

How2guide: Designing Team Structures

Introduction	When do you use this guide
Developing and managing project and programme teams is often overlooked but it is a key concept, and strong leadership and management is required to gain the performance that is aspired to. There are two areas that need to be considered: 1. Evolution through the lifecycle. There is no rule that says the governance and the delivery arrangements should remain static. In fact it is highly unlikely that they will not evolve. The early stages are likely to involve quite a lean structure as the requirements are evolving. They become more formal once the change is initiated and the need for changes to styles and skills will continue. 2. Developing the performance of the team, particularly when the team has many part time contributors, requires particular focus. Teams go through a number of stages of evolution and the management focus must manage these.	In the early stages of the project or programme the structures are likely to be relatively informal and may have very committed people believing in the concept. Expanding the team and finding people with equal levels of commitment will not be easy. In association with this H2G there should be reference to the Setting Up Governance and Resource Planning guides. The team is likely to become more formalised during Diagnose, and once it moves into Define more capability and capacity will be required. This will require careful management to avoid degradation of performance for existing team members whilst integrating new people and organisations. This guide covers: • Designing the structure • Additional roles • Developing the team • Technique – Team Development
Designing the Structure The Governance theme documentation has a list of the key roles and a generic set of responsibilities that can be used. In addition, each of the themes and the milestones have specific activities and tasks that will need to be integrated into the roles within the team. This section deals with how “Accountabilities” and “Responsibilities” should be designed. The RPA will set the level of rigor that will need to be applied to the structure. The 3 layers will need to be considered when designing the structure and help to differentiate different roles. Project boards should always reflect the two dimensions of any project which is the supply side and the user side. Internally the supply side could include	

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L&D, ICT, FM etc. Where an initiative is likely to include the procurement of external resource, procurement should be represented on the project board and assume the role of the “supplier” of the services that they will procure.

The absolute minimum for the structure of a low risk project would be an SRO to set direction and a project manager to manage and potentially deliver the requirements.

Programme boards have a slightly different dynamic. The programme manager takes on the role of the supplier, as it is their job to deliver the capability to achieve the outcome and benefits with responsibility for the project delivery. The key role that faces them is that of the Structural Change Director or Manager (depending on risk level), their responsibility is to deliver the outcomes and benefits either internally or through an external agency. This is a critical role that must always be filled.

The minimum for a programme would be SRO, programme manager and structural change manager.

The other specific area that must be built into the structure is assurance. This is the function of ongoing independent support and advice to avoid perilous decisions being made. If your organisation has a COE, it can help to provide advice or help to commission specific knowledge. For public sector organisations, the MPA Gateway process is the formal assurance for high risk projects and programmes.

Additional Roles

Within the governance structure the previous section focuses on the roles with responsibilities and accountabilities. There may need to be additional roles to reflect the need for specific knowledge and expertise. If they are included on the board then they should have clearly defined decision making authority in the decision making process.

It is most likely that the additional roles will be linked to specific areas of expertise or knowledge that will be needed during the lifecycle. In this case it is unlikely that the role will be at the “managing” or “delivery” tiers. As such they should be built into the team rather than having a place on the board and their reporting lines should be through the programme manager or the structural change route. Some specific skills or areas of expertise that should be considered for inclusion in the structure could include:

Procurement	Human Resources	Finance	Information Technology	Legal
Health and Safety	Environment	Industry sector experts	Communications	Agency specialists
Parliamentary experts	PPM expertise	Contract design	Supply chain experts	Learning and Development
EU expertise	Technical specialists			

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Developing the Team

There are two aspects to this; firstly, there is the evolution of the team through the lifecycle, and secondly, developing the performance of the team.

At the management level, individuals with strategic or policy skills in definition and design may not be as suited to the delivery or contract management focus that comes in the later stages. Review of the governance arrangements is a key part of the decision gate milestone however the planning should consider the evolving needs of the levels and plan for the changes as this will be far less disruptive than reacting to performance issues that may arise.

The 2012 Olympics programme had a major structural change as it moved from construction to Games readiness. The expertise and leadership qualities were quite different for the two tranches and the structure evolved accordingly. It was not a judgement on the leadership of either part; both were highly successful and very different.

Loss of a key role during the lifecycle can be highly disruptive. As such there should be contingency arrangements for each of the roles and a plan to ensure that an unexpected departure can be managed effectively. This could be covered by having deputies for key roles or a mitigation plan to bring in resources from other programmes, projects or an external organisation. The loss of key staff should be managed as a risk through the risk register.

Technique – Team Development

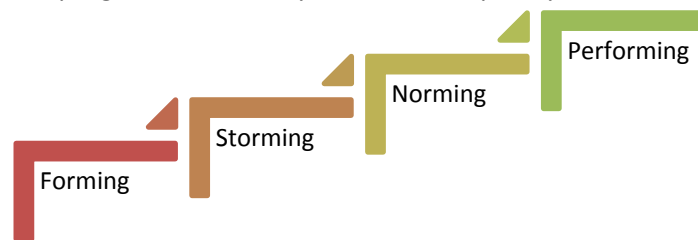
Technique Overview

This technique outlines the key stages of development any team will go through. This has been used to provide guidance on recommended activities and management style to help accelerate the development towards being established and improving performance.

Concept

This technique draws on the development work by organisational psychologists, e.g. Tuckman (see Wikipedia). It defines the team development concept which has been around for many years and recognises the various stages of evolution that a team goes through.

Developing performance of the team is often ignored. Techniques to develop teams that are common place in operational teams are often overlooked for projects and programmes, as they are more temporary in nature. However, if they run for many months or years then this area is particularly important.



There is a well developed and established model that recognises the 4 stages of team development which applies to all teams. This can be used to underpin the development plans for individuals and the teams and ensure that there is continual improvement and that the issues can be forecast and managed effectively. This table describes each stage and some actions that you may consider including in your development plan.

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Stage	Characteristics	Actions
Forming	This is the early phase when people are joining the team, starting to get to know each other and forming relationships. People may be insecure or lack the skills, knowledge or confidence to fully contribute.	During this phase consider using: a. Away days to help people to get to know each other and focus on the objectives so they are clear b. Use workshops to include people in the process and planning c. Ensure skills gaps are addressed by training d. Clear role descriptions Concepts such as Belbin team roles should be referenced to help diagnose behaviors
Storming	Individuals start to become more confident. There may be conflicts over who does what as people start to try to perform. There may be a lot of energy being used as individuals are actively contributing and trying to establish their role in the team. There may also be overlaps, misunderstandings and gaps appearing.	This can be highly productive or unproductive depending on the group, consider using: a. Prescriptive style of management to ensure the norms are understood and that there are boundaries to creativity b. Ensure that your organisation's framework guidance is being adhered to. This will help establish the norms c. Setting individual objectives Ensure that the team balance is correct; consider Belbin team roles to ensure that the balance in the team is correct
Norming	In this phase of development the group will establish the internal values and behaviours. Role demarcation will become clearer and the group will start to act like a team rather than a group of individuals.	It is important that the norms which are being established are aligned with the objectives of the project or programme. Areas to consider: a. Coaching and mentoring for individuals to help them perform b. Adjusting the structures to address gaps c. Ensuring new joiners do not push the team back to "forming" and "storming" d. Move to a monitoring and supportive style of management
Performing	Once everyone is stabilised then the group will begin to perform. Individuals will become competent in their roles, the communications will be well established and formal, and information authority will be in place.	The team is now stable and performing, so the focus should be on optimisation and intervening to manage any areas of performance which requires improvement, consider: a. Metrics driven performance management to manage productivity b. Cross skilling between roles to broaden understanding and reduce dependencies on key individuals c. Focusing on managing the external environment to minimise the impact on the team and maintaining focus and motivation.