



Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing: Tuckman’s Organizational Development Cycle

I’m not afraid of storms, for I’m learning how to sail my ship.
Louisa May Alcott

By Ed Democracy

We have all been through organizational storms. Some of us have been through this cycle many, many times and wondered what was going on. It would be helpful if there were organizational weather alerts on the news and I could whip up a blizzard a bunch of meteorological metaphors for organizational dynamics right about now ... but, instead, I will list an extract from an article which introduces you to the Tuckman Model. There are some Helpful Lnks below, as well. There is a vast amount of information out there which can help put perspective on things for us. Ultimately, though, I think we have to be our own weatherpeople and keep a weather eye out for things. We can take a lesson from Bush, “Brownie”, and Katrina. Prevention & awareness

go a long way! Which reminds me of the Ice Storm of ‘98

[Thanks to Businessballs.com for this extract:]

Features of each phase:

- forming - stage 1**
High dependence on leader for guidance and direction. Little agreement on team aims other than received from leader. Individual roles and responsibilities are unclear. Leader must be prepared to answer lots of questions about the team’s purpose, objectives and external relationships. Processes are often ignored. Members test tolerance of system and leader. Leader directs (similar to Situational Leadership® ‘Telling’ mode).
- storming - stage 2**
Decisions don’t come easily within group. Team members vie for position as they attempt to establish themselves in relation to other team members and the leader, who might receive challenges from team members. Clarity of purpose increases but plenty of uncertainties persist. Cliques and factions form and there may be



- power struggles. The team needs to be focused on its goals to avoid becoming distracted by relationships and emotional issues. Compromises may be required to enable progress. Leader coaches (similar to Situational Leadership® ‘Selling’ mode).
- norming - stage 3**
Agreement and consensus is largely formed among team, who respond well to facilitation by leader. Roles and responsibilities are clear and accepted. Big decisions are made by group agreement. Smaller decisions may be

- delegated to individuals or small teams within group. Commitment and unity is strong. The team may engage in fun and social activities. The team discusses and develops its processes and working style. There is general respect for the leader and some of leadership is more shared by the team. Leader facilitates and enables (similar to the Situational Leadership® ‘Participating’ mode).
- performing - stage 4**
The team is more strategically aware; the team knows clearly why it is doing what it is doing. The team has a shared vision and is able to stand on its own feet with no interference or participation from the leader. There is a focus on over-achieving goals, and the team makes most of the decisions against criteria agreed with the leader. The team has a high degree of autonomy. Disagreements occur but now they are resolved within the team positively and necessary changes to processes and structure are made by the team. The team is able to work towards achieving the goal, and also to attend to relationship, style and process issues along the way. Team members look after each other. The team requires delegated tasks and projects from the leader. The team does not need to be instructed or assisted. Team members might ask for assistance from the leader with personal and interpersonal development. Leader delegates and oversees (similar to the Situational Leadership® ‘Delegating’ mode).

HELPFUL LINKS

Bruce Tuckman’s 1965 Forming Storming Norming Performing team-development model
<http://www.businessballs.com/tuckmanformingstormingnormingperforming.htm>

Matrix Teams
<http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/leadtem2.html>

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