

Team Development & Leadership Modeling

Document History

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0.5	11/02/2005	Initial attempt	JDG
0.7	11/07/2005	Additional definition. Added graph. Still Draft.	JDG
0.9	11/25/2005	General edits; preparation for splitting into “team” and “leader” versions. Still Draft.	JDG
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Leadership is not defined by one’s position in the organization but rather by one’s contribution.
-Unknown

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Team Development Model

This document is intended to provide background information and theory around the Team Development process, to provide a unified model for discussion and common terminology.¹

Credits/References

The materials in this paper come from a variety of sources. Where they have been copied word for word (grammar and spelling cleanup excepted), they are listed in the footnotes. This includes articles and presentations from the Web as well as course materials picked up over the years.

Much credit needs to be given to Bruce Tuckman for the “Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing” metaphors developed in the mid 1960’s.

Hersey and Blanchard deserve credit for extending it with what became the Situational Leadership² model.

Introduction

In this model, there are four different “Stages” of Team Development. Each stage has differing characteristics that suggest differing leadership behavior responses.

Different teams progress through the different stages at different rates. This process can be impacted when different team members have varying rates of progress.

It is possible for a team to regress back to an earlier stage.

It is possible for a team to be in different stages with respect to different aspects of its mission.

Each stage must be passed through before true progress can be made.

The Stages

Orientation Stage

The first stage in a team’s development is the *Orientation* stage (“**Forming**” or “**Pickup sticks**”). Most team members are fairly eager to be on the team. However, they often come with high, unrealistic expectations. These expectations are accompanied by some anxiety about how they will fit in, how much they can trust others, and what demands will be placed on them. Team members are also unclear about norms, roles, goals and timelines. In this stage, there is high dependence on the leadership figure for purpose and direction. Behavior is usually tentative and polite. The major issues are personal well-being, acceptance and trust.³

High dependence on leader for guidance and direction. Little agreement on team aims other than received from leader. Individual roles and responsibilities are unclear. Leader must be prepared to answer lots of questions about the team's purpose, objectives and external relationships. Processes are often ignored. Members test tolerance of system and leader.⁴

The Forming stage is relatively easy.

- The “polite” stage in which the team starts to form
- Everyone is trying to figure out what the team concept is.
- Initial “silent” leaders may take the reins
- The team is usually positive – for the most part – for the initial meetings
- No one has offended anyone at this point yet!⁵

Dissatisfaction Stage

The second stage in a team's development is the *Dissatisfaction* stage (“**Storming**” or “**At Odds**”). As the team gets some experience under its belt, there is a dip in morale as team members experience a discrepancy between their initial expectations and reality. The difficulties in accomplishing the task and in working together lead to confusion and frustration, as well as a growing dissatisfaction with dependence on the leadership figure. Negative reactions to each other develop, and subgroups form, which polarize the team. The breakdown of communication and the inability to problem-solve result in lowered trust. The primary issues in this stage concern power, control, and conflict.⁶

Decisions don't come easily within group. Team members vie for position as they attempt to establish themselves in relation to other team members and the leader, who might receive challenges from team members. Clarity of purpose increases but plenty of uncertainties persist. Cliques and factions form and there may be power struggles. The team needs to be focused on its goals to avoid becoming distracted by relationships and emotional issues. Compromises may be required to enable progress.⁷

The Storming phase is difficult and many times is the cause of the team's failure.

- The honeymoon is over
- The silent leaders may be clashing for control of the group
- People disagree and may blame the team concept, saying it doesn't work⁸

Resolution Stage

The third stage in a team's development is the *Resolution* stage (“**Norming**” or “**Coming Around**”). As the issues encountered in the second stage are addressed and resolved, morale begins to rise. Task accomplishment and technical skills increase, which contributes to a positive, even euphoric, feeling. There is increased clarity and commitment to purpose, values, norms, roles and goals. Trust and cohesion grow as communication becomes more open and task-oriented. There is a willingness to share responsibility and control. Team members value the differences among themselves. The team starts thinking in terms of “we” rather than “I”. Because the newly developed feelings of trust and cohesion are fragile, team members tend to avoid conflict for fear of losing the positive climate. This reluctance to deal with conflict can slow progress and lead to less effective decisions. Issues at this stage concern the sharing of control and avoidance of conflict.⁹

Agreement and consensus is largely forms among team, who respond well to facilitation by leader. Roles and responsibilities are clear and accepted. Big decisions are made by group agreement. Smaller decisions may be delegated to individuals or small teams within group. Commitment and unity is strong. The team may engage in fun and social activities. The team discusses and develops its processes and working style. There is general respect for the leader and some of leadership is more shared by the team.¹⁰

- The team is starting to work together and has turned around from the “storming” phase
- They may start to “brag up” the team concept to others who aren't in/on the team
- They may be very positive about their role and the team
- Often the team will bounce back and forth between storming and norming when issues crop up¹¹

Performance Stage

The fourth stage in a team's development is the *Performance* stage (“**Performing**” or “**As One**”). At this stage, both productivity and morale are high, and they reinforce one another. There is a sense of pride and excitement in being part of a high-performing team. The primary focus is on performance. Purpose, roles and goals are clear. Standards are high, and there is a commitment to not only meeting standards, but to continuous improvement. Team members are confident in their ability to perform and overcome obstacles. They are proud

of their work and enjoy working together. Communication is open and leadership is shared. Mutual respect and trust are the norms. Issues include continued refinements and growth.¹²

The team is more strategically aware; the team knows clearly why it is doing what it is doing. The team has a shared vision and is able to stand on its own feet with no interference or participation from the leader. There is a focus on over-achieving goals, and the team makes most of the decisions against criteria agreed with the leader. The team has a high degree of autonomy. Disagreements occur but now they are resolved within the team positively and necessary changes to processes and structure are made by the team. The team is able to work towards achieving the goal, and also to attend to relationship, style and process issues along the way. Team members look after each other. The team requires delegated tasks and projects from the leader. The team does not need to be instructed or assisted. Team members might ask for assistance from the leader with personal and interpersonal development.¹³

Performing seems easy once the Storming process is complete.

- This is the level where the team is a high-performance team
- They can be given new projects and tasks and accomplish them successfully and very seldom fall back into the storming phase
- At this level, the team is taking on new work on their own and selling it to other teams¹⁴

Variables

The team's stage can be measured largely using two variables.

The graph on page 7 shows the fall and rise or general progression of these variables.

Productivity

The amount of work accomplished by the team

Morale

How the team members feel about themselves and their team

In the beginning, it does not include an awareness (not a realistic one, anyway) of the team's Productivity.

Conclusion

This model enables us to anticipate what a team is likely to go through.

Sometimes it can be helpful to know that a particular characteristic or struggle is "normal", is to be expected and can be worked through. It can also be useful to understand that if a team's behavior matches one stage, certain actions or situations can prompt resolution to that stage and entry into the next one.

Awareness of where one's team is in the progression of Team Development stages can be beneficial when the going gets tough. It can help to depersonalize the issue at hand as the team members constructively work through the issues.

Team Leadership and the Team Development Model

In this model, we look at leadership styles and relate them back to the Team Development model.

Team Leadership is a leadership process that provides the flexibility needed to respond to the changing needs of a developing team.

Team Leadership involves varying combinations or degrees of directive behavior and supportive behavior.

Some Team Leadership Behaviors

Directive Behaviors

A leader exhibiting Directive Behaviors typically finds that they are quite involved in the team. Their leadership mainly falls into two categories, Directing and Coaching. These two fall along a continuum in which Coaching is less involved than Directing.

Some additional behaviors may include:

- Developing team purpose and values
- Clarifying team norms and ground rules
- Establishing roles
- Identifying goals
- Agreeing on structure
- Agreeing on strategies

Directing

The Forming stage corresponds to the Directing behavior.

Leadership style for this phase is a relatively detached task directing or “telling”.

Directing is usually clear-cut and well defined. The telling, instructing, establishing and directing provide good structure, which is needed in this stage. This hard stance will temper out as the team matures into Storming.

Coaching

The Storming stage corresponds to the Coaching behavior.

Leadership style for the phase is a more managerially involved stage of explanation, or “selling”.

Coaching is an interesting phase in which the leader attempts to find a balance between instructing and supporting, usually exhibiting both behaviors. The interplay between them will typically result in diminished instructions and increased support as the team matures into Norming.

Supportive Behaviors

A leader exhibiting Supportive Behaviors typically finds that they are empowering the team. Their leadership mainly falls into two categories, Supporting and Delegating. These two fall along a continuum in which Delegating is more empowered than Supporting.

Some additional behaviors may include:

- Involving others in decision making
- Encouraging participation
- Valuing differences
- Sharing leadership
- Acknowledging and praising contributions

- Building relationships

Supporting

The Norming stage corresponds to the Supporting behavior.

Leadership style for the phase is more participation.

XXXXXX

Delegating

The Performing stage corresponds to the Delegating behavior.

Leadership style for the phase is delegation and the team is largely self-managing.

XXXXXX

Conclusion

When viewed alongside the Leadership behaviors, the Team Development model can provide a framework for matching each stage of team development with an appropriate leadership style.

It can help diagnose the team's stage of development in relation to its goal, considering both productivity and morale.

With an understanding of the team's position at its formation, specific leadership styles can be identified and adopted to progress the team to the next stage.

The Team Development model enables a leader to use appropriate strategies to smooth the progress of a team through the different stages.

The Team Development model suggests suitable leadership styles and team member behaviors during each stage of the team's development.

Review

Directing is for the Orientation/Forming stage

Coaching is for the Dissatisfaction/Storming stage

Supporting is for the Resolution/Norming stage

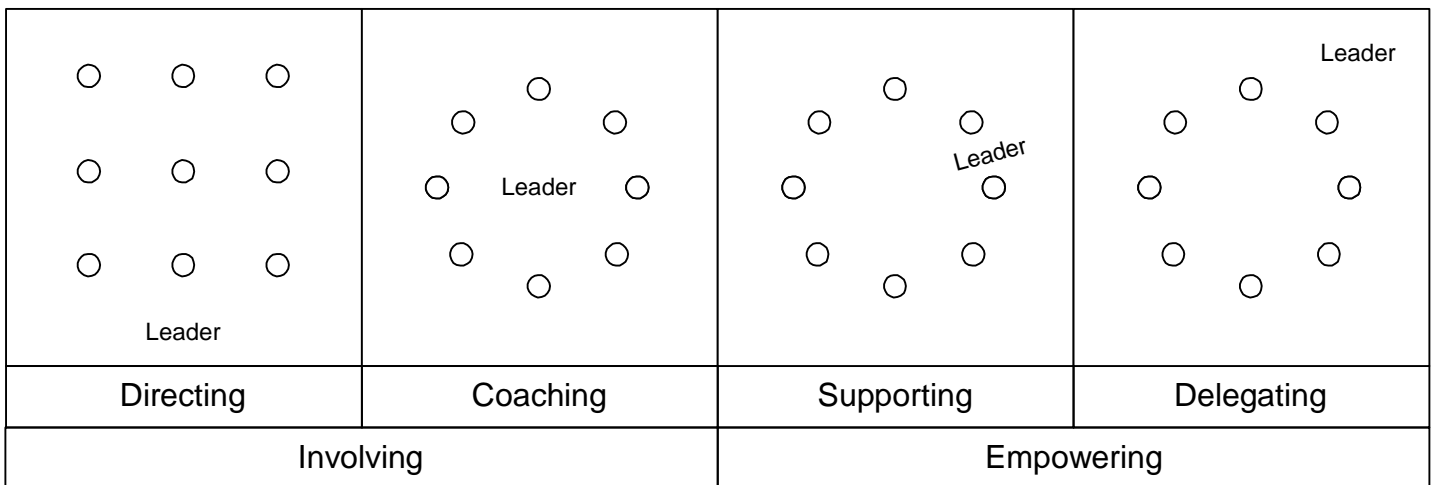
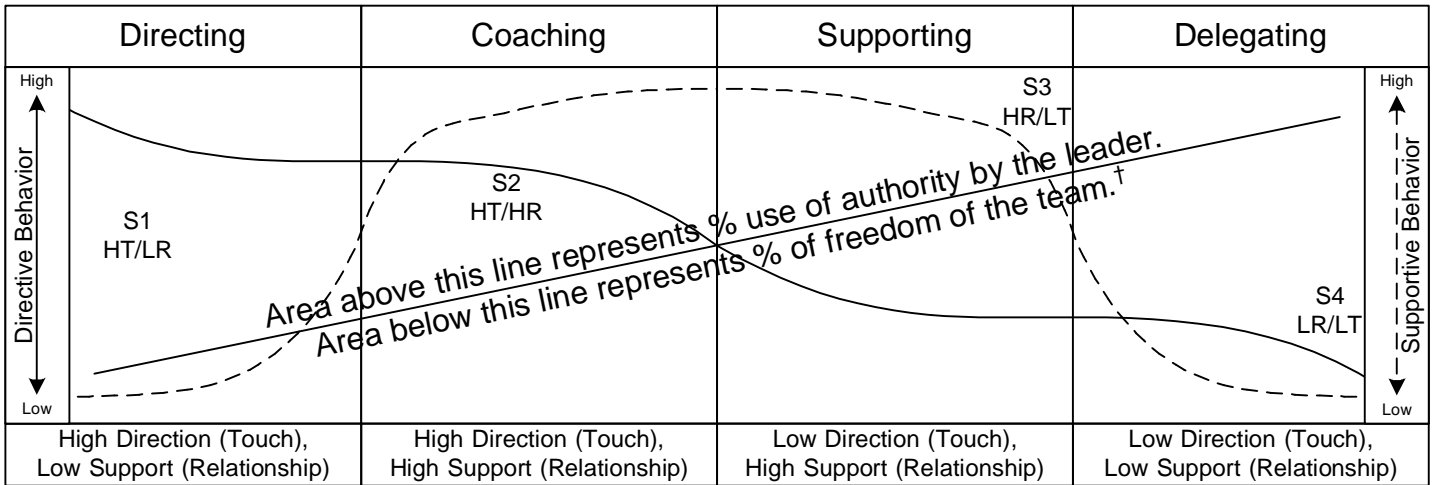
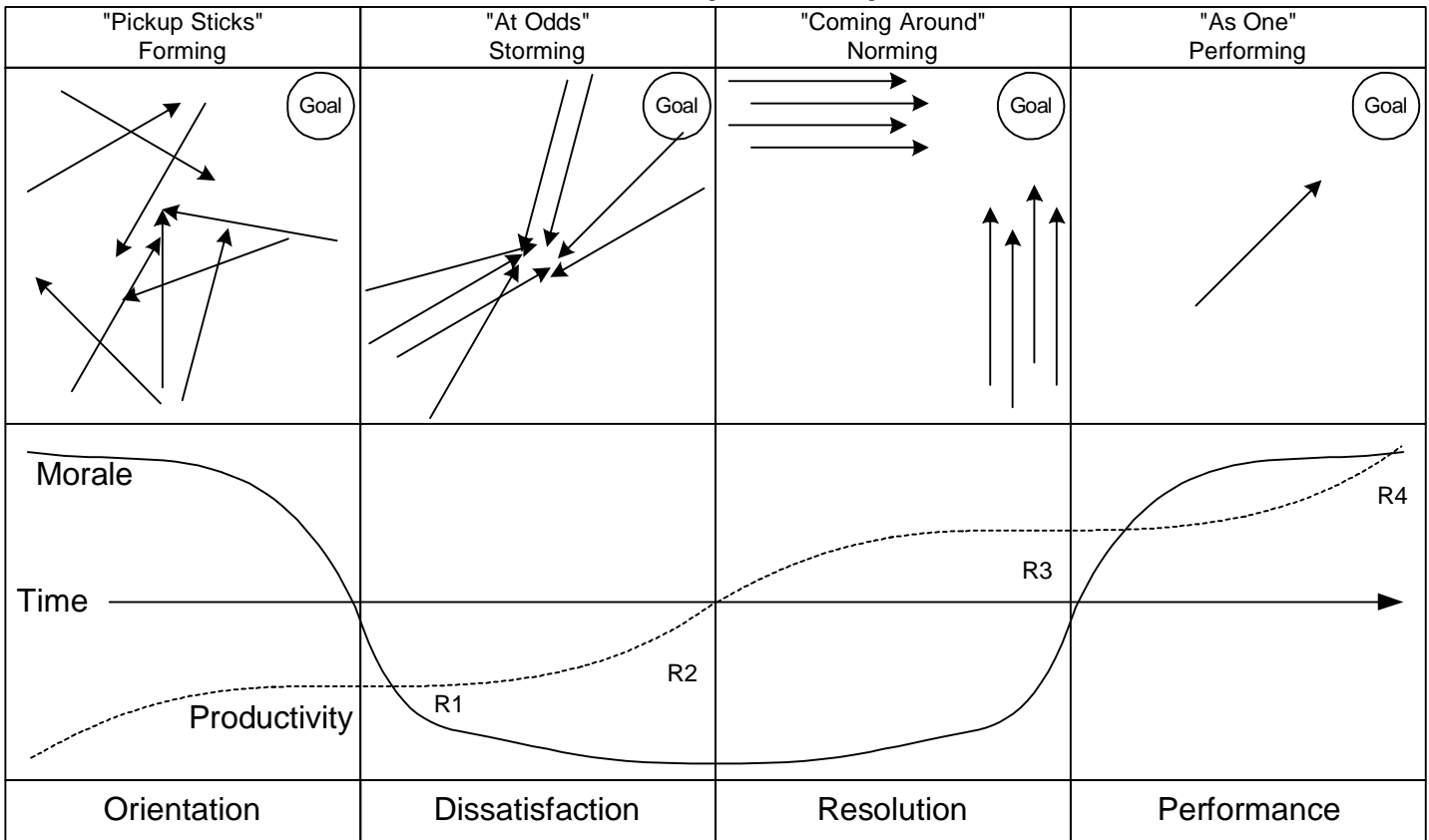
Delegating is for the Performance/Performing stage

The Graphs

The graphs on the subsequent page are a compilation of multiple team development and leadership models. In a sense, it is an attempt to create a “unified” model of team development and leadership. It is by no means perfect.

The curves represented in the subsequent graph are not intended to allow for an exact “plot” of a team’s development, a leader’s style or any other measurement.

Team Development Graphs



Footnotes

¹ This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.5 License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 543 Howard Street, 5th Floor, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.

² See if your organization offers the Situational Leadership series of courses (<http://www.situational.com/leadership.htm>).

³ From C-33-05, Stages of Team Development, pg 119.

⁴ Alan Chapman, <http://www.businessballs.com/tuckmanformingstormingnormingperforming.htm> as of 11/2/2005.

⁵ Glen Alleman, <http://www.niwotridge.com/PDFs/FormStormNormPerform.pdf> as of 11/2/2005.

⁶ C-33-05

⁷ Alan Chapman

⁸ Glen Alleman

⁹ C-33-05

¹⁰ Alan Chapman

¹¹ Glen Alleman

¹² C-33-05

¹³ Alan Chapman

¹⁴ Glen Alleman

† See Tannenbun and Schmidt for further discussion regarding the diagonal line and how the area above the line represents percentage use of authority by the leader/manager and the area below represents percentage freedom of the team. Reproduced on “Team Development Graphs” above.