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Group Dynamics

PART 1: FORMING

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During my tenure at Clientek, I've been able to experience the dynamics of teams working together, making mistakes, and eventually succeeding. It's the ultimate experiment in human behavior. Bruce Tuckman coined the four stages of development for a group as "forming, storming, norming, and performing" in his 1965 paper "[Developmental Sequence in Small Groups](#)". Our project teams are no different; we experience these stages in every project we work on. Over my next few posts, I'll touch on these stages based on my personal experience working with Agile project teams.

At the beginning of any project, team members, along with their roles and associated responsibilities, are identified. People get to know each other's personalities and working styles. Process is defined. This is known as the forming stage. We work through a lot of these forming dynamics during our alignment sprints. We establish the cadence of our sprints and sprint ceremonies, and we set expectations on what work is required (having a documented "Definition of Done" is key here).

One of the most fascinating parts of the forming stage, in my opinion, is being able to see leaders within the team

emerge. It happens with any group, and it happens almost immediately. Leaders will set the tone for the team and will establish the level of discipline and rigor for the rest of the group to follow. Team leaders are vital during the forming and storming stages. They are less critical during the norming and performing stages. (As a side note, true leaders understand and welcome this evolution.)

During the forming stage, people can feel excited, anxious, or nervous about what is yet to come. The ambiguity will soon fade, and the team will inevitably face their first set of challenges, quickly moving the group into the storming stage. Stay tuned for my next post about storming, and why it's so important.

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