



E. C. Davis & Associates

PO Box 13329

Charleston SC 29422

Phone 843-762-4269

Fax 843-762-7347

www.ecdavis.com

Assessing Your Team's Stage of Development

by Ellen C. Davis

This article may be freely reproduced for educational and training purposes without any special permission. We only ask that the copyright statement appear on all reproductions.

In the case of systematic or large-scale reproduction (exceeding 100 copies annually) or inclusion in publications for sale, prior written permission must be obtained from E. C. Davis and Associates.

ASSESSING YOUR TEAM'S STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

by
Ellen C. Davis
E.C. Davis and Associates, Charleston, SC

PART ONE: THE ASSESSMENT

INSTRUCTIONS: For each item place a check beside the appropriate description that seems to most characterize your team's current behavior. You may only choose ONE descriptor numbered item.

1. When tasks are presented to the team for completion...

- ____ a. There is a lot of reliance on the Team Manager to provide direction on what to do.
- ____ b. People seem to repeatedly ask, "Why do we have to do this?" They challenge almost all direction.
- ____ c. The team will fall rather quickly in line and begin getting things done. They have most of their routine tasks pretty well in hand.
- ____ d. The team is convinced they can handle any task that comes their way and they pursue their work with almost casual self-confidence.
- ____ e. Whatever they start, they fall into arguments among themselves and can't seem to get together. Sometimes they fulfill their own worst expectations and get nothing accomplished at all.
- ____ f. They can quickly ascertain the requirements of the task and know exactly who on the team is best qualified to do what part.

2. In team discussions, when decisions have to be made...

- ____ a. They usually readily seek and accept the Team Manager's advice, or sometimes they defer to another acknowledged "expert" within the team.
- ____ b. While some team members seem to support and want to follow the Facilitator/Team Manager's advice, others want to argue and disagree. There is a real split in the team.
- ____ c. The team wants to and can make many of its day-to-day decisions. When there are differing views, they are often handled through majority rule.
- ____ d. The team seldom engages in any real dispute over issues, so they make decisions quickly and people leave saying they agree. Sometimes they aren't so good at sticking to the decision later.
- ____ e. Some people just withdraw and won't discuss the matter. When we attempt to draw them in, they say they don't care anymore what we decide. Others dominate and try to control everything. Usually they control the decision or the manager does.
- ____ f. Decisions come through rational and objective discussions of the data available to them. They know when consensus is needed and when it isn't, so discussions tend to be appropriate to the needs.

3. Interpersonal relations in the team...

- ____ a. Polite, friendly, interested in one another, but not yet very personally close. They are a little nervous and trying to make a good first impression.
- ____ b. Characterized by name-calling and general hostility among members, with little cliques forming. Everyone is on edge.
- ____ c. Teamlike for the first time in our development. There is evidence of genuine willingness to cooperate for the good of the team — not just to impress.
- ____ d. High degree of camaraderie, interaction, and general participation. They feel they are the "best" team, and want to be seen that way by outsiders.
- ____ e. Broken into "camps" — those who readily stay committed to building the team and those who just think it won't work and avoid any involvement. There is a lot of discouragement and disillusionment.
- ____ f. Accepting of the differences among members and not inclined to overly engage in emotional conflict over relationships within the team.

4. The feelings of the Team Manager/Leader/Facilitator...

- ____ a. Enthusiastic and optimistic, if a bit overwhelmed. Everything seems to be coming along smoothly. Perhaps these team problems won't occur in my team.
- ____ b. Shocked at the almost sudden turn against my leadership and at the rebellious nature of some in the team.
- ____ c. Relaxing at the predictability of the team's performance in its routine activities.
- ____ d. Relieved and committed. The worst seems well behind us and it seems we have finally mastered what it takes to be a really successful team. We are certainly a lot better than some other teams I have observed.
- ____ e. Disenchanted and disappointed that we are STILL so far below our potential after all the time and effort we expended.
- ____ f. Wise to the ups and downs of teams and committed to the continual work of team development.

5. The "products" of our team...

- ____ a. Seem to be acceptable, but we aren't entirely sure of the requirements, so it is hard to feel very confident about what we are doing just yet. We are trying hard to please.
- ____ b. Disappointing. Everything we try to do seems to run into problems. Equipment doesn't work; resources aren't available. No one seems to know what to do, yet demands are increasing.
- ____ c. Meeting the requirements most of the time.
- ____ d. We think our products are at least as good as the products of any other team — probably better than most.
- ____ e. Slipping off a bit and failing to improve as we had anticipated we would. It feels like we have hit some sort of plateau and can't get beyond it very well.
- ____ f. Achieving consistent and productive results through a disciplined and creative process. Frequent problem-solving for steady, continual improvement.

6. Our relationship to other teams...

- a. We are focused within ourselves just now. The team pretty much leaves it to the Team Manager to deal with other teams.
- b. There is a lot of blaming the other teams for problems or for failing to get us needed information or materials. It's important to the team that they prove someone is at fault for any problems.
- c. A few systems for routine communications are being tried to improve cross-team relationships. Notes/minutes are shared and some cross-team meetings are set up.
- d. Our team does a good job of trying to communicate with the other teams, but we feel the other teams don't reciprocate.
- e. Cross-team relationships are broken down or almost nonexistent. Every group just seems to do its own thing. None of the systems we set up seem to work anymore.
- f. Communications have become more informal, but more efficient with a natural flow of information and ideas across groups. We respect one another a lot more now.

7. Team meetings...

- a. Are usually most actively led by the Team Manager/Facilitator, but most people attend enthusiastically and want to make them good.
- b. Are loaded with arguments and challenges to all the rules. Every time people can't have their way, they ask, "What happened to Employee Involvement?"
- c. Are becoming more settled with standard agendas, note-taking, and even some shared leadership. There is some good discussion, but not much real problem-solving yet.
- d. Are being questioned for their value. There are a number of team members who contend that we don't need to hold them so often anymore, because we communicate well enough outside meetings.
- e. Are poorly or reluctantly attended and characterized by discussions filled with disparaging comments about the team. Few people show any commitment to the meeting success anymore. They say they are tired of all this "team stuff." Apathy abounds.
- f. Are well attended by flexible and committed members who discuss their business, make decisions, and no longer insist that everyone has to have a say in everything. Not all meetings go perfectly, but far more are good than bad.

8. Team member initiative to assume additional leadership roles...

- ____ a. They are willing to sign up for new opportunities and assignments, even though they seldom have any idea of the responsibilities involved. It's probably best described as very energetic, but not very informed initiative.
- ____ b. Some people who signed up to take on additional responsibilities are trying to carry them out, but most are floundering around, unsure of what to do, and are now trying to withdraw from the responsibility or simply ignore it. They get a lot of criticism from others.
- ____ c. Most team related responsibilities have people who are finally becoming clear on what is expected of them and are carrying out the easiest of the tasks. Most people on the team still avoid additional work, as they see it.
- ____ d. Our team is frequently cited as a model for other teams because so many people are participating in extra initiatives. We have people off on so many projects that sometimes it is hard now to get our routine work done.
- ____ e. They started to run into problems and got "turned off." Now people are refusing to do the additional responsibilities they used to do. They are quite cynical and say they can't really accomplish anything, so why try?
- ____ f. People are once again taking up leadership responsibilities and are now starting to learn things in much more depth. They don't sign up for as much as they used to, but their level of contribution is better — and more balanced with accomplishing the day-to-day responsibilities as well.

9. When conflict occurs within the team...

- ____ a. Team members look to the Manager/Facilitator to resolve it. They avoid getting too closely involved themselves.
- ____ b. The team members are actively participating in the disagreements — they do so by forming small groups to talk behind one another's back. Or they tell on one another to the manager. They are impatient with one another and attack others' ideas or suggestions.
- ____ c. Team members are more willing to face issues, put them on the table, and move on. "Now we really are a team!" is being heard for the first time.
- ____ d. Conflict is often denied as the team avoids issues that might "break the spell" of their camaraderie. They choose to believe they will never fight again — yet at the same time, tension is building around unaddressed issues.
- ____ e. Subgroups form — those who want to press the issues and talk openly about their conflicts, and those who want to just avoid them. The people who want to avoid the conflict feel like they tried putting them on the table once before, it didn't work (because we still have these problems), and it therefore isn't worth trying again.
- ____ f. The team maturely recognizes that conflicts and differences of opinion are simply part of life in a team or family or any other similar group. They commit to continually work for improvement through rational and open discussions.

10. Openness about one's personal view and receptivity to others. . .

- a. People tend to be more polite and impersonal than open. They are very nice when someone expresses a viewpoint that may differ from their own.
- b. People seem to have "hidden agendas" and no one is really open to the views of others. Everyone seems to be trying to position themselves within the group and establish who will have informal power over the team.
- c. A little, tentative openness on most people's part has gotten the team recommitted to being an open team. It's still stiff and very cautious, but people are trying to be sincerely open and honest with one another for the first time.
- d. Everyone seems to get along really well and they claim to be very open and honest. Some people are holding back their true feelings, however, "for the good of the team." They don't want to be seen as upsetting the apple cart.
- e. Much of the openness we thought we had achieved has now come to be seen as simply fooling ourselves. Now we have some people who have almost taken their issues "underground" and they won't talk to anyone about what they are thinking.
- f. While we have regained a high level of openness, we no longer have an idealistic expectation that everyone will be able to say every little thing that is on their mind. But we do make sure that we each get out the important issues and others are willing to listen and really hear what is being said.

PART TWO: SCORING

INSTRUCTIONS: Add your checks and compute as follows:

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|----------------|--------------|
| "a" items checked | = | 1 point each = | ----- points |
| "b" items checked | = | 2 points each= | ----- points |
| "c" items checked | = | 3 points each= | ----- points |
| "d" items checked | = | 4 points each= | ----- points |
| "e" items checked | = | 5 points each= | ----- points |
| "f" items checked | = | 6 points each= | ----- points |

Record your total score: _____ Points

Interpretation:

| | | | |
|----------------|---|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 10 - 15 points | = | Stage One of Team Development, | "Orientation" |
| 16 - 24 points | = | Stage Two of Team Development, | "Challenge" |
| 25 - 34 points | = | Stage Three of Team Development, | "Cohesion" |
| 35 - 44 points | = | Stage Four of Team Development, | "Delusion" |
| 45 - 54 points | = | Stage Five of Team Development, | "Disillusionment" |
| 55 - 60 points | = | Stage Six of Team Development, | "Maturity" |