KADOUSCOPE
DRIVEN BY PURPOSE ... POWERED BY YOU

Unit 04: The Stages of Team Development

Team members and leaders have a responsibility to help the group grow and develop. When a team works together for a short time, they may try to move as a group to a productive stage as quickly as they can. Other times, they will focus on relationship building before they charge ahead.

Team Contracts

Think of how you felt when you learned you were coming to this course. While that isn't a perfect example of the stages of team development, you may see a resemblance between how you felt upon learning you would be in this course and how a new group or team member might feel.

We began our day by setting expectations and establishing ground rules. We can apply that same principle as we develop teams in the workplace. Starting with a team contract establishes the rules of engagement upfront and can be the organizing foundation as the team goes through the various stages of development, often helping get over stumbling blocks, resolving conflicts, and keeping everyone focused on the desired outcomes for the group. The team itself creates and monitors the contract, which is signed and dated by each team member. Some people don't like the idea of a team contract, and it's not a perfect solution in every situation.

Team contracts have three elements. Code of Conduct, Ground Rules, and Meeting Guidelines. You can see a sample team contract in your Learning Guide. Once you've had a chance to look it over, answer the questions in that section as well. What do you think about having a team contract? How would it work for your team?

Recognizing Team Norms

Sometimes instead of a contract, a team will identify a list of values or norms that they all agree to abide by. While less formal than a contract, it can still be an effective tool for setting a baseline for team performance.

Whether the rules are written or not, all teams have "norms" that guide their behavior and interactions. In most cases, these rules are simply understood because that's how the team always operates. These rules become normal behavior. For example, if the group always starts fifteen minutes late, team members will start arriving later or start the meeting fifteen minutes late. If someone always submits their reports ahead of time and sends them to team members, others will soon do the same.

TRANSCRIPT

© 2020, Licensed by Skilled Now Inc.

Team norms can be positive and help the team be more effective. Instead of setting a norm for meetings to start late, for example, you could start meetings on time even if everyone is not there. People will start to show up on time for team meetings as this norm takes hold. Norms can also be counterproductive. Allowing jokes and side conversations to interrupt meetings can keep a meeting from getting through the agenda or meet the objectives.

Like team contracts, some teams establish a set of norms or ground rules before they begin their work. Others do it after the team is formed.

What was your great team experience? How did team norms work during this time? In the Recognizing Team Norms section of your Learning Guide, provide insight about your best team experience. When you're ready, we'll continue to explore the five stages of a team.

The Five Stages of a Team

In the 1970s, researchers discovered that groups of individuals working together go through distinct stages of development. Bruce Tuckman developed a straightforward model that flows through five stages of development. Groups do not necessarily go through those stages together or at the same time. This model is the "Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing" model. Over time an additional stage was added to reflect the natural end to a group: "Adjourning."

Let's examine the stages of team development. You can follow along and take notes in your Learning Guide.

Stage 1: Forming

At this stage, team members:

- May be anxious, take a wait-and-see approach, or act formally.
- They may be unclear about goals or expectations,
- Need to get better acquainted, or
- May question why they are there.

During this stage, a leader can:

- Plan team introductions and orientation.
- Use icebreakers.
- Set ground rules, and
- Outline the decision-making methods.

Stage 2: Storming

At this stage:

- Team members want to get started and maybe impatient with delays.
- When people bring different ideas on how to accomplish goals, conflict arises.
- People focus on their differences, not their similarities, and
- Some members disengage mentally or physically.

TRANSCRIPT

© 2020, Licensed by Skilled Now Inc.

During this stage, a leader can:

- Model appropriate behaviors.
- Separate people from the problems.
- Enforce the ground rules and maintain control of the process.
- And keep in mind that conflict can be productive and helpful.

To move to stage three, team members need to put aside their personal interests to serve the needs of the group.

Stage 3: Norming

At this stage, team members:

- Begin to recognize the things they share in common.
- They realize that they are in this together as a team and
- Get more social.
- They May lose sight of their focus because they're having a good time.

There is much more cooperation and understanding in the norming stage. Many groups never arrive at this stage.

During this stage, the leader should:

- Pay attention to emerging group behaviors,
- Encourage the team to state their differences I positive, constructive terms, and
- Keep the team focused on the objectives.

Stage 4: Performing

At this stage, team members:

- Have a mature outlook on group activities.
- Understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Want to contribute to team processes, and
- They are self-motivated and self-trained.

The transition to this phase occurs when the team develops high levels of trust. However, the team can fall into the "group think" trap. A leader must help ensure that the group considers individual ideas. The leader should avoid getting involved in the process unless the group gets stuck or begins to struggle. If they regress to a previous stage and erupt in conflict, the leader must step in.

Stage 5: Adjourning

At this stage, team members are:

- Winding down and saying goodbye
- Setting goals for future work independently or as part of new groups

Groups may adjourn when they complete a defined project or are no longer challenged. If new members join the group, that can shift the group into a previous stage.

© 2020, Licensed by Skilled Now Inc.

In this phase, leaders should:

- Celebrate everyone's participation
- Describe the dynamics going on at this stage
- Look for and encourage continued participation as the group winds down.
- Encourage continued productivity

Nurturing Teams

Team development and support is critical to high performance. How would you guide a team through each of the Five Stages of a Team? Write in your process for success in your Learning Guide.

Tips for Forming an Effective Team

Not everyone will take the same approach to build and encourage a successful work team. Your ultimate success will depend on applying the various concepts we discuss.

One common belief is that people who are like us make for better team members. That isn't always the case. When selecting a team, consider mixing people with diverse strengths and weaknesses. Organizing an already existing team may require a different approach. For example, you will be able to skip the introductions and orientation. Your starting point may be to call an organizing meeting to discuss the new goals and objectives and how everyone can help.

You will find that you get more project commitment and buy-in when you include the team in the goal-setting stage. It's a much more effective approach than telling people the goals and expect them to achieve those goals, as stated. But setting goals is hard work. The goals need to be realistic, clear, possible to measure, and include a deadline. Goal setting is a stop; you do not want to skip.

As well, it is helpful to take some time to consider and evaluate how previous teams worked together on projects. Was the last project as successful as it might have been? What could the team have done differently? Apply those lessons learned to your next project.

Ground Rules Self-Reflection

Having ground rules helps every team to succeed. Ground rules ensure that people on the team know what is expected of them and that they all understand where they are going.

In your Learning Guide, list what you want and don't want as a team participant. Then consider five ground rules that would be most important for your group and how you can help create a positive team environment.

TRANSCRIPT

© 2020, Licensed by Skilled Now Inc.