THE 3 STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Why is this model in the Shift Maker tool box?

A team will go no further than the point to which its leader is willing to go. Anyhow, the collective dimension is a central lever to create shifts.

The Shift Maker will thus be required to do some in-depth work both on the inner invisible and the external dimensions of the group in order to:

- building trust,
- agility and ability to bounce back (situational intelligence),
- a culture of co-responsibility,
- autonomy,
- creativity,
- coaching culture,
- collective ability to rapidly onboard (inclusion) and offboard a new group member,
- emergence of a shared dream that is much greater than the sum of individual aims,
- a culture that is based on altruistic values rather than egocentricity and inactivity.

The model presented here provides Shift Makers with a diagnostic tool that can be shared with their teams, thus enabling them to engage in metacommunicating, better understanding of what works and what doesn't work, identifying how to enhance performance as well as reaching agreement on what is really at stake for them. As such, it represents an excellent tool to create unity around stakes.

Description of the model

Key precaution: there is no such thing as a good or bad stage of development!

Each stage has its advantages and also its limits. A team that wants to attain 100% of its potential must be capable of alternating between the 3 stages according to the environment, the situation, its level of maturity and its objective…
What can hold a team back in terms of performance is when it finds itself "stuck" at one or other of the stages, with no flexibility whatsoever, or when it shows itself unable to function at one of the 3 stages.

Stage 1: a collection of individuals

At this stage, the team members are in the formation phase, finding their feet, focusing on their individual identity and ways of working. The boundaries of the group are still quite fragile, nobody fully identifies or commits to the cause defended by the team yet; everyone is holding back, adopting a wait-and-see approach.
At this stage, individuals are focused on their own tasks in relation to the objectives that have been assigned to them. What prevails the most here are expertise, content, knowing what to do and how & when to do it.

Knowledge, expertise, know-how are what provide legitimacy at this development stage.

If there is cooperation within the group, it is primarily the result of individual goodwill, the generous nature of certain team members, the willingness to provide a helping hand, the size of the team… but as yet, cooperation is not structured (unlike at stage 2).
The team members operate in a star formation around the team leader who communicates information to those outside the group. The leader also has the final say on decisions and seeks to regulate any tensions that may arise.

A specific image provides a good illustration of what happens at this stage.
Have you ever watched a group of young children who are playing football for the very first time? All of them run after the ball, like a swarm of bees around a honey pot. They all want to be the one who scores the first goal. They are all earnest and willing, but lacking in organisation, owing to the fact that they don't really know one another yet.

This stage is particularly useful when people are expected to be productive, to be capable of "delivering the goods"…

Stage 2: an interdependent group.

At this stage, the boundary of belonging that defines team membership becomes more clear-cut. Leadership is also clearly asserted. The identity and the energy of each participant have been adjusted and are now clear. Team members are now fully aware of their role and their scope of action and most energy is now directed towards empathic listening, mutual understanding and the need for complementarity, with a much more systemic way of thinking.

The team has co-established common rules of procedure.
Instigated by the team leader, co-operation is now widespread and structured (please refer to the "Cooperation Principles" fact sheet for further information.)
Relations become primary over tasks at this stage; the key word is now "relational" rather than "functional". Listening, communication and so-called "soft skills" are at the heart of the team's actions and there is a certain degree of "humanism".

Meetings are regularly organized and often conducted using the "delegated roles" format, with each person being assigned a different role at each meeting.

Team members are able to work with one another without having to go through the team leader (the leader-centric star formation has given way to a circular operating mode).

If we go back to our earlier football metaphor, the team members now know who is best equipped to perform the role of attacker, playmaker, defender or goalkeeper. The team is able to take to the field in a structured manner, taking into account the strengths and weaknesses of each of its players. The key issue now is not about who scores the first goal but about how the ball is passed around and kept in play.

The risk associated with getting "stuck" at this stage of development consists of closing up in an ivory tower in which "we feel so comfortable when we are together". As a result, there is a danger of becoming cut-off from one's environment (see stage 3) or of becoming less productive (see stage 1).

The other risk is of the team placing well-being ahead of performance in terms of its priorities. As a result, the team will take much longer to reach decisions as it seeks to achieve consensus at all costs. The team finds it difficult to accept arbitrary decisions, which tend to produce frustration. There is a danger of the team becoming self-satisfied, of living in cloud-cuckoo land, a make-believe world where everything is fine and everyone is kind and nice.

Stage 3: a purposeful team

This stage is characterized by the fact that the identity of each participant, and that of the team itself, is defined in relation to a shared vision. This vision is composed of operational objectives but also a set of values, acceptable behaviours and a shared *raison d'être…*; in a nutshell, everything that serves to define a culture.

The team members, who at the previous stage were beginning to form themselves into a "collective body", now proudly and uninhibitedly wear the badge displaying the team's shared vision for the organization.

At this stage, the team has opened itself up to its environment, coming out from the comfort zone of its "bastion". Information circulates freely and is processed from outside the team in order to bring added value to the table. This takes a weight off the leader, who now has more time for providing feedback.

The team is now focused on its purpose, the long-term vision, the strategy and the key values.
The individual team-members all feel co-responsible and are drawn towards the shared vision.

Continuing the football metaphor, we now have 22 team members (i.e. including those on the bench) who are all working towards a common goal… Let's not forget that the Champions League can be won without having a star player in the team!

The risk associated with getting "stuck" at this stage of development is to forget about the importance of output and to fail to allow time for team members to focus "simply" on individual objectives. The team can become disconnected from the present moment by looking too far ahead.

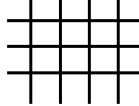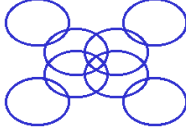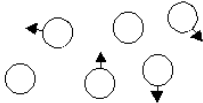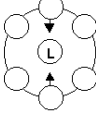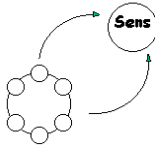## Moving from one stage of team development to the next

From stage 1 to stage 2

- Boundaries are clearly outlined.
- The team must learn to use meta-communication, to observe the processes.
- Relational rules of procedure are established.
- Meetings are structured.
- Cooperation principles are established.
- Mutual recognition.
- Confrontation is an accepted means of communication.
- Team members communicate directly with one another without needing to go through the team leader.

From stage 2 to stage 3

- The team draws up its vision together.
- Team members work together in opening up to the environment.
- The team identity is more collectively-focussed.
- Autonomy and interdependence processes are understood and taken on board.
- Strategy development and market/competition/customer awareness are more keenly developed.
- Ability to look into the future, to be a visionary.
- The team structure evolves in such a way as to support the project vision.

Summary chart

Items	Old World		New World	
Approach	• Planning • Targets		• Constructivism • Emergence	
Logic	Order & Obedience		Co-responsibility	
Organization	Taylorism, Scientific management		Systemic and complex	
Company organization & culture	**Pyramid**	**Matrix**	**Network**	
Team development stage	**Collection of individuals**	**Interdependent group**	**Purposeful team**	
Performance level and other general considerations	• Low collective performance. • Performance range: 0 to 33%, • Performance focus on individual excellence. • Low autonomy.	• Everyone works well together. Circularity comes to the fore. • Performance range: 34 to 66% • Conducive to autonomy.	• High collective performance. Good coherence within the team and with outside "partners", taking full ownership of the corporate stakes • Performance range: 67 to 100%, • Widespread sense of belonging, even with constant team reconfiguration. • High autonomy.	

Items	Old World		New World
Development focus	• Expertise & Content • What to do and how to do it. • Personal development focused on competency acquisition	• Process • How to get others to do things. • Personal development focused on empathic listening	• Purpose & Strategy. • Whys & wherefores of taking action and getting others to act • Personal development focused on coherence and purpose/meaning
Value	Technical issues	Relations	Coherence
Personal identification	With oneself	With the group	With the organization, its ecology and its aims
Type of manager	Order Giver Content Expert Hands-on professional - knows the business	Servant Leader Manager. Instils confidence while also ensuring that everyone works well together.	Bearer of meaning Leader. Empowers team members and endeavours to maintain coherence at all levels by working closely with those involved in integrating the company's stakes.
Management style	Coercive, directive; seeking compromise	Focus on how people complement one another	Focus on corporate ecology, purpose and aims
Means of regulation	• Directly with "the boss". • Tends to lead to closure rather than openness. • Compartmentalization, "scapegoating". • Regulation is seen as being a waste of time.	• Is conducted on a 1-to-1 basis and also involves metacommunication. • The shift is towards otherness, with the focus on relations. • The onus is no longer on finding "guilty parties" but thinking positively together about how the team can find solutions	• Regulation is constant (10% of time) and fluid. • Is conducted on a 1-to-1 basis and also with the whole team. • The team's strength comes from what it is capable of taking on board with regards to its own fragility.
Comments	This column accounts for 80% of all in-company situations. This approach is particularly suited to emergency situations or times of crisis.	Risk of people remaining set in their own ways even though they claim to accept other people's points of view.	A durable solution. This logic does not do away with the lower orders but the upper order fulfils the vocation of the lower orders.