
Team Building: How Does It Work

There are a total of five different headings that cover all of the teams that operate within the public services: formal, informal, size (e.g. large/small), temporary project (task team), and permanent groups.

Formal

Formal teams are inherently built upon a clearly defined structure where each member has a clear role. The goals and objectives held by formal teams always tend to have a clear finishing point. In most formal teams there is some kind of monitoring system set in place in order to ensure that goals/objectives are achieved on time for the deadline (if a deadline had been set). Formal teams will usually have the backing of senior members of the group (i.e. management) and are usually by the senior member in order to solve a specific problem or issue. An example of this would be a multi-agency safer city partnership team (e.g. the “Safer City Partnership” ~ by the city of London) who work together across a large varied group of organisations; with the sole purpose of combating anti-social behaviour and keeping the city center safe.

Informal

Informal teams will usually tend to have roles within the team that can be more malleable and elastic, thereby allowing members of the group to move in and out of the group with some amounts of flexibility. Team members will usually leave one group and enter another as their particular (i.e. specialised skills) skills are required at that point. The goals of the group may be more vague and the internal structure may be not as well defined as a formal group, but the informal nature of the group can allow for increased levels of innovation and allows new ideas to be considered more easily. An example of an informal group could be a best practice working group.

Temporary

Temporary group are formed for a short and limited time period in order to complete a particular task. Temporary groups are then disband once the objective of the task has been completed. In many cases it is difficult for members of temporary teams to work together efficiently as they are unaware of the strengths and weaknesses of their co-workers. This makes temporary teams less effective as permanent teams, as in permanent teams the members of the group have sufficient time to get to know their co-workers. Although temporary teams can be inefficient in

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some tasks, they can be efficient at troubleshooting as they sometimes see things differently from established teams, thereby preventing silo thinking. An example of a type of temporary group within the public services would be: tactical, operational, and strategic command teams that operate at the scene of a major incident (i.e. a car crash). These groups form together exclusively for the duration of the incident and, only once the situation is resolved, they disband.

Project

Project teams are similar to temporary teams in many aspects, they usually come together with the prime goal of achieving a specific goal. Once the project has been completed they usually or in some cases move on to a different project. Project teams are usually composed mainly of specialists and led by a project manager. The project manager runs the schedule and ensures that all objectives are achieved in a timely manner. An example of a project that a project team would handle is, that a team in the fire service may handle would be, to ensure all primary schools in a specific region have a visit from a fire and safety team/ expert to warn about the dangers of fires and prank calls.

Permanent

Permanent teams are the most common type of team in the uniformed public services. Many of the shifts, watches and regiments have primarily the same members for even multiple years at a time. Permanent teams are considered to strong teams, as everybody knows each other's strengths and weaknesses and can thereby use that knowledge to the benefit of the whole team. One negative of permanent teams is that they may become set in their ways and start to perform silo thinking.

This in turn can hinder creativity and potentially slow the progress of the group.

The different types of teams that operate in the police service.

There a total of seven different types of teams that work within the police service: divisional, departmental, sectional, geographical, multidisciplinary, multi-agency, and specialist teams.

- **Divisional:** Divisions in the police force are different sections of what they do. They are semi-autonomous from each other. An example of a divisional team would be the dog handling division. Divisions are formal teams of a large size that are usually permanent.
- **Departmental:** Departments are similar to divisions. An example of a division would be the air support unit. Departments are medium sized and are also formal groups.
- **Sectional:** Sectional groups, or sections are a subdivision of the police service. They are of a medium size and are also a formal group. An example of a section would be the

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mounted section of the metropolitan police force. Whilst they still work with the police force in general, they also work in a semi-autonomous manner, because they also have to cater for the needs of the horses, which the regular police do not take into account.

Three sociological theories of a team.

Firstly, I will be discussing Tuckman's theory of team development.

As seen in the diagram below, there are a total of five stages of team development. Bruce Tuckman first released his model of team development in 1965. Effectively, it is a simplified idea of how teams developed and mold together. His theory starts from the very start of a project and covers all of the aspects of a team up until it disbands. Although initially, there were only four stages in this model, later in his career, Tuckman decided to add a fifth stage to his model. I will be discussing all five stages of Tuckman's method.

Stage 1: Forming

In many cases, the forming stage is where, in most cases, the team members are meeting for the very first time. At this level of team formation, the team will rely heavily on and tend to also have a high level of dependency on the leader. Roles and responsibilities of the team members will not usually be clear at this level. The processes that the team should follow will not be known and the majority of information and guidance comes from the leader as they explain why the team exists and what it is intended to do.

Stage 2: Storming

As the name suggests this, in many cases, can be a very turbulent or even stormy stage of the teams in the development of a team. In the storming stage, individuals within the team might struggle with each other for a potential position of power, or certain role. There may be also some challenges to leadership at this level too. Personal relationships tend to start to form at this level, both positive and negative. The team needs to become very goal focused otherwise it may become distracted by internal affairs and/or difficulties that arose during at this stage.

Stage 3: Norming

This stage of team creation tends to be a much calmer stage of the process. At this point of the formation of the team, there is usually a clear agreement on the roles and responsibilities and who the leader is. The aims and objectives of the group are usually clear at this point. Commitment towards the team tends to be strong and there tends to be some amount of bonding.

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Stage 4: Performing

This is the main stage of the process. This stage of team development is where the team really begins to function together properly. The team is able to work effectively towards its goal. They are also able to sort out conflicts in a constructive way. Team members usually try to support each other and look for new and innovative ways to develop the team.

Stage 5: Adjourning

This is the final stage of the team development. It is where all the goals have been completed and the team then disbands and moves onto to a new project.

Secondly I will be discussing Peter Honey's theory on a team. Honey suggested that there are five specific roles within a team. He came to this conclusion by condensing Meredith Belbin's theory on a team; whereas Belbin suggested there are eight crucial roles in a team, Honey suggests there are five.

Firstly, there is the leader of the team. They are there to ensure that the team has clear and concise objectives. It is also the leader's role to ensure that every member of the team is committed to the task at hand and involved in the realisation of the team's goals.

Secondly, there is the "challenger". Their primary role is to question the overall effectiveness of the team and will press for changes that have the chance to improve the effectiveness of the team. "Challengers" are important because if nobody is there to question the effectiveness of the team's practices, then the whole group may fall into the trap of silo thinking, henceforth hindering creativity and potentially hampering the team's ability to deliver results.

In addition, there is the "doer". The "doer" is the member of the team who is primarily task oriented and will urge the team to get on with the current task at hand. This member of the team is best suited to performing practical tasks. In many cases the "doer" rarely contributes any creativity to the group as they will usually just attempt to get on with the task, regardless of how inefficient they are. Members of the group that are classified as a "doer" tend to be the most susceptible to committing silo thinking, as the most obvious way of doing something is not always the most effective.

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