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# Spotlight on Team Models

> " The essence of a team is common commitment. Without it, groups perform as individuals; with it, they become a powerful unit of collective performance. This kind of commitment requires a purpose in which team members can believe.
>
> **Katzenbach, J. R. & Smith, D. K. (1993)**
> 'The Discipline of Teams'

## 'Not All Groups Are Teams'

A 'team', like a group, also has a shared goal or purpose, but the difference is that members of a team work in a collaborative environment, are mutually committed to the goals and to each other, and are jointly accountable for team performance.

This has implications for the leadership of working groups and teams:

| Working Group | Team |
|---|---|
| Strong, clearly focused leader | Shared leadership roles |
| Individual accountability | Individual and mutual accountability |
| The group's purpose is the same as the broader organisational mission | Specific team purpose that the team itself delivers |
| Individual work products | Collective work products |
| Runs efficient meetings | Encourages open-ended discussion and active problem-solving meetings |
| Measures its effectiveness indirectly by its influence on others (such as financial performance of the business) | Measures performance directly by assessing collective work products |
| Discusses, decides, and delegates | Discusses, decides, and does real work together |

Katzenbach, J. R. & Smith, D. K. (1993) 'The Discipline of Teams'

Leaders therefore need to understand the different stages of development from group through to team and, secondly, the skills and behaviours demonstrated by an effective team.

## Development from Group Through to Team

Tuckman (1965) famously described the path that most teams follow to high performance as 'forming, storming, norming, and performing', and in later work he added a fifth stage 'adjourning' (sometimes known as 'mourning').

Tuckman's model describes how leaders change their leadership style from a 'directing' style through to coaching, facilitation and then delegation as teams become more mature and relationships are established between team members.

| | Immature Group<br>FORMING | Group Conflict<br>STORMING | Sharing Group<br>NORMING | Effective Group<br>PERFORMING | Disbanding Group<br>ADJOURNING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Group Characteristics** | Questioning, socialising, confusion, uncertainty, testing ground rules | Resistance, competition, tensions, cliques, moving to group norms | Reconciliation, consensus, leadership accepted, trust established | Flexible roles, healthy system, working as a team, mutual accountability | Recognition of both team and individual efforts, sadness |
| **Leadership Style** | **Directing**<br>Take the lead, get members acquainted, assign straightforward tasks, set expectations | **Coaching**<br>Resolve conflict, move towards negotiation and consensus | **Facilitating**<br>Provide direction, recognise individual and group effort, provide learning opportunities | **Delegating**<br>Encourage group decision-making and problem solving, share learning | Evaluate, achieve closure, end on a positive note, and celebrate growth, progress, and achievements |

## Skills and Behaviours Demonstrated by An Effective Team

Dr. Meredith Belbin's research at the Administrative Staff College at Henley (now known as the Henley Business School) in the 1960s and 1970s led him to conclude that the 'mix', or 'balance' of roles that members played in a team largely determined whether or not a team achieved its objectives:

Brief descriptions of the Belbin® Team Roles are provided below:

| Action Focussed | Thought Focussed | People Focussed |
|---|---|---|
| **Shaper (SH):** drives to overcome obstacles | **Plant (PL):** creative, solves difficult problems | **Teamworker (TW):** diplomatic, listens and averts friction |
| **Completer-Finisher (CF):** conscientious, seeks out errors | **Monitor-Evaluator (ME):** discerning, identifies and evaluates options | **Co-ordinator (CO):** confident, identifies talent, clarifies goals |
| **Implementer (IMP)**: practical, turns ideas into actions | **Specialist (SP):** single-minded, specialist knowledge and skills | **Resource-Investigator (RI):** explores opportunities, develops contacts |

The research also demonstrated that it may sometimes be necessary to take into account 'allowable weaknesses' when understanding team roles.

For example, a Monitor-Evaluator 'may well come across as unenthusiastic or even boring', but 1Team Role weaknesses can be comprehended as the price to be paid for the strength, and as such, they are termed ''Allowable''. Belbin Associates (2020)

### References

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