

Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, Adjourning

Directions: *New STFs will be broken into four groups (forming, storming, norming, and performing). After reading the short description, each group will identify a superhero that best represents the group. They will discuss why they chose their superhero and share salient points with the whole group.*

Tuckman ([1965](#)) discovered that teams normally go through five stages of growth: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and finally Adjourning.

Forming

In this stage, team members are introduced. They state why they were chosen or volunteered for the team and what they hope to accomplish within the team. Members cautiously explore the boundaries of acceptable group behavior. This is a stage of transition from individual to member status, and of testing the leader's guidance both formally and informally.

Forming includes these feelings and behaviors:

- Excitement, anticipation, and optimism
- Pride in being chosen for the project
- A tentative attachment to the team
- Suspicion and anxiety about the job
- Defining the tasks and how they will be accomplished
- Determining acceptable group behavior
- Deciding what information needs to be gathered

Activities include abstract discussions of the concepts and issues; and for some members, impatience with these discussions. There is often difficulty in identifying some of the relevant problems as there is so much going on that members get distracted. The team often accomplishes little concerning its goals. This is perfectly normal.

Storming

During the team's transition from the "As-Is" to the "To-Be," is called the Storming phase. All members have their own ideas as to how the process should look, and personal agendas are often rampant. Storming is probably the most difficult stage for the team. They begin to realize the tasks that are ahead are different and more difficult than they previously imagined. Impatient about the lack of progress, members argue about just what actions the team should take. They try to rely solely on their personal and professional experience, and resist collaborating with most other team members.

Storming includes these feelings and behaviors:

- Resisting the tasks
- Resisting quality improvement approaches suggested by other members
- Sharp fluctuations in attitude about the team's chance of success
- Arguing among members, even when they agree on the real issues
- Defensiveness, competition, and choosing sides
- Questioning the wisdom of those who selected the project and appointed the members of the team
- Establishing unrealistic goals
- Disunity, increased tension, and jealousy

These pressures mean that team members have little energy to spend on progressing towards the intended goal. But they are beginning to understand each another. This phase can often take 3 or 4 meetings before arriving at the next phase.

Norming

The Norming phase is when the team reaches a consensus on the "To-Be" process. Everyone wants to share the newly found focus. Enthusiasm is high, and the team is often tempted to go beyond the original scope of the process. During this stage, members reconcile competing loyalties and responsibilities. They accept the team, ground rules, roles, and the individuality of fellow members. Emotional conflict is reduced as previously competitive relationships become more cooperative.

Norming includes these feelings and behaviors:

- An ability to express criticism constructively
- Acceptance of membership in the team
- An attempt to achieve harmony by avoiding conflict
- Friendliness, confiding in each other, and sharing of personal problems
- A sense of team cohesion, spirit, and goals
- Establishing and maintaining team ground rules and boundaries

As team members work out their differences, they have more time and energy to spend on the project.

Performing

By now the team has settled its relationships and expectations. They can begin performing by diagnosing, problem solving, and implementing changes. At last, team members have discovered and accepted other's strengths and weakness. In addition, they have learned what their roles are.

Performing includes these feelings and behaviors:

- Members have insights into personal and group processes
- An understanding of each other's strengths and weakness
- Constructive self-change
- Ability to prevent or work through group problems
- Close attachment to the team

The team is now an effective, cohesive unit. You can tell when your team has reached this stage because you start getting a lot of work done.

Adjourning

The team briefs and shares the improved process during this phase. When the team finally completes that last briefing, there is always a bittersweet sense of accomplishment coupled with the reluctance to say good-bye. Many relationships formed within these teams continue long after the team disbands.

