



# SUPERCHARGING TEAM DYNAMICS

THE PERSONALITY SCIENCE BEHIND HIGH PERFORMANCE

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 Psychometrics



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# Supercharging Team Dynamics

*The personality science behind high performance*

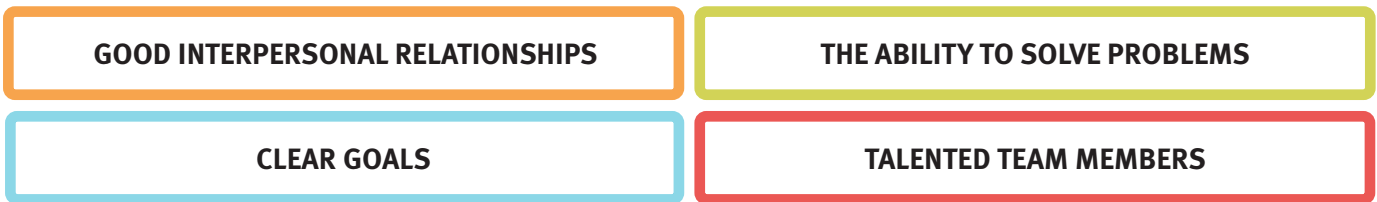
Much of the complex work that organizations seek to complete is best done through teams. As a result, the importance of teamwork continues to grow – in 2016 it was listed as the number one global workforce trend in Deloitte’s Human Capital Trend Report, and by 2023 they identified the growing prevalence of multi-team approaches, the increase in co-creation, and problem-solving as a team sport as the latest frontiers of teamwork.

Why? For the simple reason that teams can do things that individuals cannot. Teams are better at solving complex problems and innovating, and they can produce outcomes that are greater than the sum of individual’s contributions. Yet without the right skills, processes, and purpose, teams do not do not have the advantage and are simply individuals coordinating individual efforts.

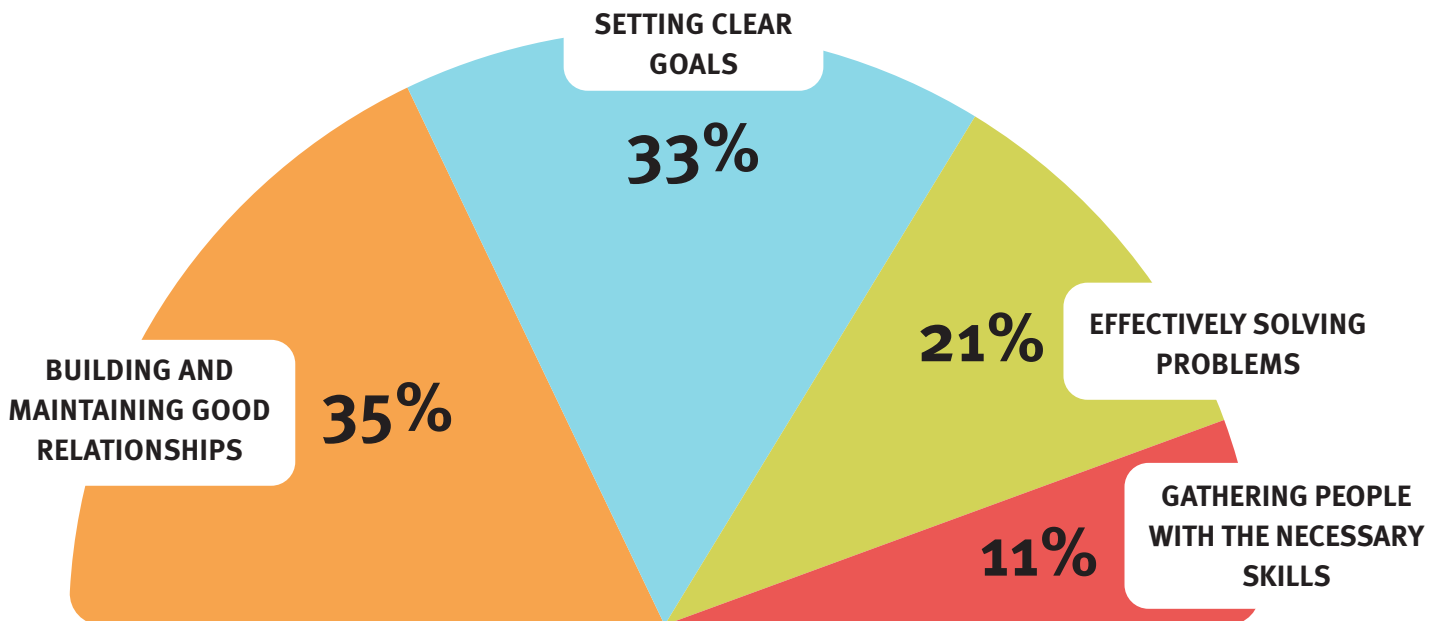
**“Not finance. Not strategy. Not technology. It is teamwork that remains the ultimate competitive advantage, both because it is so powerful and so rare.”**

Patrick Lencioni

A team of experts does not make an expert team. Instead, effective teams have certain group and team member characteristics that enable them to work well together. Successful teams have the following components:



WHERE DO TEAMS HAVE THE MOST DIFFICULTIES?



Our research with HR professionals shows that relationships are the area where teams struggle the most, followed closely by setting clear goals. Of the four critical components of effective teams, these two issues trip up more than two-thirds of teams.

When we examine the skills required to be an effective team member, three competencies consistently show up – it doesn't matter what type of team they are on, or what the team is trying to accomplish. These teamwork competencies are:

**COMMUNICATION**

**ADAPTABILITY**

**COORDINATION**

Unsurprisingly these competencies play a key role in building and maintaining good relationships and setting clear goals.

On the following pages we will explore the critical issues that teams need to address to supercharge their team dynamics: Communication, Conflict, Change, and Problem-Solving.

## **Tips for Leaders: *Supercharging Team Dynamics***

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**Bad conditions trump potential!**

**Without the proper organizational support and leadership, teamwork will not flourish even if team members have the appropriate skills.**

### **Leaders should:**

- 1. Communicate the importance of teamwork**
- 2. Recognize and reward team behaviours**
- 3. Make resources and processes that facilitate teamwork available**

## Better Communication

Effective communication is the foundation of effective teams. When team members are good communicators, their team is better able to set clear goals, establish good relationships, make best use of peoples' skills, and solve problems.

Good communication starts with the audience, not the speaker. If the audience is not the first concern, good communication cannot occur, except by chance – and that is a risk that successful teams do not take. While many people fall into instinctual patterns and methods of communication that feel comfortable to them, effective team members ensure that what and how they communicate works best for their audience.

### COMMUNICATING TO BROAD AUDIENCES

When communicating with groups of people, you cannot tailor your approach to a specific individual. However, by considering some of the common personality differences amongst people you can ensure that everyone receives the information they need, in a way that they like to receive it. Not only will this improve your communication, but it ensures that you consider perspectives that are not as natural to you.

Good communication should include each of the following:

#### MACRO

Give the big picture, the global situation, the overall plan, the flow.

#### MICRO

Give specific data about what, when, how, and whom.

#### HEARTS

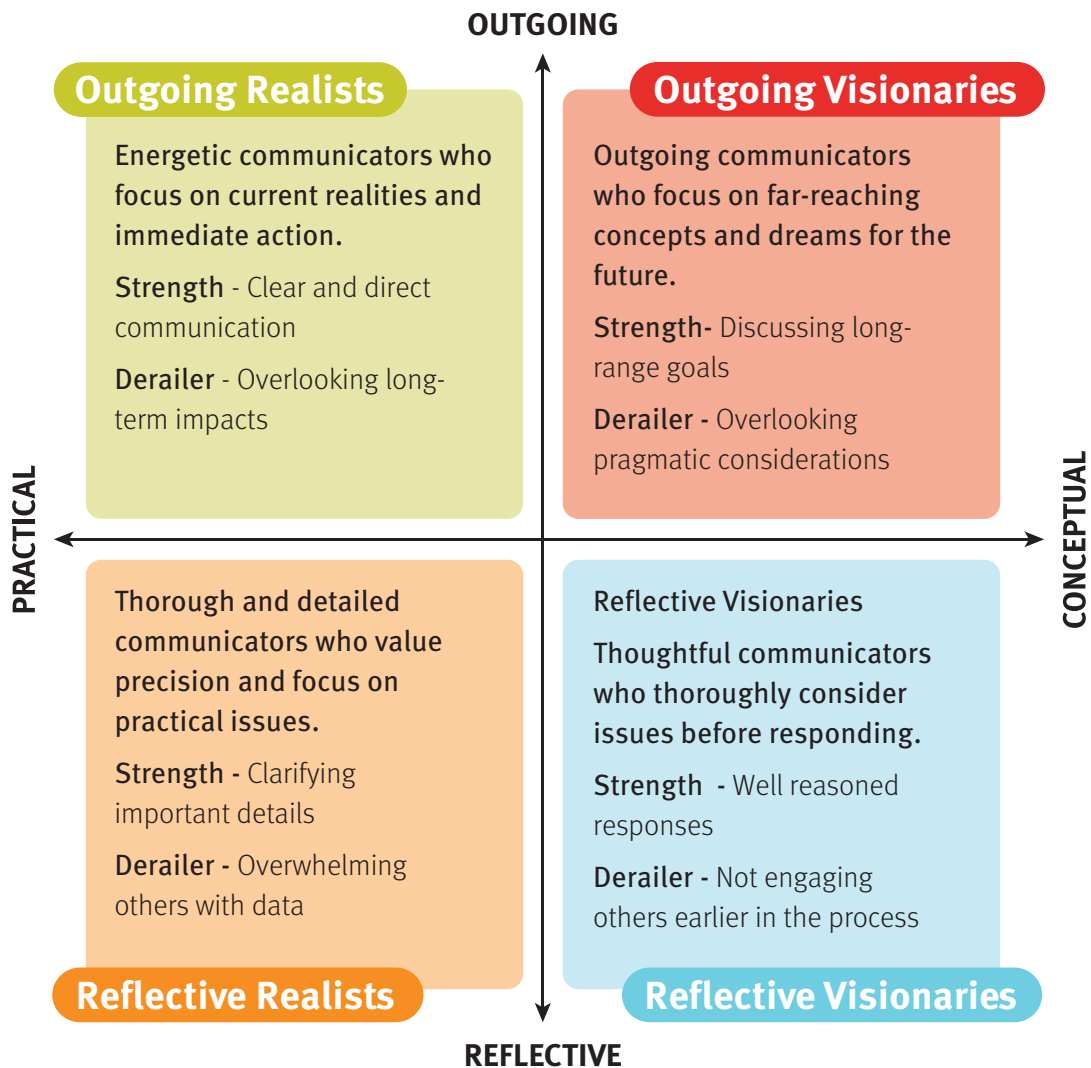
Explain the values that drive ideas and invite discussion of values or people you've overlooked.

#### MINDS

Give the logic behind ideas, including the alternatives you considered, with the pros and cons, and invite critique.

People will naturally speak to macro or micro, and hearts or minds – understanding your natural style and adjusting to broaden what you include when you communicate is key to becoming a better communicator.

## FOUR COMMUNICATION STYLES – WHAT’S YOUR STYLE?



Not only should individuals be aware of their own communication strengths and derailers, but the team should also address the internal and external communication processes for the team.

### COMMUNICATION TIPS FOR TEAMS:

- 1. Rules for Tools** – Discuss which methods of communication the team will use and when. Offline and written communication can inadvertently mask your intentions and humanity. Choose methods carefully based on what you need to communicate.
- 2. Assume Positive Intent** – Tone and nuance get lost in digital communication, so assuming your colleague is coming from a positive place helps with any potential misunderstandings.
- 3. Context is King** – Let people know about your current situation – if people know that you are busy, they will understand why you can't respond, or are giving very short responses.
- 4. Asynchronous is OK** – embrace communication across distributed timelines, but make sure you share deadlines and when you need a reply.

## Tips for Leaders: *Better Communication*

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**1**

**Engage in dialogue with your team early and often.**

**2**

**Clarify purpose – let people know why you are reaching out to them.**

**3**

**Solicit input from all team members.**

**4**

**Communicate complex or nuanced issues with interactive methods such as in-person or a video call.**

# Resolve Conflict

Conflict is inevitable when working in teams. It starts when one person's concerns or desires differ from those of another. This is not a problem – we expect and need team members to bring different perspectives to the table. Effective teams need to be able to share ideas, concerns, needs, values and possible risks.

How these differences are resolved determines if the conflict leads to positive or negative outcomes. Addressed properly, conflict can spur creativity, improve relationships and lead to win-win solutions. The goal of high performing teams should be to resolve conflict effectively, not to avoid it.

## WHEN DOES CONFLICT OCCUR THE MOST?

WHEN TEAMS NEED TO HANDLE  
UNEXPECTED ISSUES

DURING TIMES OF CHANGE

## STEPS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT EFFECTIVELY:

**1** Evaluate the situation. Take time to assess the conflict before reacting. Ask yourself – Who is involved? What are their priorities and how do they differ from your own? How important is this issue to the different people involved? How much time is available?

**2** Choose your behaviours accordingly. Based on your responses to the questions above, one of the five conflict handling modes will be an effective starting point.

**3** Adjust your approach as the conflict changes. Keep listening to others; based on what you hear you may need to shift your approach and begin using a different conflict handling mode.

Remember, the goal is to deal with conflict, not to avoid it.

## CONFLICT HANDLING MODES

There are five main methods for dealing with conflict, and they vary in levels of assertiveness and cooperation. Too often people use the method that they are most comfortable with; this results in suboptimal solutions. Instead, choose the method that best fits with the situation you find yourself in.

CONFLICT STYLES	USE WHEN...
<b>Competing</b> – My way of the highway	The situation requires quick action
<b>Avoiding</b> – Let’s deal with it tomorrow	You need to reduce tensions
<b>Compromising</b> – Let’s make a deal	You need to create temporary solutions
<b>Accommodating</b> – We can do it your way	You need to create goodwill with others
<b>Collaborating</b> – Two heads are better than one	You need an integrated solution that meets everyone’s needs

Over the last few years, we have seen a decrease in the use of Competing, Compromising and Collaborating. At the same time, we have seen more use of Avoiding and Accommodating. Why? Because people are not being as assertive, which is a key component to Competing, Collaborating, and Compromising. The potential underuse of these styles, and the overuse of the less assertive styles of Avoiding and Accommodating comes at a cost.

### THE RESULTS FROM UNDERUSE OF:

**Competing** is indecision and delayed action

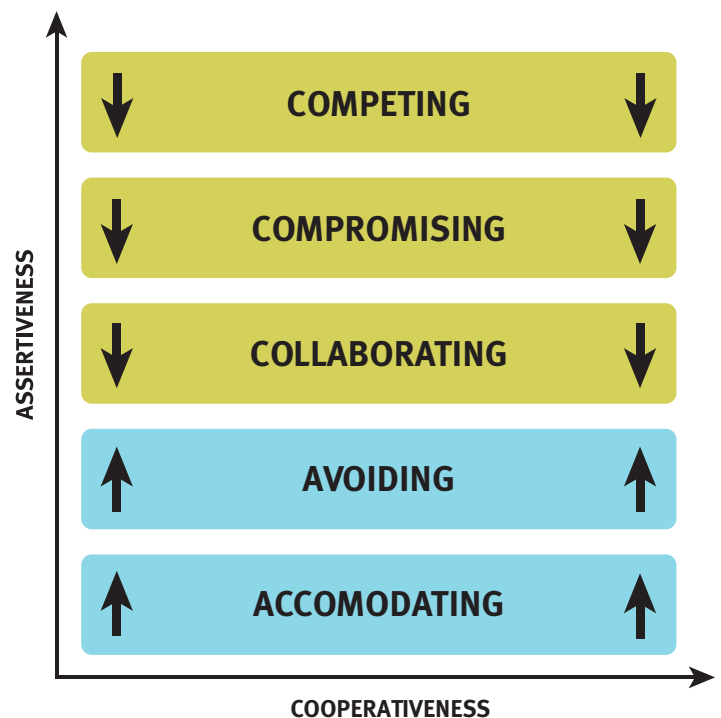
**Compromising** is the inability to negotiate effectively

**Collaborating** is less innovation, less empowerment, and fewer win-win solutions

### THE RESULT OF OVERUSE OF:

**Avoiding** is festering issues, a climate of caution, and decisions made by default

**Accommodating** is overlooked ideas, loss of contributions, and limited influence



## Tips for Leaders: *Resolve Conflict*

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**Resolving conflict is a key leadership skill – and one of the most common areas of weakness among today’s leaders!**

**1**

**Don’t avoid it! Exploring the issue that is leading to conflict is the only way to effectively resolve it.**

**2**

**Don’t stifle dissenting views.**

**3**

**Look for the upside in conflict. Differences of opinion based on the variety of perspectives that people bring can spur innovation and the discovery of win-win solutions.**

**4**

**Help your team develop conflict literacy, so they can think effectively and communicate clearly during times of conflict.**

**5**

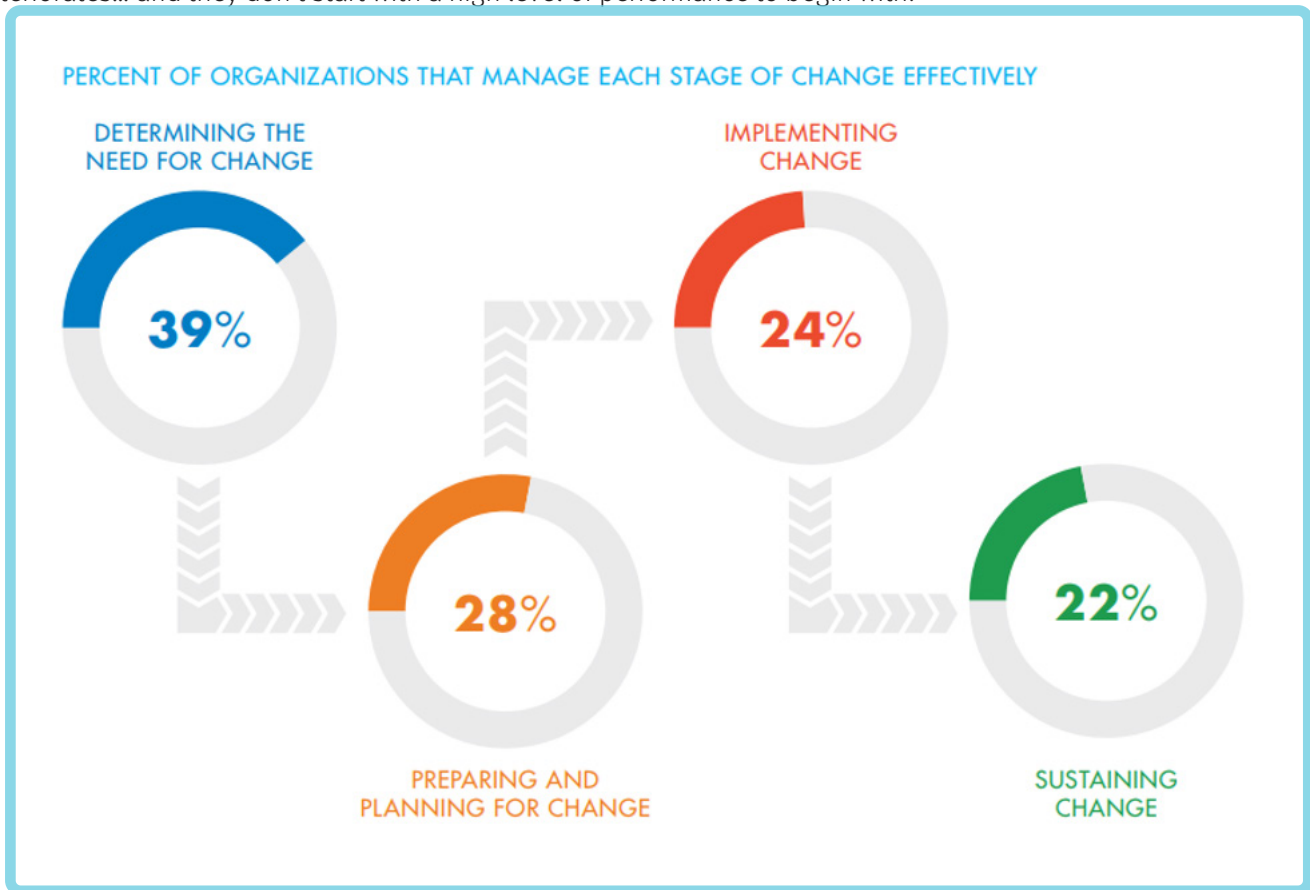
**Identify and discuss your team members’ conflict handling styles.**

## Manage Change

*“If you wish to persuade me, you must think my thoughts, feel my feelings, and speak my words.”*  
Cicero

Adaptability is one of only three transportable team competencies, along with communication and coordination. Being able to proactively drive change and navigate external changes are key team member skills. Successful teams are composed of members who can work with each other to adapt to their environment.

Unfortunately, it’s not that simple. Our People Trends Survey found that the largest gap between organizational need and performance was change management, with the need far outweighing the capability. The process for managing change can be broken down into four broad stages, starting with determining the need for change and ending with sustaining change. As organizations move through these stages our research shows that their effectiveness deteriorates... and they don’t start with a high level of performance to begin with!



The foundation of this problem is how organizations and teams approach change. They focus too heavily on managing the tangible aspects of change – strategy, process, timelines, individual responsibilities; but do not spend enough time addressing the intangibles – organizational culture, employee engagement, and individual needs.

Team members can manage change more effectively by considering how different people approach change. Psychometrics Canada has identified 5 change styles based on team members' personality characteristics.

### **CHANGE CATALYSTS**

People who seek out change in all its forms.  
But may change things that do not need changing.

### **CHANGE DRIVERS**

People who like directing change.  
But dislike adjusting to change they can't influence.

### **INCREMENTAL IMPROVERS**

People who like to build upon what currently exists.  
But may miss the need for innovative approaches.

### **ADAPTABLE CONTRIBUTORS**

People who react quickly with practical solutions.  
But may not bring enough ideas.

### **PRESERVATIONISTS**

People who focus on keeping what works.  
But may change too slowly.

Each of these styles have their associated strengths and derailers. By recognizing that teams are composed of people who naturally approach change differently, and that each of these different people will provide a useful perspective during change teams can identify, navigate and implement change much more effectively.

## **Tips for Teams: *Manage Change***

- 1. All changes result in something coming to an end. Identify what is being lost and acknowledge it.**
- 2. It is during change that people need the most support. Take time to connect with others and ask how they are doing.**
- 3. As new changes take hold, make sure everyone understands the part they will play in the new way of doing things.**

## Tips for Leaders: *Manage Change*

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**Most people like change. In fact, they do it all the time. People buy new clothes, eat at different restaurants, travel to exotic locations, change jobs, and move to new places. What people don't like is uncertainty; and when faced with uncertainty people ask questions, with none more frequent than "WHY?"**

**Leaders should not see this questioning as resistance to change, but instead as a sign of employees trying to understand and deal with uncertainty. To help employees manage change, leaders need to answer their "Why?" questions. The key ones are listed below. If leaders cannot answer these questions, it is likely that the change has not been well thought out, and they will not be able to respond effectively when employees ask "Why?"**

- **What is it about the global situation that explains why the change needs to be made?**
- **What is not working and how do the proposed changes respond to that?**
- **What are the values that drive the change?**
- **What is the logic behind the change?**

**Leaders then need to communicate the answers to these questions to employees early and often. This will reduce uncertainty and increase employees' ability to manage change.**

# Solve Problems

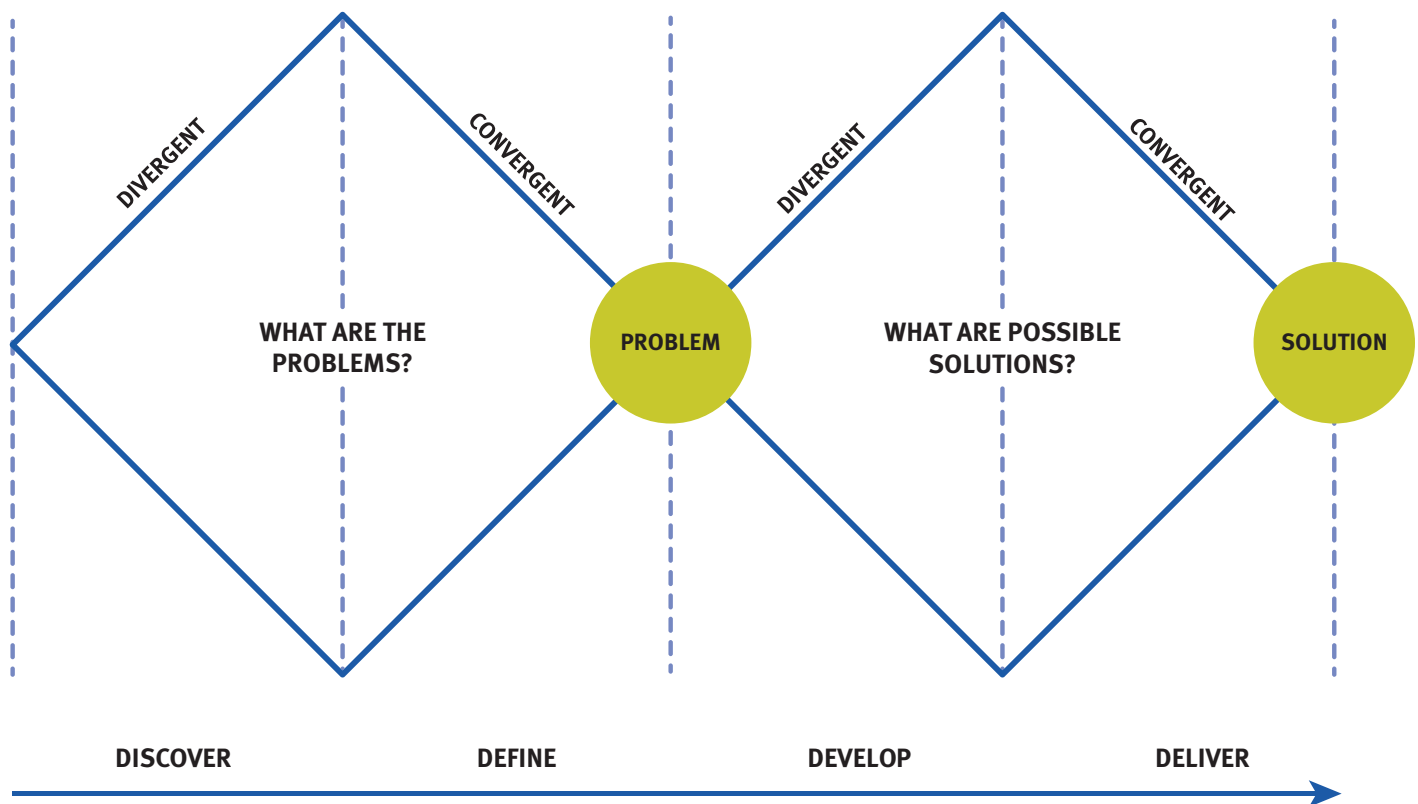
Teams are formed to solve problems. Some are straightforward while others are complex. Many teams struggle because they move to solutions before they fully understand the problem. As a result, they do not address the real issue, and are left frustrated by implementing a variety of ineffective solutions.

The Double Diamond model is a powerful approach for thinking purposefully about a problem, before moving to solutions. It requires both divergent and convergent thinking.

**DIVERGENT THINKING – BROAD CONSIDERATION AND BRAINSTORMING OF IDEAS.**

**CONVERGENT THINKING – IDENTIFYING A WELL-DEFINED PROBLEM OR SOLUTION.**

Teams need to shift between divergent and convergent thinking – first in the problem identification stage, and then later when finding solutions. To effectively solve problems, teams need to purposefully move through these four stages:



**1. DISCOVER – WHAT ARE ALL THE POSSIBLE CAUSES OF THIS PROBLEM?**

**2. DEFINE – WHAT SPECIFIC CAUSE SHOULD WE TRY TO SOLVE?**

**3. DEVELOP – WHAT ARE ALL THE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS?**

**4. DELIVER – WHAT IS THE BEST SOLUTION?**

Some team members will prefer divergent thinking, while others will be natural convergent thinkers. Both are important, and good team members exercise both types of thinking at the appropriate time. As you move through the four stages teams need to ask and answer questions that will uncover the real problems and the best solutions.

### **DISCOVER**

- How did we get in this situation?
- What has been done and by whom?
- What insights or hunches come to mind?
- What other problems is this similar to?

### **DEFINE**

- What are the verifiable facts?
- What interpretations can be made from these facts?
- What is the most logical cause?

### **DEVELOP**

- What solutions might be possible?
- What have others done to solve similar problems?
- What already exists and works?

### **DELIVER**

- What are the pros and cons of each alternative?
- What are the logical consequences of the options?
- How will others react and respond to the options?
- Who is committed to carrying out the solution?

## Tips for Leaders: *Solve Problems*

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After-Action Reviews are an excellent way for teams to evaluate their performance and accelerate their learning. They have been found to increase team performance by an average of 20 to 25%, despite their relatively short nature. At the completion of a project, bring your team together to discuss the following:

**1**

**What went well?**

**2**

**What could have gone better?**

**3**

**What should we do differently in the future?**

As a leader make sure that each team member contributes, encourage discussion, and consider team specific factors such as communication and decision making. Take notes on the responses for each question and document any conclusions or agreements that are reached. Then send out a copy to everyone.

## How does Personality Impact Team Dynamics?

The personality traits of team members play a significant role in the dynamics of their team. These personality traits influence how individuals approach tasks, interact with colleagues, solve problems and manage conflict.

### IMPACTS OF PERSONALITY TRAITS ON WORK STYLE:

**COMMUNICATION** – Outgoing individuals prefer frequent interaction, while introverts prefer tasks that allow for more independent work. Communication styles also vary based on traits like attention to detail, concern for others, and openness to feedback.

**PROBLEM-SOLVING** – Creative and open-minded individuals approach problem-solving with innovative ideas, while analytical thinkers may focus on logical and data-driven solutions.

**CHANGE** – Innovation and flexibility can impact team members' willingness to embrace change and new ideas, influencing their adaptability to evolving work situations.

**TEAMWORK** – Cooperative individuals often work well on teams and contribute to a harmonious work environment. On the other hand, task focused individuals focus on team goals first and push for achievement.

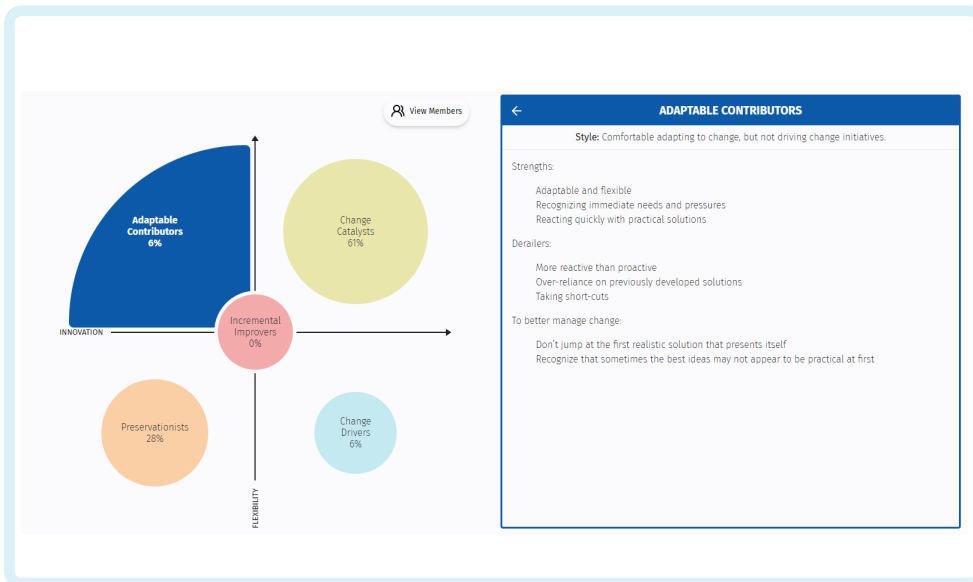
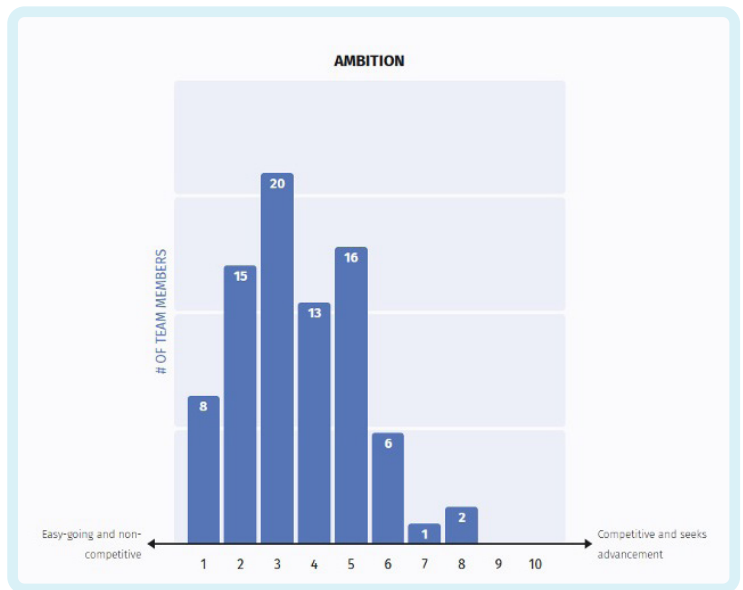
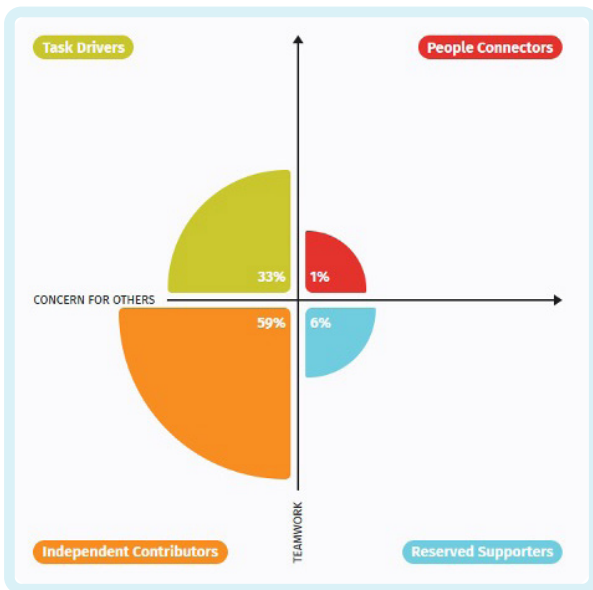
**CONFLICT** – Persuasive team members push for solutions and are comfortable asserting their needs, while collaborative people seek solutions that incorporate all points of view.

# Data Driven Team Development

Understanding personality differences gives team members the insight necessary to work more effectively and target their developmental gaps. Supercharging team dynamics and identifying team development initiatives comes from a clear understanding into how different team members approach their work.

Psychometrics Canada’s Team Dynamics solution combines individual assessment data from the Work Personality Index to give your team actionable insights. By aggregating personality trait scores, and applying this information to critical issues, Team Dynamics helps members address the most common issues that teams face: Communication, Change, Conflict, Problem-Solving, and Teamwork.

Democratize the team development process by giving team members the information they need to identify gaps and improve their performance. This active engagement gives ownership of the team insights to team members, empowering the group to make positive improvements based on their team’s data.



# PSYCHOMETRICS

## *BUILDING BETTER ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH PEOPLE*

Psychometrics has been providing assessment tools and consulting services for the selection and development of people in business, government and education since 1976.

Our expertise is in applying business psychology in the areas of employee selection, personal and leadership development, team building and conflict resolution. We work with more than 4000 clients around the world including 84 of the top 100 companies in Canada.

Contact our experts to explore how assessment solutions can help identify and develop talent in your organization.



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