

A

Teams

In some (but not all) situations, tasks can be achieved more easily by **teams** with a **common purpose** rather than by **individuals**. Of course, it's important to develop **teamwork** through **team building** so as to get the best from the team. The level of **engagement** and **commitment** is the degree to which team members feel involved with the team.

Here are some frequent combinations with 'team':



team	leader	the person in charge of the team
	effort	the work done together by the team
	performance	the results that the team produces
	dynamics	the way the team works together
	effectiveness	the degree to which the team produces results
	learning	when people learn in teams rather than individually

B

Team players

Meredith Belbin* has identified these types of team members or **Team Roles**:

- a The **Implementer** converts the team's plan into something achievable.
- b The **Coordinator** is a confident member who sets objectives and defines team members' roles.
- c The **Shaper** defines issues, shapes ideas and leads the action.
- d The **Plant** is a creative and imaginative person who supplies original ideas and solves problems.
- e The **Resource Investigator** communicates with the outside world and explores opportunities.
- f The **Monitor Evaluator** sees all the possibilities, evaluates situations objectively and sees what is realistically achievable.
- g The **Team Worker** builds the team, supports others and reduces conflict.
- h The **Completer Finisher** meets deadlines, corrects mistakes and makes sure nothing is forgotten.

C

Stages of team life

The typical team goes through a series of stages:

- a **Forming** The group is anxious and feels dependent on a leader. The group tries to discover how it is going to operate and what the 'normal' ways of working will be.
- b **Storming** The atmosphere may be one of conflict between members, who may resist control from any one person. There may be the feeling that the task cannot be achieved.
- c **Norming** At this stage, members of the group feel closer together and the conflicts are forgotten. Members of the group will start to support each other. There is increasingly the feeling that it is possible to achieve the task.
- d **Performing** The group is carrying out the task for which it was formed. Members feel safe enough to express differences of opinion in relation to others.
- e **Mourning** The group's work is finished, and its members begin to have pleasant memories of their activities and achievements.

**Management Teams: Why They Succeed or Fail*, Butterworth-Heinemann, 1996.

9.1 Look at A opposite. Then read the article and answer the questions.

In many manufacturing industries, a daily meeting is used to keep the plant running smoothly; but this level of daily communication is seldom employed in knowledge work or administration. Sarah manages a team of nurses. Sitting together in the morning and building positive emotion, energy, and shared tasks for the day helps build their focus on the work of the whole unit. Shared knowledge helps limit mistakes and keep people engaged in learning. And knowing who may need help distributes the work of the unit across the formal team structures. The practice of daily meeting and discussion of tasks is another crucial way in which Sarah builds engagement.

Sarah's transparency in terms of performance requirements is another leadership practice that reinforces engagement. Once a month, Sarah shares information with the group that shows the unit's overall productivity numbers and their clinic-by-clinic performance. This monthly meeting, to discuss the unit's performance and the breakdown of each team's performance, creates performance pressure for all members of the team.

- 1 What is Sarah's job?
- 2 Two types of meeting are mentioned. How often does each of them happen?
- 3 How are knowledge work and administration different from manufacturing?
- 4 What are the advantages of regular meetings?
- 5 What negative things can regular meetings prevent?
- 6 What is the advantage of the monthly meetings?

9.2 Look at the types of team members in B opposite and say if these statements are true or false.

- 1 Implementers are not interested in final results.
- 2 Coordinators tend to take a leading, organizing role.
- 3 Shapers tend to follow what other people say.
- 4 Plants can be useful in providing new ideas when the team has run out of steam.
- 5 Some Resource Investigators probably need to use the internet.
- 6 Monitor Evaluators are not good at seeing all sides of a problem.
- 7 Team Workers may help to defuse arguments between members.
- 8 Completer Finishers are bad at finishing things on time.

9.3 Members of a team brought together to work on a design project said the following things. Match what they said (1–5) with the stages (a–e) in C opposite.

- 1 We had such a great time working together.
- 2 We need to appoint a leader.
- 3 We're beginning to get to know each other better.
- 4 Who does Ana think she is, taking over and behaving like she's in charge?
- 5 We're really making progress now and we get on so well together.

Over to you

- What teams have you worked in or are you working in?
- Do you recognize the types in B opposite in your team?
- What role do you usually play?