

initial analysis. Such analysis is however fairly common now in areas in which groups must perform, although regrettably little has yet been written explicitly about design groups.

It is now not uncommon for competitive teams to employ sports psychologists, not just to develop personal skills but to weld the team together into a more effective unit. It is well known that teams playing away from home are generally less likely to win than those playing at home. By studying football results in the UK and abroad both past and present, Desmond Morris has calculated that in general away teams find it roughly twice as difficult to win as home teams (Morris 1981). There are some obvious disadvantages suffered by the away team which include the journey, unfamiliarity with surroundings and conditions, a hostile crowd and so on. However, all these afflictions are also suffered by touring international teams, and in particularly large measure. In general, however, these teams seem to be able to offset these disadvantages by the social cohesion which develops from the extended contact which is enforced by the tour. It is no accident that touring teams usually play minor opponents they would be expected to beat before the international series begins. Clearly then the performance of a group can be significantly influenced by such factors as group morale, whatever that might be.

Group norms

One of the most significant factors in the formation of effective groups seems to be the development of group norms. Such norms may include conventions of dress, speech and general behaviour and serve to suppress the individuality of members in favour of an expression of attachment to the group. That such a movement towards conformity should be a force for good in a group devoted to creative work seems at first rather strange, and indeed here we find one of the fundamental problems in the life of such groups. However, we shall return to this a little later. It is beyond dispute that in general groups develop norms. Certainly this can be seen very clearly in sporting groups or teams, where uniforms, running jokes, and habitual gestures and terminology abound. Of course, in such cases the supporters also develop such norms, but the behaviour of large crowds is hardly relevant here.

One of the characteristics of group norms is that they often involve some form of regressive behaviour. Standards of behaviour

which would, in other social contexts, be seen as rather questionable can become quite normal in small groups. This can be true even though the individual members would also find their own behaviour odd outside the group. I was once concerned with the development of a large open plan headquarters office for a very large nation-wide company. This company had previously been housed in a variety of separate smaller buildings of differing ages and types scattered around the town. The architects department, however, had been familiar with open plan accommodation through their large drawing offices and they had developed such group norms over an extended period. Once relocated in the new office they quickly became regarded as a nuisance by members of other departments due to the rather regressive nature of their group behaviour which involved such things as community singing, rehearsing scenes from the previous night's television comedy programmes, flying paper aeroplanes, and very casual dress.

Tracy Kidder's account of the design of a new Data General computer is rich in material illustrating the importance of group dynamics and interpersonal relationships in the performance of a design team. Kidder (1982) describes how groups sprang up within the team and gained identities through their behavioural norms. In particular the young graduates who joined the team and were regarded as 'kids' by the older hands, were to split into those who designed hardware and were known as 'Hardy Boys' and those who designed microcode and were known as 'Microkids':

Some of the recruits said they liked the atmosphere. Microkid Dave Keating, for instance, had looked at other companies, where de facto dress codes were in force. He liked the 'casual' look of the basement of Westborough. The jeans and so on. Several talked of their 'flexible hours' . . . There was an intensity in the air. 'I kinda liked the fervour and wanted to be part of it'.

Kidder describes how members of these groups were seduced into them by the atmosphere created by the norms, even though an extremely important norm seemed to be one of very long hours and hard work.

He was essentially offered the chance for some gruelling work, and he accepted with alacrity . . . There was, it appeared, a mysterious rite of initiation through which, in one way or another, almost every member of the team passed. The term that the old hands used for this rite . . . was 'signing up'. By signing up for the project you agreed to do whatever was necessary for success . . . From a manager's point of view, the practical virtues of the ritual were manifold. The labour was no longer coerced.