

FindingPotential

Team Type Preferences



Working Together More Effectively



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Team Preferences

Purpose of the Workbook

There are three essential elements to building a high performing team:

- Purpose and focus - why does this team exist, what are its key deliverables and goals?
- Process - what processes are we going implement to ensure we work together efficiently (e.g. how often we meet, the focus of our different meetings, communications between meetings)?
- Relationships - how are we going to interact and collaborate to ensure we are effective, i.e. so the sum of the parts is greater than the individual aspects (e.g. how do we mix different styles together, how will we resolve conflict, how will we stimulate new ideas)?

This document has been created to help teams think about the third of these elements, i.e. how they can work together more effectively by utilising their collective personal preferences more effectively.

We have set out three simple steps to help you identify potential strengths/gaps in how your team may work together and start discussions within the team on how you can work even more effectively going forward.

Step One

Using the template on the next page, fill in the team members' names and different team type preferences:

- ✓✓ Strongest team type preference
- ✓ Next strongest preference
- ✗✗ Least preferred team type

Step Two

As a team, explore where you have:

A balance of preferences

- A balance of preferences that can be utilised more effectively as a strength for the team. For example, a *Chair*, *Driver*, *Innovator* and *Team Player* working together effectively are likely to bring structure, ideas, focus to get results whilst ensuring the group work together

Potential for conflict

- Potential for conflict can exist if too many people want to adopt a similar role. For example, a team full of people whose primary preference is *Driver* is likely to have a high level of conflict and operate independently of each other, rather than utilising each others' strengths. Similarly a team full of *Innovators* may never get round to delivering anything.

Potential for gaps/oversight in approach

- Potential for gaps/oversight in approach, where no team member has a preference for working in a particular way. For example, a team without any preferences for 'Critic'.

Step Three

Having identified the spread preferences of the team, what strategies can you put in place to manage the balance, potential conflict or gaps?

A balance of preferences

Possible Approaches

- Think about introducing a process such as Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats® that will bring a discipline and structure to how you work together. For instance, the Chair will create the focus for the meeting, Drivers can add information and push for what needs to be delivered, followed by brainstorming of ideas (where Innovators will operate at their best), and so on.

- Adopt an approach similar to that attributed to Walt Disney, where instead of trying to get people with very different personality preferences to work collaboratively together, separate them into different sub-teams each with a different purpose and focus. Using the team type profile, this might mean the Innovators working together to pass ideas onto the Critics to define which ideas will work, with the Implementer and Perfectionists being tasked with executing the final ideas.

Benefit

- By adopting a discipline such as Six Thinking Hats®, you are creating a defined space for people to use their preferred style, whilst ring-fencing this space from potential more dominant styles.
- The Disney approach removes the need to manage the needs of the different styles, by using them sequentially rather than collectively.

Potential for conflict

Possible Approaches

- Agree a way for identifying potential trigger points and a mechanism for dealing with the trigger. For instance, a team full of people whose main preference is *Driver* is likely to have high levels of disagreement and conflict points. Recognising when these are about to happen, and taking a 5 minute cooling off period, will help the team stay in a more productive space rather than wasting time in conflict and becoming entrenched.
 - **NB** Healthy disagreement and debate are an essential part of team behaviour; this is about recognising the point at which these become conflict, stand-off and entrenchment.
- Ask a team member to adopt a specific role in the meeting to minimise the risk of the team falling into ineffective behaviour. For instance, a team with strong preferences for being *Perfectionists* are likely to get caught up in the details of issues. One of the team, possibly the one with the strongest preference for *Driver*, could adopt a role which means they do not contribute to the discussion but instead monitor it, to help pull the team out of the detail asking questions such as:
 - I've noticed a focus for the last 5 minutes on a particular point, to what extent is this focus helping our overall objective which is to...
 - We're dropping into the detail on this, how important is this at this time?

Benefit

- Identifying trigger points will help the team take a step back and move the conversation forward instead of getting caught into potential conflict and ultimately division within the team.
- Giving a specific role to an individual not only helps provide feedback from a neutral perspective (i.e. someone not caught up in the conversation itself), but also gives explicit permission to that individual to play that role (i.e. don't blame the messenger for the message)

Potential for gaps/oversight in approach

Possible Approaches

- Put in place processes to ensure the gaps are not overlooked. For instance, if none of the team have a preference for being a Networker, then build a section into the meeting process that explores who the key stakeholders are, who needs to be involved in discussions and who needs to be informed of decisions and progress updates. Adopting the RACI accountability process would help in this type of example. Similarly a team with strong preferences for Drivers and Implementers (but no Team Players) who are leading a major change initiative, may well overlook the most important factor – how are people likely to react to the change and how can we engage them more effectively. By creating a process that forces them to consider impact and reaction to change, they are likely to be more effective in delivering their goals.
- Accept that this really isn't a gap the team can easily close themselves and bring in other people to the meeting. For instance, if the team aren't good at detail then delegate this task to another team. Similarly, once the team has come up with great ideas, ask someone from another part of the business to come in and analyse and challenge the ideas (i.e. play the role of *Critic*).

Benefits

- Building in processes where preference gaps exist can help remove the risk of key issues falling off the radar and not being discussed. It creates a structure that teams can easily follow and build into their processes for working together.
- Bringing in an outside contribution is a much quicker way of closing possible gaps, leaving the team to focus its energy on its potential strengths. It will bring a fresh perspective, whilst also giving a very clear remit.

Team Type Preferences	Team members names and preference								
Chair									
Driver									
Innovator									
Critic									
Networker									
Perfectionist									
Team Player									
Implementer									

Preferences

- ✓✓ Strongest team type preference
- ✓ Next strongest preference
- ✗✗ Least preferred team type