

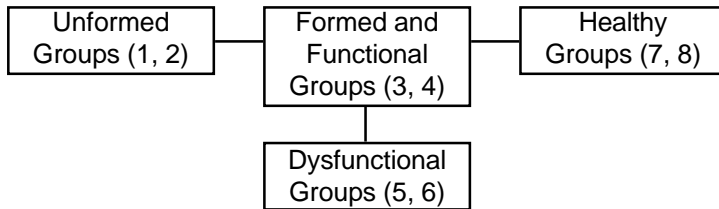
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Introduction

Bird's-eye View

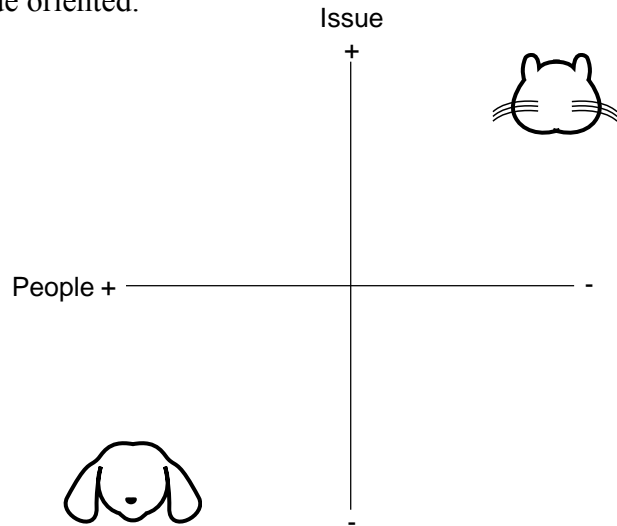
The Introduction provides a bird's eye view of the terrain we will be traveling. *Fast Track* is divided into four parts, each with two chapters. The following flow chart has the parts represented by the four boxes. (The chapter numbers are in parentheses.) As a reader you can read the book from beginning to end, or you can identify specific groups that hold your interest and go directly to the pertinent chapters.



Groups can be categorized based on whether they are issue-oriented or people-oriented. These categories can be shown on two axes that form a group dynamic grid. The location of “+” and “-” has been altered from math usage. The issue-oriented axis is vertical with “high focus on issues” at the top and “low focus on issues” at the bottom. The people-oriented axis is horizontal with “high people focus” to the left and “low people focus” to the right.

To be respectful of gender equality and yet provide the reader with a fluid reading style, in this chapter the person-in-charge is referred to by male pronouns and other individuals are referred to by female pronouns.

A useful analogy is household pets. Dog-oriented groups are high people oriented. Cat-oriented groups are high issue oriented.



Part One: Unformed Groups

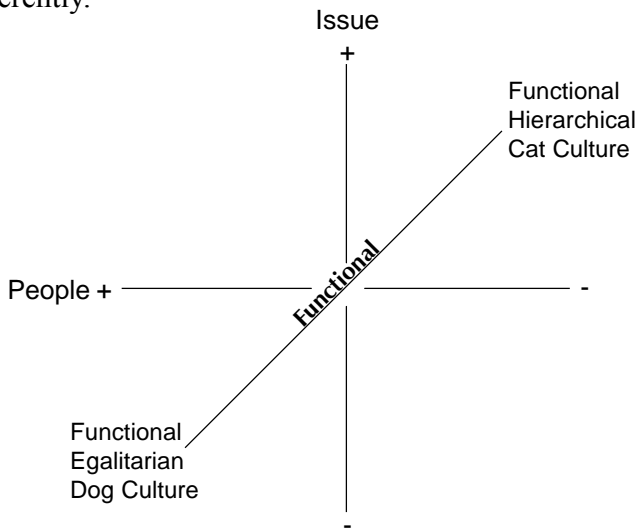
Go to Chapter One to discover the six indicators (page 16) that we use to determine whether a group is formed or unformed. Our role as the person-in-charge (page 34) is very different with an unformed vs. a formed group. By applying these six indicators to a given group, we have a clear vision of our task and options.

Go to Chapter Two to know how to accelerate the transition from unformed to formed group. And use the four techniques that accelerate the formation of a group (page 35). With a formed group we expend less energy because the group's norms are established and maintained by the group itself.

Part Two: Formed and Functional Groups

Go to Chapter Three to learn how to read the group through three key roles that members occupy and find out how to respond to each: Outliers (page 46), Barometers (page 51), and Fostered Leaders (page 53). A leader manages the group more efficiently by forming relationships with these three key role-members.

Go to Chapter Four to learn the three methods for recognizing the culture we are interacting with. The methods give persons-in-charge subtle but dependable clues on how to succeed with a particular group. Groups are like countries; we need to know which country we are in so we can select the appropriate language to speak and know which behaviors are acceptable. Only then can we influence. Although both the cat hierarchical culture and the dog egalitarian culture can be functional, they operate very differently.



There is also a provocative presentation of how to observe.

Vignette: “Why should you be here?”

As Shawn walked to the front of the 50 telemarketers, he could both see and feel their cold stares. He began with “Morning.” He paused long enough to indicate that he could breathe deeply and stay relaxed even in such a hostile environment. He then walked two steps to the flipchart and read, “Phone Skills. 9-noon.”

He paused again. Then he looked down and simultaneously turned and started to walk to the other side of the front. As he passed the center point, he was still looking down when he softly said, “Before we begin...” Arriving at the far side, he faced the bewildered audience, “If I were you [long pause] I wouldn’t want to be here. Some of you might even be tempted to not take any notes. [Another long pause.] You have too much work to do back at your desk.” [He gestured and looked at the outside wall in the direction of their work stations.] [He paused again.] He turned back to the presentation flipchart.

Shawn had first acknowledged their resistance, “...wouldn’t want to be here.” He even talked about the inappropriate behavior of “...tempted not to take any notes.” Even cats appreciate it when a person-in-charge can calmly talk about the “invisible elephants.”

Shawn then switched from a surface focus about inappropriate behavior such as “not taking notes” to the motivation behind the surface “too much work to do....” By switching to the motivation level he can honestly agree with them. The reasons why people do things, even negative things, stem from positive purposes.