

Stages of Team Development: One of the consistent findings of studies of groups is that they go through recognizable stages of development. Dr. Bruce Tuckman presented a model in 1965 which identified the stages that teams move through.* These stages are commonly known as: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning. Tuckman's model explains that as the team develops maturity and ability, relationships establish, and the leader changes leadership style. Beginning with a directing style, moving through coaching, then participating, finishing delegating and almost detached. By understanding these stages leaders will be better prepared to detect what is going on and take appropriate action to help the team. Team members will better understand the interactions between other team members and their feelings. The recognition of feelings and resultant behaviors can lead to quicker resolution of issues and a more productive work team.

Goals: For leaders and team members to understand the differences between the different stages of team development, to prepare for, and respond proactively as the team matures over time. The small and large group discussion is also a time for team members to clarify their own values about teamwork and discuss ideas, such as, the role of the team in satisfying individual as well as business needs, ways to allocate responsibilities to members, and how to lead and manage teams, etc.

Group Size: A group of 3 – 50 participants can easily participate in this exercise. Any more than 50, the leader and/or facilitator can break the group into two smaller groups or change the process to accommodate larger groups of people.

Time Required: 50 – 60 minutes, depending upon the number of people in the team participating.

Materials:

- Handout on stages of team development (see below)
- Handout “Guess which Stage” (see below)
- Pencil or pen to write with

Physical Setting: A space that accommodates a team gathering to meet and talk together.

Process:

1. Explain that this exercise is to understand the natural stages of team development and to proactively prepare for other changes as a team.
2. Distribute the first handout “Stages of Team Development” and ask participants to read through the information. After the participants are finished reading, discuss the information on the handout and ask for questions. Think through two examples you have had observing teams grow and develop and comment on your experience. Would this information have changed what you did, or did intervene in the team, based on understanding this information?

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3. Distribute the handout “Guess which Stage”** and ask participants to read through the questions and choose the best alternative for each question.
4. Depending on the size of the group, divide participants into pairs or groups of 4 and ask them to discuss their answers.
5. Ask the participants to join everyone in a large group discussion, using the following questions:
 - Were there any surprises as you read through your responses to these questions?
 - What stage do you think we are currently in? Why?
 - What can we do to prepare for future stages?
 - When we aren’t responding appropriately how does this impact our service to customers?
 - What can I as a leader do to support all of you now and in future stages?
 - Knowing that high output, change, and stress can result in miscommunication and conflict, what else can we do to support each other as a team during these difficult times?

Evaluation:

Come back to employees at various meetings and formally (survey) or informally inquire as to their work together.

* Tuckman, B.W. and M.A. C. Jensen. 1977. Stages of small-group development revisited. *Group and Organization Studies*, December, 419-427.

**Adapted from the Leadership Survey found at <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/teamsuv.html>

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Stages of Team Development

Forming: The initial forming stage is the process of putting the structure of the team together. Team members feel ambiguous and conflict is avoided at all costs because of the need to be accepted into the group.

Observable Behaviors	Feelings and Thoughts	Team Needs	Leadership Required
Politeness Tentative joining in Orienting with others personally and professionally Avoids controversy Cliques may form Need for safety and approval Attempts to define tasks, processes, and how it will be decided here Discussion of problems not relevant to the task	Many feel excited, optimistic, and full of anticipation Others may feel suspicious, fearful, and anxious working with others Pride in being chosen for the group What is expected of me? Why are they here? What is expected of me? Uncertainty Apprehension	Team mission and vision Establish specific objectives and tasks Identify roles and responsibilities of team members Establish groundrules Team membership Measurement and feedback Team member expectations Operational guidelines Effective meetings	Visionary, Director Provide structure and clear task direction Allow for get-acquainted time Create an atmosphere of confidence and optimism Active involvement Leader makes many decisions One-way communication from leader to employee

Storming: This stage begins to occur as the process of organizing tasks and processes surface interpersonal conflicts. Leadership, power, and structural issues dominate this stage.

Observable Behaviors	Feelings and Thoughts	Team Needs	Leadership Required
Arguing among members Vying for leadership Differences in points of view and personal style are evident Lack of role clarity Team organizing itself Power struggles and clashes Lack of consensus-seeking behaviors	Feel Defensive Confusion, loss of interest Resistance to tasks Fluctuations in attitude about the team Unsure if I agree with teams mission and purpose. Question the wisdom of others Increase in tension and jealousy	Interpersonal relationships Identify stylistic and personal differences Effective listening Giving and receiving feedback Conflict resolution Clarify and understand the team's purpose Reestablish roles and groundrules esp. how should we deal	Facilitator and Teacher Acknowledge conflict Guide others toward consensus Get members to assume more task responsibility Teach conflict resolution methods Offer support and praise Actively involved

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Lack of progress Establishes unrealistic goals Concern over excessive work Attacking the leader	Unsure about my personal influence and freedom in the team. Wonder what are the risks/benefits of being open/closed.	with violation of codes of conduct?	Leader consults but makes final decisions Fair amount of clarifying, persuading and explaining
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Norming: In this stage, team members are creating new ways of doing and being together. As the group develops cohesion, leadership is shared and team members find they trust one another.

Observable Behaviors	Feelings and Thoughts	Team Needs	Leadership Required
Processes and procedures are agreed upon Comfortable with relationships Focus and energy on tasks Effective conflict resolution skills Sincere attempt to make consensual decisions Balanced influence, shared problem solving Develop routines Sets and achieves task milestones	Sense of belonging to a team Confidence is high Many feel a new ability to express criticism constructively Acceptance of all members in the team General sense of trust Assured that everything is going to work out okay Freedom to express and contribute	Develop a decision making process Be prepared to offer ideas and suggestions Problem solving Utilizing all resources to support the team effort Management coaching Begin to take responsibility in leadership skills	Coach and Sponsor Give feedback and support Plan celebrations Allow for less structure Promotes discussion Asks for contributions from all employees Collaboration Observant for a big pitfall here: groupthink Encouraging others in making decision Continues to build strong relationships

Performing: True interdependence is the norm of this stage of group development. The team is flexible as individuals adapt to meet the needs of other team members and customers. This is a highly productive stage both personally and professionally.

Observable Behaviors	Feelings and Thoughts	Team Needs	Leadership Required
Fully functional teams Roles are clear,	Empathy for one another High commitment	Coaching and counseling Maintain flexibility	Consultant and Sponsor Observing

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interdependence Team able to organize itself Flexible members function well individually, in subgroups or as a team Better understand each other's strengths and weaknesses and insights into group processes	Trusting friendships Fun and excitement Lots of personal development and creativity General sense of satisfaction Continual discovery of how to sustain feelings of momentum and enthusiasm	Measure performance Customer focus Continue consensus process Complete action items and accountability Provide information Giving and Receiving Feedback Dialogue	Inquiring Fulfilling Provides little direction and decisions Leader sets goals: team accomplishes Low amounts of two-way communication needed Give positive reinforcement and support Share new information
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Adjourning: In this stage typically a team members is leaving and/or there is significant change to the team structure, membership, or purpose and the team is experiencing change and transition. While the group continues to perform at times productively they also need time to manage their feelings of loss and transition.

Observable Behaviors	Feelings and Thoughts	Team Needs	Leadership Required
Visible signs of grief, crying, withdrawn, anger Momentum slows down Picking up trivial projects Rehashing old issues Absence from meetings Restless Behavior Bursts of extreme energy sometimes followed by lack of energy	Sadness Humor (that to outsiders could appear cruel) Others feel frustrated at not being recognized Underappreciated Increased discontent General hilarity	Evaluate the efforts of the team Tie up loose ends and tasks Recognize and reward team efforts Acknowledge those who are leaving and recognize their individual contribution to the team Discuss future plans	Facilitator and visionary Help team develop options for renewal or termination Good listening Provide information in many different formats Offer direction to move group back through initial stages, if necessary Guide the process Create opportunities for communication Reflection and carry forth learning to next opportunity

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Guess Which Stage

Objectives: To identify the present stage of the teamwork model that your team is presently operating in.

Directions: This questionnaire contains statements about teamwork. Next to each question, indicate how often your team displays each behavior by using the following scoring system:

- Almost never - 1
- Seldom - 2
- Occasionally - 3
- Frequently - 4
- Almost always - 5

Questionnaire

1. _____ We try to have set procedures or protocols to ensure that things are orderly and run smoothly (e.g. minimize interruptions, everyone gets the opportunity to have their say).
2. _____ We are quick to get on with the task on hand and do not spend too much time in the planning stage.
3. _____ Our team feels that we are all in it together and shares responsibilities for the team's success or failure.
4. _____ We have thorough procedures for agreeing on our objectives and planning the way we will perform our tasks.
5. _____ We are in the process of re-evaluating our process's and procedures. Some of them will be changing.
6. _____ Team members are afraid or do not like to ask others for help.
7. _____ We take our team's goals and objectives literally, and assume a shared understanding.
8. _____ It seems like every time I turn around some is crying or has a long sad face. I couldn't be happier that changes are facing us, so that we can move on.
9. _____ The team leader tries to keep order and contributes to the task at hand.
10. _____ We do not have fixed procedures, we make them up as the task or project progresses.
11. _____ We generate lots of ideals, but we do not use many because we fail to listen to them and reject them without fully understanding them.
12. _____ Team members do not fully trust the others members and closely monitor others who are working on a specific task.
13. _____ The team leader ensures that we follow the procedures, do not argue, do not interrupt, and keep to the point.
14. _____ We are often confused. Not because we don't know how to do the work, but because everything is changing.
15. _____ We enjoy working together; we have a fun and productive time.

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16. _____ A few of the team members are disgruntled because only a few of us were recently acknowledged at a recent recognition event.
17. _____ We have accepted each other as members of the team.
18. _____ The team leader is democratic and collaborative.
19. _____ We are trying to define the goal and what tasks need to be accomplished.
20. _____ Many of the team members have their own ideas about the process and personal agendas are rampant.
21. _____ We fully accept each other's strengths and weakness.
22. _____ We assign specific roles to team members (team leader, facilitator, time keeper, note taker, etc.).
23. _____ We try to achieve harmony by avoiding conflict.
24. _____ The tasks are very different from what we imagined and seem very difficult to accomplish.
25. _____ The leader ensures that we spend a lot of time in preparation for the time ahead.
26. _____ There are many abstract discussions of the concepts and issues, which make some members impatient with these discussions.
27. _____ We are able to work through group problems.
28. _____ For many members, there is little energy for tasks.
29. _____ We argue a lot even though we agree on the real issues.
30. _____ The team is often tempted to go above the original scope of the project.
31. _____ We express criticism of others constructively
32. _____ There is a close attachment to the team.
33. _____ It seems as if little is being accomplished with the project's goals.
34. _____ We all know that we have worked well together as a group. We will miss those that are leaving soon.
35. _____ The goals we have established seem unrealistic.
36. _____ Although we are not fully sure of the project's goals and issues, we are excited and proud to be on the team.
37. _____ We often share personal problems with each other.
38. _____ There is a lot of resisting of the tasks on hand and quality improvement approaches.
39. _____ We get a lot of work done.
40. _____ Our group has accomplished quite a lot, especially in offering new services. This has been a time to celebrate!

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Part 2 - Scoring

Next to each survey item number below, transfer the score that you give that item on the questionnaire. For example, if you scored item one with a 3 (Occasionally), then enter a 3 next to item one below. When you have entered all the scores for each question, total each of the five columns.

Item	Score	Item	Score	Item	Score	Item	Score
1.		2.		4.		3.	
6.		9.		7.		10.	
12.		11.		13.		15.	
19.		20.		17.		18.	
22.		24.		23.		21.	
26.		29.		30.		27.	
33.		35.		31.		32.	
36.		38.		37.		39.	
Total_____		Total_____		Total_____		Total_____	
Forming		Storming		Norming		Performing	
Stage		Stage		Stage		Stage	
						Adjourning	
						Stage	

This questionnaire is to help you assess what stage your team normally operates. It is based on the "Tuckman" model of Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning. The lowest score possible for a stage is 8 (Almost never) while the highest score possible for a stage is 40 (Almost always).

The highest of the five scores indicates which stage you perceive your team to normally function in. If your highest score is 32 or more, it is a strong indicator of the stage your team is in.

The lowest of the three scores is an indicator of the stage your team is least like. If your lowest score is 16 or less, it is a strong indicator that your team does not operate this way.

If two of the scores are close to the same, you are probably going through a transition phase, except:

- If you score high in both the Forming and Storming Phases then you are in the Storming Phase
- If you score high in both the Norming and Performing Phases then you are in the Performing Stage

If there is only a small difference between three or four scores, then this indicates that you have no clear perception of the way your team operates, the team's performance is highly variable, or that you are in the storming phase (this phase can be extremely volatile with high and low points).

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