EAO July 2023 Supervisor Newsletter- Plain Text

Intro:

Every day in the workplace, UW-Madison employees respond to the dynamic needs of students, other staff, and community members. Change can be a challenge, but it can also be an opportunity for growth. Managers who can lead their team through change are able to drive results and support their team's well-being, even in times of stress.

One lens to understand how to manage a team through change is Bruce Tuckman's framework for how an organization develops and changes over time[1]. Tuckman's descriptions of Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing can help you understand the way that teams behave and self-evaluate through times of change.

FORMING

When a team comes together to work on a new challenge for the first time, it can be really exciting! This could be a new initiative or project, onboarding a new employee, coping with changed conditions that may change your ongoing work, and more. Typically, people feel excitement and anxiety when a team is first forming. People may feel like they have a lot of questions, and may set lofty expectations and goals without fully understanding the constraints of a new project.

As a manager, you can support your team in forming by outlining a clear plan for the project, setting out structure, goals, and a direction. Managers can set expectations, especially around process and ways that the team can resolve issues that come up. Make space for questions, and provide as much information as you can so that your team can prepare for the work ahead.

STORMING

Once the initial excitement of starting a new project wears off, most teams enter a stormy period. Team members start noticing a mismatch in expectations and reality. Initial conflicts arise, and employees feel more openly frustrated and challenged. This phase often manifests in teams feeling stuck or overwhelmed.

A savvy manager can help their team navigate the storming phase. Be sure to facilitate communication, sharing what you know and encouraging your team to be collaborate with information. Be flexible if you can, and respond fairly to new information about team capacity, knowledge, or skill that may impact your overall goals. Work to break tasks down into smaller and more achievable steps, so that your team can overcome the feeling of being stuck.

---

[1] https://hr.mit.edu/learning-topics/teams/articles/stages-development

NORMING

Once a team gets through the "storm" of the storming phase, they are able to adjust well to the change and start to feel more 'normal'. They're able to identify the gap between reality and expectations and reconcile it without getting frustrated or overwhelmed. They become more comfortable expressing their opinions, and they become more cohesive as a team.

At this stage, a manager can support increased productivity by facilitating collaboration. Team members settle into their roles and expectations, and the manager can play a crucial role in ensuring that conflicts are resolved and that folks feel supported in their work. Managers can also reinforce the new "norms" by setting fair, realistic goals.

PERFORMING

Over time, a well-supported team will begin performing. They will reach a higher level of team satisfaction and confidence in their roles. Team members trust each other, and are able to jump in to fill operational needs with fluidity. A team that's performing is making substantial progress on their goals.

As a manager, you can support a performing team by continuing to facilitate individual and team development. Find opportunities for your team to deepen their knowledge and skills. As well, remember to openly celebrate your team's accomplishments and make sure that all members of a team feel valued.

ENDING

Do these stages of team development seem familiar to you? Most teams are in some stage of forming, storming, norming, or performing.

Team development isn't always linear, and new challenges can sometimes shift a team between these stages. Employee assistance is here to support you in supporting your team if you feel stuck or that an outside perspective would be helpful.

Announcement:

All workplaces experience change, and that includes the EAO! Our office manager, Cassie Varrige, is departing the EAO at the beginning of August to attend graduate school. Cassie has greatly appreciated the opportunity to work with the diverse campus community at UW-Madison and is proud to have been a part of the Employee Assistance Office team.

Next month, look forward to meeting our new office manager and learning about the unique skills, experiences, and perspectives they will bring to our team!

Upcoming LifeMatters Events and Opportunities:

Click here to learn more about upcoming trainings and support sessions through LifeMatters.

Link: [Layout 1 (empathia.com)](empathia.com)

This month's promotional content includes:

Flyers:

- LGBTQIA+ Resources
- Decreasing Vacation Costs
- June Presentations
- Management's Role in Gender Transition (for Managers)

Posters:

- LGBTQIA+ Support
- Per Diem

Digital/Social Media Content:

- Digital Signage
- Infographics

Don't miss our upcoming employee and management webinars! Go to mylifematters.com and sign in with Bucky1. Webinars are located under "Quick Links."

New Podcast Resource

Our partners at LifeMatters are excited to bring you "OnTopic" a podcast dedicated to overcoming challenges in times of uncertainty. Employee assistance counselors will be talking to industry experts from a wide variety of fields to explore the issues of the day and steps individuals and organizations can take to become more resilient. OnTopic will be released every other Wednesday. **The most recent episode discussed trauma-informed care in the workplace.**

You can access OnTopic on iTunes, Spotify, or anywhere else you get your podcasts.