Use the Phases of Team Development (Based on Bruce W. Tuckman's Model of Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning) to Help Teams Grow and Advance: 2022 Update

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2022 Update

Want happier and more productive teams? Among other things, it takes great leadership. And proven strategies can provide a real edge! That's where the groundbreaking work by Bruce W. Tuckman — Ph.D. in Psychology from Princeton — comes in.

Tuckman conducted extensive research on group dynamics, and he published a related model in 1965. At that time, the model included four phases: forming, storming, norming, and performing. In 1977, Tuckman and his colleague determined that adjourning was so important that he, with Mary Ann Jensen, updated his model in 1977 to add adjourning as the fifth phase. According to Tuckman, all five phases — Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning — are necessary for teams to form, tackle problems, find solutions, plan work, and deliver results.

Tuckman's model has stood the test of time because it remains highly relevant and beneficial. Since his work was published, it has been supported by additional peer-reviewed research. And it has received recommendations and coverage from leading organizations including Google, Harvard Business Review, IEEE, the Project Management Institute, PMI Global Congress Proceedings Institute, Scrum Alliance, Scrum.org, Gartner, CSO, NASA Corporation, Software Engineering Institute, University of Edinburgh, Cisco, KPMG, Warsaw University of Technology, Software Engineering Institute, DevOps Institute, American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Wharton School, Oxford University, American Management Association, AT&T, University of Southern California, IBM, and many others.

Agile project management practitioner, consultant, award-winning author, international speaker, thought leader, and influencer Scott M. Graffius developed a related custom illustration, Phases of Team Development. It highlights the performance level, responsibilities, and recommendations for the Tuckman's 5 phases. Project Managers, Scrum Masters, Agile Coaches, DevOps Leads, and other professionals can apply the information to help handle challenges or issues experienced by teams. By doing so, they'll advance the teams' happiness, productivity, and success.

Graffius updates the content periodically. He released an updated version of the visual on February 14, 2022. This article features the updated version. It also includes a new custom illustration. Read on for details including information on permission requests and downloadable high-resolution versions of the image.

Five Phases of Team Development

1. Forming

Characteristics of Forming include displaying eagerness, optimism, politeness, and some anxiety as people seek clarity, wonder about how one fits in, and some anxiety and questioning.

Strategies for this phase include taking the 'lead,' being highly visible, facilitating introductions, providing the 'big picture,' clarifying leader expectations, communicating success criteria, and ensuring response times are quick.

2. Storming

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

Strategies for this phase include requesting and encouraging feedback, identifying issues and facilitating their resolution, normalizing matters, and building trust by honoring commitments.

3. Norming

Features of Norming include purpose and goals are well-understood, more confident, improved commitment, members feel more supportive, relief (lowered anxiety), and developing cohesion.

Strategies for this phase include recognizing individual and team efforts, providing learning opportunities and feedback, and monitoring the 'energy' of the team.

4. Performing

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

Strategies for this phase include 'guiding from the side' (minimal intervention), celebrating successes, and encouraging collective decision-making and problem-solving.

5. Adjourning

Typical traits of Adjourning (also referred to as Transitioning or Mourning) include anticipation of ceasing, recognition of team and individual efforts, and disbanding.

Strategies for this phase include recognizing change, providing an opportunity for summative team evaluations ("lessons learned"), providing an opportunity for individual acknowledgments, and celebrating the team's accomplishments — which may involve a party and possibly an after party.

As shown, performance fluctuates as teams move through the phases. Review the characteristics to help identify the team's current phase, then apply the corresponding proven strategies to help them advance.

Permission Requests and Downloadable High-Resolution Versions of "Phases of Team Development" Illustration

To request permission to use the "Phases of Team Development" visual, contact Scott M. Graffius at the email address indicated in the image above.

High resolution versions of the Phases of Team Development image are available at the following links: here for the PNG file and here for the PNG file.

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About Scott M. Graffius

Scott M. Graffius, PMP, CSP-SM, CSP-PO, CSM, CSPO, SPC, ITIL, PMI-ACP, is a Los Angeles based project management practitioner, multi-award winning author, and international speaker. He has generated over 1.75 billion dollars of business value in aggregate for his employers and clients. Scott's motto is "Agile is the Principal Consultant at Exceptional PPM and PMO Solutions" and subsidiary Exceptional Agility™. His expertise spans project, program, portfolio, and PMO leadership inclusive of agile, traditional, and hybrid approaches. Content from his books, articles, and blog posts/pages/posts has been cited, quoted, featured and used by businesses, professional associations, governments, and universities including Microsoft, Oracle, Cisco, Gartner, Deloitte, Project Management Institute, IEEE, SANS Institute, U.S. Soccer Federation, English Institute of Sport, Fanti, Qantas, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Sports Government of Georgia, United States Department of Energy, United States Army, New Zealand Ministry of Education, Amsterdam Public Health Research Institute, Tel Aviv University, Ben-Gurion University, Warsaw University of Technology, University of Waterloo, National University of Ireland Galway, Zurich University of Applied Sciences, and others. Graffius has spoken at 67 conferences and other events around the world, including Arizona, Australia, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Dubai, Ireland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and the United States. Thinkers360 named Graffius a global top thought leader and influencer in four domains: Agile, Change Management, Digital Transformation, and GovTech.

His full bio is available here.

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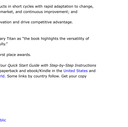

A fantastic agile transformation experience and result with a client requiring Scrum training and coaching services. Thanks to Scott M. Graffius's multi award-winning book, *Agile Scrum: Your Quick Start Guide with Step-by-Step Instructions* (ISBN 13: 978-1533370241).

Here's an excerpt from the book: "Shifting customer needs are common in today's marketplace. Businesses must be adaptive and responsive to change while delivering an exceptional customer experience. Unfortunately, many organizations employ delivery frameworks such as waterfall are often ineffective. In contrast, Scrum is a value-driven agile approach which incorporates requirements based on regular and repeated customer and stakeholder feedback. And Scrum's built-in rapid response to change helps ensure customers are highly satisfied, receive higher satisfaction, and continuous improvement—which supports innovation and drives competitive advantage."

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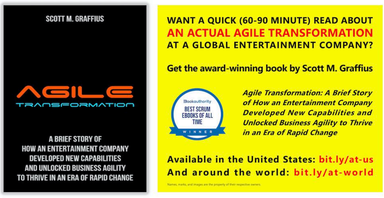
About *Agile Transformation: A Brief Story of How an Entertainment Company Developed New Capabilities and Unlocked Business Agility to Thrive in an Era of Rapid Change*



Thriving in today's marketplace frequently depends on making a transformation to become more agile. Those successful in the transition enjoy faster delivery speed and ROI, higher satisfaction, continuous improvement, and additional benefits. *Agile Transformation: A Brief Story of How an Entertainment Company Developed New Capabilities and Unlocked Business Agility to Thrive in an Era of Rapid Change* (ISBN-13: 978-1072447962) provides a revealing behind-the-scenes story about an actual successful agile implementation at a global entertainment company.

The award-winning book — a quick (60-90 minute) read — is available in paperback and ebook/Kindle formats in the United States and around the world. Some links by country follow.

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This story was simultaneously published here and at https://AgileScrumGuide.com and https://Exceptional-PMO.com.

The short URL for this article is: https://bit.ly/teams-2022

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