



High Performing team development

A manager / facilitator handbook

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# Overview of Team Development

One of the differentiating characteristics of a high performing team compared to simply an nominal performing team is the fact that the relationships and interactions are at a different level. Typically high performing teams exhibit:

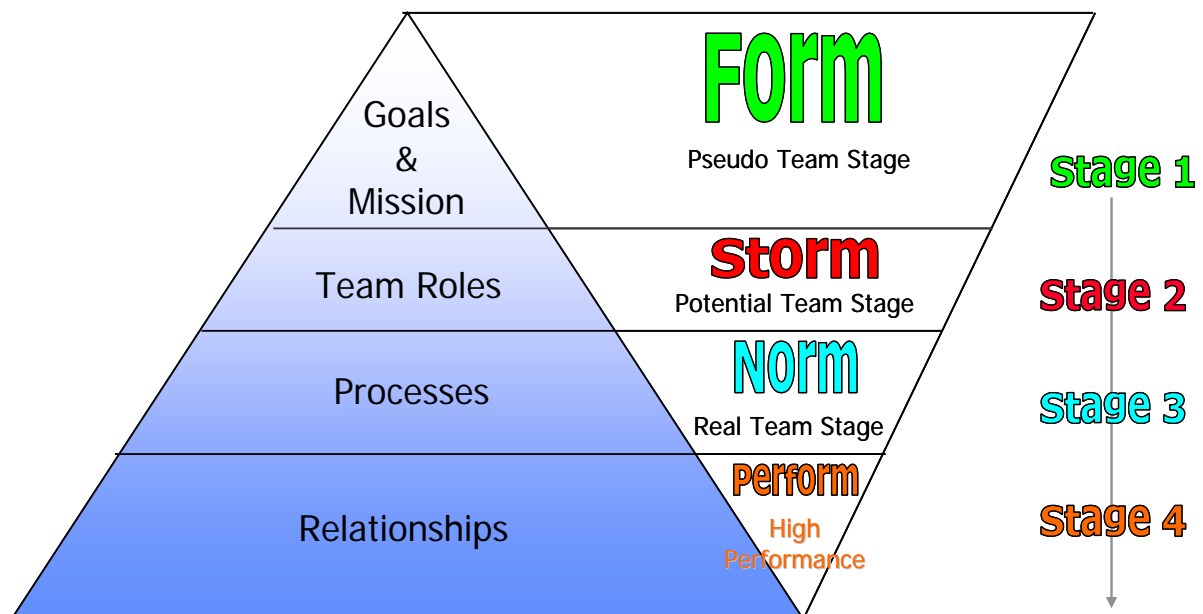
- A tolerance of mistakes – they learn from them and don't seek to blame others.
- Willingness to help each other out in times of need.
- Core competencies of the team are evident and continually developed.
- A constant search for more challenging and stimulating projects.
- A continual drive for excellence in what they do and the services / products they provide.
- An ability to celebrate success (both team and individual).
- Openness to challenge each other and are constructively critical when necessary.

The question is, 'how do you build a high performing team'?

This document is designed to provoke thought and action for managers and facilitators alike. It will explore the stages teams go through and what can be done to help facilitate the process towards high performance.

The model below provides an outline of the process recognising what needs to be built in to the team at each stage. (e.g. at the forming stage it is critical to have a common vision that inspires a shared belief around what the team is about and where it is going in the future.)

You'll note that at the final stage (stage 4) is where the relationships within the team are working at it's optimal and therefore most likely to bring about high performance.



Teams pass through four stages of development: forming, storming, norming, and performing. Members' needs and behaviours change during each stage, this will become evident as we go through this overview. The time that a team spends at each stage may vary, and teams may move back to an earlier stage if there are changes in team members or in what the team has to accomplish.

The following pages look in more detail at each of the stages, what behaviours you will see at each stage and what can be done to move the team on towards high performance.

## Team Development: **Forming**

**You will recognise a group in the Forming Stage because they are:**

- Feeling anxious.
- Very polite.
- Using tentative statements.
- Waiting for the leader to tell them what to do.
- Indecisive and often self-conscious.
- Giving out credentials often.
- Feeling moderately eager, with high expectations.
- Testing the situation and central figures.

**During the Forming Stage, the group needs include:**

- Getting acquainted with other members, building initial rapport.
- Sensing what behaviours will be acceptable in this group.
- Reducing the suspicion and anxiety about the work ahead.
- Developing an early sense of what each person's role might be.
- A common understanding of the group mission/purpose.
  - Who are we?
  - What do we do?
  - For whom do we do it?
  - Why do we do it?
  - Maybe - how will we know we are doing it well?
- Ideas on how to get started on the task.
- Decisions on what information needs to be gathered.
- Defining some boundaries and approaches.

**A team has moved from Forming to Storming when:**

- Team members feel comfortable with each other.
- Team members are committed to the purpose of the group.
- Team members are willing to risk challenges to their ideas and suggestions.
- There is evidence of healthy debate and discussion / disagreement.

## Team Development: **Storming**

**You will recognise a group in the Storming Stage because they are:**

- Competing for power and/or attention.
- Cliquish.
- Resistant.
- Becoming more outspoken.
- Listening for rebuttal.
- Questioning how/why things are done.
- Reacting negatively toward leaders and other members.

**During the Storming Stage, the group needs include:**

- Building trust in other team members and the chance of success.
- Managing the tendency toward unbalanced participation, competition, and coalition forming into subgroups.
- Identifying or creating a meaningful role for each team member.
- Sharing information and experiences that are relevant to the task.
- Overcoming resistance to quality improvement ideas and strategies that are new.
- Resisting the tendencies to take flight from the task and hard work.
- Providing organisation and structure for dealing with the key tasks.
- Encouraging and managing disagreement and conflict so that issues are identified and explored.

**A team has moved from Storming to Norming when:**

- The team is confident that the leader has the necessary skills and abilities.
- Every member feels he or she has a role and significant contribution to make.
- Conflict is a valuable resource to the team.
- The team 'attitude' has changed from competition to co-operation and active listening.

## Team Development: **Norming**

**You will recognise a group in the Norming Stage because they are:**

- Being more open and giving more feedback.
- Relationship oriented.
- Becoming more involved with the team.
- Supportive of one another.
- Less reliant upon the leader.
- Increasing their ability to productively solve problems.
- Clarifying team purposes and member roles.

**During the Norming Stage, the group needs include:**

- Reconciling competing loyalties and responsibilities.
- Clarity and agreement of core processes.
- Encouraging the mutual support, interest, and involvement of all team members.
- Opportunity to express feelings and opinions in addition to ideas and information.
- Knitting the support and cohesiveness of the team back together after periods of vigorous, productive disagreement and conflict.
- Reinforcing positive team norms and changing unproductive norms.
- Creating a team identity.
- Exploring any and all relevant information.
- Fostering creativity, innovation, and new ways of thinking about issues.
- Vigorously testing ideas and their implications in an objective manner.
- Revisiting and redefining (as necessary) the team's mission.

**A team has moved from Norming to Performing when:**

- The team expresses unanimous agreement on key objectives and norms.
- Every member feels empowered to share freely.
- There is a high level of trust among members.
- Feedback about both task and relationship issues is offered by team members.
- The team starts sharing leadership responsibilities.

## Team Development: **Performing**

**You will recognise a group in the Performing Stage because they are:**

- Showing high confidence in accomplishing tasks.
- Relaxed.
- Sharing leadership.
- Highly motivated.
- Depending on each other more.
- Performing at high levels.
- Establishing their own structure.
- Clearly understanding their roles and responsibilities.

**During the Performing Stage, the group needs include:**

- Maintaining mutual trust and acceptance at a high level.
- Permitting members to fully share the leadership function.
- Allowing the team to function without you.
- Giving the team a lot of room; informality should predominate.
- Complimenting team progress and success as well as unity.
- Recognising individual and team contributions.
- If necessary, using caution against arrogance and insular attitudes.
- Providing tools and methods for tackling complex problems.
- Maintaining realistic expectations for team effort.
- Initiating thorough discussion of implementation strategies and potential roadblocks.
- Encouraging flexibility and resourcefulness.

## Conclusion and outline of required development steps:

<b>Form:</b>	
What's required?	<p>A need for clarity around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Plan</li> <li>• Mission / Vision</li> <li>• Overall Key Performance Indicators</li> <li>• Who we are as a collection of individuals.</li> <li>• Individual measures – first draft</li> <li>• SWOT analysis</li> <li>• Building capability</li> </ul>
Why?	<p>Its important to establish the frame around how you're going to work together, so that individuals gain a sense of what the team is about and how they 'all' contribute. It also starts to raise the challenges that the team will encounter – without the team gaining a sense of them being overwhelming.</p>
How?	<p>This is a whole team meeting with neutral facilitation of either a one or two day duration. This enables the leader / manager to start to become an integrated member of the team.</p>
When?	<p>Within the first few months of the team coming together.</p>

<b>Storm &amp; Norm:</b>	
What's required?	<p>A need to embed the core processes and overcome any initial challenges either internally or externally. There may also be a need to pull on the dynamics and capability of the collective team through greater understanding of each other and what core skills they need to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MBTI / FIRO B</li> <li>• Wants &amp; Offers</li> <li>• Core process reviews</li> <li>• Performance Management</li> <li>• Reward &amp; Recognition</li> <li>• Communication (internal and external)</li> <li>• Capability Planning</li> <li>• SWOT review</li> </ul>
Why?	<p>Its vital at this stage in the team life to pull upon the greater dynamic of the group. (i.e. how we can support and develop within the team by sharing the internal capability of the group.) It's also important to review (or establish) core processes that support the team.</p>
How?	<p>This is a whole team meeting with potentially neutral facilitation of either a one or two day duration. This again enables the leader / manager to start to become an integrated member of the team. The process here can (and often should) form part of the overall meeting process of the team. This ensures that the approach can be regularly reviewed.</p>
When?	<p>Between 3 to 5 months of the team coming together.</p>

## Conclusion and outline of required development steps (contd):

<b>Perform:</b>	
What's required?	A need for 'out of work' activity that strengthens the team as a cohesive group.
Why?	It's important to review and take time to 'step back' from the business and in a parallel process use the time to 'reward' the team while developing them too.
How?	This is a whole team event with neutral facilitation of a two day duration. This enables the leader / manager to start to become an integrated member of the team. It is often an off-site with a social or activity based agenda (sometimes both) that allows the team to build relationships.
When?	Within the first year of the team coming together.