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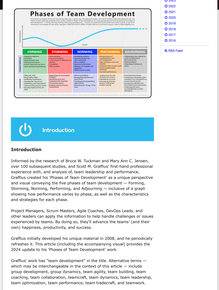
Scott M. Graffius' Phases of Team Development: 2024 Update

BY SCOTT M. GRAFFIUS | ScottGraffius.com



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Introduction

Introduction

Informed by the research of Bruce W. Tuckman and Mary Ann C. Jensen, over 100 subsequent studies, and Scott M. Graffius' three decades of professional experience with, and analysis of, team leadership and performance, this article provides a 2024 update to Tuckman's foundational, comprehensive and crucial concepting the five phases of team development — Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning — inclusive of a graph showing how performance varies by phase, as well as the recommendations and strategies for each phase.

Project Managers, Scrum Masters, Agile Coaches, DevOps Leads, and other leaders can apply the information to help handle challenges or issues experienced by teams. By doing so, they'll advance the teams' (and their own) happiness, productivity, and success.

Graffius initially developed his unique model in 2008, and he periodically refreshes it. This article (including the accompanying visual) provides the 2024 update to the "Phases of Team Development" work.

Graffius' work has "team dependent" in the title. Alternative terms — which may be interchangeable in the context of this article — include group development, group dynamics, team agility, team building, team coaching, team collaboration, teamcraft, team dynamics, team leadership, team optimization, team performance, team productivity, and team synergy.

Main Section of Article

Five Phases of Team Development

1. Forming

Characteristics of the Forming phase include displaying eagerness, socializing, generally polite time, sticking to safe topics, unclear about how one fits in, and some anxiety and pleasantness.

Strategies for Forming include taking the "lead," facilitating the initial "socialization" phase, providing "structure" to help manage unclear expectations, communicating success criteria, and ensuring response times are quick.

2. Storming

Traits of the Storming phase include some resistance, lack of participation, conflict based on differences of opinions, competition, and high emotions.

Strategies for Storming include maintaining and encouraging feedback, identifying issues and facilitating their resolution, normalizing matters, and building on/ at forming commitments.

3. Norming

Features of the Norming phase include developing cohesion; purpose and goals are understood; more confident, productive, improved commitment; members are engaged and supportive; and relief, lowered anxiety.

Strategies for Norming include delegating feedback, recognizing individual and team efforts, providing learning/upskilling opportunities, and monitoring the "energy" of the team.

4. Performing

Characteristics of the Performing phase include demonstrations of interdependence and self-management, high motivation, trust, and empathy; individuals defer to team needs; producing deliverables effectively; and consistent performance.

Strategies for Performing include "guiding from the side" (minimal intervention), highlighting successes, and encouraging collective decision-making and problem-solving.

5. Adjourning

Typical traits of the Adjourning phase (also referred to as the Transitioning or Mourning phase) include potential sadness, and disbanding of temporary teams.

Strategies for Adjourning include communicating change, conducting a summative team evaluation via a retrospective or lessons learned session, recognizing individual and team efforts and achievements, and celebrating the team's accomplishments (a particular party).

Conclusion

Conclusion

Project Managers, Scrum Masters, Agile Coaches, DevOps Leads, and other leaders can apply the information in this article to help handle accompanying visual to help handle challenges or issues experienced by teams. By doing so, they'll advance the teams' (and their own) happiness, productivity, and success.

This article provided a brief overview of the five phases of team development. Scott M. Graffius presents dynamic and engaging talks and workshops on this topic and more at conferences and other events (public and private/corporate) around the world. To learn more, visit here. For booking information, please complete a speaker engagement request form or email Scott M. Graffius.

If you're looking for additional information on this article (such as references/sources, citation details, or permission request information), read on.

Coverage of Graffius' Research

Graffius' Research is Widely Cited, Featured, and Used

Businesses, scientists, journalists, professional associations, government agencies, universities, and others around the world have featured and used prior — 2023 and earlier — editions of Scott M. Graffius' "Phases of Team Development" material. Here are a few examples:

- Academic Cooperation Association
- Adobe
- American Management Association
- Amsterdam Public Health Research Institute
- Amazon
- Boston University
- CodePoint
- Dagen
- Dienna Aerospace
- Fast Company
- FSU College of Medicine
- Hasso Plattner Institute (Hasso Plattner Institut für Digital Engineering GmbH)
- IEEE
- Intuit
- Life Sciences Trainers & Educators Network (LTEN)
- London South Bank University
- New Zealand Government
- Prince Resource
- Queensland University of Science
- Technical University of Munich
- Toronto University Australia
- UK Sports Institute
- University of Galway Ireland
- University of Melbourne
- University of Waterloo
- US National Park Service
- Virginia Tech
- Warsaw University of Technology
- Wellington Uni
- ZirbusCharity University of Applied Sciences
- And many more

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