

(1) **Task design.** The team task is a whole and meaningful piece of work for which members have autonomy to exercise judgment about work procedures, and that provides members with regular and trustworthy data about how well the team is doing.

(2) **Team composition.** The team is as small as possible, has members with ample task and interpersonal skills, and consists of a good mix of members.

(3) **Core norms of conduct.** The team clearly and explicitly specifies both those member behaviors that are especially valued and those that are unacceptable.

Tell us about a team you have been a part of (work, sports, etc.) in terms of these particular features. Briefly describe the team you are analyzing, but focus specifically on task design, team composition, and core norms. How did the presence (or absence) of these structures impact your team's performance? I'm looking for you to really hone in on the importance of these things and how they relate to good (or bad) performance.

Task Design: Build a catapult to fire water balloons at the staff. We gave our participants a rough sketch of what the completed catapult should look like. They are also given ropes, pulleys, ammunition pocket, zip-lock bags, a 5-gallon bucket, and access to the pile of staves (poles). The prior day we did a lashing demonstration with a hands-on portion. Lashings are the “knots” used to attach poles together.

Team Composition: We create groups of participants intentionally diverse, but with similar ages for commonality to foster team cohesion. This is a youth event open to 13- to 17-year-olds.

Prior to this event, we’ve already worked through a few team building exercises.

Core norms of Conduct: We have a code of conduct covering inward and outward facing norms. All participants read and sign the standard code of conduct and with the help of a leader create their group norms as well.

We teach the teams stages of team development, forming-storming-norming-performing. We also teach the EDGE method of instruction: Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, Enable. Following each exercise, we walk each team through a reflective exercise where we ask “Stop, Start, Continue” questions. This cycle of continuous improvement furthers the team’s development and increases their performance. Core norms in this group of youth are consistently good as we focus on character development as a core part of our program.

Share a personal or professional story related to **SUPPORTIVE CONTEXT**. Demonstrate that you have really read, understood, and can apply the concepts related to *reward*, *educational*, and *informational* systems within teams. This should ideally be about a team of which you are or have been a member.

CONTEXT: I was part of a team where everyone worked on multiple pursuits, that is multiple business opportunities with new and existing clients. There were at least 12 of us on this team with one managing director (MD) and his assistant-MD (or assistant to the MD). Since each of us could have 3-6 opportunities we were chasing, the team together could be working on 36-72 opportunities of varying sizes, importance, complexity, and close probability.

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: The firm supplied training and we had some of the best training in the industry. I was decent in Excel, but learned pivot tables, macros, and advanced functions through a few sessions I voluntarily attended. Having that training available made me better at my job and enabled me to make a major impact on our team.

INFORMATION SYSTEM: All of the team members entered data into a SharePoint site that I inherited from a previous team member. The system wasn't hard to update, but it was nearly impossible for leadership to understand who was working on what and more importantly who had availability. As new opportunities are identified, leadership needs availability information to assign resources (our team members). I built a dashboard using Excel that used a macro to fetch live data from the SharePoint site. The same macro also refreshed all of the data analytics and presentations. Bottom line: Leadership had all of the intelligence they needed to make real-time informed decisions.

REWARD SYSTEM: I was recognized by leadership as the creator of this handy crystal-ball that allowed them to make better decisions with greater visibility than they'd ever had. It was well-polished and dead-simple to use. Although there was no monetary award, the recognition helped to bolster my personal brand and reputation in the firm.

Use this week to have an open-ended discussion on the Hackman text. Critique, share personal stories, discuss what you've learned, provide additional examples of your own experiences with "Expert Coaching", provide outside reference to related material....anything you think is worthy of sharing and discussion. ENGAGE!

I've been following the forming-storming-norming-performing model for years. In this book from 2002 (Hackman, 2002, pg. 177), I read that the model is too rigid and dated. Any model, in fact, is at risk of being too rigid when applied literally while becoming outdated without maintenance. I think that's the key, flexibility and practical application. The real power of applying anything we learn is in our interpretation and adaptation.

I remember when ITIL first became all the rage in my Information Technology (IT) industry. Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) is a set of standards generated by the OGC (U.K. Office of Government Commerce). People tried to implement every suggestion, every control, every facet of ITIL in its entirety. Epic failures resulted everywhere; exasperation was at an all-time high. Once we learned to implement just the parts we needed, it was a lot more useful. We tailored ITIL to our specific environments and use cases. Then we changed it as our needs changed over time.

Good theory and new thinking that must be grounded in practical application is what I learn in these classes. It's a rookie mistake to assume that everything you read or learn is 100% right on as-is and applicable everywhere you may wish to apply it. The art of it, becoming a master craftsman, is in the practical application.

I've done several of these over the years and one thing that has changed over time is me. Each one of these tests are a little different. They all give good insight. One trap I've seen people fall into is to refer to the report results to explain or excuse their behavior. The fact is that most people are a little bit of each category with certain traits being more dominant depending on the situation. I find myself changing my style based on the situation. Heck, just back in DB4, Carl invoked some of my "Dominant Direct" traits with the tone of his reply. It happens sometimes. If you do a couple of these evaluations, it will give you insight into yourself and others.

I have found it helpful to know my dominant traits. Even more helpful is understanding the dominant traits of others. Very recently, I was giving one of our managers an update. I could tell that he was becoming impatient. I asked him, "Are you more Driver or an Analytical?" He responded, "Oh, Driver for sure." I cut the fluff (detail) out of the rest of that and my following updates and conversations. He was very receptive and actually more pleasant to talk with when we did make small talk. He appreciated the "just the facts" approach that I switched to based upon my understanding of his preferred style.