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## What Every People Manager Needs to Know

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I have been working with team leaders and managers for over 20 years as a coach, management skills trainer and consultant. What has surprised me is how often people have been appointed to a role of managing a team without being given any or enough support and training in what the role requires. So they know what knowledge, skills and behaviours are essential to success and performance in the role. There is an assumption that people managers will automatically know what is required in the people manager role.

In this article I will share with you two models that I believe every people manager, supervisor or person appointing them needs to know.

### 1. Adair's Action Centred leadership model

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In the model Adair describes leadership in terms of a leader's action in relation to:-

- Managing the task - the task that has to be done, and how to do it most effectively
- Managing the team - how to get people to work together effectively
- Managing individuals - how to get the best out of them

#### Activities in the task function

- Defining the task
- Making a plan to achieve the tasks
- Allocating work and resources
- Checking performance against the plan
- Adjusting the plan

#### Activities in the team management function

- Setting standards and an example
- Maintaining discipline
- Building team spirit
- Ensuring communication within the team

#### Activities in the individual function

- Attending to personal problems
- Praising individuals
- Giving status
- Recognising and using individual abilities

All these areas overlap - like a Venn diagram. Each function will impact on the other functions. Sometimes more focus needs to be on one function; however the other functions cannot be ignored. Like someone balancing spinning plates on sticks, a wise manager keeps an eye on all the functions so as to be aware where some attention or intervention is required to keep all the plates spinning as they need to.

**This is what every people manager should know and what every person appointing someone as a people manager or supervisor must know.**

Frequently I am told about managers who have been promoted to the role because they are very effective at doing the task function.

Are they also capable of effectively carrying out individual and team management functions?  
They need to be.

## 2. Tuckman's Stages of Team development

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Effective teams do not just happen by chance. Tuckman identifies five main stages of a team's development that need to be managed to ensure it is an effective team.

### **Forming**

This stage is when the team first gets together. This could be a completely new team or one where a new member or members have joined an existing team. Team members in this stage are very focused on identifying and establishing roles in the team, in assessing and building relationships, and exploring boundaries. There isn't a great deal of conflict as the focus is on working out 'the lie of the land', and assessing appropriate and acceptable behaviours. Performance is relatively effective at this stage as people are in 'good behaviour' mode. Evidence of this stage: when people are overly formal and polite, and overtly cooperative.

### **Storming**

The next stage is storming. This is where team members are identifying their boundaries and in doing this will be pushing them to see how far they can go, in terms of what they can or can't do, both in relation to the task and to each other:- identifying what behaviour is acceptable or not. A lot of time and attention will be spent on building up and defending territory. Conflict is not always overt, but will be present. There is usually a dip in performance as the focus is not on the job in hand and on collaborative working, but on establishing and defending positions in the team. Evidence of this stage: cliques emerging in the team, people being excluded, and individuals not behaving as expected, for example being late, or not doing actions they were asked to do.

### **Norming**

This is where team members become aware of their boundaries and expectations of them in the team. Relationships are more developed. Team members understand what is expected of them, what the norms are in terms of behaviour and performance. Evidence: the team members are behaving as is expected of them, and working collaboratively.

### **Performing**

Then the performing stage. This is where the team becomes an effective team, able to focus on achieving the tasks required, as they know their boundaries and the working relationships. People know their own strengths, and the strengths of the team. The focus is on performing as required. In this stage the team is performing effectively.

### **Adjourning/Mourning**

The final stage is adjourning or mourning. This stage happens when people leave the team. There is a dip in performance as people get used to the new team dynamics, and deal with the impact of people leaving. The team is essentially a new team and so will go through the stages of team development again.

### **What every people manager should know is that storming is an essential part of team development.**

It has been my experience that many managers don't know about the stages of team development. They have acquired a team to manage and the team has performed satisfactorily when it is forming. When the storming phase occurs, managers hope that it is a temporary glitch and that normal service will be resumed soon - i.e. that the team will revert back to its previous behaviour. So they wait for this to happen. This will not happen and far from ignoring the storming phase, the manager's responsibility is to get the team through it as effectively and quickly as possible - so it can norm, and then perform as a team.

Many managers have told me that they have inherited a problem team which is one where negative behaviours have been allowed to manifest and continue to grow because the previous supervisor or manager has chosen not to address them. They tell me of the huge negative impact this has on the performance of the team and the individuals in it.



## About the Author - Krista Powell Edwards

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Krista is an experienced and highly qualified consultant, coach, facilitator, trainer and author. She uses her experience and expertise to support individuals, teams and organisations to enhance their effectiveness and performance.

Krista is currently writing her first book 'Credible HR, a handbook for influence and impact at work' to be published by Routledge in 2022.

### **Expertise and experience**

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Krista has developed her expertise through

- An extensive track record of supporting organisations in the UK and internationally since 1995.
- Masters level research in the factors that impact the achievement of service quality and workplace performance.
- Extensive Continuous Professional Development (CPD), including regular attendance at conferences.
- Research of 'best practice' consultancy, facilitation and learning and development
- Qualifying as a Master Trainer and Master Practitioner in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP).
- Designing and delivering 500+ training and development programmes.
- 20+ years as Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) volunteer - branch chair, council representative - supporting the CPD and performance of 7500+ HR professionals.
- Lecturing at a university (International Human Resource Management).

### **Specialist areas**

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Krista specialises in three main areas:-

**Credibility** - How to communicate credibility for influence and positive impact in the workplace

**Credible HR** - Supporting HR and People Departments to add value to the organisation

**Personal Effectiveness Skills** - Developing confidence, credibility, influence, time management and delegation, assertiveness and conflict management skills so that individuals and teams are able to perform effectively.

### **Services**

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Tailored and high quality

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We offer a 30 minute exploratory discussion/chemistry session free of charge. Contact

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