

2. The performance purpose of the group is usually established by the leader. Often, in fact, it has been assigned to the leader by upper-level managers. It is, however, a powerful performance purpose—and it is that purpose that differentiates the single-leader “performance unit” from the less disciplined “effective group.”
3. The specific objectives of the group are determined by the leader, since she is held accountable for its performance by those above her. The majority of these objectives, of course, break into individual assignments or goals for each of the members. While the leader may interact with each member in translating group objectives into individual assignments, the leader remains the final determiner of what goals and time frames will be set and met.
4. The group’s working approach is designed by the leader. Again, while the leader may interact with individual members in shaping the individual roles, the leader has the experience and know-how to determine who should be given what assignments.
5. The leader holds each member individually accountable for tasks assigned and agreed upon. Individuals feel a much stronger responsibility to the leader to deliver as promised, and do not worry much about what others are doing.

Thus the single-leader unit is fast, efficient, and effective—when tasks can be easily assigned to individual members, and when the joint work-products of the group are much less important than the individual work-products. Single-leader units, however, do not rise above the level of “effective groups” to become performance units without a strong, clear performance purpose and a leader who enforces consequence management.

MAKING A CHOICE FOR TEAMS IN DESIGN

Those leading design groups

Those leading design groups must look to the particular performance challenge at hand to help them decide how best to lead, and which discipline to apply (real team or single-leader working group). If the performance challenge can be met through maximizing each individual’s contribution, then the leader can rely on the normal decision-making and delegation processes

found in a working group. However, if the challenge cannot be met by traditional good management practices, if collective work and end products are more important than individual results, and if different people need to lead, then a real team approach should be seriously—and consciously—considered.

The team approach is becoming more applicable to design today, due to technological and cultural changes. The technological changes that have affected design require greater participation from multiple experts and therefore create more opportunity for real teams. For example, buildings like the Empire State were designed in part based on the availability of natural light and ventilation. Advances in technology have eliminated this design constraint, but have increased the need for cooperation from various technical specialists. Artificial lighting, cooling and heating systems, and more recently, complex phone and computer networks, are standard in workplaces today and require technical experts to work closely together. Additionally, as the variety of structural and decorative options available to clients increases with innovation, so does the number of potential vendors involved in a project.

A major cultural change that has affected the opportunity for real teams in design is the effort to create environmentally responsible designs. Whether “green” movements are introduced by regulatory or ethical guidelines or by the good intentions of curious and innovative designers and clients, the green movement is a way to get the project team motivated around a single “collective” goal. Green architecture is concerned with delivering an improved quality of life to the end-user. One aspect of this movement is that the architecture creates a sense of communication with nature, which is recognized as a stimulant to a healthy work environment and possibly encouraging social interaction. This is part of a project’s goal and increases the emotional intelligence and joint commitment required by the team, which can be a strong driver of the common purpose aspect of a real team.

Performance goals within green architecture are often quantifiable and now public. With the introduction of the *Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design* (LEED) rating system, architects and designers are working together to meet formal and public performance goals, recognizing them for contributing to a “healthy and prosperous planet.”⁹ Additionally, not unlike the technical advances discussed above, producing green designs requires expertise and cooperation along lines perhaps not considered in the past. For example, buildings such as the Jubilee Campus at the University of Nottingham, England, and the Commerzbank Headquarters in Germany