TYPES OF TEAMS

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This article lists just a few of the different forms and functions of teams.

Teams exist at all levels in the world of work or sport, most teams are identified by their role. Teams can show the characteristics of more than one type.

Let us understand the various types of teams in detail:

Sports - A team sport is an activity in which a group of individuals, on the same team, work together to accomplish a win against the opposition.

For example: football, teams mountaineering teams baseball teams, basketball teams, rugby team

Organization or Work – This is the most common team type, formed where team members work together on tasks under a leader to achieve a common goal. These are permanent teams who share a common mission and collectively manage their own affairs within pre-defined boundaries and team norms. Most of the times the members manage and direct themselves independently. The team leader will brief, direct and update members on the team aims and targets.

For example: Police constables on shifts who respond and react to calls from the public. A team of teachers in a history department. A team of accountants.

Self Managed - Self Managed Teams consist of individuals who work together for a common purpose but without the supervision of any leader. Members must respect each other to take their own responsibility. Individuals act on their own initiative.

For example: A group of nurses in a doctors practice who all have equal status and shared responsibilities in completing the task

Permanent - work together all the time, as a result know each other well, they use this knowledge to help them achieve task. The allocate roles based on strengths and suitability to task. These teams are not dissolved once the task is accomplished they always function through out the year
and hence are permanent teams. They can be set in their ways and be bound by history or etiquette; therefore they may be show to react to change. Members’ feelings and task completion are of concern because of the length of time spent together.

For example: Army Regiments, Watches in the Fire & Rescue Service, Human Resources, Operations or Administration teams in a business.

**Temporary** - Unlike permanent teams, temporary teams loose their importance, once the task is accomplished. Such teams are usually created for a specific project, to assist the permanent team or to deal with an excess of work. Members do not tend to know each other well this can effect speed of achieving aim. They are not bound by etiquette can evolve faster to changes than permanent teams. Completion of task is the main concern

For example: Gold Command for flood disaster response (Police, Fire, MRT, Met Office, NHS) working together to deal with disaster once the disaster is over the team disbands.

**Formal** – Teams created for specific purpose they have defined structures, procedures and roles. Teams are monitored to ensure they achieve the objectives set. They are bound by etiquette, established rules, norms and history. These are not flexible in the way tasks are managed and little creativity is allowed.

For example: Police Traffic Teams dealing with traffic problems. RAF Police Dog Teams to provide assistance in search and arrest. Army Catering Teams to provide food. RAF Mountain Rescue Teams to locate aircraft crashes and assist in Search And Rescue.

**Informal** – Less structured teams, roles can be interchangeable and the team is flexible, goals are less defined allowing for creativity in the way they approach the task. Members tend to be volunteer for these roles and enjoy working in these teams because it represents a change from more formal teams.

For example: Charity event teams established within recruit training and Best Practice Working Groups finding solutions to work problems.

**Project** – These are temporary teams used for a defined purpose; as soon as this is achieved they disband. They are usually made of specialists and controlled by project manager. Members are borrowed from permanent
teams because they have skills that the project needs. They are less structured than formal teams, roles can be interchangeable based on members’ skills, the team is allowed flexibility in its approach and goals are less defined allowing for creativity. The aim of the project is the main concern. The project team may be full or part – time.

For example: A number of police forces providing manpower to form a task force to solve a murder enquiry. A team of experts (Police, Fire & Rescue, Met Office, Local NHS Trust) joining together to look at the problems experienced with freak weather patterns. Project teams introducing new working procedures, or items of new technology into service eg “Airwaves” radio system in police service.

**Cross Functional Team** - Individuals from different areas or functions who work together for a common objective to. In such teams, people from different areas, interests come together to successfully complete a task. These are similar to project teams. However, they are more permanent, working on longer term projects.

For example: Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships which are a combination of police local authorities and other agencies who work together to implement strategies for tackling crime.

**Geographical** – this is a team that restricts its operation within a geographical area. The task is limited to that area and members are mainly recruited from the same area.
For example: South Yorkshire Police, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service or Sheffield County Council.

**Divisional, Departmental or Sectional** – These teams are sub sets of larger teams they are usually permanent and specialised in their work, skills or areas of operation.
For example: an Army Armoured Division, Reconnaissance Section or a Local Health Department within a council.

**Multi-disciplinary** – Teams which use different skills in order to carry out the task. They are bound by procedures and how members interact is usually critical to the completion of the task. They are usually enjoyable places to work because of the vision of other members’ roles and sharing of best practice.

For example: An Aircraft Servicing Team contains members with
responsibilities for electrical, radar, airframes and refuelling systems.

**Inter- service or Multi-agency** - (multiple public services working together) These are temporary teams that work independently of each other but rely on each working toward the same aim.

For example: When there has been a Major Incident such as Flooding to a residential area there will be a coordinated Response by the Coastguard, Royal Air Force, Navy, Police, Fire & Rescue and Mountain Rescue Teams to control and return the situation to normal.

**Interdependent** - These are permanent specialist teams which need the help of all members to accomplish the task. Members usually have interchangeable roles and accompany each other for support. The tasking is as important as relationships and members benefit from knowing and trusting in one another. There is a good knowledge of the strengths of each member and individual tasking within the team can reflect this.

For example: A number of fire engines and their crews working to put out a large blaze, rescue civilians and deal with a chemical hazard.

**Independent** - These are permanent teams where each member performs their own role and only their role. They may offer advice or support to colleagues but ultimately work by them self's.

For example: A paramedic going to an incident and dealing with a patient.

**Advisory**
These are temporary teams who are responsible for providing support and guidance on a task. They often have part time members who are loaned to other teams because of the specialist skills or knowledge they possess.

For example: A Forensic Officer or Fire Investigator loaned to the Police to help solve a case.

**Task Force** - Such teams are formed for a special purpose of working on any specific project or finding a solution to a very critical problem. The government generally appoints special teams to investigate critical issues like bomb blasts, terrorist attacks and so on. The task force contains more than one service or organization joined for the duration of the task.
For example: Royal Navy Task Force sent to a war zone. A task force set up to eliminate excessive government spending.

**Committee** – These teams are generally formed to work on a particular assignment either permanently or on a temporary basis. Individuals with common interests, more or less from the same background, attitude and come together on a common platform to form a committee. The members work together to successfully accomplish the task.

For example: Committees, who organize an event, raise funds or Health and Safety Committees.

**Virtual Teams** - Virtual teams consist of individuals who are separated by distances and connected through computer. Here individuals communicate with each other online through internet, all working for a common objective but the communication is totally digital through internet. Such teams are helpful when employees need to connect with each other and are located at different places.

For example: Social networking sites such as facebook or international Interest groups.