention, and his background. Effective use of language consists of tailoring one's message for the context of the receivers in order to maximize overall between the intended and received messages.
4. **Follow up and Feedback:** The process of feedback makes communication a two-way process. In face-to-face situations, the sender should try to become sensitive to facial expressions and other signs that indicate how the message is being received. It is often important to solicit questions of clarification from the receiver. When more formal communication is involved, the writer may specify specific forms and times for responding

Feedback

There are lot of ways in which company takes feedback from their employees, such as: Employee surveys, memos, emails, open-door policies, company newsletter etc. Employees are not always willing to provide feedback. The organization has to work a lot to get the accurate feedback. The managers encourage feedback by asking specific questions, allowing their employees to express general views, etc. The organization should be receptive to their employee's feedback.

Since feedback involved both receiver and sender, it is important to understand the conditions under which feedback session will be more effective both from the sender's and receiver's perspective.

For feedback to be most effective, the person giving the feedback must:

i) Give specific and not general or vague feedback.

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ii) Give feedback immediately or soon after the event has taken place rather than long after the event has occurred.
iii) Give feedback on aspects that the receiver can rectify rather than on aspects over which the individual has no control.
iv) Be descriptive than evaluative.
v) Give feedback on a few critical issues where improvement is most urgently expected rather than on a wide range of problem areas.
vi) Be sure that the receiver is ready to receive feedback.

IMPORTANCE OF FEEDBACK

For the growth and success of any organization in the market, it is quite imperative for the management and the HR department to follow certain rules and ethics of business. And one of them is to realize and follow the Importance of Feedback as it comes along with the lot of benefits and merits that helps the firm to go a long way beating the competition and retaining the employees that are loyal and expert in their tasks assigned.

1. **Keeps the employees motivated:** When the top management and the human resource department of the firm realize the Importance of Feedback, the employees are highly motivated and agile enough to conduct their tasks and responsibilities in an efficient and effective manner. There have to be regular feedback sessions of the employees with their immediate superiors on a formal and informal basis keeping the work culture and the overall environment healthy and fruitful.
2. **Increases productivity levels:** if the employees of the firm are motivated their productivity levels increases. The firm is able to optimally utilize the human and other resources through the proper feedback and training sessions. Even if the employees are going wrong somewhere or facing any issue with their departments or inter-departments, they are able to easily approach their managers or the HR department expressing their grievances and issues as they know that they will be heard and given the proper feedback.
3. **Helps to avoid mistakes:** When the management of the firm understands and follows the Importance of Feedback, every individual team or the department conducts regular feedback sessions that help to avoid the mistakes. It also helps to iron out the flaws and solve the bottlenecks that act as an obstacle not only in the success of the firm but also helps the team members to take their mistakes as a learning curve and an opportunity to climb the ladder of success.
4. **Better decision making:** Involving more and more employees with feedback, helps a business get significant insights and make well informed decisions. Employees generally know a great deal about the company's performance, so, involving them in a feedback process means their valuable insights can be further utilized to improve business performance.
5. **The positive environment in the workplace:** When the management and the HR department of the firm realize and follow the Importance of Feedback at the workplace there is a positive and healthy environment. As it is a fact that when a couple of people work together in an organization attaining the similar levels of goals and objectives, issues are bound to arise and it is the task of the HR department and the top management to ease out the issues and undercurrents by following the proper feedback policy.

6. **Helps in Retaining loyal employees:** Employees stay with a firm that has a positive work culture and the environment that boasts a healthy atmosphere and is quite lucrative for their overall growth and success of their professional graph. And feedback is one of the crucial aspects of the same. And if the firm wishes to retain the employees that are loyal, expert, and proficient in nature and approach; it has to understand and follow the Importance of Feedback.

7. **Learning for the employees:** When the employees are given regular feedbacks in a formal and informal way by their immediate superiors, it becomes a learning curve for them helping them elevate their career and professional graph. This in turn also helps the firm to sharpen the skills and expertise of the employees that helps the management to launch the new and innovative line of products and services in the market that is full of competition.

8. **Improved team performance:** The process of feedback, when done right, brings together the team for a better performance and keeps everyone on track. When done regularly, it helps build a transparent communication processed eliminate redundant errors resulting in a better understanding within the team. The continuous and healthy feedback practice eliminates the chances of miscommunication and forms better relations within team for an improved overall performance.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Interpersonal communication is one of the most important life skills business professionals can have. In companies and organizations of all types, effective communication determines whether a team can operate effectively and accomplish core business goals. It underlies the efficiency of key business functions such as managing, training, selling and resolving conflicts within an organization.

ELEMENTS OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Effective communication in the workplace relies on each of the following elements:

1. **Problem solving and decision making:** One of the best ways to maintain professional relationships is through effective problem solving and decision making. Both of these skills align team to members toward a common goal. If leaders are unable take the steps necessary to solve problems and make the right decision for the team, a business can't function successfully.

2. **Listening:** Strong listening skills are invaluable for business professionals. They help individuals understand sent messages and act accordingly. If a manager provides instructions but team members are unable to listen and synthesize the information, roadblocks will arise that can derail projects and cause negative consequences.

3. **Assertiveness:** A commonly undervalued element of interpersonal communication is assertiveness. The ability to influence others helps leaders drive the team toward a common goal. Being willing to take charge and effect change is one of the hallmarks of a business leader.

4. **Negotiation:** This skill is a key element in conflict resolution. Finding common ground and identifying shared goals can help business professionals work effectively with others.

HOW TO IMPROVE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Here are some of the ways business professionals can improve interpersonal communication in the workplace.

1. **Research and plan:** Gather facts and relevant data to plan for important conversations. This helps ensure clarity and accuracy.

2. **Determine your audience:** Consider coworkers' personality and mindset before approaching a conversation. Find the right communication style for your specific situation. Some conversations lend themselves to face-to-face meetings, while others can be best accomplished through email.

3. **Self-evaluation:** Understand your own strengths and weaknesses when it comes to communication. Ask for honest feedback from coworkers and managers as a learning opportunity to better inform future interactions.

4. **Monitor expectations:** Keep assumptions and expectations to a minimum before engaging with a coworker. You never know for sure how someone will react, so be ready to adapt as the situation demands.

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

Transactional Analysis is one of the basic approach to study interpersonal relationships in an organizational system. It deals with understanding, predicting and controlling interpersonal relationships. TA is a technique developed by Eric Burne in 1970's. It is used to help people better understand their own and other's behavior, especially in interpersonal relationships.

Transactions Defined

The unit of social intercourse is called a transaction. If two or more people encounter each other sooner or later one of them will speak, or give some other indication of acknowledging the presence of the others. This is called **transactional stimulus**. Another person will then say or do something which is in some way related to the stimulus, and that is called the **transactional response.**
At its simplest level, Transactional Analysis is the method for studying interactions between individuals.

Berne's Three Ego States

In addition to the analysis of the interactions between individuals, Transactional Analysis also involves the identification of the ego states behind each and every transaction.

Berne defined an ego state as

"A consistent pattern of feeling and experience directly related to a corresponding consistent pattern of behavior."

Berne defined the three ego states as: Parent, Adult, and Child. It should be carefully noted that the descriptions of these ego states do NOT necessarily correspond to their common definitions as used the English language.

The following are detailed descriptions of the three ego states:

1. Parent: The parent ego, refers to the behavior and attitude of an emotionally significant individual who acted with quite a maturity when he was a child. He possesses the parental traits of being overprotective, dogmatic, distant, indispensable and upright and behaves very judiciously at any time.

There are two types of a parent ego: critical and nurturing. The critical parent ego is one when an individual shows the critical and evaluative behavior while interacting with the others. Whereas the nurturing parent ego is one, when individual shows the kind and nurturing behavior, not only towards children but towards all with whom he interacts.

Examples of recordings in the Parent include:

"Never talk to strangers"
"Always chew with your mouth closed"
"Look both ways before you cross the street"

It is worth noting that, while recording these events, the young child has no way to filter the data; the events are recorded without question and without analysis. One can consider that these events are imposed on the child.

2. Child: The child ego, refers to the state of an individual when he behaves illogically and takes quick actions to satisfy the immediate needs without thinking much about its consequences. The creativity, depression, conformity, dependence, hate, fear, etc. are some of the main characteristics of this ego state. The child ego represents the childhood state when an individual has not become social and is in its initial stage of development.

Examples of recordings in the Child include:

"When I saw the monster's face, I felt really scared"
"The clown at the birthday party was really funny!"
"I feel sad when Mom is sad"

3. Adult: The adult ego shows the logical thinking and reasoning ability of an individual. The person behaving or interacting with adult ego seeks all the information properly, validate it using his reasoning skills and then provide it to the other people. The person possessing the adult ego can be judged through his discussions and the way he thinks about a situation before arriving at the conclusion.

In an attempt to explain Transactional Analysis, Dr. Thomas Harris developed the following Summary

> Parent – taught concept
> Child – felt concept
> Adult – learned concept

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS - TYPES OF TRANSACTIONS

Complementary Transactions: A complementary transaction occurs when the sender of the message gets the intended response from the receiver. For example, an employee makes a mistake and, wanting some sympathy, apologizes to the boss. Employee - `I just dropped the thing when I was almost done. Now I have to do it all over again. 'Supervisor - `It happens to all of us; don't worry about it.' This complementary transaction is illustrated below

Complementary Transactions
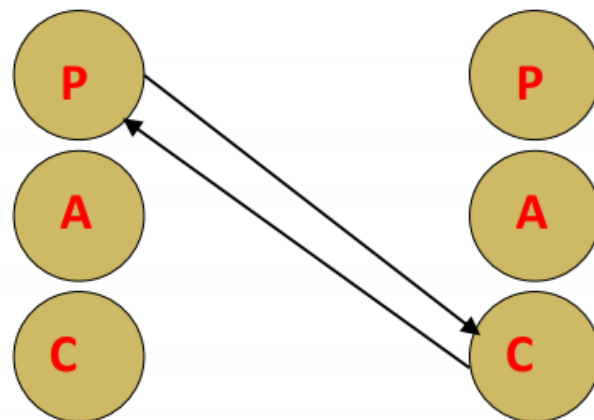
This is a **complementary** transaction because the employee accepts the child ego state assigned to him by the director and responds in child ego state.
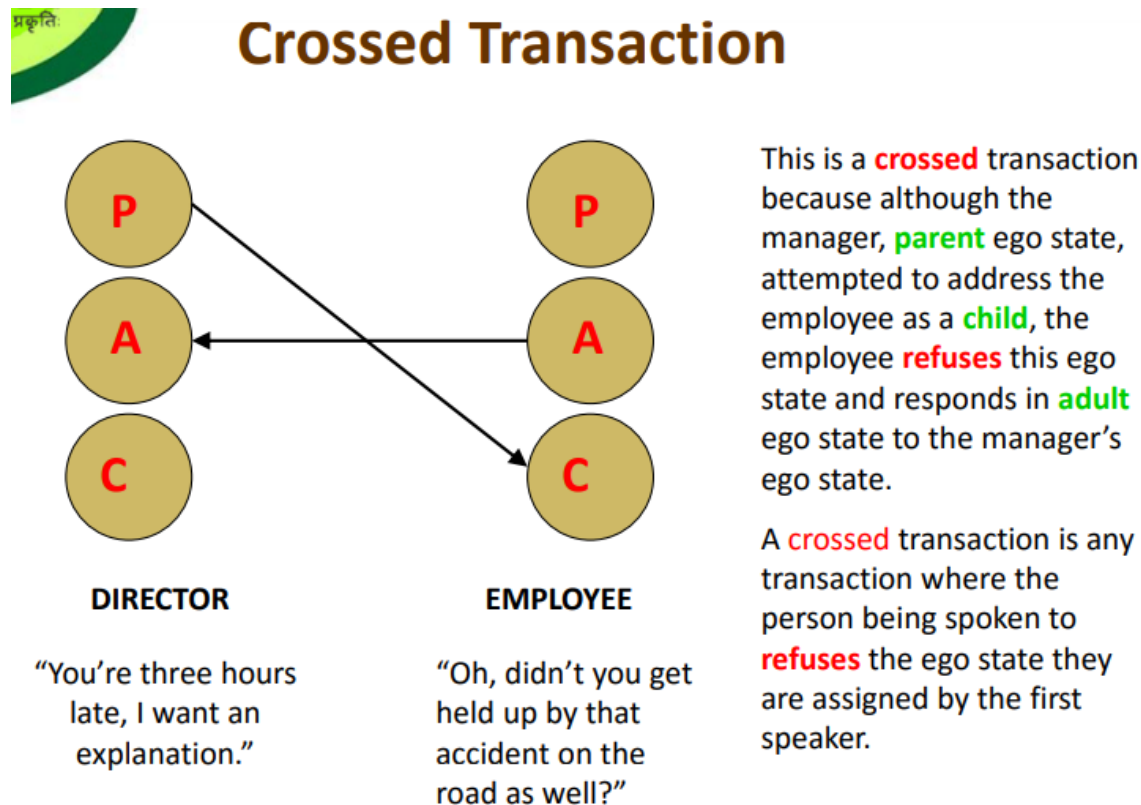
DIRECTOR

"You're three hours late, I want an explanation."

EMPLOYEE

"I'm really sorry, I slept through the alarm, it won't happen again, I promise."

Crossed Transactions: Crossed transactions occur when the sender of the message does not get the expected response from the receiver. Returning to our first example: Employee - `I just dropped the thing when I was almost done. Now I have to do it all over again.' Supervisor - `you are so clumsy.' This transaction is illustrated below

Crossed Transaction

प्रकृतिः

DIRECTOR

P

A

C

"You're three hours late, I want an explanation."

EMPLOYEE

P

A

C

"Oh, didn't you get held up by that accident on the road as well?"

This is a **crossed** transaction because although the manager, **parent** ego state, attempted to address the employee as a **child**, the employee **refuses** this ego state and responds in **adult** ego state to the manager's ego state.

A **crossed** transaction is any transaction where the person being spoken to **refuses** the ego state they are assigned by the first speaker.

Ulterior Transactions: Ulterior, or hidden, transactions occur when the words seem to be coming from one ago state, but in reality the words or behaviors are coming from another. For example, after a training program, one of the participants came up to a consultant asking advice on an adult ego sate. When the consultant gave advice, the participant twice had quick responses as to why the advice would not work (child rather than adult behavior). The consultant realized that what the participant actually wanted was sympathetic understanding for his situation, not advice. The consultant stopped making suggestions and listened actively, using reflective responses. The consultant changed from the adult to the sympathetic parent ego state in order to have a complimentary transaction.

Sometimes people don't know what they want or how to ask for it in a direct way, so they use ulterior transactions. When possible, it is best to avoid ulterior transactions because they tend to waste time. Avoid making people search for your hidden meanings. Plan your message before you send it. When receiving messages look for ulterior transactions and turn them into complimentary transactions, as stated above

Transactional Analysis- life positions:

Life positions are basic beliefs about self and others, which are used to justify decisions and behaviour. Franklin Ernst drew the life positions in quadrants, which he called the OK Corral (1971). The concept of life positions is another basic idea from transactional analysis theory. Life positions are basic beliefs about self and others, which are used to justify decisions and behavior. Life positions works within the assumption that we choose very early on in our life, before age two, a basic position towards ourselves and other people. It represents the fundamental attitude a person takes about the essential value he perceives in him and other people. Once a child has taken up a favorite position, they are likely to construct the rest of their world view to match that life position. One could therefore also see a life position as one of the first script decisions a person makes.

1. **I'm OK—You're OK** position is considered the optimal, healthy position and is generally game-free. People occupying this position will hold the belief that all people are innately worthy and valuable. That people are OK is a statement which describes their being or essence rather than their behaviour This position is characterized by an attitude openness and of honesty and trust. People occupying this position will be collaborative and accepting of themselves and others.

2. **I'm OK—You're not OK** is occupied by those who project their difficulties onto others, they may be blaming and critical. Transactional games that reinforce this position involve a self-styled superior (the "I'm OK") who projects anger, disgust, or disdain onto a designated inferior, or scapegoat (the "You're not OK"). This position requires that there be someone to be 'worse than' in order to maintain the sense of self as ok.

3. **I'm not OK—You're OK** position is depressive, it is characterized by feeling powerless and lacking in comparison with others. People occupying this position may discount their own needs in favour of others and may experience themselves as victims. Transactional games supporting this position include "Kick me" and "Martyr"—games that support the power of others and deny one's own.

4. **I'm not OK—You're not OK** is a position of hopelessness, futility and frustration. From this position life seems uninteresting and hopeless. This may result in self destructive or violent behaviour.

Strokes

Berne defined a stroke as the "fundamental unit of social action." A stroke is a unit of recognition, when one person recognizes another person either verbally or non-verbally. Strokes are exchanged whenever two persons interact with each other. A part of the original need for physical stroking seems to be satisfied with symbolic stroking like verbal recognition and eye contact between persons.

Berne also reasoned that any stroke, be it positive or negative, is better than no strokes at all. Or, as summarized in TA Today, "any stroke is better than no stroke at all." For example, if you are walking in front of your house and you see your neighbor, you will likely smile and say "Hi." Your neighbor will likely say "hello" back. This is an example of a positive stroke. Your neighbor could also frown at you and say nothing. This is an example of a negative stroke. But either case is better than no stroke at all, if your neighbor ignored you completely.

The Johari Window Model

The Johari Window is a disclosure/feedback model of awareness, named after Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham. It was first used in an information session at the Western Training Laboratory in Group Development in 1955. The four panes of the window represent the following:

1. Open: The open area is that part of our conscious self - our attitudes, behavior, motivation, values, way of life - of which we are aware and which is known to others. We move within this area with freedom. We are "open books". It is through disclosure and feedback that our open pane is expanded and that we gain access to the potential within us represented by the unknown pane.

2. Blind: There are things about ourselves which we do not know, but that others can see more clearly; or things we imagine to be true of ourselves for a variety of reasons but that others do not

see at all. When others say what they see (feedback), in a supportive, responsible way, and we are able to hear it; in that way we are able to test the reality of who we are and are able to grow.

3. Hidden: Our hidden area cannot be known to others unless we disclose it. There is that which we freely keep within ourselves, and that which we retain out of fear. The degree to which we share ourselves with others (disclosure) is the degree to which we can be known.

4. Unknown: We are more rich and complex than that which we and others know, but from time to time something happens – is felt, read, heard, dreamed - something from our unconscious is revealed. Then we "know" what we have never "known" before.

	Known to self	Not know to self
Known to other	Open	Blind
Not known to other	Hidden	Unknown