

## Roadmap to Effective Multicultural Teams

In this workshop, we will lay out four phases of development experienced by multicultural teams, namely 1) the “everything is great” or honeymoon or phase, 2) the “team shock” or conflict phase, 3) the “third way” or acceptance phase and 4) the “we’re better together” or effective synergy phase. We will examine each phase in turn, presenting both the challenges that multicultural teams face and the practices and strategies which enable them to successfully navigate into the effective synergy phase.

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### I. Phase 1: Everything is wonderful!

- A. Good will is strong among team members
- B. People are not yet competent in intercultural interaction, but also are largely unaware of their incompetence
- C. Each team member is ‘testing the waters’ with his or her teammates
- D. The normal cultural patterns and inclinations of each team member are dominant in group interactions

### II. Phase 2: Team shock

- A. “Team shock” is parallel to “culture shock”
- B. Team members are aware of their differences, and frustrated with some of them
- C. Differences in team members impact the dynamics and energy of the team in negative ways.
- D. Challenge: it is possible to get “stuck” in this phase, especially if some members effectively dominate the rest of the team

### III. Phase 3: “Third Way” acceptance

- A. Team members are aware of their differences, and are not consciously making changes to be more competent with each other
- B. Team members also change the expectations they have of their teammates
- C. They now allow for “otherness”—accepting the behavior and values of their teammates
- D. An identifiable team culture emerges

### IV. Effective Synergy

- A. Team members have become so “in tune” with each other that they no longer have to even think about competence
- B. Team culture has become the norm for how the team operates
- C. Team members enjoy fluid inter-team dynamics—acting in ways that respect their teammates in various situations and settings
- D. Shared vision/mission of team guides decisions and direction
- E. The team is effective in their task

#### ***Suggested Readings:***

*Leading Multicultural Teams* (Paul and Evelyn Hibbert, William Carey)

*When Cultures Collide: Leading Across Cultures* (Richard Lewis, Nicholas Brealey International)

*The Culture Map* (Erin Meyer, Public Affairs)