

# Berkeley-Haas Team Survival Kit

*A Guide to High-Performing Teams*

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Haas School of Business  
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# Welcome to Haas Team Performance

Over the course of your education here at Haas, you will experience many types of projects that require teams to perform optimally to maximize outcomes. The teams will range from small, a team of 2 or 3, to very large, maybe 20 or more. The projects will range from short group writing to year-long student organizations with a complex set of activities. When you graduate, we want you to look back on these experiences not only as rewarding and educational, but designed to help you develop the skills to:

- Be a great team member
- Lead high performance teams
- Help an organization create and manage innovation teams
- Create organizations that harness the power of innovation and teams for superior competitive advantage.

This guide will help you in two ways. First, it will help you overcome some of the usual challenges that teams experience at Haas, particularly during your first semester. Second, it will be a set of tools that you can take with you to your next place of work. There, we hope you will find yourself in

many team leadership positions where you can apply your skills and knowledge. This is part of the Haas School's focus on developing innovative leaders.

When you return to the workplace after Haas, you will need to be both a strong team leader and a skilled team member. You won't have the luxury of picking your own team. Your teammates will probably be people with different views, different languages and cultures, different abilities and different preferences from yours. Sometimes they will be your direct reports, and other times they will be your peers (not subordinates). And yet your success, your reputation and your career depend on your ability to lead and work with them *effectively*.

The guide reflects a cumulative body of knowledge spanning many years of dealing with team projects at Haas and in the corporate environment. It will be modified and extended as we learn from each successive year of students who experience it, and the diverse set of team experiences at Haas.

# AS YOU START

Running high performance teams is a skill you'll be honing your whole life. Even the most accomplished team leaders learn something new each time they lead a team. Before you and your team start this journey together we want you to know about the background, research and models that inform this Kit.

## Second-Year Student Advice for Your Team

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We take our job putting this Kit together for you seriously, so we did our homework. We heard what over 180 second-year Haas students had to say about their first-year Student Team experiences. They reported what worked, what didn't, and what support they wish they'd received. We listened for patterns and best practices, insights and tips. Your peers had a lot to say. They were very clear how much impact the Student Teams had on their first-year experience and beyond. Each described how their team had ups and downs – just like in the workplace. For many, the Student Team's value and impact was positive. For those for whom the experience was not positive, it put a "dent" in their first year, which they hope you can learn from and avoid.

Here's the summarized collective advice of those who found their teams valuable as well as those who found their teams challenging:

- ✓ *Get to know each other*
- ✓ *Agree on a conflict resolution scheme early*
- ✓ *Value everyone's voice*
- ✓ *Don't have meetings without a purpose*
- ✓ *Remember Haas is an opportunity to build your personal brand*
- ✓ *Be true to your best self*

We've included the most helpful information, tips, tools, and structures that will make it easier for you to follow their advice.

## Team Performance Model

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Of course, you're also benefiting from over 40 years of our own combined experience consulting to CEO's and senior teams. Over this time we have studied and used numerous team models. Eventually, we decided to create our own, borrowing elements from some of the best around; models grounded in solid social science and evidence-based research. We crafted our model over many years. In the past three

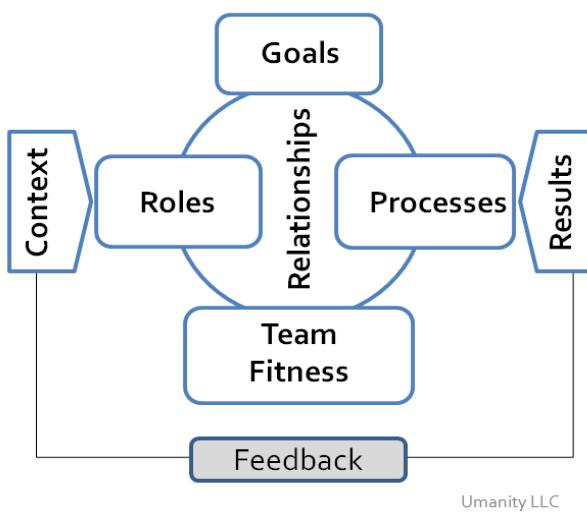
years, we've field tested at Haas and tailored it to your situation. For those who care about such things, this model comes from good management science stock, including Hackman, Nadler and others.

### Assumptions Behind the Model

Anyone using a model should be aware of the biases and assumptions that inform it. In the spirit of full-disclosure, here are ours:

### Teams are complex adaptive systems

Teams are not machines; they're living, dynamic systems, also known as complex adaptive systems (go to "complex adaptive systems" in Wikipedia for details). This means teams are self-organizing and self-determining. They respond dynamically to changes in their environment, functioning for periods of time in a steady state punctuated occasionally by chaotic spikes. The environment in which they operate determines to a great extent what the teams can and can't do. Like other complex adaptive systems, teams transform the raw material from their environment (e.g. ideas, natural resources) into outputs (e.g. products, services, profits, etc.) using work processes. Along the way, they also generate by-products; some desirable (good will) and some not (wasted time).



### The Eight Essentials for High Performing Teams

Our Team Performance model reflects eight essential steps for developing high-performing teams.

- ✓ *Understand the team's history, **mandate** and resources*
- ✓ *Set clear, shared **goals***
- ✓ *Define and deploy needed **roles***
- ✓ *Effectively deploy core work **procedures** (prioritization, delegation, decision making, etc.)*
- ✓ *Manage **team fitness** (in addition to doing the work tasks)*
- ✓ *Create and sustain strong working **relationships***
- ✓ *Measure **results** at the individual and team level*
- ✓ *Leverage **feedback** to learn and drive continuous improvement.*

### Working relationships are central

One of the key distinctions of our model is our emphasis on *working relationships* as central to team effectiveness. When working relationships begin breaking down, the core work of the team deteriorates at an equal rate. Few things can destroy value faster than breakdowns in working relationships between critical players on your team.

In our experience working with teams across various settings and industries, we have come to view working relationships, specifically the elements of productive conversation, conflict resolution and trust building, as the glue that holds teams together in the face of adversity. All teams face adversity. The stronger the working relationships, the more **resilient** teams are

***Does your team get stronger or weaker in the face of adversity?***

in the face of stresses like prolonged uncertainty, broken promises, wildly vacillating client demands, evaporating financial resources, fervent opposing views, promising ideas that turn into dead ends, personality conflicts, etc. If the relationships are strong and well attended, adversity actually strengthens the team. This in our view is *the* litmus test for high performance teams

### **Using the Model During Your Time at Haas**

We based your Team Survival Kit on the Team Performance model, so you're

already applying the model just by using the tools and tips offered in this Kit.

Beyond what's in the Kit, you can think of the Team Performance Model as a dashboard with the few, most vital elements you need to check in pre-flight, to track during flight, and to review once you land to keep improving your skills. For example, as you start up, you'll discuss the goals, roles, procedures, working relationships, etc. for the team. As the semester progresses, you can use the elements of the model to check in as a team a couple of times to evaluate how well you're doing and what areas need shoring up. Doing so will provide you with the early warning signals you need to adjust speed and direction, avoid stalling and navigate turbulence with skill. At the end of projects and at the end of the semester you can use the checklist to review how you did and to learn what you will do next time to perform even better.

Now, prepare for launch!

# YOUR TEAM LAUNCH

## Fast Start vs. False Start

What do I want and what does our team want? What are we trying to do? How will we do this? These are three key questions for the team to address as part of a strong start. Connecting and contracting are two techniques for ensuring your team covers the right ground. Teams that dive right into “the tasks” in service of efficiency, skipping the connecting and contracting steps, can implode later on when unforeseen adversity and/or conflict forces the team to draw upon a foundation of shared purpose and understanding that was never built. Think of it as starting slow so you can go fast.

### Connecting to Teammates

At the top of the second-year students’ list of advice is “Get to know each other!” Strong working relationships are a vital ingredient of successful teams. Make the time right out of the gate to learn what each member brings the team, what they want from the team, and how business school fits into the broader context of

#### Approach to Connecting:

**Step 1.** Read one question at a time. Individually reflect on each question, taking notes.

**Step 2.** Discuss your notes with your team. You can share in pairs first, then take it to the whole team or start by sharing as a team.

**Step 3.** Note areas where your needs converge and/or diverge. Use this conversation to inform your Team Contract.

**Suggested time for 5 person team:** ~20-60 mins.

### The 5 Connecting Questions with Examples

#### 1. What do I want to get out of my experiences at Haas (and from this class, this project)?

I am at Haas to shift from being a techie to having a strategic management position. I want to build as much skill and experience in the areas of strategy and leadership as possible.

#### 2. What do I want from our Team?

I am not super strong in the quantitative stuff, so I hope I can learn from the quant pros on my team.

#### 3. What are my past experiences with teams?

The best team I ever worked on was Team ABC because everyone was fully plugged in and played full out. The worst team I ever worked on was Tear CDE because everyone was in it for him or herself and didn’t put anything into strengthening the team. The top 3 lessons I learned from my team experiences so far are \_\_\_\_.

#### 4. What hopes and concerns do I have about this team?

I hope we can push each other beyond our individual comfort zones and learn as much as possible. I want to become a real working team, not just a social club.

#### 5. How do I like to work? What is my Myers-Briggs type?

I am strong on S & J, so for more complex projects prefer to see things in advance, so I can collect my thoughts before having a big discussion.

It really sets me off when people are late to our meetings. If on top of that they don’t even call or text to let me know...that really triggers me!

their lives. Knowing what motivates and inspires your teammates will help you decide how to work best together. It will also enable you to optimize the different perspectives, needs, and resources each member brings. Without this information, it's easy to make assumptions and misinterpret behavior, which often has a peculiar way of surfacing as very difficult conflict later on. Investing time to get to know each other's purposes and goals will lay down solid tracks for foundations of trust and understanding. You will undoubtedly be glad you did.

## Team Contracting

Well-crafted Team Contracts bring clarity to what the work is and how the work will get done. In so doing, it builds trust on the team by clarifying and making explicit the team's shared goals, what members can expect from each other, their agreements and what to do when those agreements get violated. With a lot at stake (learning objectives, grades, career aspirations, personal reputations, etc.) trust becomes an essential team asset that needs to be actively managed.

Just the process of putting your Contract in writing has enormous value. It provides an early forcing mechanism for getting aligned on key issues by requiring you to literally spell out your specific agreements together. As your team's first "deliverable," writing the Team Contract can surface issues that might not have come up yet and let you anticipate/avoid problems stemming from lack of clarity. The written contract also provides a valuable record of your agreements. And when someone doesn't keep agreements, the Team Contract is a helpful starting point for a feedback conversation.

Tailor your agreements to reflect both the unique composition of your team as well as the specific goals and requirements of your

work together. Here are six agreement categories for contracting that teams have found helpful in the past:

1. Personal Context
2. Goals
3. Roles
4. Processes
5. Norms
6. Commitment

Because your team is operating in a fluid situation, your team contract needs to be a dynamic, living document. It is only helpful to the extent that it reflects the real needs and circumstances of the team. If the team's circumstances change significantly, the contract should be revisited and if necessary, revised. Some good reasons teams revise their contracts include changes in membership, new schedules, major life events, etc. By recommending you modify your contract, we are not in any way suggesting you "water down" your high standards. High standards are a good thing. Making and changing agreements when it's really necessary is a team practice that helps keep the high standards relevant to the team's situation, in real time.

**Student Team Contract****Team Contract**  
Scratch Pad

<b>What do I want?</b>	
<b>Personal Context</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do I want to get out of Haas (and/or this class/project)?</li> <li>• What do I want from my Study Team?</li> <li>• What are my experiences with teams?</li> <li>• What are my hopes and concerns about this team?</li> <li>• How do I like to work? What is my Meyers-Briggs type?</li> </ul>	
<b>What are we trying to do?</b>	
<b>Goals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are we going to judge the success of our team?</li> <li>• What do the key stakeholder(s) expect from the team?</li> </ul>	
<b>How will we do this?</b>	
<b>Roles</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will we have explicit roles? What might they be?</li> <li>• How do we balance development and expediency?</li> </ul>	
<b>Processes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will the team divide up and integrate its work?</li> <li>• When and how often will the team meet, for how long, and where?</li> <li>• How will we manage team meetings?</li> <li>• How will we make decisions?</li> <li>• How will we hold each other accountable?</li> </ul>	
<b>Norms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What behaviors will support us?</li> <li>• How will we work through conflicts?</li> <li>• How will we handle mistakes?</li> <li>• How do we support development of one another? How do we leverage each other's strengths?</li> </ul>	
<b>Commitment</b> What sort of commitments (time, prioritization, responsiveness, mentoring,) will team members make to each other?	<b>UMANITY</b>

Team Contract Scratch Pad	
What do I want?	
<b>Personal Context</b>	
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<b>Commitment</b>	
What sort of commitments (time, prioritization, responsiveness, mentoring,) will team members make to each other?	

### Team Contracting Approach:

**Step 1.** Individually fill in the template (a few bullets in each area) before the team meeting.

**Step 2.** Share and discuss each person's notes, one category at a time.

**Step 3.** Once everyone has finished sharing for that category, record the key areas of both convergence and divergence.

**Step 4.** Repeat these steps for each category.

**Step 5.** For important areas in which the team's needs diverge, brainstorm ways to manage the differences (see appendix for sample team contracts from previous years). Record any agreements reached.

*Note: Adapt your team contracting process to fit your situation. An existing team that just got a case assignment can do a leaner version of contracting than a new team starting on a semester-long project.*

If you are still stuck, contact a Umanity Team Coach for support ([haasteams@umanity.org](mailto:haasteams@umanity.org)) to get advice in email or to set up a call.

**Suggested time for 5 person team:** ~90 to 120 mins

## The Bare Minimum

If you are totally crushed for time and just can't imagine doing what we have outlined for a strong start, then we've boiled down the team contracting process to its most essential elements. We are not recommending you take any shortcuts (every step is valuable or we wouldn't have included it) but we do know that life happens, so, the bare minimum is this...

1. Share your individual goals for your time at Haas and the class/project and then discuss how your goals might complement and/or conflict with each other's goals.
2. Based on your individual goals, establish clear, shared goals, agree on ground rules, and define the work you're doing together. These questions should help:
  - ✓ *What are we trying to do together?*
    - What results/outcomes do we want our team to deliver?

- What is the core work required to deliver those results?
- ✓ *How will we do it?*
- How do we best organize to get the work done? What work should the team do all together and what is better accomplished by working individually, in pairs, or in sub-groups?
  - What ground rules will support us in accomplishing our goals?
3. Discuss your work styles and preferences (include your Myers-Briggs Type) and talk about how your differences might complement and/or conflict with each other. Discuss the implications for adapting how to work together effectively.
  4. Make a plan for attending to your team's fitness (not just focusing on the tasks of the project) during the life of the team.

## I. COVERING THE BASICS

We often assume that the best teams are the ones with the most talented individual players. But becoming a high-performing team takes far more than just talented individuals. It takes a good system for learning HOW to work well together and the team's commitment to practice using it so members can build capacity quickly.

Consider two prominent soccer teams, both with impressive rosters of world-class players in the recent 2010 World Cup. Spain seemed to have more of a team "system" while Argentina seemed to rely much more on their individual players' capabilities and creativity. Over the course of the tournament, without a strong team system for playing together and for improving as a team, Argentina's effectiveness as a team seemed to remain constant throughout the tournament while Spain's team system approach appeared to gain strength and

momentum. Unfortunately for its fans and players, Argentina (a team with a well-deserved tradition for great soccer) exited the tournament much earlier than they had hoped while Spain won the 2010 World Cup.

As outside observers versus insiders on the coaching staffs of these two great teams, we are speculating a bit. Yet it serves as a recent illustration of a broader performance dynamic that repeats itself in many other situations where teams are the right structural choice to do work; be it in team competitions of various kinds, in orchestras and jazz quartets and of course, in organizations.

How do you develop a good team system? All the suggestions (ideas, principles, tools, tips) below will help your team develop its own system for becoming a high-performing team.

## How to Run Productive Team Meetings

We've all been in meetings that feel like a waste of time and leave us drained. Not nearly as many of us have regularly experienced meetings that feel generative and alive, leaving us energized, and excited about the progress made. The key to consistently good team meetings is not what you put in the coffee. Here are the key ingredients:

### ***Before the Meeting***

- ✓ *Use an agenda (circulated in advance)*  
*Include:*
  - The topic(s)
  - The team member on point for each topic, and
  - How much time each topic will be given in the meeting
  - Pre-work assignments (e.g. completed reading, review of drafts)
- ✓ *Complete the above tasks in advance of the meeting so that members come prepared and the meeting time can focus on moving the team's work forward*

### ***During the Meeting***

- ✓ *Stay attentive and contribute fully*
  - Respect each other's time and work by refraining from emailing, texting, surfing, or drifting in and out of the meeting

- ✓ *Start on time and end on time*
  - Enable team members to plan better, feel respected and have greater confidence in their agreements
- ✓ *Start with a Check-In (quick 30 seconds each)*
  - Invite each person to say one or two sentences about what's going on in their lives, how they're doing, and anything else that will help them be present
- ✓ *Use standing roles including facilitator, note taker, and organizer of the next meeting*
  - Consider rotating the roles to share the workload and the opportunity to practice new skills
- ✓ *Take minutes*
  - Record bullets of key points, decisions, assignments, next steps and due dates
  - Agree on time/location for next meeting
- ✓ *Reflect and evaluate the meeting – take about 5 minutes*
  - Discuss what worked and what needs improving
- ✓ *End with a Check-Out*
  - Invite each person to say a sentence or two about how they are feeling leaving the meeting

# When Do We Work as a Whole Team? When Do We Delegate?

Not only can meetings become unproductive when people are not prepared or focused, they can also get bogged down when there is a mismatch between the task and the “unit of production” doing the work. Teams do some tasks well; sub-groups, pairs, and individuals are better suited for other tasks. The key is to know when to use each one. Here are a few tips:

## **Use the whole team for:**

- ✓ *Brainstorming ideas to generate a breadth of options*
- ✓ *Discussing complex topics where the range of team members' experiences and skills adds insight*
- ✓ *Planning a project*
- ✓ *Reviewing and integrating work that was delegated to a sub-group or individual*

- ✓ *Rehearsing presentations*
- ✓ *Giving and receiving feedback (this can also apply to sub-groups, pairs and individuals)*

## **Use sub-groups for:**

- ✓ *Giving presentations*
- ✓ *Handling natural groupings of related tasks (the market research, the financial modeling, the value proposition, the final slide presentation, etc.)*

## **Use individuals/pairs for:**

- ✓ *Reading*
- ✓ *Writing and editing*
- ✓ *Researching and performing analyses*

### **Delegating? Don't Forget Integration**

- ✓ When the work requires a few team members' particular expertise or focus, it makes sense to delegate it to individuals or divide into sub-groups.
- ✓ When you do delegate, it's important to define the deliverables and due dates clearly and think through how you'll reintegrate the delegated work at the back end.

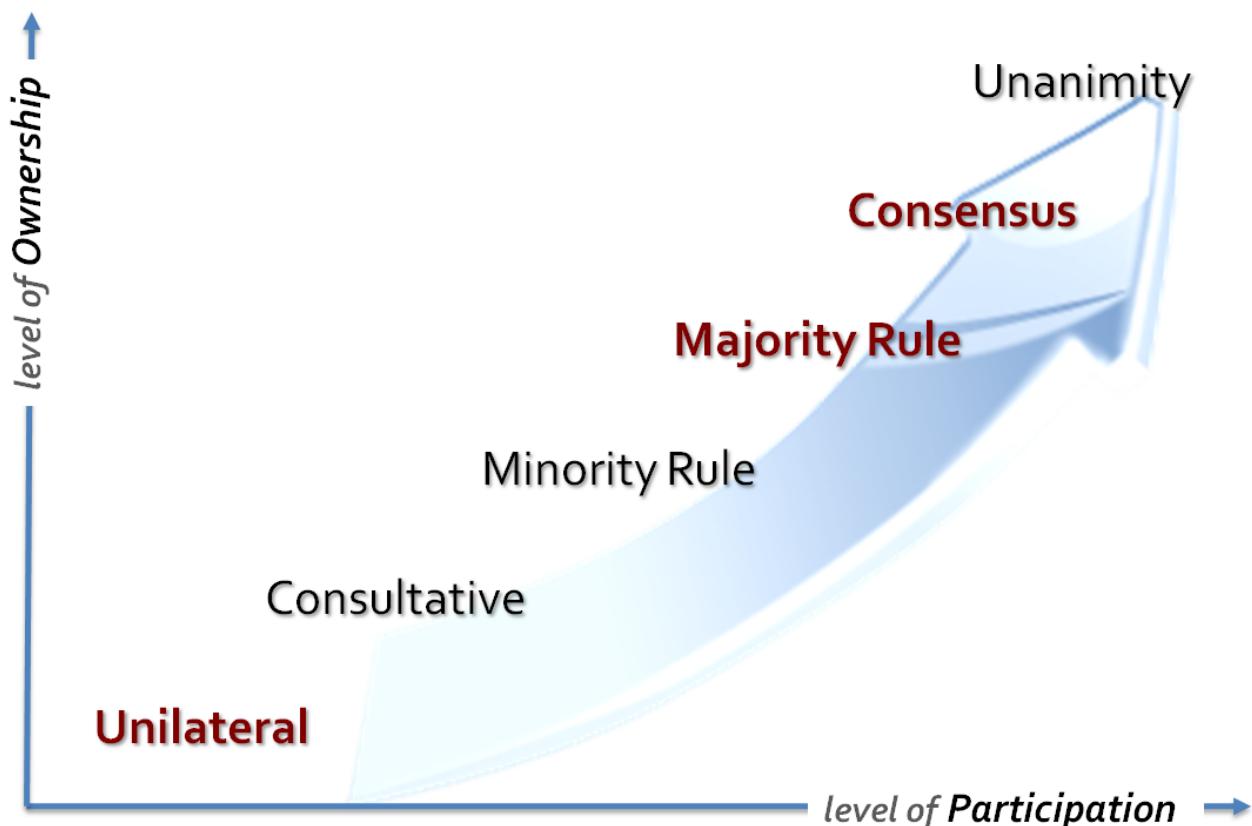
This not only helps ensure that you're **dividing labor effectively**, but helps **prevent wasting time** and energy fixing avoidable integration problems, which can arise despite the brilliant work of individuals.

## How Do We Make Decisions?

Teams that do real work often have to make tough decisions. Making good tough decisions requires making a good match between the project content and context and the decision process you choose (see chart below). Over the years we've found that most teams forget that there are more than three options for making key decisions. They usually remember **unilateral** (one person decides), **majority rules**, and **consensus** (though many teams are confused about what "consensus" actually means). There are a few more than that. As you face the myriad decisions ahead that your team will confront, it can help to have the short list of decision-making process options in front of you.

Keep this list handy especially during your planning process and in the meetings in which key decisions are being made.

How do you decide how to decide? There are large books dedicated to decision making (two good ones are A Primer on Decision Making by James March and How We Decide by Jonah Lehrer). When trying to match decision process with project content and context, there are numerous variables to consider, including level of expertise and experience required to make an informed decision, time, degree of uncertainty, level of risk, importance of buy-in of team members and potential impact on others outside of the team.



For purposes of this team guide, our best advice to you is to keep the decision process chart on hand as you start to plan for and make decisions. Over time you will develop a feel for how to make a good match that works well for your team's situations. And please, do yourself a favor and use a light touch. If you have ever gone

through a Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RACI) chart exercise, you know how mechanical a process like that can be. Our intention is only to remind you of your decision process options so you can be clear, efficient and savvy in picking the best process for your situation.

Decision-making Options		Definition/Context/Velocity
<b>Unilateral</b>	one person decides	When the group has delegated the decision to one person because of time constraints and/or the person's expertise or capability. Goes as fast as the decision maker can go.
<b>Consultative</b>	one person consults with others, then decides	When group has asked one person to lead, but certain individuals on the team have information or desire input. Typically takes a bit more time to consult with relevant team members, but it can contribute to higher quality decisions and/or prevent a lot of post-decision selling/explaining.
<b>Minority Rule</b>	a sub-group of the team decides	When team has delegated a task to a sub-group and the sub-group has the expertise and capability it needs to make a good decision and/or the implications for the decision largely fit within the scope of the work that was delegated. Tends to go pretty fast.
<b>Majority Rule</b>	the most votes decides it	When team has decisions to make that impact the whole team but people can go either way, when decision options are ambiguous (e.g. deciding among two equally imperfect options), when time is short. Goes pretty fast.
<b>Consensus</b>	everyone on the team will support a decision that offers either their first or second choice	When team decisions need to be made that have a significant impact on every team member and buy-in to one of several choices is paramount. When there are strong views and when choices are ambiguous. Can be more time intensive because the investment made in getting buy-in to everyone's first or second choice can be complex. It is a "go slow to go fast" investment of team time.
<b>Unanimity</b>	100% of the team has to agree	When team decisions have a major impact on every team member, there can be only one option and even one dissenting vote means that implementation of the decision is at risk or not appropriate. Speed totally depends on alignment of the team and complexity of the issues going in. Can go very fast or take a very long time. These tend to be more rare in student teams, perhaps more common in the Oval Office.

## How Do Team Members Give and Receive Feedback?

Typically, the topic of feedback loops isn't particularly charged, at least not in fields like systems engineering or the behavioral sciences. Information generated by an operation or task is fed back to the operator as information to help adapt actions to improve performance. Personal feedback in a team setting, however, is another story for some. In that context, feedback can become very uncomfortable. We might think of it as criticism. On many teams and in some cultures, criticizing others is unacceptable. If you believe getting "feedback" is code for you "messed up," you're probably reluctant to have anything to do with it. Avoiding feedback, however, is a huge mistake. In fact, avoiding giving and receiving feedback deprives the team of one of the most potent means for improving rapidly and sustaining high-performance. What to do?

If you are willing to give feedback a second chance, or you already recognize its value and want to get better at using it, then here are a few tips:

First, repeat the following phrase 5 times to yourself: "Feedback is simply information. What I do with it is my choice." If you can eventually believe these words, you will be amazed how you start to hear feedback as helpful – even if it's less than perfectly delivered.

Second, know that the more choice you give teammates about when and how they hear feedback, the more likely they will use it and want more. Conversely, the more you impose it on them, the less interest they will have.

With these two tips, you are now ready to learn about the three key components that help make feedback useful.

### Three Components of Feedback

1. Observable Behavior
2. Impact of Behavior
3. Preferred Future Behavior

These three simple steps can be used to give either positive or negative feedback. Before giving feedback, it's important to check if the recipient is ready and willing to receive it. Feedback given without permission usually elicits resistance, if not downright hostility...not quite the desired impact (remember the second tip?).

1. Start by identifying the behavior you want the person to change. It's very important to provide a concrete example of observable behavior without exaggerating or embellishing, so the recipient knows exactly

### Example Feedback

**Person A:** "When you come to meetings more than 10 minutes late without letting us know in advance, I feel annoyed and frustrated. I would appreciate it if you would either be on time or let us know in advance if you expect to be late. That would be a relief."

**Person B:** "How much advance notice do you want?"

**Person A:** "At least an hour would be good. That way we can plan without you if we need to."

**Person B:** "Okay."

what you're talking about. Always focus on the tangible behavior, not the attributions (other's thoughts, attitudes, or motivations) you think might be behind it. Using "I" statements when identifying the behavior will help you avoid making those types of attributions.

2. Identify the impact (tangibles like time delays and intangibles like feelings) that the behavior has on you. It is important to relate the impact also in terms of the feelings it elicits (this part is often skipped over), not the thoughts or opinions you have. When you do share

<b>Observable Behavior</b>	When I see/hear you...	how it feels at the receiving end of a specific behavior, you are sharing something personal about yourself. However vulnerable that might feel, it's worth the risk because an emotional connection to an experience or piece of information is much "stickier" than dry facts, and is also much more motivating to the person whom you are requesting to change their behavior. If you keep it simple and real and don't embellish or exaggerate, the recipient will be more likely to listen and respond to your requests.
<b>Impact of Behavior</b>	I notice... I feel...	
<b>Preferred Future Behavior</b>	I would appreciate it if you...	

3. The next step is to make a request for a preferred future behavior. Like the behavior under discussion, the requested behavior should be specific and observable. It is usually quite easy to identify behavior we don't want and much harder to name the behavior we do want. However, the person won't know exactly where to go if you don't point them there.

- a. Finally, share the emotional impact you expect the preferred behavior to have (e.g. "it would feel really good and restore my trust"). Then ask the recipient to tell you what they have heard you say to ensure that they really understand the feedback.

## II. PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS

Think of some of the best conversations you've ever had. Words flow easily, one person's idea builds on another's, which builds on another's, and before you know it, you're having insights and ideas you could never have had alone. Everyone has become more brilliant together. Think late night dorm conversations about politics and philosophy.

Unfortunately, you've probably also experienced that other kind of conversation in a team meeting; the kind that goes around and around in circles. No one is listening to each other, one person is going

on and on, and everyone else is looking at their watches. The entire conversation seems pointless.

Productive, generative conversations aren't just more enlivening and fun; they're the cornerstone of high-performance teams. While they are as much art as science, you can do more than merely hope for the best every time your team gets together. We've gathered the best practices that can help make productive conversations a consistent part of your team experience. Believe it or not, it all starts with your **intention**.

### Harnessing Your Best Intentions

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Intention is so important that no matter how many tips and techniques we give you, the single biggest impact you'll have on the quality of your conversations comes from your **intention**. If you truly want to understand the other person's perspective (see 2<sup>nd</sup> Year tips on pg. 3), you will find the "listening" and "difficult conversation" techniques contained in this Kit quite valuable. If, instead you're unconsciously or consciously invested in looking smart or proving another person wrong, then not only will your team members experience that intention coming from you, but no amount of technique will save you. Each of us has amazing internal radar about others' intentions. Not all of us switch that radar on... or use it. Yet that "intentions radar" is a core part of your neurophysiological make up. Even if you don't say anything, your intentions come shining through in your attitude, your expressions, your

energy and your body language. Your intention constantly communicates volumes. The question is whether or not you are in command of it.

If you don't choose to operate with your *best intentions* consciously, the "less noble" drives (e.g. looking good, being right, vengeful, etc.) inevitably step in and run the show for you. You can learn to connect with your best intentions by asking yourself one question before you act or speak: "What do I most want to have happen in this conversation?" Am I after a little personal "victory" or do I want to help the team move ahead? Whatever else might be going on, you can always reconnect to your best intentions by checking in with that great question, "What do I most want to have happen in this conversation?"

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## Listening to Work Smarter

Good listening skills go far beyond the tenets of finishing schools and the basic laws of politeness. Listening skills impact team performance. When someone is really listening, it changes what we do, how we speak and what insights we reveal. It even changes how we think. The best leaders and team members know how to listen so that people share their best thinking.

The key starting point for any of the following listening skills to work is that you have a genuine intention to understand the other person. As we've already said, no amount of skills, tools, or techniques can cover the smell of insincerity. For at least a short time, to really listen, you need to prioritize understanding what the other has to say over your own desire to be heard. Let's say that again. Understanding the other person comes before you being understood. None of us should underestimate how hard that is for most of us to do.

*"When I work with teams, it is good fun to find the "under-cover non-listeners" on the team. Those are the folks that actually would prefer to do most of the talking, but who appear to be listening by letting others speak. Yet when you watch them closely, what they are actually listening for is not understanding, but listening for the first sounds of breathing. The split second the speaker has to take a breath (and we all do), they instantly dive into that tiny space and start*

*talking. We help these types of "listeners" learn that they have better options available."*

Ulrich Nettesheim, Umanity Founder

Effective listening is not only a function of your intention; it also requires your **attention**. The practice of **mirroring** helps heighten your attention and insures that you're listening accurately, while signaling to the other person that they've really been heard. The three steps of mirroring are deceptively simple:

1. Listen
2. Reflect back what you heard using some of the speaker's own words
3. Ask them if you "got" it

After you try mirroring, it is important to ask the speaker if you understood them correctly. Examples of phrases you can use to check if you "got" it:

- ✓ *Did I understand you?*
- ✓ *Am I following you?*
- ✓ *Did I get what you were trying to say?*

Sometimes mirroring is especially challenging. One such instance is when the speaker you are listening to is saying things you strongly disagree with. Your brain may be so busy with evaluation activity that you have no more bandwidth to really listen – and the speaker, of course, senses that.

For those of you aspiring to achieve that black belt in listening, try the practice of suspending your own thoughts of evaluation, agreement, and disagreement until after the speaker experiences being fully understood. Being able to do that is a hallmark of listening mastery. It is a very powerful interpersonal skill. Perhaps it's so hard because we are so conditioned to constantly evaluate and judge quickly. Yet it is the cognitive activity of evaluation that often crowds out effective listening. Listening that improves team performance is really valuable to work on and also really hard to learn.

Mature listeners learn to trust that they will have their chance to weigh in when the time is right, so they are patient about their

talking. And they also trust that if they help the others really feel heard, the gift of being fully heard will be returned in due course.

### ***Mirroring tips***

- ✓ Demonstrate understanding by paraphrasing (vs. parroting their exact words)
- ✓ Match their pace
- ✓ Don't add anything or editorialize
- ✓ Don't refer to your own experience

## Inquiry as Catalyst for Team Performance

Inquiry is the art of asking powerful questions. Good inquiries clarify content, reveal the thinking behind someone's conclusions, and open up new levels of meaning. Even if you disagree with someone, learning how they came to their conclusions has huge value. It enables you to appreciate their perspective, correct any misinformation, and/or change your own thinking without rousing defenses. If you can sustain an inquiry long enough, you can begin to understand what led the person to their belief, which makes it much easier to not only find areas of agreement, but also is a catalyst for higher quality thinking that helps you "crack the case," and position you at the core of issues.

There are many kinds of Inquiry. You can ask questions to learn about:

- ✓ *Data*
- ✓ *Feelings*
- ✓ *Thoughts and reflections*
- ✓ *Personal experiences*
- ✓ *The history or background of a position, idea, or action*
- ✓ *The intended future of a position, idea, or action*

Examples of phrases you can use to inquire are:

- ✓ *How did you come to that conclusion?*
- ✓ *What information leads you to say that?*
- ✓ *What would be the impact of that action in the long run?*
- ✓ *What other ideas do you have about how to handle this?*

## Advocacy in Service of Results

Now it's your turn to talk. There is an art to sharing your perspective so that other people really want to listen to it. The more that you can express it simply, without pushing, the more open they will be. Long meandering monologues, forceful emphatic declarations, and hammering your point into the ground are all cases of pushing. Pushing has a tendency to put people to sleep, make them outwardly compliant (and inwardly hostile), or just turn them off. Pushing tends to shut people's listening down.

Here's how to be compelling and advocate strongly for a perspective.

- ✓ *Start by sharing what you think, but don't stop there. Also share the data and assumptions behind your conclusions.*
- ✓ *Share where you have questions and what you're not certain about.*
- ✓ *Invite others to help you improve your thinking by asking:*
  - What might I be missing?

- Are there other ways I could interpret the data I have? What other assumptions could I make based on the information I have?
- Are there other conclusions I could draw?

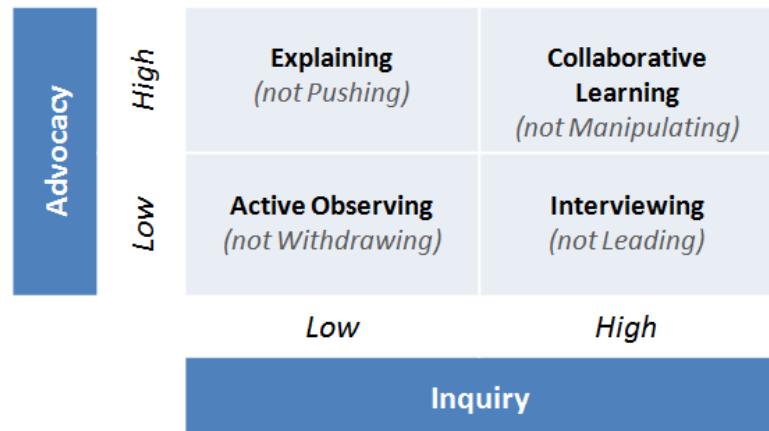
Contrary to many of the ideas we might have adopted, being open to other people's influence is not a sign of weakness; it's an expression of mature leadership. When we look around we often see models of unhealthy head-butting, with each party trying to out-shout the other. It may work to boost talk show ratings, but it definitely does not work on teams. When there's too much pushing and not enough advocacy, there's usually unhealthy conflict and under-performance. Advocating skillfully requires both active listening and inquiry skills. They're all connected. If you don't intercede on behalf of another, team members will spend twice as long trying to get through to you. You will inevitably save time practicing these methods.

## How to Know If You Are Communicating Productively

### The Advocacy/Inquiry Matrix

It is actually possible to predict with a high degree of accuracy the quality of your team's thinking and output just by analyzing your conversations. High performing teams have a balance of advocacy and inquiry. To find out how your team is doing use the 2 x 2 matrix in the appendix to answer these questions for yourself, your teammates, and the team as a whole:

- ✓ *In which quadrant do you spend most of your time?*
- ✓ *Within each quadrant, are you behaving in ways that lead to learning and innovation or to frustration and closing down?*
- ✓ *Do team members step back when the team goes off track, name the problem and make a suggestion for how to move forward?*
- ✓ *Or, do some team members dig in their heels, give up and/or push more emphatically?*



### A Quick Communication Check-Up

#### When I'm listening, do I...

- ✓ Genuinely try to understand the other person or am I looking for the pause where I can jump in?
- ✓ Look for the value in what they're saying and acknowledge it?
- ✓ Make sure I really "get" it before moving on?

#### When inquiring, do I...

- ✓ Explain why I am asking the question?
- ✓ Take enough time to discover how the person came to their conclusions?
- ✓ Inquire with genuine curiosity or rather to find a hole in the argument?

#### When speaking, do I...

- ✓ Share all of my thinking, or just my conclusions?
- ✓ Explain 'why' I am sharing what I am sharing?
- ✓ Encourage others to explore my thinking?

## III. TEAM PAIN POINTS

### Team Troubles

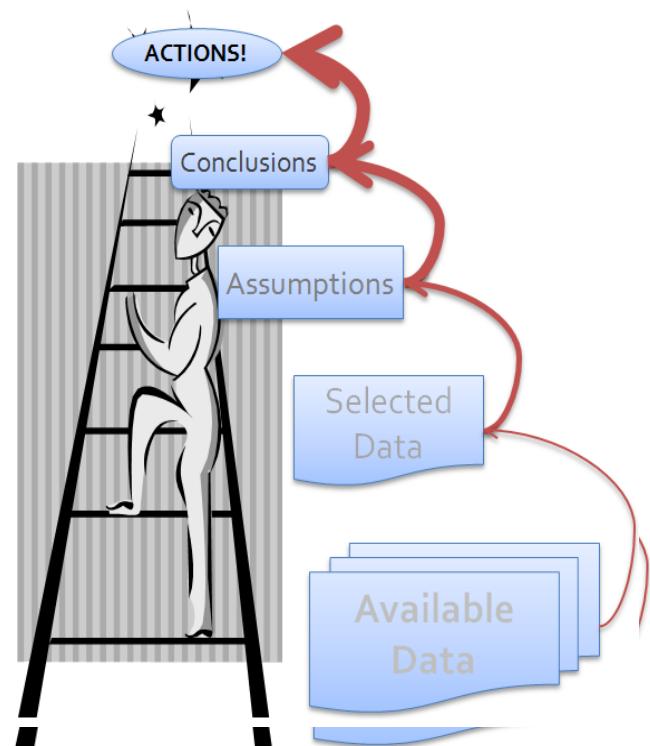
As much as you practice all these great skills - being clear on your intentions, listening for understanding, balancing inquiry and advocacy - real challenges will still arise. Something might happen that sets you or others off. Maybe you don't like what someone said or you can't believe how they're acting. Or perhaps you think the group is heading in a perilous direction. Suddenly, it's become a "high stakes" conversation. You're heating up inside (even if you're keeping it cool on the outside), your palms are sweating, your jaw is clenched. Your breathing becomes shallow and you stop thinking clearly. You want to grab the wheel and take over the ship yourself, let someone have a verbal lashing or leave the situation completely. To keep from getting that close to the edge, or if you find yourself already standing on the edge, what do you do?

#### A Model of How Your Mind Works: The Ladder of Inference

It is helpful to understand how the mind works. Chris Argyris of Harvard & Donald Schon of MIT (now deceased) spent much of their careers observing and recording meetings of executive teams and boards. They were surprised to notice a big gap between what executives **think** they do in meetings versus what they actually **do**. For example, most executives do a lot more talking than listening. And as we've already discovered, when that happens not a whole lot of learning and innovation takes place. Argyris and Schon also noticed that

executives, in "heated" conversations and situations, often unintentionally think in ways that actually make the situation **worse** instead of better.

Out of their research, Argyris and Schon developed a model for how people think called "The Ladder of Inference." It shows how we go through life filtering data (less than 20% of what's available). Based on the data we focus on, we make assumptions, and then draw conclusions, which then inform the actions we take. We do this in milliseconds, which is good news when we're about to get run over by a bus. It's not so helpful, however, when we're in a conversation with a teammate that's going nowhere.



How does the Ladder of Inference help us to get out of a hot spot? First we have to understand what got us into it. What became clear to Argyris and Schon was that the least amount of learning (and most amount of conflict) happens when we treat our own conclusions as if they are “the truth,” without testing them or making explicit the thinking that led to them. It should come as no surprise, then, that when conversations heat up we tend to talk strictly at the level of “conclusion.” In other words, we talk at the top of our Ladders. That’s why we don’t learn anything and just end up butting heads.

It’s also why we get stuck in serious logjams. Here’s how it works: When we get triggered, we tend to zip right up to the top of our Ladder of Inference. Then, we treat our conclusions as if they are the data itself. Our conclusions are obvious! Indisputable! Self-evident! We completely forget the original data, forget that we could have chosen other data and forget that we could have interpreted the data differently. We just assume we’re seeing things the way they really are.

Then something really insidious happens. Firmly convinced of our conclusions, we selectively scan for data that further confirms our thinking (and ignore data that is disconfirming). Once that happens, we’ve gotten ourselves in a bad corner. In other words, we get trapped in a self-reinforcing feedback loop of our own creation. To us it is completely obvious that we’re absolutely “Right.” Anyone that disagrees is obviously absolutely “Wrong.”

Self-reinforcing loops make it very hard to imagine other ways of interpreting the same data or to recognize there might be additional data. Thus, we don’t see the

possibility that there might be other options available to us. When we remain stuck in such a corner, our world becomes narrower.

### So What Do You Do Already?

If you’re the one who’s heating up, you can’t do anything until you cool yourself down. In these moments, the best thing is to slow down - even pause the whole conversation - or call a team break. Breathe. Step back from the fray and notice how you’re feeling. With a little distance and time you can start to look for ways to get re-grounded and to step out of the corner you feel trapped in. Gain a little more space within yourself and for your team. Once you have cooled down a little you have a much better chance to help transform this difficult moment into an opportunity for learning and innovation.

*Help slow down the conversation by asking some questions that help get back down the ladder.*

- ✓ What is the thinking behind what you’re saying?
- ✓ What are you basing that on?
- ✓ Are there other ways we could interpret it?
- ✓ Other conclusions we could draw?

In a team meeting, when you notice the conversation has gotten heated, start paying attention to where people are on their Ladders of Inference. Are they speaking at the level of conclusion, and not sharing assumptions and data? Are they

missing critical data or making incorrect assumptions?

In helping to make the thoughts and inferences more explicit and tracing how you got from the data to your conclusions and actions, you will likely discover common ground and see where important differences provide rich learning opportunities. For teams that need to be innovative, this is a critical skill. The ambiguity of the tasks, the diversity of the ideas, and the framing of the problems requires our team to work with the inherent tensions of multiple perspectives for much longer than we're used to elsewhere. So in fact, this skill is not just a solution to a pain point, it is critical for teams that need to leverage their diversity.

## Working with Assumptions

Another way to get our teams back on track is to work with your assumptions. Every assumption has an impact. Author Diana Smith tells us that some assumptions lead to learning and innovation while others lead to further breakdown of the team. Her table below charts the impact of different kinds of assumptions on the team and the perspectives they reflect. Take a look. What kinds of assumptions do you tend to make? What does that tell you about your perspective? If you are in the **either/or** column, it is likely that shifting to the **relational** column will make a huge difference? All it takes is practice catching yourself and deliberately changing your assumptions to get better results. Your thinking, individually and collectively, will improve.

Assumptions	Either/Or Perspective	Relational Perspective
<b>About Substantive Disagreements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume only one person can be right, and so the other must be wrong</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume each person sees things the other misses and misses things the other sees</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume the rightness of one view is a matter of obvious fact, not opinion or interpretation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume people's different beliefs and interests lead them to see the same things differently</li> </ul>
<b>About Relationship Troubles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume one or another person is causing the difficulty; "He is making the other feel this or do that", "She gave the other no choice"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume each person is contributing to the difficulties; "They're each making it hard for the other to be at their best"</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume that one or the other is mad or bad – that is, crazy, stupid, incompetent or immoral</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume they're each doing the best they can and could use your help</li> </ul>

Diana Smith, 2008

## Final Tips for Difficult Team Conversations

When conversations get heated and start to speed up, the most important thing to do is slow them down. Remember though, it's not easy when all you really want to do is make your point more emphatically.

Instead, notice where you are on the Ladder of Inference. If you're at the level of conclusions, drop down to the level of data and assumptions. Reveal to the group how you're thinking and invite others to show you anything you might have missed. Assume that everyone sees some part of the truth and everyone misses some part of the truth.

Step back and notice how much you and others are operating in the either/or perspective or the relationship perspective. Remember to ask yourself: "What do I really want: to win the argument, to look smart, or to contribute to the team's success and learning?"

If you are going to assume anything, then assume everyone is doing their best. In the face of difficult conversations, be clear on your intentions, be curious about other people's perspectives, and be courageous in service of the team.

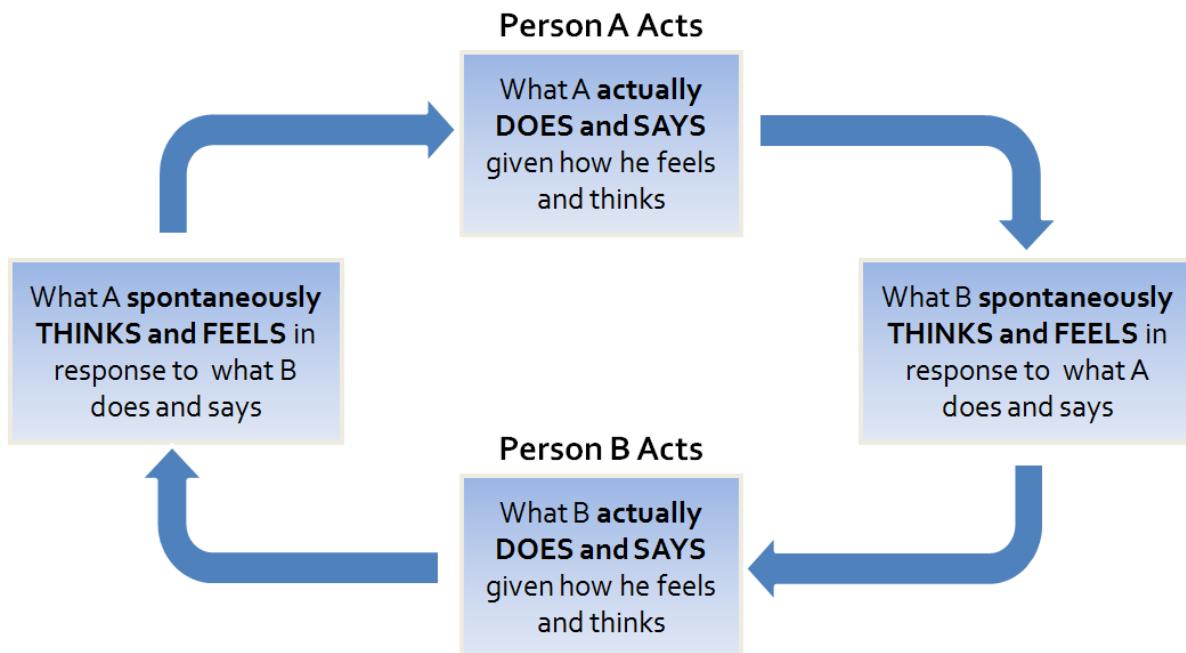
## Teammate Troubles

### The Act-React Loop

If you find yourself having difficulties with a teammate that seem to only be getting worse, keep reading. When we find ourselves in trouble with teammates, it can be very hard to know what to do. It's easy to think everything would be better if they or the situation were just different. It's much harder for us to see or even look for what we, ourselves, are doing that is contributing to the situation. We get locked

into what Diana Smith, author of [Divide or Conquer: How Great Teams Turn Conflict Into Strength](#) calls "The Act-React Cycle".

See the chart below on how it works. The cycle can start anywhere, with anyone. Before you know it, Person A and Person B are locked in a kind of ritualistic merry-go-round, each blaming the other. Each feels trapped and clueless as to how they are part of the problem.

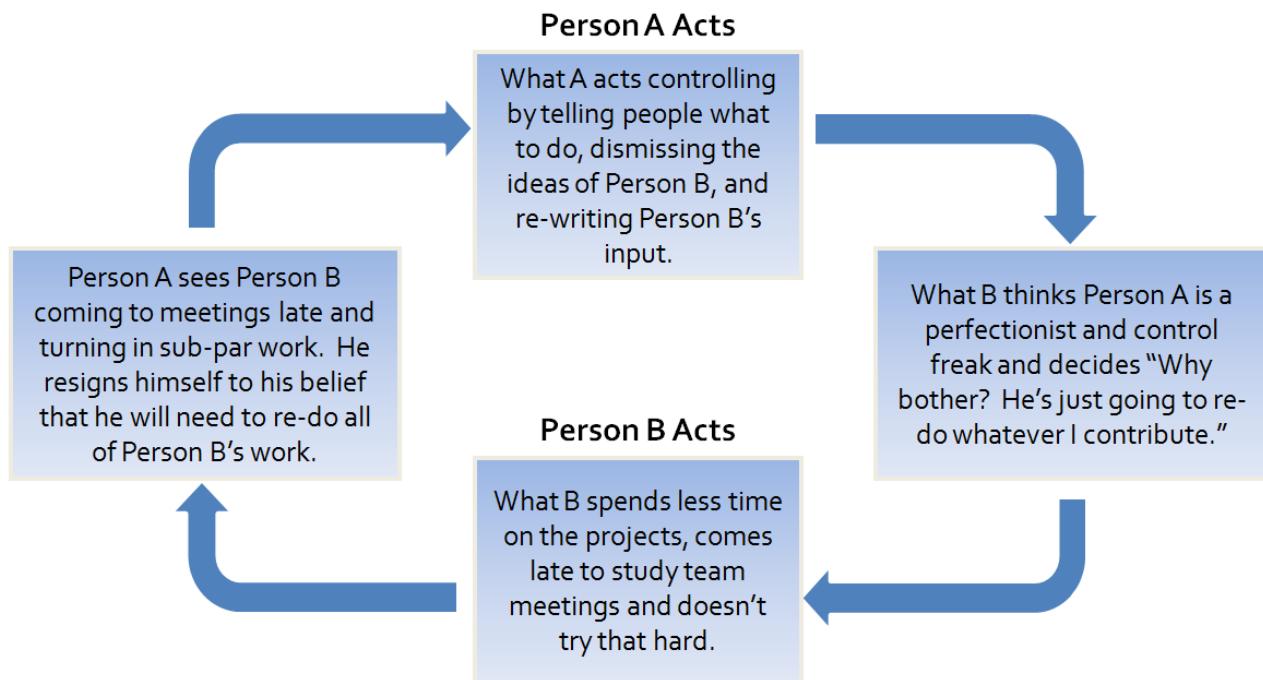


Diana Smith, 2008

### Sample Team Trouble: The “Assumed” Control Freak vs. the “Assumed” Slacker Dynamic

Here's an example of how the cycle works. Bob gets some work from Mary and decides to re-write it. Mary is furious that Bob is being such a perfectionist control freak. By the way, this is not a fact, it is an interpretation. Mary thinks, "Why bother going to any effort? He's just going to re-do whatever I contribute." Because Mary

doesn't raise her concerns and test her assumptions, she spends less time on the projects, comes late to team meetings and doesn't try very hard. Bob sees Mary slacking off, which reinforces his belief that he will need to re-do all of her work. Of course, he doesn't see this as a belief. He sees it as a fact. So he doesn't raise his concerns and test his assumptions; instead he feels justified in continuing to act controlling, so the cycle continues.



If you're having a difficult dynamic with someone, you may very well be trapped in an act-react loop. Check it out.

- ✓ *What are you assuming about your teammate(s)?*
- ✓ *What are you choosing to do (actions, thoughts, feelings) as a result?*
- ✓ *What do you experience the other person doing?*
- ✓ *What do you imagine they are seeing you do? What might they be feeling as a result?*
- ✓ *How does it all connect to create a mutually reinforcing dynamic?*

The loops can be so tight (and our blind spots so blind), it can be difficult to break free from them without help from someone else. After all, feeling trapped in it is part of the issue. Ask someone you trust for help. Real help does not look like someone taking your side and supporting your complaints about how difficult the other teammate is. Real help aids both parties in seeing the loop they are in and then hopefully making other choices (actions, thoughts, feelings) to break out of the cycle. Invite the person helping you to challenge your assumptions about both the situation and yourself. Ask them to point out your blind spots. Then co-design a

conversation to have with your seemingly challenging teammate to improve the situation.

When you get together with the one you are having difficulties with, share the Act-React cycle in which the two of you have gotten stuck. By first acknowledging your own role in the situation, you will invite the other person into a constructive conversation. Describe the blind spots you've had and ask them if they can point out any more. Ask them what other data you might have missed that supports a different understanding. Ask them, "What am I missing here about myself and how I might be contributing to this? What am I missing about you?"

Preemptively requesting their feedback actually signals that you want to hear and understand your impact on them. More often than not, if you don't demand it, your openness creates willingness for them to eventually do the same – to learn how their choices impact you. It may take a few times where you first have to model the openness. And on rare occasions, the person may never be ready to do so. In this case you have to figure out a way to move on that works for you that doesn't depend on them. Most of the time this approach puts the two of you back on the same team, committed to learning together.

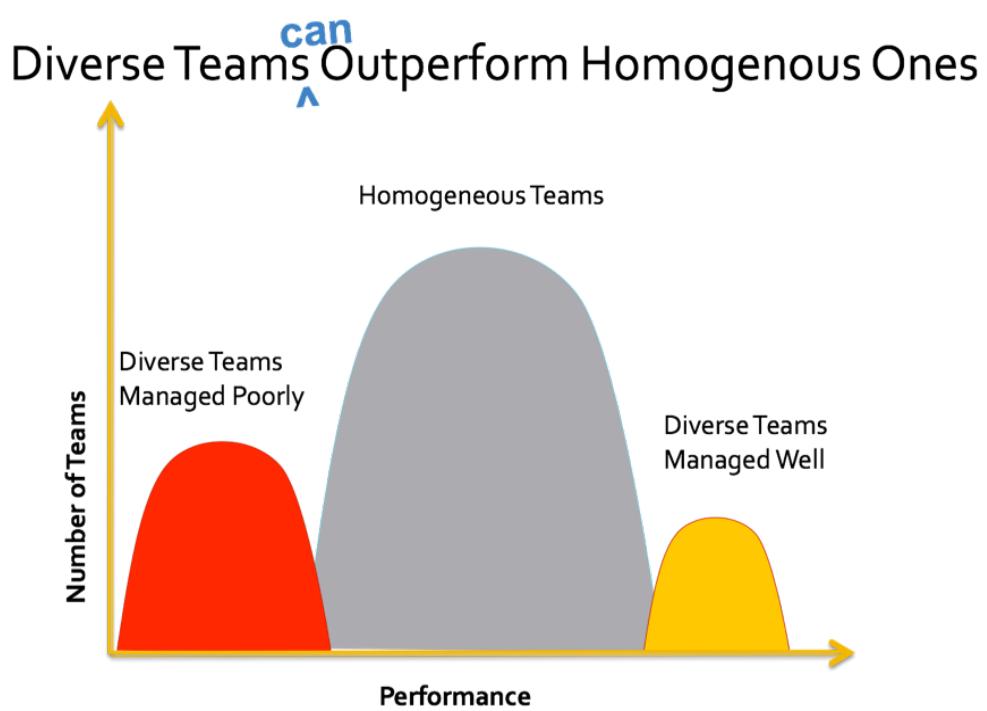
## IV. LEVERAGING THE TEAM'S DIVERSITY

### Realities of Diversity on Teams

With the globalization of the workforce more and more teams are becoming more and more diverse – different disciplines, experiences, ethnicities, genders, learning styles and personality types. There is a lot of research being done on how to best leverage diversity on teams. Having diversity on a team has its upsides and downsides. Some of the team issues most directly impacted are conflict, cohesiveness, knowledge sharing and communication. While it's true that homogeneous teams tend to have less conflict, faster team development, better performance on cooperative tasks, easier

coordination and higher satisfaction, they also have real limitations. Heterogeneous teams *can* develop more innovative and better solutions, discover broader criteria for evaluating problems and perform better at solving complex problems. Diversity in teams *can* in general lead to increased creativity. *Can* is the operative word. The research on global teams with cross-

cultural focus suggests that diverse teams tend to perform either better or worse than homogeneous teams, with more performing **worse** than better (DiStefano & Maznevski, *Organization Dynamics*, 2000).



Source: "Creating Value with Diverse Teams in Global Management." DiStefano & Maznevski. *Organizational Dynamics*, V. 29, No. 1, pg. 45-63, 2000

The downside effects of diversity on teams can be mitigated with good leadership, effective team processes and strong relationships. Bottom line: diversity on teams can lead to either better or worse outcomes depending upon how much inherent value the diversity brings to the work at hand and how well the diversity on the team is managed.

## Three Types of Diverse Teams

There are three basic groupings for how teams tend to handle the challenges of diversity, leading to the three different outcome clusters of team performance.

### **Destroyers**

This group gets stuck in action-reaction loops and stereotypes that make them uninterested, guarded or even hostile toward each other. They end up estranged from each other and perform very poorly.

### **Equalizers**

This group downplays their differences. In their attempt to be politically correct and see everyone as equal they miss the potential value in their diversity by trying to ignore it. They end up with superficial relationships and mediocre results.

### **Creators**

This group treats their differences as a valuable resource and intentionally draws them out and maps them. Team members actively seek ways to tap into and integrate the diverse perspectives on their team. By fully leveraging the suite of assets that different fields, cultures, values, experiences and talents bring, they can become an innovative high-performing team.

To be Creators requires a lot from a team. It takes determination and clear processes established at the outset to mitigate the transaction costs that can come with diversity. It also requires the team to invest more of their time in connecting and planning.

## Team Members with English as Second Language (ESL)

There are plenty of teams at UC Berkeley in which only a few members speak English as their native language. It's worth reflecting for a moment on just how impressive it is to study at the graduate school level in your second, third, or even fourth language (when it's challenging enough in your first). So, lots of "kudos" to the students accomplishing that. It's also important to realize that English as a Second Language might also mean "the U.S. as a second culture." In this case, there are not only important language differences, but also social and cultural differences that need bridging. As we've already mentioned, the potential value *and* challenges of these differences should not be underestimated.

With the number of global and virtual teams these days, having a diverse Team gives you valuable real-world practice. While there is a vast body of work on cross-cultural teams that we can't hope to cover, here are some tips for adjusting your communication and work styles to fully include everyone on your team and support the whole team in making a full contribution to its success.

Some initial tips for diverse teams

- ✓ **Everyone**, don't make any assumptions about how to support ESL members on the team without checking in with them. In other words, avoid making leaps up the Ladder of Inference or getting locked in an action-reaction loop. Instead talk

*about how things are going early on and often to calibrate what works best for both individual members and for the team as a whole.*

- ✓ **Fluent English speakers,** talk a bit slower, enunciate clearly and dare we say it – use fewer words (be concise). Consider sending a note on important topics or decisions in advance of team discussions so that those that find it helpful to read things in advance can do so.
- ✓ **ESL speakers,** be sure to ask questions if something is not clear. Chances are good that if you don't understand something important that others on the team may not either.
- ✓ **Everyone,** plan in a little extra time to review documents (and don't turn things in late) since it may take ESL members a bit longer to review.
- ✓ **Everyone,** use flipcharts and white boards to record conversations so that all students can both hear and see the conversations. This has a lot of benefits for the whole team. It slows down the conversation a bit enabling the team to

*be more deliberative. It also gives the team a chance to see if you're all really on the same page. Plus, if there are differences of opinion, capturing those opinions in writing and having them displayed in a shared space can make it easier for each party to listen better to the other, which ultimately can lead to quicker resolution of differences. One might wonder why we don't record more of our team conversations on whiteboards no matter how homogenous our teams may seem.*

Some of you may worry that slowing down team conversations will become tedious and waste valuable time. If you have that concern, consider this -- slowing down to make sure everyone is following and is participating in the decisions is a best practice for high performing teams. In our extensive experience with teams, we've found that way too often teams race through important topics so quickly that many members get left in the dust with no idea what just happened. So while working efficiently is important, working fast is often overrated.

## V. GOOD TEAM ENDINGS

We've talked a lot about how to launch teams well. How to **end** them well is an often overlooked yet equally important topic. Good endings are extremely important; they honor the team and the value of the experience you shared, no matter how challenging it might have been. They enable team members to harvest the meaning from the experience, put a bow around it, let the rest go, and move on.

Endings especially matter when members of a disbanding team remain part of a larger community together (e.g. as second-year students, Haas alumni, members in the same professional field, etc.). As the world gets more connected, that larger community we share has become global.

Your classmates' experience of you on the team helps shape your reputation. Ending your team on a positive note, no matter how many challenges you endured, can be enormously uplifting. A good ending can redeem even the roughest rides as powerful learning experiences and create a positive outlook for the future.

Good endings don't have to be fancy. They can be pure fun and celebratory. They can also provide an opportunity for deeper sharing and reflection. Your team needs to decide for itself what is most appropriate. The most important thing to remember is to be purposeful about your endings and make them clear, clean and constructive.

### Purposeful Endings

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#### **Clear**

Clear means that the team recognizes they are crossing a finishing line representing the end of the team. A closing ritual is a great way to mark the end of the team's life and bring closure for the members. It can be as informal and uncomplicated as conversations over beer, or more ritualized, like a final closing circle in which each member offers their reflections on their experiences on the team.

#### **Clean**

Clean means that people don't leave anything unfinished. Everyone has had a chance to say whatever needs to be said in a way that honors the dignity of everyone on the team and the value of the

experience, while also addressing any remaining hard feelings. What can often help is for the team to do a round of appreciations and then a round of acknowledgements of any unfulfilled expectations or hopes, and of struggles and the learning that resulted. It means that laying to rest, as best as you can, any ill feelings or remaining conflicts and cleaning up any messes that may have been made, is part of a clean ending.

#### **Constructive**

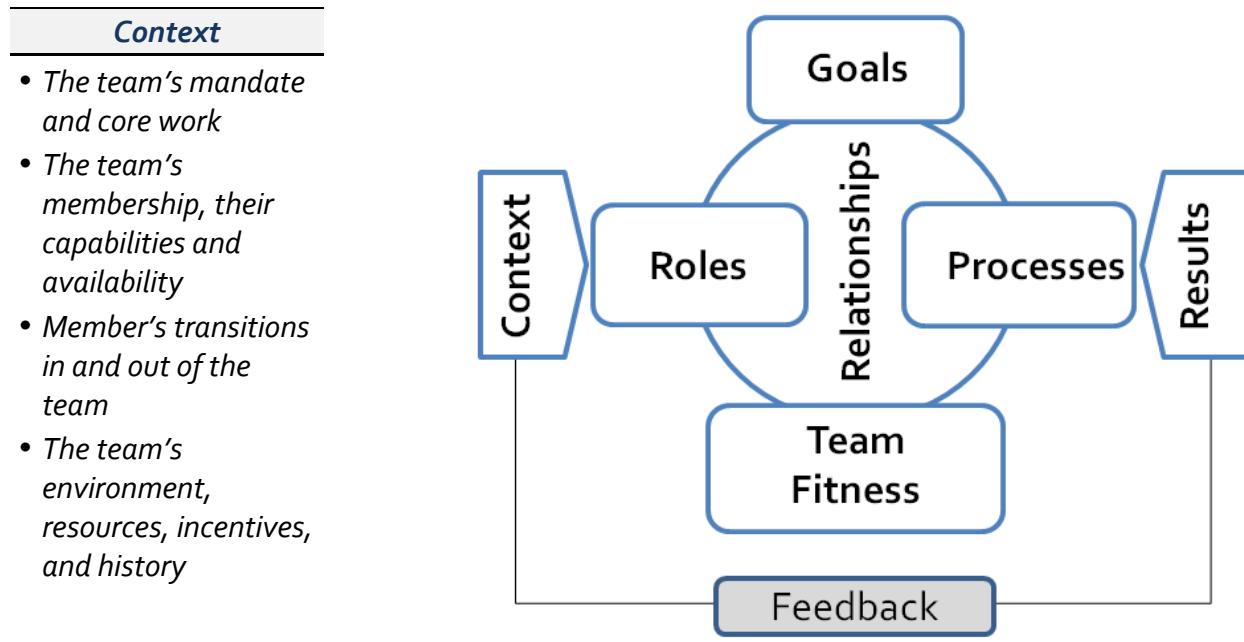
Constructive means that the ending acknowledges and celebrates what worked and that it celebrates the growth that came from facing challenges in a way that honors the worth of all team members.

## Three Tips for Creating Purposeful Endings

Synthesize	Celebrate	Close
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Review the team's achievements</li><li>✓ Review your own achievements</li><li>✓ Reflect on the team's greatest assets and how they were leveraged to add value</li><li>✓ Reflect on the team's struggles and the impact they had on team performance</li><li>✓ Find at least one example of when the team successfully overcame adversity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Share what you valued most about being on the team</li><li>✓ Share one thing you appreciated most about each team member</li><li>✓ Name one valuable contribution you're leaving with</li><li>✓ Share how your team's diversity positively affected team performance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Talk through the steps of how the team will wind down</li><li>✓ Do your own version of the "good-bye and good luck" ritual</li></ul>

## VI. APPENDIX

### The Team Performance Model: Detailed Description



Umanity LLC

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Core Processes</i>	<i>Relationships</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Tangible and intangible goals</i></li> <li><i>Individual and team goals</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Team Start-up</i></li> <li><i>Decision making, coordination, communication, delegation, prioritization, integration, linking to others (e.g. clients)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Building trust</i></li> <li><i>Handling difficult conversations</i></li> <li><i>Resolving conflicts</i></li> <li><i>Making and breaking commitments</i></li> </ul>
<i>Roles</i>	<i>Team Fitness</i>	<i>Results</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Required roles on the team</i></li> <li><i>Client's and advisor's roles</i></li> <li><i>Work the team does as a whole vs. as individuals, subgroups, or pairs</i></li> <li><i>Leader and member roles</i></li> <li><i>Content and process roles</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Honoring the team contract</i></li> <li><i>Running effective meetings</i></li> <li><i>Using performance feedback to improve</i></li> <li><i>Holding one another accountable</i></li> <li><i>Making the time to work on team's fitness</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Performance measures for individuals and team</i></li> <li><i>How to capture, track and use the measures</i></li> </ul>

## Sample Team Contracts

### Sample Contract 1:

**TEAM CONTRACT**

Last updated:

Study Group #:

Semester:

Haas School of Business, University of California Berkeley

September 1st

XXX

Fall

We hereby agree to the following conditions:

1. I will demonstrate great interest to participate in class, share my ideas and discuss them openly with other team members. I will respect each team member and each team member's opinion.
2. I will make an effort to collaborate with my team and build consensus. Nonetheless, I am solely responsible for any assigned material by the team. I will complete high quality work and submit my work on time.
3. In the case of an unforeseen absence, it is my responsibility to promptly contact my team members and learn of any new material. An announced and anticipated absence is greatly appreciated.
4. On a regular basis (monthly or as needed), my team will share positive and negative feedback about my performance. I will be open and receptive to feedback. My team will provide feedback on the following categories that have been deemed important by the team:
  - a. Quality of work
  - b. Dependability (timeliness, trustworthy)
  - c. Level of participation
  - d. Willingness to teach and collaborate
5. I will be respectful of my other team members' commitments and be flexible when scheduling meetings.
6. Each meeting will have a facilitator that will be responsible for leading the discussion and pushing the conversation forward.
7. Team members attending Economics, Statistics, and/or Leading People agree to meet on time for the following study discussions:
  - a. Economics: Monday and Wednesday at noon
  - b. Statistics: Wednesday at 5:30pm
  - c. Leading People: Tuesday and Thursday at noon

This contract will be revised as necessary throughout the semester. All team members will be

**Sample Contract 2:****Team Contract: Study Group XXX****Team members\*: Albert S., Danielle H., Evan B., Rebecca J., Mark A.**

<p><b>Goals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>To work efficiently and collaboratively to arrive at a collectively satisfactory outcome</i></li> <li>✓ <i>To leverage each other's strengths to improve each other's weaknesses</i></li> <li>✓ <i>To have a balanced approach to our experience at Haas while respecting each other's time and goals</i></li> <li>✓ <i>To execute ethically</i></li> </ul> <p><b>General Rules:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Be on time (respect each group member's time)</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Be respectful of each other</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Plan a team event every 3-4 weeks</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Do not wait until the last minute to complete tasks / projects</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Project management:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Duties:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Schedule meeting logistics</li> <li>· Prepare agenda for each meeting</li> <li>· Distribute summary of weekly tasks / goals</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Ensure each member is sharing perspective / insights</li> <li>✓ <i>Rotate Manager duties every 3 weeks</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Albert</li> <li>2. Danielle</li> <li>3. Evan</li> <li>4. Rebecca</li> <li>5. Mark</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p><b>Meeting Times:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>No meetings prior to 9:00 a.m.</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Try to finish by 5:00 p.m.</i></li> <li>✓ <i>No weekends if possible</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Schedule recurring team meeting on Friday</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Project Execution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Readings – Prepare alone</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Case prep:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· 1 member prepares case outline / answers to case questions</li> <li>· Other group members read case, come prepared to discuss / ask pointed questions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Projects:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Brainstorm / white board to structure concept, outline</li> <li>· Divide and conquer tasks and then reconvene and review</li> </ul> <p><b>Feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>If something is bothering you, let the team know, don't let it fester</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Provide formal feedback every 4 weeks (Manager to include in specific meeting agenda)</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Personal goals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Albert:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Improve Public Speaking</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ <i>Danielle:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Improve English and Public speaking</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ <i>Evan:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Push back, Don't be too agreeable</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ <i>Rebecca:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Improve Public speaking</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ <i>Mark:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Improve English</li> <li>· Improve Public speaking</li> <li>· Have a fun setting</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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\*the names have been changed to protect the innocent

## Detailed Advocacy/Inquiry Matrix

Advocacy		
Low		
High		
	<p><b>Explaining</b>  <i>(High advocacy that leads to high performance)</i>  <b>"I think we should do 'c', because of x, y and z reasons."</b></p> <p>-----</p> <p><b>Pushing</b>  <i>(High advocacy that leads to frustration)</i>  <b>"It is obvious that the only real choice is 'c'."</b></p>	<p><b>Collaborative Learning</b>  <i>(High advocacy and high inquiry that leads to high-performance)</i>  <b>"I think we should do 'c', because of x, y and z reasons." However, I could be missing something. Does anyone see something differently?"</b></p> <p>-----</p> <p><b>Manipulating</b>  <i>(High advocacy and high inquiry that leads to frustration)</i>  <b>"Would anyone seriously consider 'b'? 'C' is the only real choice. So can we just move on to our next agenda item?"</b></p>
	<p><b>Active Observing</b>  <i>(Low inquiry, low advocacy that leads to high performance)</i>  <b>Intensely, but quietly observing a conversation. Speaking up when one notices the team has gotten stuck. At this point, an active observer moves into the collaborative learning box to name the behaviors one is observing, to ask if anyone else sees it and to make suggestions for breaking the logjam.</b></p> <p>-----</p> <p><b>Withdrawing</b>  <i>(Low inquiry that leads to frustration)</i>  <b>Checked out. Not paying attention to the meeting. Texting, checking email, thinking about other things, etc.</b></p>	<p><b>Interviewing</b>  <i>(High inquiry leads to high performance)</i>  <b>"Can you tell us what leads you to think that?"</b></p> <p>-----</p> <p><b>Leading Questions</b>  <i>(High inquiry that leads to frustration)</i>  <b>"You don't really think 'b' is a good idea, do you?"</b></p>

Low

High

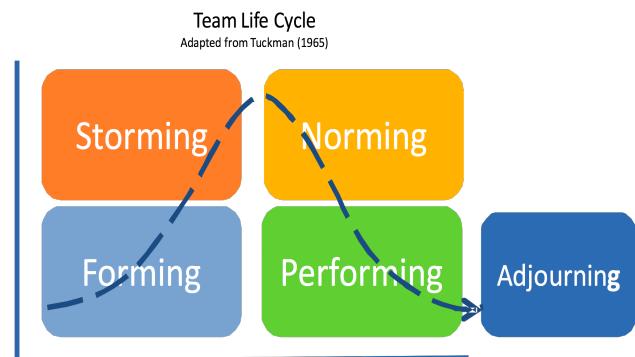
Inquiry

# Life Cycle of Teams: Tuckman's Forming, Norming, Storming, Performing

A venerable classic, Tuckman's life cycle of teams model is useful in that it is a reminder that teams do go through phases, that storming is normal as long as you don't get stuck there, and that to get to a high performing team takes time and effort.

Warning: the model makes team

development sound much more linear and clear than it actually is for most teams. Teams can bounce around and have one foot in several phases simultaneously. But as a basic frame, the model is helpful to know. Below you will see a visual model adapted from Tuckman (1965).



## Brief Description of Each Stage

### Forming

**Primary Challenge:** creating a purpose and managing team membership. **What it looks like:** Everyone is on their best behavior, trying to make a good impression. Everyone is assessing one another. There is excitement but also caution, as each begins to figure out the team and how things are going to work.

### Storming

**Primary Challenge:** aligning goals, expectations and clarifying roles. **What it looks like:** Differences of opinion come out in the open, interpersonal and task conflicts are more common, power struggles & factions emerge. The team often seems to resist organization. Some teams get stuck here.

### Norming

**Primary Challenge:** managing relationships and task goals. **What it looks like:** Renewed energy as team develops its identity and establishes norms and behaviors. Roles are clearer. Collaboration and cooperation become more natural.

### Performing

**Primary Challenge:** managing task completion, getting feedback and improving performance. **What it looks like:** The team is confident and competent. Relationships are strong and can handle conflicts well. Roles are seamless and flexible. Individual/team satisfaction and performance are high.

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### Adjourning

Primary Focus: managing relationships and task goals. What it looks like: Tasks are completed, roles ended and team

dissolved. There can be a sense of celebration and/or loss. If the end is unplanned (merger, budget crisis), then the environment can be chaotic and stress very high.

## VIII. READING LIST

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### Books

- Argyris, C. 1985. *Strategy, Change and Defensive Routines*. Massachusetts: Pitman Publishing.
- Covey, S.R. 2008. *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything*. New York: Free Press.
- Goleman, D. 2007. *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships*. New York: Bantam Dell.
- Lehrer, J. 2009. *How We Decide*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
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- Patterson, K., Grenny J., McMillan R., and Switzler A. 2004. *Crucial Confrontations: Tools for Resolving Broken Promises, Violated Expectations, and Bad Behavior*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
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- Pink, D.H. 2009. *Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us*. 1st ed. New York: Riverhead Books.
- Rosenberg, M.B. 2003. *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*. 2nd ed. Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press.
- Smith, D. 2008. *Divide or Conquer: How Great Teams Turn Conflict into Strength*. New York: Penguin Press.

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### Articles on Leadership

- The Work of Leadership*. R. Heifetz, D. Laurie. Harvard Business Review, Dec. 2001. #R0401H.
- What Makes a Leader?* D. Goleman. Harvard Business Review, Jan, 2004. #R0401H.
- Why Should Anyone Be Led by You?* R. Goffee, G. Jones. Harvard Business Review, Oct. 2000. #R00506
- Level 5 Leadership*. J. Collins. Harvard Business Review, Jul. 2005. #R0507M
- Discovering Your Authentic Leadership*. B. George et al. Harvard Business Review, Feb. 2007. #R0702H

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### Additional Resources About the Life Cycle of Teams

- Developmental Sequence in Small Groups*. B. Tuckman, [Psychological Bulletin](#), 63 (6): 384–99.

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