



## **Effective Team Building For Organizational Success**

By R.G. Srinivasan

"Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results." -Andrew Carnegie

Team building and team work is the key driver in organizational productivity. The days of the lone warrior corporate hero who could carry an organization to fortune 500 lists with his charisma and genius are finally over. Organizations are now looking to build teams with people of complementary skills to work towards achieving the corporate objectives and goals.

While teams are important in every area of human endeavor whether it be in sports or volunteer work, the scope of this article covers business enterprises.

Why teams?

Teams are formed when:

A combination of skills, knowledge and expertise are required to undertake a particular task. A single individual may not have such a combination.

On the face of challenges such as falling profits, improvements in quality standards, putting together a new project, tackle major change initiatives and cross functional co-ordination in large and complex organizations. Teams may be formed for many purposes. The list is only a broad indicator for the kinds of teams that may be formed.

Stages of team development

Tuckman and Jenson have described the sequence of the team evolution in their work which is the best model to understand and manage teams. Teams have to go through certain process before it can settle down and work effectively. Understanding the stages of development of the team is key to successful team management.

Stage #1 Forming

This is the stage when the team members assemble and get together. People are very polite, get acquainted with each other and try to assess their own roles in the team.

Uppermost in the minds of the new team members at the formation stage is where and how they fit in with the team. This stage is marked by easy acceptance of each other, avoiding controversies and direction and support from team leader in settling down.

### Stage #2 Storming

This stage introduces conflicts and competition as each individual begins to start work on the plan. Stress of the work with Individual differences on issues crop up. Sometimes the issues could be cultural, ethnic or simply an issue of asserting ones own strength in the overall team equation. Interpersonal and communication issues dominate this stage leading to a flare up of conflict and confrontation.

The leader needs utmost restraint and maturity at this stage of team development. He has to bring forth all his networking skills, emotional intelligence and people management abilities in creating the right atmosphere, create winning relationships between team members and bring their focus back on team vision and goals.

### Stage #3 Norming

As conflicts begin to get resolved, the work flow picks up speed. People settle down to more harmonious working relationships. The focus now shifts to common team objectives and performance related issues. A cohesive team which knows its strengths and weaknesses now moves to peak performance leveraging the complementary skills of its members. This is also the stage where the team leader begins to delegate more effectively. Giving the team members a certain level of functional autonomy leads to unleashing the creativity of its members making for a high performing team.

### Stage #4 Performing

This is the final stage where a perfect group identity is created. There is independence and interdependence, learning as well as sharing knowledge, speed and efficiency. All glitches have been smoothed out by the team leader. There are very high levels of autonomy giving rise to emergence of new leaders. The performance is at the peak due to high motivation.

A successful team leader understands the different stages of the group formation and development. He manages the team effectively by moderating his team managerial styles according to the stage of development in which the team is passing through.

As the Chinese proverb goes ‘A wise man knows everything; a shrewd one everybody.’

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