

Building an Effective Work Team: Maximizing Team Success at Every Stage



By Jeanne Baer
Creative Training Solutions
Lincoln, Nebraska

Copyright 2009 NSLP

Five stages of team development

- Forming
- Storming
- Norming
- Performing
- Adjourning

2

What you'll learn today:

- What each stage is
- How people feel in each stage
- What they do in each stage
- How to maximize that stage

3

Forming: What it is

- The birth and “early childhood” of the team
- Members begin to get acquainted
- Members begin to clarify roles and responsibilities
- Members learn about the project

4

Forming: How people feel

- Filled with pride (or dread) at being chosen
- Cautiously optimistic (or suspicious)
- Eager/anxious for answers
 - purpose, timelines, budget
 - expectations, critical issues, measurement of success
 - responsibility, authority, scope

5

Forming: What people do

- Define what needs to be done
- Discuss abstractions
 - frustrated members impatient but silent
- Determine acceptable group behavior, so...
 - observant
 - polite
 - guarded
- Form cliques
 - go “underground” to express conflict and recruit supporters

6

Forming: How to maximize it

- Use directive (“telling”) leadership
- Start with a good orientation process
- Teach team stages

7

Forming: How to maximize it

- Discuss and get agreement on the purpose/mission
 - What is the work we were brought here to do?
 - What is the team’s scope?
 - What are the critical issues we must address?
 - What will a successful outcome look like?
 - What are management’s expectations?
 - How much authority and responsibility do we have?

8

Forming: How to maximize it

- Set clear, S.M.A.R.T. goals
 - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-based
 - if goals can’t be quantified, find qualitative data to indicate improvement
- Know how the goals support the overall organizational mission

9

Forming: How to maximize it

- Discuss and agree on timelines
 - What is the overall timeline?
 - Are there mid-point milestones?
 - What is the approval process?

10

Forming: How to maximize it

- Explore roles and responsibilities
 - What strengths, skills, and expertise do members possess?
 - What perceived weaknesses?
 - What is the role of the leader?
 - What is the role of the facilitator?
 - Is s/he a team member?

11

Forming: How to maximize it

- Discuss and resolve...
 - How much time are members expected to spend on this effort?
 - How will members communicate? (Face-to-face vs. electronic)
 - Who gets status reports?
 - Must all members attend all meetings?
 - How do we decide who attends which meetings?
 - If someone misses a meeting, how will s/he catch up?

12

Forming: How to maximize it

- Negotiate ground rules
 - so too-strict people will “get real”
 - so too-lax people hear reasons for ground rules
 - goal: everyone agrees to ground rules and will help enforce them

13

Forming: How to maximize it

- Resolve ground rules issues:
 - Wait to be called on?
 - Interruptions okay?
 - Short side conversations okay?
 - Make most decisions by consensus?

14

Forming: How to maximize it

- Useful ground rules
 - no “plopping” allowed
 - honor time limits
 - don’t take cheap shots or otherwise distract the group
 - focus on interests, not positions
 - speak up during the meeting, not later
 - suggest only solutions which are aligned with mission

15

Forming: How to maximize it

- What to do with ground rules
 - post on wall
 - some teams read them aloud at meetings
 - some teams sign them

16

Storming: What it is

- Thunder, lightning, and a flood
- Conflict about *everything*
- Slow progress on the project

17

Storming: How people feel

- Annoyed at and critical of each other
- Defensive about being criticized
- Territorial
- Jealous
- Frustrated at lack of progress

18

Storming: What people do

- Struggle for power
- Argue about everything and prevent progress
- Focus on minutiae to avoid *real* issues
- Complain and blame about constraints

19

Storming: How to maximize it

- Don't be blindsided; embrace it
- Lead by coaching and persuading
- Deal with conflict openly; be prepared to mediate

20

Storming: How to maximize it

- Develop teaming skills
- Be prepared to redefine goals, roles, and tasks
- Remind members and the team of their value

21

Questions?



22

Norming: What it is

- Roles and responsibilities are clear and accepted
- Leadership may have shifted
- Teamwork gets more natural and fluid
- Members experience some “wins”
- “Groupthink” may emerge
- Members may regress to Storming

23

Norming: How people feel

- More comfortable expressing ideas and feelings
- More accepting of diverse points of view
- More trusting, respectful, and supportive
- Understanding of strengths *and* weaknesses
- Motivated and satisfied

24

Norming: What people do

- Take more responsibility
- Develop decision-making methods
- Respect and share leadership
- “Win” by spending time and energy on project

25

Norming: What people do

- Communicate more often and meaningfully
 - share ideas more freely
 - members ask for and offer help
 - constructive criticism possible and welcomed
- Form friendships and *esprit de corps*
- Make effort to resolve problems and achieve group harmony

26

Norming: How to maximize it

- Enjoy and give recognition
- Leader should be facilitative/participative
- Keep using teamwork skills

27

Norming: How to maximize it

- Speak up, to avoid “Groupthink”
 - caused by very strong new friendships
 - members silently think, “I’m the only one who disagrees”
 - caused by overconfidence
 - members think, “We’re too cool to make mistakes”

Performing: What it is

- Breakthroughs in relationships, innovation, and productivity
- Strategic awareness
- Little need for supervision
- Competence + Confidence = Fluid roles

Performing: How people feel

- Optimistic, confident
- Synergistic, interdependent
- Attached, helpful
- Appreciative of differences

Performing: What people do

- Focus on product *and* process
- Handle decisions without supervision
- Resolve conflict well
- Perform

31

Performing: How to maximize it

- Deepen knowledge and skills
- Avoid cliques; welcome new members
- Leader can delegate
- Measure and celebrate success
- Enjoy

32

Performing: Will it last?

- Changes can send the team back to earlier stages
 - leaders
 - members
 - external environment
 - expectations
- Recognize and address changes

33

Adjourning : What It Is

- Completing the task
- Breaking up the team

34

Adjourning: How people feel

- Anxious
- Sad
- Satisfied
- A mixture

35

Adjourning: What people do

- Complete deliverables
- Evaluate process and product – pass on lessons learned
- Create a closing celebration

36

Adjourning: How to maximize it

- Realize that productivity may rise *or* fall
- Acknowledge feelings about the transition and dissolution
- Give members closure
- Help members move on to next challenge

37

Questions?



38

More information

National Student Loan Program
1300 O St., P.O. Box 82507
Lincoln, NE 68501-2507
800-735-8778
www.nslp.org

Jeanne Baer, President
Creative Training Solutions
800-410-3178
jbaer@cts-online.net
www.cts-online.net



39
