



Teams and Team Building

What is a Team?

A **team** is a group (2 or 3 or up to 15) of people who have a certain degree of interaction towards the achievement of a common goal. In workplaces, the goal is likely to concern a certain performance outcome. Teams differ from groups in that team activities are linked so that what one person does directly affects others. Groups don't necessarily have the same degree of interaction or close linking.

Types of Teams

Some teams are more or less permanent. The team lasts over time, though the team members may change as one person leaves and another joins. Other teams are temporary, set up to complete a particular task. The team disbands when the task is completed. Teams could also be 'vertical' or 'horizontal.' **Vertical teams** carry out the work tasks of a particular department of the organisation, such as a sales team or customer service. The team has a leader and a chain of command.

A **'horizontal' team** is composed of staff of the same or similar ranks, from different departments, with differing areas of expertise. **Special purpose teams** are part of the organisation, independent of its normal operating structure. They have special projects and a separate reporting procedure. Other types of teams include problem-solving teams, quality circles, virtual teams and many more.

Team Roles

While the primary aim of work teams is to perform their tasks, social and interpersonal interaction of team members is important. If teams get on well, they function better and are more efficient. Team composition needs to take account of the interpersonal aspects of team members as well as their skills and areas of expertise. **The task role** of team members includes working diligently towards the team's goal. This includes being motivated to work well, gathering information, carrying out tasks, problem-solving, reporting and staying on track with the work.

The interpersonal or social role of team members involves supporting each other, including emotional support, cooperating, reconciling conflicts, encouraging each other, working to reduce tension and improve harmony and stability, and sometimes compromising.

Team Stages

Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing and if relevant, *Adjourning*. The team may revisit the earlier stages of its development during its lifetime.

Forming: The team comes together. The team's 'norms' or 'rules' are tested and established.

Storming: Problems, power-plays and personality differences emerge. Disagreements and disunity.

Norming: Conflicts discussed and resolved. Consensus reached. Acceptance, understanding, cohesion, unity.

Performing: Tasks are carried out. Ideally there is efficiency, problem-solving, cooperation and commitment.

Adjourning: Occurs in temporary teams when the task is completed. The team disbands and members leave.

Professional Development

To maintain ongoing integrity and professionalism, teams need regular professional development. They need it to hone and refine their task skills and keep up with the latest development in their field. The Enneagram personality model is ideal for developing interpersonal team cohesion and overcoming personality problems. Contact us for details and to arrange your programme.