



# Stages of Team Development



The first stage in a team's development is the **Forming** stage ("Pickup Sticks").

- High, unrealistic expectations
- Anxiety about how they will fit in, trusting others, demands placed on them
- Unclear about norms, roles, goals, and timelines
- High dependence on the leadership figure
- Tentative and polite behavior
- Concerned about personal well-being, acceptance, and trust



The second stage in a team's development is the **Storming** stage ("At Odds").

- Dip in morale; discrepancy between initial expectations and reality
- Difficulties lead to confusion and frustration
- Growing dissatisfaction with dependence upon the leader
- Negative reactions to each other develop, and subgroups form
- Breakdown of communication, inability to problem-solve, lowered trust
- Concerned about power, control, and conflict



The third stage in a team's development is the **Norming** stage ("Coming Around").

- Issues addressed and resolved; morale begins to rise; positive, even euphoric, feelings
- Task accomplishment and technical skills increase
- Increased commitment to purpose, values, norms, roles, and goals
- Trust and cohesion grow; communication becomes open and task-oriented
- Team members value the differences among themselves; "we" rather than "I"
- Team members tend to avoid conflict for fear of losing the positive climate
- Concerned about sharing control and avoidance of conflict.

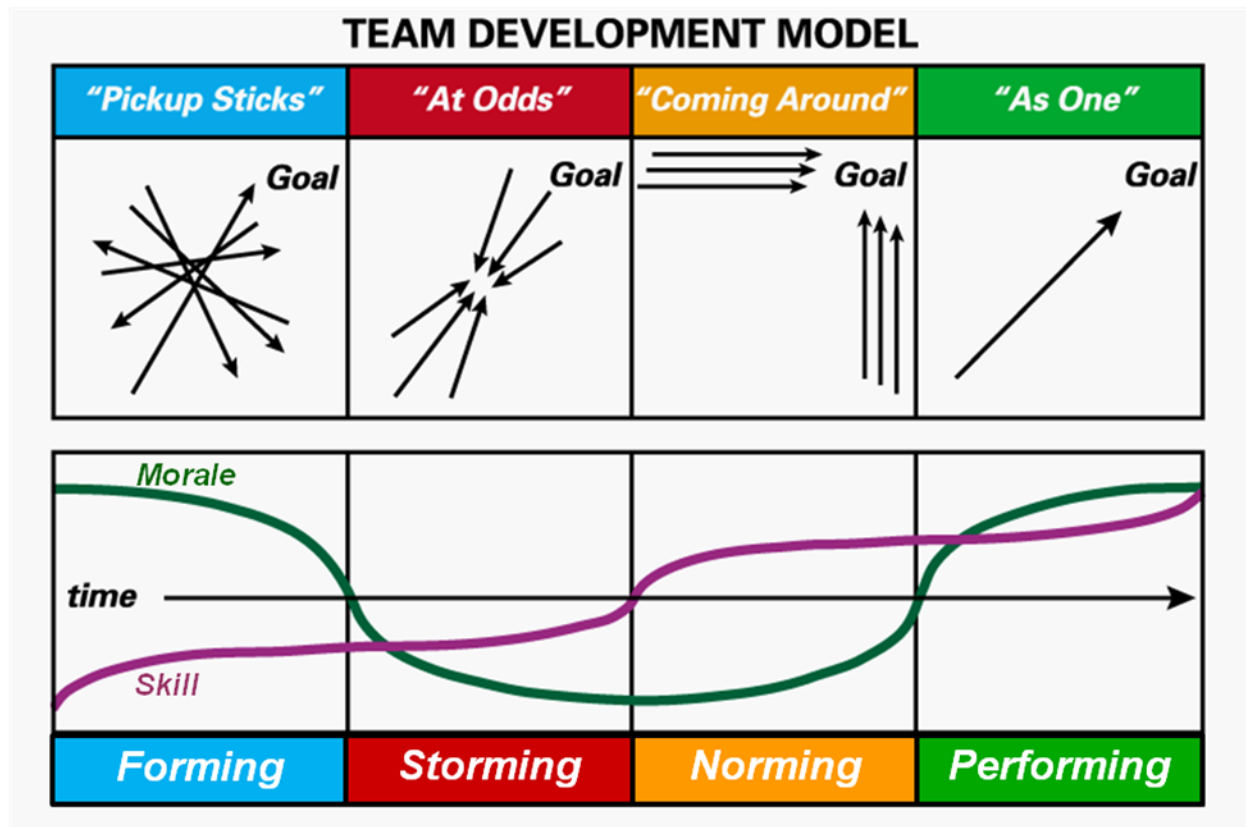


The fourth stage in a team's development is the **Performing** stage ("As One").

- Both productivity and morale are high, reinforce one another
- Sense of pride and excitement in being part of a high performing team
- Purpose, roles, and goals are clear; standards are high
- Primary focus is on performance; commitment to continuous improvement
- Confident in their ability to perform and overcome obstacles
- Communication is open and leadership is shared; mutual respect and trust
- Issues include continued refinements and growth.



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## Background notes:

Educational psychologist Bruce W. Tuckman suggested that all teams go through four distinctive stages in their development.

The four stages were originally referred to as **Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing.**

The basic model has been in use for the past four decades.

The model has important implications for organizing, building, and leading a team.

## References

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