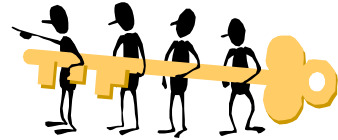


Stages of Team Growth



Stage 1: Forming Team members are often optimistic but hesitant and tentative as they begin to get to know one another and define themselves as a team. Teams tend to have lofty, abstract discussions and to complain about the barriers to their task without focusing well on the project goals. The team may come to consensus too early, afraid to "step on toes," creating a "dumbing down" effect for the entire group.

Stage 2: Storming Team members become impatient about the lack of progress, but still are too inexperienced with one another to know how to fix the situation. Members tend to debate about the direction they should take, sometimes creating competing factions in the team. The tension during this stage makes it difficult to focus on the project goals, but it is important for members to understand one another.

Stage 3: Norming Team members reconcile their differences by accepting the individuality of team members as well as the common goals. Members are able to constructively discuss the team's dynamics and create ground rules that everyone can live with. Finally the team can make real progress toward the project goals.

Stage 4: Performing The team knows one another's strengths, weaknesses, and idiosyncrasies and how to best utilize all members. The team efficiently begins to diagnose and solve relevant problems and feel satisfaction about their progress. A "performing" team gets high-quality work done.