The Stages of Team Development

All teams go through specific stages of development, especially when facing any new task or project. Each new group begins as highly enthusiastic but relatively low-skilled team. As they begin to realize the task may be harder than they initially thought, and that their skills may not be sufficient, their enthusiasm dips. Soon they begin to gain some experience and grow in their skills as a team and their confidence begins to grow. Finally, as the team develops proficiency in their tasks and grows in their level of skill, they develop into an enthusiastic highly capable team.

The Four Stages of Team Development are defined as:
Forming, *Storming*, *Norming*, and *Performing*.

It is essential that every Leader develop an understanding of these stages, and recognize them in order to employ the most effective leadership strategy

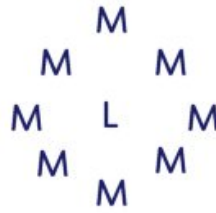| **Forming**	**Storming**	**Norming**	**Performing**
High Enthusiasm, Low Skills	Low Enthusiasm, Low Skills	Rising Enthusiasm, Growing Skills	High Enthusiasm, High Skills
"Great Team Expectations", no team bonds or history of working together	"At Odds", no one working together, high conflict and dissatisfaction	"Coming Around", the beginnings of a team	"Pulling Together", working toward a common goal

As Patrols move through these stages of team formation, they will experience the following milestones in their team building process:

- They are *formed* into a real patrol and develop a team identity
- They *develop* their capabilities to act as a team
- They actually *function* and operate as a team

Effective Leaders learn to recognize the stage that their team is in and adjust Leadership Style to the current level of team development in the following fashion:

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M  M  M          M            M              M M
M  M  M        M   M        M     M        M    M
M  M  M      M   L   M      M        L      M      M L
    L          M   M          M     M        M
                                M              M
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Forming	Storming	Norming	Performing
Explaining	*Demonstrating*	*Guiding*	*Enabling*
The leader explains in detail how a task or skill is completed	The leader demonstrates how a task or skill is completed	The learner tries the skill while the leader guides him through it	The learner works on his own under the eye of the leader

[L represents the Leader   M represents the Team Members]

It is also important to note that at any time, any team or Patrol may regress to an earlier stage of team development when faced with a new challenge, an unforeseen situation or during a change in leadership. While there is no "quick fix" to move a team through the stages of development, an effective leader will make use of past team successes to boost team formation.