Team Formation Companion

For Demo Surveys December from Better Inc

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Contents

What is this?

This Team Formation Companion is designed to be a standard/ritual that you can use when forming a new team, and each time a new person joins the team.

It sets a tone for trust, respect, understanding, collaboration, fun and psychological safety.

Use it when you bring someone new onto the team as early as you can—include it in your first team meeting, for example. Or make this the "New Person Welcome Meeting" that becomes the standard process when a new person joins. Visiting and revisiting these concepts is always useful, and the activity never gets tiresome.

How is it intended to be used?

This Team Formation Companion is intended to be used with audiences who have already been debriefed in their REACH Profile and/or have participated in the *Introducing REACH* workshop in the Group Debrief Presentation Deck available as a download in the [Group Debrief Certification](#) course (or an equivalent group debrief such as a workplace launch event) or are otherwise familiar with the REACH framework.

Given that familiarity, the recommendation is to work through this document on a large screen to help people develop a better understanding of each other's strengths and tendencies, and begin constructive collaboration together.

Why do it?

Shorten the time to 'high-performing' by week, months or sometimes even years!

This process can take your team from 'feeling their way' to understanding each other, learning team personalities and dynamics, and working out their role (forming and storming phases of Tuckman's team dynamics) to a common language, shared understanding, and constructive collaboration (the performing phase) in hours, days or weeks instead of weeks, months or years.

Set your team up to focus on collaborating to achieve your team's goals instead of having time and negative emotion creating distraction (often overwhelming noise and distraction) from the purpose.

How long will it take?

A team of 4 new collaborative people will take about 60-90 minutes. If it is just one person joining, it can be even quicker (from as little as 30 minutes).

If you are supporting the launch of a larger team (6-12 people), this can be a great quality 2 hour session.

If you want or need to fill a certain larger window of time, the REACH Group Debrief content can provide you with additional depth and content that can be extended out over several days.

Running the Session

You can use this document and work through it or use this together with the PowerPoint file which has more content and sets up the session better. You'll notice some visual cues to below for the pages here that correspond to the PowerPoint.

Guiding principles:

- This is about improving appreciation of diversity, that we all naturally fill different and equally important roles on a team based on how we think and what we prefer to do (similar to a sports team, only a sports team may have some physical traits that are factored in as well)
- Allow people to speak freely and acknowledge all perspectives and contribution. Setting that tone now while you are exploring differences will lay foundations for psychological safety and lead to better quality collaboration, feedback and in turn synergy and growth.
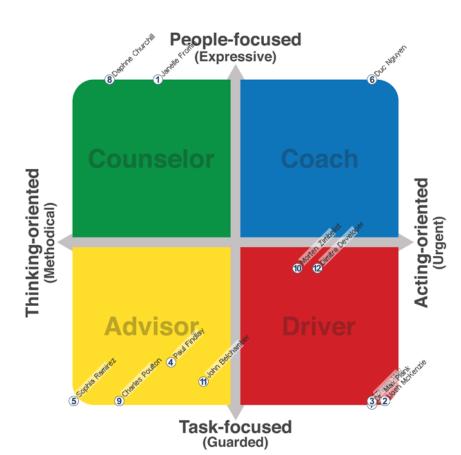
Bigger-picture questions to ask as you work through (there are questions on each page as you work through as well)

- Does the team have a productive balance of diverse approaches?
- Thinking about preference for urgency and big picture vs methodical detail (left and right-hand side of the matrix), are there any specific tasks or parts of tasks that we can assign to allow each of us to play to our strengths?
- Thinking about preference for people versus task orientation (top and bottom halves of the matrix), are there any specific tasks or parts of tasks that we can assign to allow each of us to play to our strengths?
- Is there opportunity to help people appreciate the strengths diversity and improve collaboration and outcomes? Specifically, ask each person to think of a task or part of a task (e.g., proofing an important report or marketing email before sending it versus helping with the executive summary or subject line for the same two pieces of output).
- Should we have this matrix with our positions visual in the office to keep diversity top of mind?
- How can we use this information to help us be more intentional with communication, planning and motivating on an ongoing basis? Ask everyone to give one takeaway they would like people to try to remember when communicating with them, and one thing they are going to try to remember when communicating with a specific person in the team. (Remember, communication can be receiving, giving, or nuances of the interaction—body language, words, interpretations).

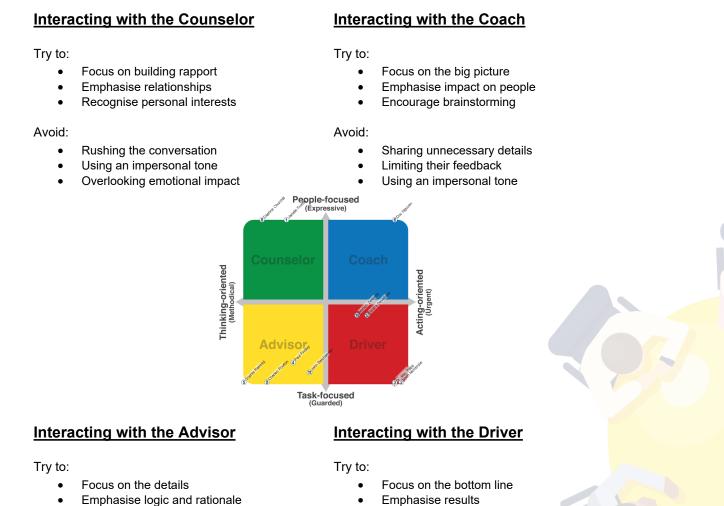# Our Team

Conversation Starters

Our Individual Profiles:

1. Do you think your profile accurately reflects how you see yourself?
2. Did you pick your teammates profiles?
3. Why might we see ourselves differently to how others see us?
4. Do you currently change your approach depending upon who you are interacting with?

Thinking about our Team Diversity:

1. Do we have a range of Diverse styles in our team?
2. Could we benefit from more diversity of thought?
3. How could we increase diversity of thought in our team?
4. Are we conscious about recruiting diversity?

Our Team - Communication

We all prefer communication in certain ways. By understanding how to adapt our style to be closer to other people's preferred way of being communicated with, we are less likely to be perceived as rude or inconsiderate, creating a better platform for constructive collaboration. Let's be purposeful and understanding, so we can all **share** and **respond** instead of just **sending** a message and **reacting**.

Interacting with the Counselor

Try to:
- Focus on building rapport
- Emphasise relationships
- Recognise personal interests

Avoid:
- Rushing the conversation
- Using an impersonal tone
- Overlooking emotional impact

Interacting with the Coach

Try to:
- Focus on the big picture
- Emphasise impact on people
- Encourage brainstorming

Avoid:
- Sharing unnecessary details
- Limiting their feedback
- Using an impersonal tone

Interacting with the Advisor

Try to:
- Focus on the details
- Emphasise logic and rationale
- Draw out specific concerns

Avoid:
- Using emotional arguments
- Offering vague expectations
- Pushing for a conclusion

Interacting with the Driver

Try to:
- Focus on the bottom line
- Emphasise results
- Be clear and specific

Avoid:
- Forcing personal small-talk
- Controlling the conversation
- Challenging their position

Conversation Starters

1. Do we accommodate different styles?
2. Should we change our approach to communication with our teammates?
3. What could we do better?
4. How would each person like to see communication with them change?

Our Team - Strengths

When we spend time working within our preferred profile, we tend to enjoy our work more and therefore have more creativity, proactivity and greater attention to detail and enjoy work more! This is called working to our strengths.
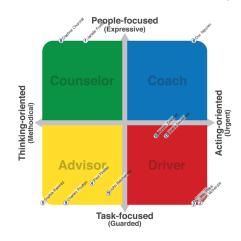
Counselor Profile

Counselors are best recognized for being: Thinking-oriented and People-focused. The key 'markers' or behaviours of the Counselor Profile include:

- **Focus** on nurturing others
- **Communicating** with a warm, comforting style
- **Conflict-handling** by accommodating others' views
- **Delegating** by 'asking' others for participation
- **Planning** through a careful, flexible approach
- **Recognition** that is personal, private
- **Learning** with careful, step-by-step reflection

Coach Profile

Coaches are best recognized for being: Acting-oriented and People-focused. The key 'markers' or behaviours of the Coach Profile include:

- **Focus** on networking
- **Communicating** with charisma, dynamic style
- **Conflict-handling** by collaborating on solutions
- **Delegating** by 'selling' others on participation
- **Planning** through a fluid, interactive approach
- **Recognition** through a team incentive
- **Learning** with active, 'big picture' understanding

Advisor Profile

Advisors are best recognized for being: Thinking-oriented and Task-focused. The key 'markers' or behaviours of the Advisor Profile include:

- **Focus** on knowledge and understanding
- **Communicating** with a reserved, formal style
- **Conflict-handling** by identifying compromises
- **Delegating** by 'teaching' the suggested approach
- **Planning** through methodical, detailed preparation
- **Recognition** that is private, objective
- **Learning** with careful, step-by-step reflection

Driver Profile

Drivers are best recognized for being: Acting-oriented and Task-focused. The key 'markers' or behaviours of the Driver Profile include:

- **Focus** on accomplishing
- **Communicating** with a focused, intense style
- **Conflict-handling** by directly confronting the issue
- **Delegating** by 'directing' the course of action
- **Planning** through an urgent, adaptive approach
- **Recognition** that is individual incentive, competitive
- **Learning** with active, 'big picture' understanding

Reflect and Share:

1. What parts of my role give me energy?
2. What parts of my role drain my energy?

The Discuss:

1. How could we change the way we work to accommodate each other's strengths?
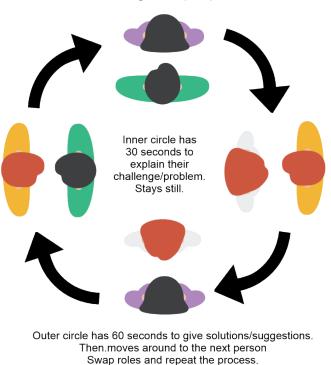
Activity: Our Team Collaborating

This activity is a great, high-energy way to finish this session and transition back to work, or back to the rest of your meeting.

Set up (Say this with a smile, it sounds crazy):

"You are about to get ideas from people that probably don't know enough context to give you well-considered or well-founded answers, and they will only have a few moments to consider and have no time for research… and you're going to get great value! 😊"

Instruction 1: "Take 2 minutes to think of a challenge/problem that you have in your personal or work life. It can be anything that you don't have a clear resolution to and would like some ideas on. You won't need to share it with the group however, you will be sharing it with colleagues one on one."

Instruction 2: Arrange the people.

Inner circle has 30 seconds to explain their challenge/problem. Stays still.

Outer circle has 60 seconds to give solutions/suggestions. Then.moves around to the next person Swap roles and repeat the process.

All of this is variable. You can have circles of 3-8 people in the inner ring and outer ring. You can vary the amount of time you allow for people to share their problems and to give solutions.

You can have multiple rings of people all doing the same thing.

If you have one odd person, you can team them up into a pair of solution givers.

Things to note: This gets VERY loud, and you will need a loud timer and/or whistle to move people around.

This can work online using breakout rooms in pairs of two. If you are doing it virtually, have people reverse roles while they are in the breakout and make each turn a bit longer. One minute to share the challenge, 2 minutes to give feedback, then swap roles. That way people are together for 6 minutes before you re-pair them.

Instruction 3: *When I blow this whistle, Person A will have 30 seconds to tell person B what their first suggestion is. Person B will then have 1 minute to give person A ideas on how to implement their suggestion—either what they can do personally or what they can get their team to do. After the minute is up, I will blow the whistle again and it will now be Person B's turn to tell Person A their suggestion in 30 seconds, then Person A will have 1 minute to tell Person B their ideas. Any questions before we start?*

Blow the whistle to start A telling B their suggestion. After 1.5 minutes blow the whistle again and have the outer ring move around one. Continue the process until the outer ring has moved right around the inner ring. Then have the rings swap positions and swap roles. Complete a full circle again.

Debrief: This will have been loud—full of ideas, human connection and usually some laughter. It's an amazingly simple yet incredibly high energy and fun activity.

If this is a new team, and you have never done this activity before, this is a strangely powerful question to ask to set the tone for the collaborative supportive culture in this new team.

- Say "Put your hands up if you laughed or smiled during that activity." (Everyone's hands go up.)
- Then "Put your hands up if you got at least one good idea."
- Then "Keep it up if you got more good ideas in the couple of minutes than you did in the last week at work?" (Everyone's hands stay up and everyone has a giggle.)
- Then "Keep your hands up if you got more good ideas from colleagues just now than in the last 2 weeks?" (Pause for effect) "3 weeks?" "Month?"

Take away thoughts:

- Can you have fun generating ideas in this way and still find it productive?
- Were the ideas you received useful?
- Were there any connections made or conversations started that you want to continue?
- In our team, shall we share ideas, ask for help, benefit from each other's perspectives, and have fun doing it?

Top 6 Tips

1. It's a great idea to set up a team charter around this time as well that sets behavioural and cultural expectations.

2. Do this each time new people join the team!

3. Take this to the next level with the Reach and Strengths, then the Strengths & Resilience workshops within the Group Debrief Certification deck. And try using the 'Activities for meetings' in the learning resources to add 10 minutes of learning to your normal meetings.

4. Use the REACH 360s across all members of the team. With the shared understanding and learning mindset this provides, the 360s continue to inspire connectedness and continuous improvement.

5. Try the Coaches Companion either peer-to-peer or between team leader and team members.

6. Keep REACHing top of mind with REACH products (like cubes or labels) in the office and/or in people's home offices.

REACH**LX**

Alternate Activity

When you are bringing several new people together, or you have more time and want to develop strong bonds, doing a 'Lifeline' together can be powerful. This activity will develop mutual understanding, will be very emotional, and will create lasting connections.

Reading through the activity here makes it seem somewhat insignificant; however, it is common that around ¼ of the people participating will cry, and long-term bonds will be formed.
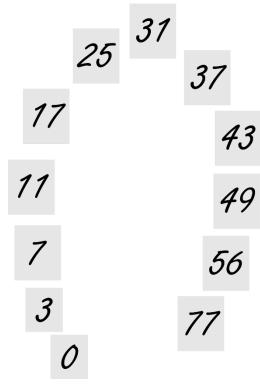
Instructions:

Write numbers that represent ages on pieces of paper and lay them out in a line or horseshoe shape depending on the room and number of people participating.

The ages that you write on the pieces of paper are somewhat random with the following guidelines:

Don't put them on the milestone years (18, 21, 30, etc). If you do that, people think about the milestone event and not so much about what was significant in that period of their life.

Put one or two cards further out than the oldest person you have to get the people to think into their future. This can vary a lot depending on the age of your people.

A sample is shown below:

31
25
37
17
43
11
49
7
56
3
77
0

Introducing the activity:

Explain to your group that you are going to be thinking about the most significant things that have happened during your life.

Start at the small numbers, and it's very important that you speak in first person, present tense.

"I am 1, I was born in ____ to ____. My life is ____, I am 6, I am ____; I _____."

Use the years as mental cues to help you think through the timeline of your life. However, you can stand near any year, and talk about what was most significant near that year. For example, you may stand just after the 7 card and talk about when you were 9 years old, because things that happened when you were 9 were significant to you.

Talk through the significant things in your life in first person and move around the circle as you go.

Once you get to the card closest to your current age, think about which one(s) you want to jump to and share what you hope your life to be like.

Let people know that it will be much more emotional than they expect, and that everyone will respect that and be supportive. They are all going to have the same experience when they share about their lives as well.

Explain that it will form shared understanding, appreciation, respect, and tolerance because we will all learn that there's a lifetime that has brought each of us to this point, together on this team.

Disclaimer

The information contained herein describes certain behavioural preferences and tendencies derived from the participants' self-reporting. While such patterns of behaviour tend to be consistent over time, these can change based on circumstances beyond the scope of what has been measured by this survey. Therefore, this information does not represent a comprehensive measure of psychological traits, nor does it claim to represent a prediction of future behaviour. No part of this information is intended to convey a psychological, medical, or psychiatric evaluation, and in no way is this information intended to convey an evaluation of employability. This information is intended to provide insight that is useful in coaching, team-building, and other aspects of professional development and training. No employment decision should be made based, in whole or in part, on the results contained herein, and no indication of suitability for employment should be inferred or implied based on the REACH Survey.