



Collaborative Teamwork

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Administrative Professionals
Conference

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Collaborative Teamwork

- ◆ Collaborative teamwork is a process of ventures completed by multiple people within a team rather than individuals
- ◆ For this to work, a team must agree on the goals they are trying to reach while also agreeing on the steps that are needed to reach those goals
- ◆ The team must learn to become in tune with each other so that the work habits are smooth

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Collaborative Teamwork

- ◆ If a team does not reach this level, then the collaborative process will likely fail
- ◆ There are four stages of progression that will establish a successful team. The *Forming-Storming-Norming-Performing* model of team development was first proposed by Bruce Tuckman (Chaneski, 2009)
- ◆ Teams will advance through these separate stages in order to evaluate and create a successful collaboration

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Forming

- ◆ Forming could be best described in other words as the beginning of the collaboration process
- ◆ At this point of team development, team members are being introduced to one another in order to discuss serious issues regarding the team
- ◆ During the forming stage teams usually discuss when to gather, plan, and assign tasks to team members

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Forming, continued

- ◆ This stage is important in order to help the team achieve a successful collaboration because there can be many obstacles to overcome
- ◆ Some team members may find it a difficult stage because this is when all the individuals are gathering their first impressions of one another

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Forming, continued

- ◆ It may also be difficult for teammates to trust one another if they are not used to collaborating as a team to complete tasks
- ◆ Team members also have to learn each other's strengths and weaknesses in order to improve the quality of collaboration and form a stronger team.

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Forming, continued

- ◆ In the beginning of forming, the team should sit down and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of team members
- ◆ After that the team can provide a goal or direction for the collaboration
- ◆ In the forming stage team members also try to avoid conflicts or disputes, which can hinder the growth of the group dynamic

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Forming, continued

- ◆ Focusing on assigning tasks, roles, and establishing a routine will keep a group on schedule
- ◆ Once team members become a little more familiar with each other the group advances to the next stage of development...

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KIVA Storming! Yes, STORMING...

- Storming is the **creative** stage and cannot be avoided
- ◆ Storming also deals with conflicts in values, perspectives, goals, and power between team members
- ◆ During this stage much more information is shared by the team and progress toward resolution is begun
- ◆ The team members will discuss possible approaches, solutions and methods to starting the collaborative process, also known as, brainstorming

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KIVA Storming, continued

- ◆ The team dealing with the storming phase of collaboration should capitalize on any resources available and explore ideas that are identified in meetings
- ◆ Storming may take place in groups several times before the team is successful
- ◆ For team development, the goals set during the forming stage helps keep the team focused and the transition to the storming stage can take place effectively

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Norming

- ◆ The norming phase **generally** occurs when the team starts to work together more fluidly
- ◆ The team reaches a level of trust and comfort
- ◆ Motivation, communication, and reliability become a normal aspect of the team's productivity
- ◆ Each individual has a clear understanding of the team's goals and the responsibilities that need to be carried out to reach those goals

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Norming, continued

- ◆ Rules are discussed and agreed upon between the members of the team
- ◆ Everyone knows what is expected of them including productivity, performance, availability, and quality of work
- ◆ Individuals are focused on the project and are more comfortable with sharing their ideas
- ◆ Strengths and weaknesses of each individual are well known to each other, resulting in key responsibilities assigned to specific members

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Norming, continued

- ◆ The motivation each member shows will increase because of the confidence level that is felt within their group
- ◆ Designated group meetings have been put in place and the members are reliable with their presence
- ◆ Each member has acquired a comfort level within the group
- ◆ This has occurred because of the confidence level in the relationships formed is consistent

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Norming, continued

- ◆ Communication is now effortless because there is: less shyness, competition for the best idea, and fear of looking foolish between the group members
- ◆ Some team members might start to socialize outside of the team projects
- ◆ These relationships can make it easier to collaborate, share ideas, and give recognition
- ◆ Members with strong relationships show each other respect, give recognition, and reward each other (McCabe, 2006)

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Norming, continued

- ◆ However, the process can be fragile, in an instant a member might leave the group or a new member may join the team, the team could possibly become less comfortable
- ◆ The team would then revert to the storming phase because of the ambiguity that is now present
- ◆ This could also happen when members of the team are trying to resist the pressure they feel from an intense amount of responsibility

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Norming, continued

- ◆ Even though this may occur, once the team feels comfortable around each other again, they will advance to the norming phase once more
- ◆ As a group, it is evident that projects will be more successful when the team can trust, rely, and communicate with each other (McCabe, 2006)
- ◆ This creates trust in relationships with each individual on the team

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Performing

- ◆ Not all groups can reach the performing stage, which is characterized by a state of interdependence and flexibility
- ◆ Everyone knows each other well enough to be able to work together, and trusts each other enough to allow independent activity
- ◆ The team is also more strategically aware; the team now knows the goal clearly and has a set plan to achieve it

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Performing, continued

- ◆ There is a focus on achieving goals, and the team is able to come to a consensus on most of the decisions based on criteria they all agree upon
- ◆ When performing effectively the group will also have a high degree of autonomy
- ◆ Disagreements can still occur during this stage but they are resolved within the team positively and the necessary changes to processes and structure are made by the team (Tuckman, 1965)
- ◆ The team is also able to handle relationships, different learning styles, and individual issues while being able to get work done

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Avoiding Cycles

- ◆ The combined phases are not to be moved through as rapidly as possible
- ◆ For instance, problems in performing may often be traced back to insufficient storming and norming
- ◆ Group discussion, while storming out some controversies, may return to issues involved in forming: redistributing responsibilities, rediscovering common values, and modifying procedures

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Avoiding Cycles, continued

- ◆ Similarly, a group having difficulty in performing may, either implicitly or explicitly, need to redefine some norms
- ◆ During the first meeting, in particular, you need to lay a lot of groundwork and get a firm foundation. The group's success depends upon it (Connery, 1988)
- ◆ The establishing of a team charter that outlines goals, strengths and weaknesses, can ensure that the collaboration keeps moving forward

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Avoiding Cycles, continued

- ◆ Additionally, if you are not careful group work can tend to run in cycles
- ◆ When this happens you need to ***identify and define the problem to be solved***
- ◆ Then you need to ***decide upon a solution systematically***, using discussion and sometimes negotiation to reach a consensus
- ◆ Next, you need to decide on the work that needs to be done to implement the solution; usually work like gathering information and writing

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Avoiding Cycles, continued

- ◆ At any point within this larger cycle, you may encounter smaller problems which send you into a sub-cycle of problem solving, information gathering, and implementation
- ◆ At the beginning of each cycle, you need to take time to define the problem that you are solving
- ◆ Before you try to solve the problem, survey the group for their definitions of the problem and come to a consensus about the problem (Connery, 1988)

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Conclusion

- ◆ For a team that goes through the four stages of team development and collaboration, overcoming changes to the team, scheduling conflicts, and creative differences, can all be accomplished positively and efficiently
- ◆ Through the strong foundation that the forming, storming, norming, and performing stages create, teams are able to avoid many of the pitfalls that doom collaborative efforts and finish the team process

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Endnotes

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