December 8, 2021

Group Dynamics

PART 2: STORMING

Written by: Shane Oswald, Director of Delivery

In my previous post, I wrote about my observations in working with Agile teams as they move through the forming stage. In today's post, I will touch on the dynamics of the next phase in group development, the storming stage.

A general description of the storming stage tends to sound a little more intense than what I have personally experienced. In theory, it's during this stage where people test their boundaries and resist the established process. Personalities clash and conflicts arise due to differences in communication or working style, and people challenge authority/leadership within the group. That all sounds dysfunctional, and with some teams, it could very well be reality. In my experience, however, the storming stage looks a bit different.

During the storming stage, teams typically face challenges or issues that they had not anticipated. They fail to follow the established process and struggle with communication. This occurs not because of incompetence or refusal, but purely because the process may be new to some team members. It may require a few iterations of practice before this process becomes solidified.

In my opinion, the storming stage is the most important and most valuable because it is in this stage where the team learns and grows the most. The best way to learn is to make mistakes. During storming, teams will inevitably run into pitfalls and hopefully identify how not to make those same mistakes in the future. (These situations make for perfect topics of discussion during retrospectives as described in Jesse's post: Reflection | Part 1: The Importance of Retrospection).

Ideally, teams don't stay in the storming stage long, but it does require some time and effort to get through it. Mature organizations will recognize that the storming stage (for any new team) should be expected. An effective team will embrace the learnings coming out of this stage and utilize the experience to improve. The sooner that occurs, the sooner the team will move into the norming and performing stages which I will touch on in my next post. Stay tuned!

CONTACT US

Looking for more insights? articles.clientek.com

CLIENTEK