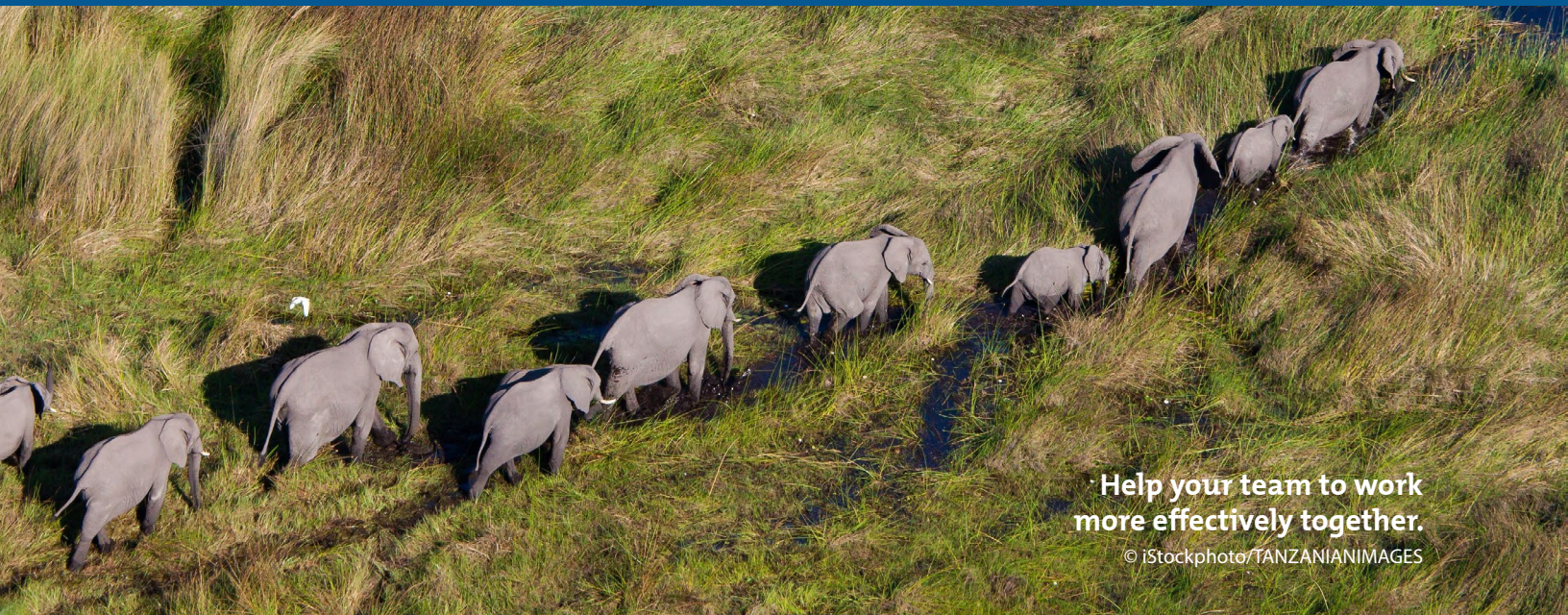


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# Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing

## Your 10-Minute Guide to Developing an Effective Team



Help your team to work  
more effectively together.

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**It takes time for people in a new team to learn how to work together effectively. Find out what you can do to help your team members perform as a group.**

Teams often go through recognizable stages as they change from being collections of strangers to becoming united groups with common goals.

The [Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing](#) model describes these stages. By understanding it, you can help your team to become productive more quickly.

### Introducing Tuckman's Model

Psychologist Bruce Tuckman first came up with the memorable phrase, “forming, storming, norming, and performing” in 1965. He used it to describe the path that most teams follow on their way to high performance.

Later, he added a fifth stage, “adjourning,” which is also known as “mourning.”

Let’s look at each stage in more detail.

This guide outlines a simple framework that managers can use to help new teams become effective quickly.

Feel free to share it inside your organization.



## Forming

In this stage, most team members are positive and polite. Some are anxious, as they haven't fully understood what work the team will do. Others are simply excited about the task ahead.

You'll play a leading role at this stage because team members' roles and responsibilities aren't clear.

This stage can last for some time, as people start to work together, and make an effort to get to know their new colleagues.

## Storming

Next, the team moves into the storming phase, when members start to push against boundaries established in the forming stage. This is the stage where many teams fail.

Storming often starts when team members' work styles conflict. People may work in different ways for all sorts of reasons, but if they don't work in the same way as their co-workers, or if differing working styles cause problems, people may become frustrated.

Other examples of storming behavior include team members challenging your authority, or jockeying for position, as their roles are clarified. If you haven't defined clearly how the team will work, team members may feel [overwhelmed by their workload](#), or they could be uncomfortable with the approach that you're using. Some may question the worth of the team's goal, and they may resist taking on tasks.

Team members who stick with the task may experience stress as they try to focus on the job in hand, particularly as they don't have the support of established processes or relationships with their colleagues.

## Norming

Gradually, the team moves into the norming stage, when people start to resolve their differences, appreciate colleagues' strengths, and respect your position as leader.

As team members know each other better, they may [socialize out of work](#), and they are able to ask each other for help and to provide constructive feedback. People develop a stronger commitment to the team goal, and you start to see good progress toward it.

There is often a prolonged overlap between storming and norming, because, as new tasks or concerns come up, the team may loop back into storming behavior.

## Performing

The team reaches the performing stage when hard work leads smoothly to the achievement of the team's goal. This is supported by the structures and processes that you set up, with [adjustments suggested by the team](#).

You can safely delegate more work now, and spend more time on developing team members. It feels easy and enjoyable to be part of the team at this stage, and people who join or leave don't disrupt performance.

## Adjourning or Mourning

Most teams will reach this stage eventually. For example, project teams exist only for a fixed period, and apparently permanent teams may be disbanded through organizational restructuring.

Team members who like routine, or who have developed close working relationships with one another, may find this stage difficult, particularly if their [future now looks uncertain](#).

## How to Apply Tuckman's Model

As a manager, your aim is to help your team to reach and sustain high performance as quickly as possible. To do this, you will need to tune your approach at each stage.

Follow the steps below to ensure that you're doing the right thing at the right time.

1. Identify which stage of team development your team is at from the descriptions above.
2. Then, consider what you need to do to move toward the performing stage. The table on the next page will help you to understand your role, and how you can help your team to succeed.
3. Schedule regular reviews of where your team is, and adjust your management and [leadership styles](#) appropriately.

Stage	Activity
<b>Forming</b>	Direct the team, and establish clear objectives. Set people up for <a href="#">successful collaboration</a> by helping them to create a <a href="#">team charter</a> .
<b>Storming</b>	<p>Support the team in establishing useful processes and structures, and in building good relationships.</p> <p><a href="#">Resolve conflicts</a> swiftly if they occur. Look out for those team members who are less secure. Remain positive and persuasive in the face of challenges to your leadership or the team's goal.</p> <p>Explain the “forming, storming, norming and performing” idea, so that people understand why problems are occurring, and see that things will get better in the future. Coach team members in <a href="#">assertiveness</a> and <a href="#">conflict resolution skills</a> where this is necessary.</p> <p>If budget allows, use psychometric indicators such as <a href="#">Myers-Briggs®</a> or the <a href="#">Margerison-McCann Team Management Profile</a> to help people to appreciate different work styles and strengths.</p> <p>Avoid trying to rush through this stage – it needs to happen!</p>
<b>Norming</b>	Step back and let team members take responsibility for progress toward their goal. Encourage team building or social events, and invite people to share their ideas and skills with one another.
<b>Performing</b>	<a href="#">Delegate</a> tasks and projects as far as you can. Once the team is achieving well, you can aim to have as light a touch as possible. You will now be able to start focusing on other goals and areas of work.
<b>Adjourning or Mourning</b>	Take the time to celebrate everyone's achievements and to <a href="#">part on good terms</a> – some of you may work together again, and this will be much easier if people view this experience positively.

## Key Points

Team formation usually follows easily recognizable stages known as “forming, storming, norming, and performing.” Psychologist Bruce Tuckman, who created this memorable phrase, later added a fifth stage, “adjourning” or “mourning.”

You can use Tuckman's model to help your team reach the performing stage as quickly as possible.

First you identify the stage of development that your team is at. Then, you use appropriate strategies to move your team through to the next stage in the team formation process.

By harnessing everyone's focus and hard work, you'll quickly have a high-performing team!

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