

Team Building

Tuckman's Stages of Team Development

Stage 1: FORMING

During this stage, team members discover what behaviors are acceptable to the group. For teams with new leadership, mission, and/or members, this stage is a period of testing behavior and dependence on formal or informal group leadership. Other characteristics may include:

- Getting to know one another and defining roles within the group
- Feeling of initial attachment to the team
- Establishing a mission, goals and ground rules
- Hesitant participation
- Tests of behavioral expectations and ways to handle behavioral problems
- A mixture of enthusiasm and excitement, and/or suspicion, fear and anxiety about the new situation
- Members tend to be on their best behavior, polite and a bit restrained
- Discussion of symptoms or problems peripheral to the task;
- Minimal work accomplishment

Stage 2: STORMING

During Stage 2, team members may become hostile or overzealous as a way to express their individuality and resist group formation. Team members are responding emotionally to the challenge of accomplishing the task. Other characteristics may include:

- In-fighting and/or challenging the leader
- Establishment of unachievable, unclear goals
- Disunity, increased tension, and jealousy
- Resistance to the task demands
- Polarization of group members
- Creativity due to comfort level in sharing ideas and opinions
- Concern over excessive work
- Establishment of pecking orders
- Minimal work accomplishment

Stage 3: NORMING

During this stage, members accept the team, team norms, their own roles, and idiosyncrasies of fellow members. Emotional conflict is reduced by patching up previously conflicting relationships. Other characteristics of this stage include:

- An attempt to achieve harmony by avoiding conflict
- A high level of familiarity
- A new ability to express emotions constructively
- A sense of team cohesiveness with common spirit and goals
- The establishment and maintenance of boundaries
- Lack of creativity or new ideas due to avoidance of conflict
- Moderate work accomplishment

Stage 4: PERFORMING

Now that the team has established its interpersonal norms, it becomes an entity capable of diagnosing and solving problems, and making decisions. This stage is not always reached by every team. Other characteristics of this stage include:

- Members experience insight into personnel and interpersonal processes
- Constructive self-change occurs
- Conflicts are dealt with constructively as they arise
- Members can challenge each other's ideas without getting personal
- A great deal of work is accomplished