

## Pressure To Be a Team Player

“O.K., I admit it. I’m not a team player. I work best when I work alone and am left alone,” says Sanjit Pandey.

Sanjit’s employer, an office furniture manufacturer, recently reorganized around teams. All production in the company’s Aurangabad factory is now done in teams. And Sanjit’s design department has been broken up into three design teams.

“I’ve worked here for 4 years. I’m very good at what I do. And my performance reviews confirm that. I’ve scored 96 percent or higher on my evaluations every year I’ve been here. But now everything is changing. I’m expected to be part of our modular-office design team. My evaluations and pay raises are going to depend on how well the team does. And, get this, 50 percent of my evaluation will be on how well I facilitate the performance of the team. I’m really frustrated and demoralized. They hired me for my design skills. They knew I wasn’t a social type. Now they’re forcing me to be a team player. This doesn’t play to my strengths at all.”

Is it unethical for Sanjit’s employer to force him to be a team player? Is his firm breaking an implied contract that it made with him at the time he was hired? Does this employer have any responsibility to provide Sanjit with an alternative that would allow him to continue to work independently? If you were Sanjit, how would you respond?

### **Suggested Answers:**

1. It is not unethical for Sanjit’s employer to “force” him to be a team player. The company’s structure is moving toward a modular (team-based) design. This is an issue of policy, organizational design, and management prerogative.
2. There is no “implied contract” that is at issue here. The conditions under which Sanjit was hired have changed. This is reasonable given the dynamic nature of business environments.
3. The employer does not assume any responsibility to provide Sanjit with an alternative to allow him to work independently. We assume that the organization has determined that team-based, cooperative work arrangements are more beneficial for the company’s products and services. Sanjit has a choice to make.
4. It depends. Learning to work as a team member is a good skill to develop. One way is to just embrace the situation and hone your skills. It may or may not be a strength. He needs to attempt a new role before he decides that he can’t change or adapt.