

# Team Kickoff Process Quick Guide

Are you a leader of a new group? For instance, have you recently “inherited” new members to your existing team due to an integration or organizational restructuring? Newly joined the company in a supervisory position? The members of your team will be depending on you to provide direction, structure, and support. They’ll be watching you closely and taking their cues from your leadership. Certainly, you want your new group to become a cohesive team -- to perform at high levels and be highly engaged from the start. By taking some key steps in the early weeks and months when your team is first forming, you’ll be better positioned to accomplish these goals.

## What you’ll find in this guide:

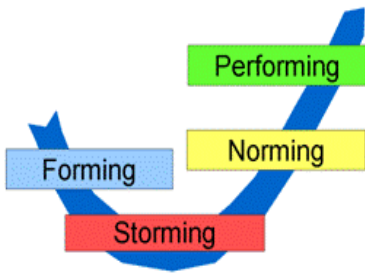
What to expect as the leader of a new team and a recommended process for how to implement a “kick off” for your team that will positively impact team performance and employee engagement:

- What to do: Objectives and desired outcomes for the process
- How to do it: Team building road maps for a 1-day meeting, or series of meetings, to run in the early stages of your team’s development
- An overview of tools and resources you may easily adapt and use
- Contacts for further guidance on how to customize and implement this process

## What to Expect As a Leader of a New Team

If you’ve been appointed as the leader of a new team, or if you’ve gained new or different members, then your team will return to the Forming stage of development (refer to **Moving Teams to High Performance Quick Guide\*** for more detailed information about all of the stages of team development).

In the Forming stage, employees will be excited about your “arrival” and the possibilities of this new team, but also apprehensive and uncertain about you as a leader. Who are you? How will you lead? Will you be competent? They will be looking to you to provide direction, structure, and to set the tone and example for the team. Additionally, they’ll need to feel that you care about them as individuals and are taking active steps to get to know them and understand their histories, experience, strengths, etc.



*Bruce Tuckman, Stages of Team Development Model*

## What to Do

Plan and implement a strong and engaging kick-off process early in your leadership tenure when the team is first forming, with the following overall objectives and desired outcomes in mind:

- Normalize the process of team development and encourage the group to want to work with you to build a high-performing team
- Start building trust and relationships; provide opportunities for all to learn more about each other – both professionally and personally
- Learn from the past (what worked and didn’t) and discuss expectations for the future with the team
- Build alignment by confirming goals, priorities, and responsibilities
- Agree on how to work together to accomplish the goals (e.g. a set of team norms or practices for communications, meetings, decision making, etc.)
- Gain insight about team members’ strengths and identify ways to help each other improve

## How to Do It

Two different documents that outline a recommended process are described below – team building “road maps” for you to use to get things off to a good start with your team. Contact Organizational Development for more information about these documents.

- One outlines the **plan for a one-day team meeting\*** dedicated to achieving the desired objectives. This may work well for those who want to use a more aggressive timeline.
- The other provides a **framework for a series of meetings\*** to occur over an extended period of time. This may work better given work schedules and/or if the team is very geographically dispersed.

The purpose of these documents is to give you a framework and structure to make your team better, not to prescribe or dictate the agenda. The detail is provided to give you as much information as you might need to fully understand how these ideas can be implemented, not to limit your freedom of judgment. As in all important undertakings, judgment and flexibility are key.

A caution: Don’t shortchange the team building process. The time you invest up front will pay dividends later in terms of team member commitment, engagement, and performance.

## Tools & Resources For You

There are some additional tools and resources to make this process easier for you:

- 1) **PowerPoint slide deck and facilitator notes\*** – this document can be adapted to use in your team meeting(s). It includes facilitator notes, including some talking points and instructions on how to manage certain activities.
- 2) **New Leader Team Kickoff Survey\*** – this is a suggested team survey to distribute to team members to learn more about their expectations of you as their new leader and of the team.
- 3) **Effective Team Building Activities Guide\*** – this document describes how to run a successful activity and provides 12 different activities for you to use.

\* Saved as a separate file on the Employee Engagement Library