

Editorial

In earlier issues of *Team Performance Management* (Vol. 6 No. 7/8, 2000 and Vol. 7 No. 1/2, 2001), I briefly described Tuckman's (1965) stages of team development. In those issues, I focused on Forming, Storming and Norming stages of development in which the team moves from tentativeness, into conflict, and then into conflict avoidance.

The model identifies two additional stages of team development which I will discuss in this Editorial. Following Forming, Storming and Norming stages of development, a team has the potential of moving into a Performing stage, the fourth stage of Tuckman's model. In this stage, the team can be characterized as focusing on its productivity. Interdependence of team members occurs in this stage as team members focus on problem solving and tasking to achieve the goal of the team. Cooperation is the word of the day at this level of team performance. At this advanced stage of team development, there is consideration for both individual and team performance. This heightened sense of both individual and team contribution does not occur at the other three levels of team development, as individualism can be seen as anti-team development by members of the team. This advanced stage of development fosters the understanding and awareness that team performance is both individual and team oriented.

According to Gilbertson and Ramchandani (1999), there are actions a team leader can

engage in to help a team during the performing stage. They are as follows:

- Continue one-on-one contact to accurately assess whether team members feel like they are accomplishing their tasks effectively. Stay in touch.
- Celebrate, reward and recognize each other's progress; individual and team.
- Balance individual and team recognition while celebrating.
- Give the team visibility for the good works they have done.
- Discuss conflict openly; don't avoid it.
- Use a delegating leadership style.

In the fifth stage of Tuckman's "Team Development Model", the goal is to adjourn the group; to formally close the team's work in a way that celebrates both individual and team success.

Some ideas for a successful ending ritual are:

- choose a time and place where the team members can all be present;
- talk about what each person contributed to the team;
- if appropriate, involve some of the people affected by the team;
- tell some stories about the team's work together; and
- choose some activities that everyone enjoys.

This is a time to encourage the team to celebrate, reflect and ready themselves for new challenges. Asking a team for their ideas about how and when to adjourn will assure that the team's needs are met as the team adjourns.

Tuckman's model is a sage one for understanding the predictable stages of teaming. A team that understands what to expect during each stage will ride the waves of development more easily, and function more productively through smooth and bumpy transitions.

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References

Gilbertson, B. and Ramchandani, V. (1999), *Developing Effective Teams*, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, St Paul, MN.
Tuckman, B.W. (1965). "Development sequence in small groups", *Psychological Bulletin*, No. 63, pp. 384-99.