



## Facilitated Goodbyes The 'Adjourning' Phase



**H**ow to say goodbye? Working in the projects environment, I am familiar with 'projects' that have a very specific time limit. I know at some point in time, they must end. My time as the President of the SAIMM is no different. This was a year of learning, of achievements, of meeting incredible people, and of beautiful change. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to say goodbye. During this time of handing over, I was reminded of the work done by Bruce Tuckman. He looked at the 'Developmental Sequence in Small Groups', which describes the path that teams follow on their way to high performance.

Usually, a high-performing team comprises excellent leaders. They say the definition of a good leader is that when the leader is no longer in the room, the team still carries on without any upset. How does a good leader enable and empower their team to be a high-performing team, whether they are present or not?

On one of my mega projects, I was privileged to have a Project Manager that was invested in relationships and our team journey. He initiated a team journey, with specific activities, to support each of the phases described by Bruce Tuckman. The work I'm referencing, was the work of, and presented by, Karien van der Merwe (The Thrive Institute, Work Psychologist, specializing in group dynamics) and was facilitated by her as well.

It goes without saying that the various activities during the team journey, from 'Forming' to being a high-performance team ('Performing'), shown in Figure 1, enabled our very successful adjourning.

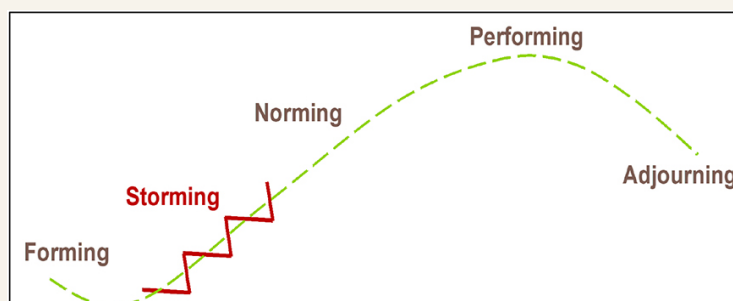


Figure 1

Nonetheless, I want to focus on specific activities that supports the 'Adjourning' phase. During this phase, there are members leaving the team, there are feelings of extreme uncertainty, there are responsibilities that shift and handovers that need to happen (Figure 2). It is important to facilitate the disconnection/disengagement of individuals during this time. Facilitated goodbyes, in the form of farewell functions, sessions where team members celebrate and share their learning, and voice appreciation and thanks to each other for the contributions they made in each other's work-life-journeys, ensures more effective re-engagement on the next project and with future teams. Closure guarantees future engagement in a new environment.

All the change happening in the 'Adjourning' phase requires resilience from team members, and to build resilience we focused on celebrating, on highlighting accomplishments, on recognition (of both teams and individuals), and maybe the most important of all, we focused on lessons learned that we could take into the future (Figure 3).

## President's Corner *(continued)*

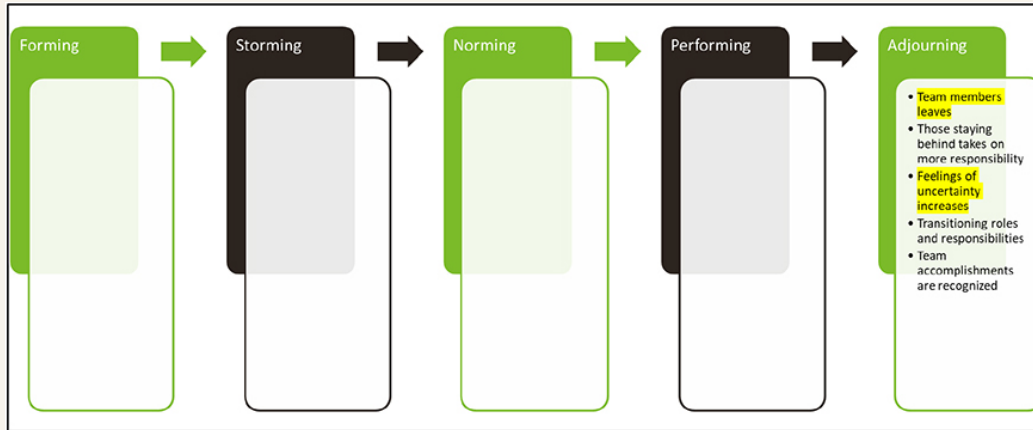


Figure 2 – Typical behaviour during the 'Adjourning' phase

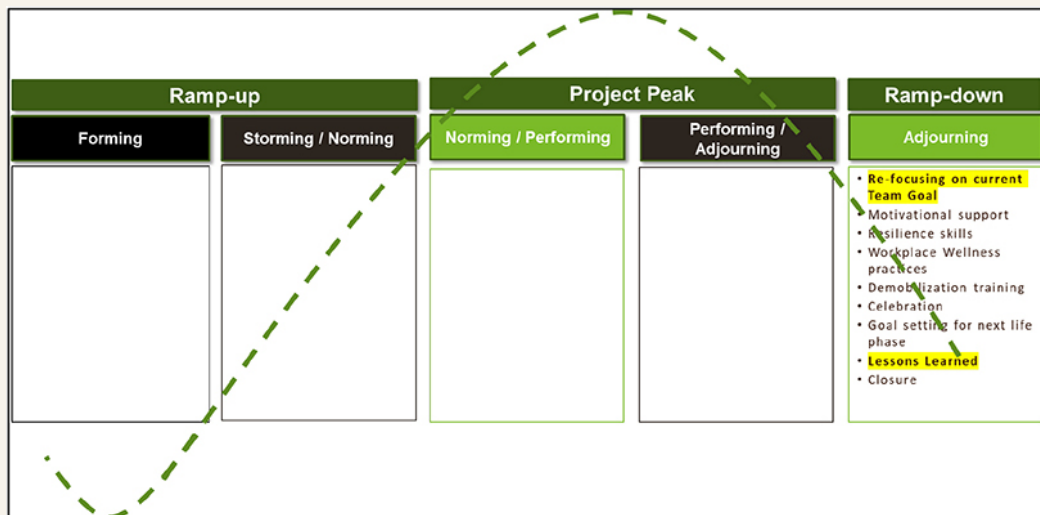


Figure 3 – Typical activities to support the team during the 'Adjourning' phase

I can, again, declare that the SAIMM is truly a family that supports transition and growth. During our year together the SAIMM family celebrated a new SAIMM podcast, a new student initiative, participation of more than 48 countries in our events, more than R3 million in sponsorship from our industry, and many, many more achievements.

And then, finally, a very big celebration of our new President, William Joughin. He believes that our assets are our people. He is a very concise, technical leader, who believes in knowledge and learning. He believes in empowerment, providing guidance and enabling learning. He has a hope for us, to keep growing and to develop our industry and technology. I am extremely excited to keep serving this year, under the guidance of William Joughin.

**Z. Botha**  
*President, SAIMM*