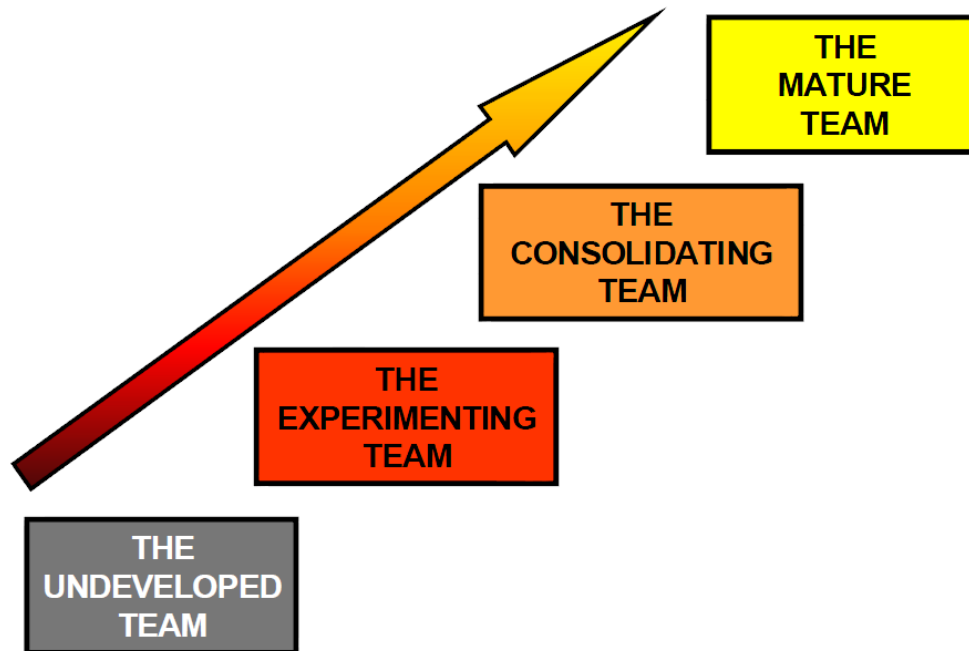# The 4 Dimensions Of Team Performance

THE 4 DIMENSIONS OF TEAM PERFORMANCE

Effective teams, because they are about interaction between people, defy simple analysis. However, a simple four-stage model may help those working in teams better understand their level of development. (Woodcock)

Stage One - THE UNDEVELOPED TEAM

Probably the largest category. Usually tolerable performers, but almost always hidebound by maintaining existing conventions, and replaying old solutions to new problems. Procedures, departmental barriers, job descriptions are strong defences against change. People in these teams are often unhappy about 'rocking the boat'. Bureaucracy, rules and red tape become havens of security.

As a result, their meetings are usually about the re-stating of positions or issues, a lot of talking and very little listening. Decision-making tends to be focused on the leader. The-team is disheartened and the leader seldom challenged.

A prime characteristic at this stage is that feelings are just not dealt with. There is a belief that feelings are appropriate to home life and that work is about work.

Mistakes are often covered up, as they are regarded as a sign of failure, with the result that the team learns few lessons.

Stage Two - THE EXPERIMENTING TEAM

Teams in this stage of development have begun to look at some of the interpersonal issues, because they have either stumbled across a willingness to change or because someone, usually the leader, has made a commitment to change. A major failure or a new opportunity may have been a catalyst.

Problems are faced more openly, and discussion leads to a wider consideration of options before decisions are taken. Gradually as some of the taboo subjects are skirted around, others begin to be examined. One of the first is the way in which the team is managed. People begin to open up and say things they have wanted to for years.

All these changes can lead to a feeling of discomfort and traumatic encounters, but uncomfortable as it may seem, most team members begin to feel the process will be worthwhile. They feel they can 'get it off their chests'.

Those in the group begin to learn to listen more. They become aware of the out of work existence of their colleagues. The group becomes introspective, cautious about how to handle these changes. It is a transitional stage, a sort of watershed. There are no real tangible outcomes yet. But most team members begin to welcome the process of change.

Stage Three - THE CONSOLIDATING TEAM

The team members are now more relaxed with each other. Meetings are more inter-active, and players have more confidence and possess a resolve to be more open. It re-focuses its attention, not on the inter-personal barriers which have been stopping team work, but on its operating methods and procedures.

The team decides to adopt a more methodical approach, and looks again at the rules and procedures. The group realises the need for a blueprint and begins to take ownership of many of its old systems, modified in the light of current experience and group needs.

Most importantly, this affects the decision making process. This becomes more systematic, targeted against clear objectives, based on the collection of relevant information, and results from careful planning. Decision making still rests ultimately with the leader, but team members can be surprised at their degree of commitment to those decisions.

Stage Four - THE MATURE TEAM

Here the openness, concern and improved relationships of stage 2 are blended with the systematic approach in stage 3. Result - a sound foundation for the mature team.

The leader becomes flexible, pushing aside protocol, and developing those individual roles both within and without the team which makes it more responsive, particularly in a near crisis when the power and energy of team members needs to be harnessed.

These teams succeed, and every member learns to glow in this success. Individual objectives are still strong motivators, but team members learn to share in team achievement.

Because the team is more able, it can better embrace the needs and aspirations of its members. It can also bring new people into the team as there is no suspicion. Openness, co-operation and confrontation and honesty are basic principles. The team begins to form a vision of its wider responsibilities, within the organisation, or indeed in society at large. It has the confidence to set and work towards long term goals. It is prepared to invest heavily in development of its members.

Because it is confident it welcomes outside help, and graciously holds out a helping hand to less mature teams. It is a good place to be.

HOW DOES A TEAM DEVELOP?

Teams do not form immediately, or automatically when people meet. Teams gradually take shape and mature over a period of time, very much like individuals having a defined growth cycle (B Tuckman). Traditionally, there are four main stages of team development:

1 Forming
2 Storming
3 Norming
4 Performing

So what are the main characteristics a team can look for at each stage?

FORMING - The key features of the forming stage are:
- The team is not yet a group, but rather a set of individuals.
- There will be much discussion about defining their purpose, team membership, roles, leadership pattern and life-span.
- At this stage, individuals tend to want to establish a personal identity within the team, to make some individual impression.

STORMING - Most teams then progress through a storming stage, when:
- A degree of conflict abounds, and individuals and ideals are challenged.
- Many personal agendas are revealed, with a degree of inter-personal hostility being inevitable.
- Through skilful handling, new and more realistic objectives, procedures and norms can be established.
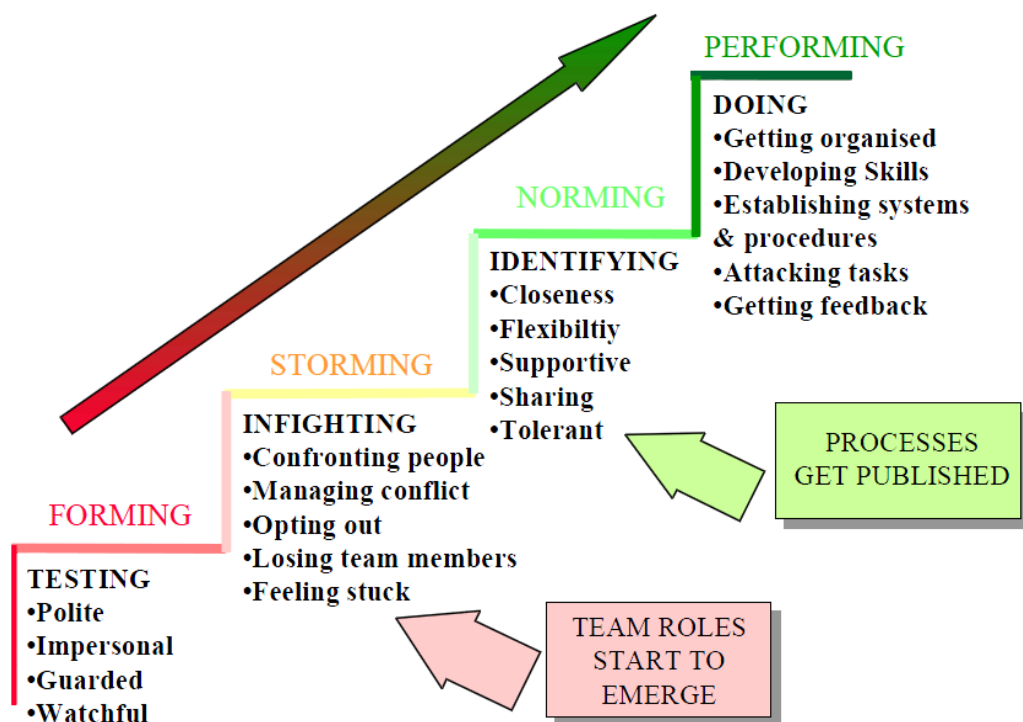- Trust between team members can start to develop.

NORMING - The team now needs to establish norms and practices:
- When and how should it work?
- How should decisions be taken?
- What type of behaviour should it expect and tolerate?
- What level of work and degree of openness, trust and confidence is appropriate?
- At this stage, individual team members will be testing the temperature of the team, and measuring the appropriate level of commitment.

PERFORMING - Only when the three previous stages have been successfully completed will the team be at full maturity, and be able to be fully and sensibly productive.

Of course, the team will be achieving a degree of performance at all stages of development, but it is likely to be impeded by the other processes of growth, and by individual agendas.

If, for example, the leadership issue or the objective or purpose of the team are not resolved early on, they are likely to be recurring topics that crop up in every meeting, in some form or other, seriously hindering the true work of the team.

PERFORMING

DOING
- Getting organised
- Developing Skills
- Establishing systems & procedures
- Attacking tasks
- Getting feedback

NORMING

IDENTIFYING
- Closeness
- Flexibiltiy
- Supportive
- Sharing
- Tolerant

PROCESSES GET PUBLISHED

STORMING

INFIGHTING
- Confronting people
- Managing conflict
- Opting out
- Losing team members
- Feeling stuck

FORMING

TESTING
- Polite
- Impersonal
- Guarded
- Watchful

TEAM ROLES START TO EMERGE

TEAM DEVELOPMENT - THE FOUR STAGES

STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4
Characteristics	Characteristics	Characteristics	Characteristics
		Stage 2 with a more systematic approach	**Stage 2 with a more systematic approach**
1. Feelings not dealt with	1. Experimentati on	1.Methodical working	1.High flexibility
2. The workplace is for work only	2. Risk issues debated, wider options debated	2. Agreed procedures	2. Appropriate leadership determined
3. Established line prevails	3. Personal feelings raised	3. Established ground-rules	3.Maximum use of energy and ability
4. No rocking the boat	4.More inward looking		4. Basic principles considered, agreed and reviewed
5. Poor listening	5.Greater listening		5.Needs of all members me
6.Weaknesses covered up	6.More concern for others		6.Development a priority
7. Unclear objectives	7. Sometimes uncomfortable		
8. Low involvement in planning			
9. Bureaucracy			
10.Boss takes most decisions			

FORMING   STORMING   NORMING   PERFORMING

A   Intellectual route   B

A   B

Emotional Route
& productivity
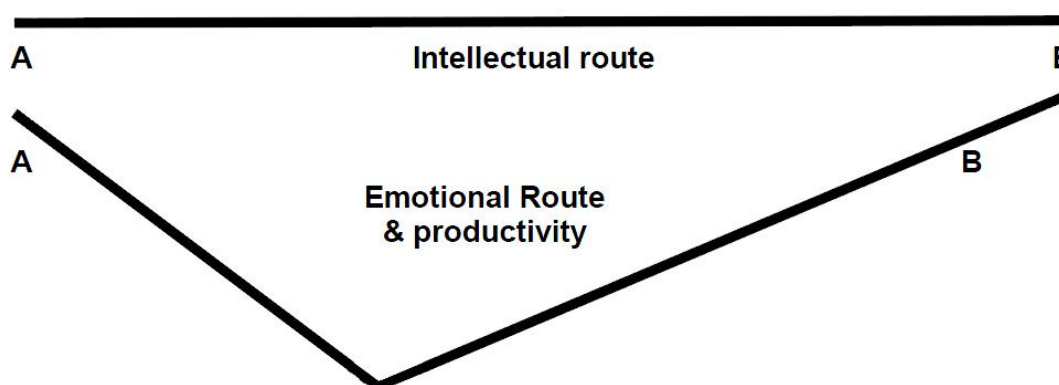
EFFECTIVE & INEFFECTIVE TEAMS

Effective teams will be recognised by the following characteristics:-
- Informal, relaxed atmosphere
- people care for each other
- a lot of listening takes place
- people are open and truthful
- there is a high level of trust
- decisions are made by consensus
- there is strong team commitment
- conflict is addressed
- feelings are expressed freely
- process issues are dealt with
- much relevant discussion & participation
- leadership is not always with the chair
- the group will examine its own progress

INEFFECTIVE TEAMS

Ineffective teams will be recognised by the following characteristics:-
- Bored or tense atmosphere.
- Discussion dominated by one or two people, and often irrelevant.
- No clear common objective.
- Members tend not to listen to each other.
- Conflict is either avoided or is allowed to develop into open warfare.
- Simple majorities are seen as sufficient basis for group decisions, which the minorities have to accept.
- Personal feelings are kept hidden and criticism is embarrassing.
- Chairman provides leadership.
- The group avoids any discussion about its own behaviour.

Use the above to assess your own teams development and progress, and review its potential to develop further in the future.

FINALLY

Consider Dorothy in the film "The Wizard of Oz". She shows leadership as she takes a guy with no brains, one with no heart and one with no courage and melds them into an effective team that successfully accomplishes its mission. The team succeeds only after they stop blaming others for their problems, and start taking responsibility for their own destinies.

About MTD

Sean McPheat | **in**

Chief Executive Officer

MTD Training Group

Email: sean.mcpheat@mtdtraining.co.uk

Sean McPheat is the **Chief Executive Officer** of the multi-award winning **MTD Training Group**.

Founded in 2001 and having trained hundreds of thousands of staff since, MTD specialise in management and leadership development and also sales effectiveness programmes.

There are **3 specific divisions** to the group:

Management/Leadership	Sales Effectiveness	Microlearning
https://www.mtdtraining.com	https://www.mtdsalestraining.com	https://www.skillshub.com