

not only the behavior of the members but also the values, beliefs, and attitudes of the members.

Spontaneous groups are usually small. Six or eight is a common number. They rarely exceed 15. It is as though there were some physical limitation on how many people can effectively and in a satisfying way create a group. It is no accident, I suppose, that formal organization rules generally specify that supervisors should not ordinarily have a group of more than 10 or 15 immediate subordinates. I am told--I do not know whether it is true or not--that U.S. Communist Party cells, if they still exist number about 15 or 17. It is as though there were a widely recognized practical limit on the effective size of groups.

There are two reasons why groups form. One is a presumed basic, human need for affiliation, for intimacy, on a continuing and dependable basis. Now, when I say "need," as a psychologist, it is a very strong word. It does not mean just a whim. It means a need that, if not satisfied, limits the performance of the whole organism. This is a way of saying, in our special language, that an unaffiliated individual is a sick individual, a handicapped individual.

The other reason for the formation of groups is the very practical reason that, by pooling resources in group activity, we can do things we otherwise could not do, we can protect ourselves against the hazards of a sometimes hostile world. We soon learn, even as children, that our ability to deal with our personal problems, whatever they might be, is multiplied if we are able to become members in appropriate social groups.

Groups are universal because they serve human purposes and needs. Those of us who do manage to establish group memberships live longer, are healthier, have fewer diseases, have more creative ideas, get more done of the things we want to do, and we enjoy it more. These are persuasive arguments for trying, at least part of the time, to become skillful in the function of being an effective group member.

Now, from a manager's point of view, there are certain things you need to take into account in thinking about the group phenomena in your organization, or in considering the strategies of management that involve deliberately creating groups, or creating circumstances in which groups can grow or change their character.