

Group Dynamics & High Performing Teams

What are the Typical Stages of Team Development?

Based on the work of Dr. Bruce Tuckman¹, a researcher in group dynamics, there are five stages of team development:

1. **Forming:** the group is under development and generally people are concerned with being accepted by others. Team members may be getting to know one another and most try to avoid controversy or conflict.
2. **Storming:** the group is concerned with how they work together. They are testing out where they fit into the group. The group is likely to be showing signs of disagreement and as well as lively debates and discussions.
3. **Norming:** the group is starting to feel more comfortable with working with each other. Far more is being achieved at this stage, and most team members take responsibility and care about the team's success in achieving its goals.
4. **Performing:** the group is now a high performing team! The goals are being achieved in an atmosphere that is often relaxed and purposeful. The team is likely to be feeling confident at this stage with a really open and honest dialogue taking place.

What are the Characteristics of a High Performing Team?

High performing teams generally:

- Manage their time effectively
- Have clear roles and expectations
- Respect team members and team processes
- Work to achieve a shared vision

According to researcher², Several behaviors have been shown to positively impact the performance of a team, including facilitators or leaders that:

- Provide positive feedback and reassurances that the team is on the right track
- Influence the group to reach their goals
- Encourage active participation from team members
- Present clear directions

¹ Tuckman, Bruce (1965). "Developmental sequence in small groups". *Psychological Bulletin* 63 (6): 384–99.

² Chong, E. (2007). Role balance and team development: A study of team role characteristics underlying high and low performing teams. Institute of Behavioral and Applied Management. pp.. 202-217.