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## Solid solutions to aid fluid teams

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A group of Simon Fraser University MBA students who coined the phrase 'fluid teams' in the workplace - those with high rates of turnover - are now attracting international attention with their findings on increasing fluid team success.

SFU Business professor Gervase Bushe and his students (Alexandra Chu, Oba Harding, Andrew Johnson, Charles Lo and Jessica Oma) studied the problems associated with fluid teams, which include a lack of cohesion and low commitment, as part of a class project.

Among their recommendations, recently highlighted in the Wall Street Journal (see links below):

- Standardize team members' roles as much as possible, so they don't need to acquire the bulk of knowledge on the job
- Ensure teams have some stable membership. Find individuals with substantive accumulated knowledge and keep them on teams to guide new members and help them get the hang of the job
- Make team members' roles as independent as possible, so they don't need to develop shared ways of thinking
- Make each team member's actions highly visible to avoid individuals getting a 'free ride' at others' expense

Bushe says the subject of enhancing fluid teams attracted him because 'it breaks all the rules. The way to design organizations for teams where people are always coming and going is in some ways the opposite of how to design for normal teams.

' Bushe has spent nearly three decades studying and consulting for teams and team-based organizations.

His recent publications include Clear Leadership, a book about the skills required for leading and working in highly collaborative organizations, and a paper on group development and team effectiveness, co-authored with Graeme Coetzer, which won the Douglas McGregor Award for the best paper published in the Journal of Applied Behavioral Science in 2007.

To read the article in the Wall Street Journal in its entirety, visit: [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB\[Phone removed\]\[Phone removed\]\[Phone removed\]14776.html](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB[Phone removed][Phone removed][Phone removed]14776.html)

The Wall Street Journal's August edition of WSJ Executive Adviser can be viewed at: <http://online.wsj.com/public/page/executive-adviser-08232010.html>