Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing and Adjourning

Managers are people who do things right, while leaders are people who do the right thing.

– Warren Bennis, Ph.D.
"On Becoming a Leader"
Introduction

A team has “A small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and a common approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.”

- Forming – team members are introduced
- Storming – the team transitions from “as is” to “to be”
- Norming – the team reaches consensus on the “to be” process
- Performing – the team has settled its relationships and expectations
- Adjourning – the team shares the improved processes with others
Staged Development of Teams

- The Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing stages are seemingly obvious but are in fact difficult.
  - Participants want to move to the Performing stage without passing through the first three stages.
  - The Forming stage is relatively easy.
  - The Storming stage is difficult and many times the cause of the team’s failure.
  - Performing seems easy once the storming process is complete.
Staged Development of Teams

- The “Real” problem is how to identify when a stage is complete:
  - The team members agree that the stage is complete?
  - The team coach agrees the stage is complete?
  - The team simply moves on to the next stage?

- The definition of the “exit criteria” between stages needs to be worked out prior to the team’s reaching the end of the stage.
  - This again seems obvious but is also very difficult.
Forming

- The “polite” stage in which the team starts to form.
- Everyone is trying to figure out what the team concept is.
- Initial “silent” leaders may take the rein.
- The team is usually positive – for the most part – for the initial meetings.
- No one has offended anyone at this point yet!
Forming

Forming includes feelings and behaviors of:
- Excitement, anticipation, and optimism.
- Pride in being chosen for the project.
- A tentative attachment to the team Suspicion and anxiety about the job.
- Defining the tasks and how they will be accomplished.
- Determining acceptable group behavior.
- Deciding what information needs to be gathered.
- Abstract discussions of the concepts and issues, and for some members, impatience with these discussions. There will be difficulty in identifying some of the relevant problems.
Forming

- Because there is so much going on to distract members' attention in the beginning, the team accomplishes little, if anything, that concerns its project goals. This is perfectly normal.

- Exit Criteria?
Storming

- The honeymoon is over.
- The silent leaders may be clashing for control of the group.
- People disagree and may blame the team concept, saying it doesn’t work.
- Management needs to do a lot of coaching to get people to work past their differences, may take separate 1–on–1’s with people.
Storming

Storming includes feelings and behaviors of:

- Resisting the tasks.
- Resisting quality improvement approaches suggested by other members.
- Sharp fluctuations in attitude about the team and the project's chance of success.
- Arguing among members even when they agree on the real issues.
- Defensiveness, competition, and choosing sides.
- Questioning the wisdom of those who selected this project and appointed the other members of the team.
- Establishing unrealistic goals. Disunity, increased tension, and jealousy.
Storming

- The above pressures mean that team members have little energy to spend on progressing towards the team's goal.
- But they are beginning to understand one another. This phase sometimes takes 3 or 4 meetings before arriving at the Norming phase.
- Exit Criteria?
Norming

- The team is starting to work well together, and has turned around from the ‘storming’ phase.
- They may start to “brag up” the team concept to others who aren’t in the team and will be very positive about their role/team group.
- Often, the team will bounce back and forth between “storming” and “norming” when issues crop up.
Norming

- Regressions will become fewer and fewer and the team will bounce back to “norming” in a quicker manner as the team “matures.”
- The natural leaders at this stage may not be the ones who were visible in stages 1 & 2 (those people may no longer have the “unofficial lead roles” within the team.
- This team still takes management direction, but not as much as storming.
Norming

- Norming includes feelings and behaviors of:
  - An ability to express criticism constructively.
  - Acceptance of membership in the team.
  - An attempt to achieve harmony by avoiding conflict.
  - More friendliness, confiding in each other, and sharing of personal problems.
  - A sense of team cohesion, spirit, and goals.
  - Establishing and maintaining team ground rules and boundaries.

- As team members begin to work out their differences, they now have more time and energy to spend on the project.

- Exit Criteria?
Performing

- This is the level where the team is a high-performance team.
- They can be given new projects and tasks and accomplish them successfully, and very seldom fall back into the “storming” phase.
- At this level, the team is taking on new work on their own, and selling it to other teams.
Performing

- At this level, the team can usually take on a new member or two with little trouble as far as regressing goes.
- They are a complete self-directed team and require little, if any, management direction.
- In many organizations, this can take 6 months or longer to reach this state this stage.
Performing

- Performing includes feelings and behaviors of:
  - Members have insights into personal and group processes, and better understanding of each other's strengths and weakness.
  - Constructive self-change.
  - Ability to prevent or work through group problems.
  - Close attachment to the team.

- The team is now an effective, cohesive unit. You can tell when your team has reached this stage because you start getting a lot of work done.

- Exit Criteria?
Adjourning

- The team briefs and shares the improved process during this phase.
- When the team finally completes that last briefing, there is always a bittersweet sense of accomplishment coupled with the reluctance to say good-bye.
- Many relationships formed within these teams continue long after the team disbands.
- Exit Criteria?
# Teams versus Work Groups

## Roles and Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Teams</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Individuals establish a set of behaviors called roles.</td>
<td>- Teams have a shared understanding of how to perform their role.</td>
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<td>- These roles set the expectations governing the relationships between the group members.</td>
<td>- For example:</td>
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<td>- The search for role definition serves as a source of confusion and conflict.</td>
<td>- Time keeper</td>
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<td>- Score keeper</td>
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<td>- Leader</td>
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<td>- Facilitator</td>
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Teams versus Work Groups

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<tr>
<th>Identity</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Groups do not have a cohesive identity.</td>
<td>Teams have an identity.</td>
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<td>It is difficult to establish a sense of cohesion that characterizes a team.</td>
<td>A team has a clear understanding about what constitutes the team’s “work” and why it is important.</td>
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<td>They can describe a picture of what the team needs to achieve, and the norms and values that will guide them.</td>
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# Teams versus Work Groups

## Cohesion

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<td>Groups lack a source of cohesion.</td>
<td>Teams have an esprit that shows a sense of bonding and camaraderie.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being a member of a group still leaves the person “alone” and an individual.</td>
<td>Esprit is the spirit, soul, and state of mind of the team.</td>
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<td>It is the overall consciousness of the team that a person identifies with and feels a part of.</td>
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<td>Individuals begin using “we” more than “me” or “I.”</td>
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Teams versus Work Groups

_Facilitating Groups_
- Groups tend to get bogged down with trivial issues.

_Teams_
- Teams use facilitators to keep the team on the right path.
Teams versus Work Groups

**Communication**

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<td>The communications with a group tend to be centered on individuals.</td>
<td>The team is committed to open communication.</td>
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<td>Individual positions are more important than a “team” opinion.</td>
<td>Team members feel they can state their opinions, thoughts, and feelings without fear.</td>
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<td>Defending ones opinion becomes an end unto itself.</td>
<td>Differences of opinion are valued and methods of managing conflict are understood.</td>
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<td>Through honest and caring feedback, members are aware of their strengths and weaknesses as team members.</td>
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# Teams versus Work Groups

## Flexibility

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<td>Most groups are extremely rigid.</td>
<td>Teams, provide flexibility and perform different task and maintenance functions as needed.</td>
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<td>This rigidity is due to many causes:</td>
<td>The responsibility for team development and leadership is shared.</td>
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<td>The strengths of each member are identified and used.</td>
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<td>- Defense of individual positions</td>
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<td>- Individual reward systems</td>
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<td>The strengths of each individual is difficult to capitalize on since someone has to give up a role to allow another to assume that role.</td>
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Acknowledgement of Sources

- This set of slides is a compendium of ideas.
- Collecting of good ideas and repurposing them seems to add value to new readers who may not have encountered these ideas in the past.
- The concepts of teaming and the processes of team building can be traced to many authors.
- John Kotter is one source everyone should consult.
- Although these ideas appear obvious, they are in fact quite difficult to put into practice.