



STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Governmental Services Center
Serving the People Who Serve the People

When a group of people are first formed into a team, their roles and interactions are not established. Some may act as observers while others may engage the process immediately. There are many models that describe team developmental progression, the most popular developed by B W Tuckman in the 1970s. The four predictable team stages are:

Stage 1: Forming

The Forming stage of team development is an exploration period. Team members are often cautious and guarded in their interactions not really knowing what to expect from other team members.

Look for the following behaviors in the Forming stage:

- Members trying to define the task.
- Lofty, conceptual discussions as people try to express who they are.
- Discussions about what information needs to be gathered.

Strategies: Help team members to define the task. Make sure the purpose and task are clearly defined and share management expectations of the group. Give the team time to get comfortable with one another, but move the team along as well.

Stage 2: Storming

The Storming stage is characterized by competition and strained relationships. There are various degrees of conflict that teams experience in regards to power, leadership, and decision making.

Look for the following behaviors in the Storming stage:

- Members begin to show their true styles.
- A growing impatience will surface over lack of progress.
- Members will get into one another's territory, causing irritation.
- General disagreement over process, task, and overall purpose of the team.

Strategies: Don't ignore the Storming stage. Acknowledge it with the team as a natural developmental step. Surface conflicts and address them. Review ground rules and revisit the purpose and related administrative matters of the team.

Stage 3: Norming

The Norming stage of team development is characterized by cohesiveness among team members. After working through the storming stage, team members discover they have common interests.

Look for the following behaviors in the Norming stage:

- Ground rules and formal procedures are now taken more seriously.
- The team will want to discuss items more; less time spent on generation, and more on decision making.
- Members will want to limit agenda items to focus on specific topics.
- Conflicts are addressed and resolved.

Strategies: At this stage, the team has process down. Task will take on new significance as the team will want to accomplish its purpose. Remind the team of the task. Be diligent in adhering to the road map, providing time for feedback and closure.

Stage 4: Performing

The Performing stage of team development is the result of working through the first three stages. By this time, team members have learned how to work together as a fully functioning team.

A team in the performing stage will be productive, tasks will be accomplished. They will demonstrate loyalty to the group and respect individual dissension and disagreement.

Strategies: Teams at the Performing stage are generally self-regulating. Road maps, processes, decision making and other matters will be handled independently by the team.

For more information on teams, visit our workshop *Team Building* or Course Catalog.



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