



BOTILMS

Module 5: Navigating Team Dynamics

What's the number one cause of conflict at work? People. When different personalities clash, it's bound to cause some reverberations. But understanding and embracing what makes each person unique can produce a high-performing team that excels without exception.

This module will teach you how to build team dynamics that serve rather than hinder your development by discovering different roles, work styles, and generational differences. You'll learn to improve collaboration by finding a style that resonates and learning what makes your colleagues tick.

Click on the first lesson below—or the “*Start eLearning*” button above—when you're ready to begin.



Introduction to Team Dynamics and Why They Matter



Characteristics of High-Performing Teams



Common Roles in a Team



Understanding and Leveraging Different Work Styles



Tips for Improving Team Dynamics



Managing the Multigenerational Workplace



Key Takeaways



Knowledge Check



Module 5: Completed

Introduction to Team Dynamics and Why They Matter



Improving the Way Your Team Works Together

Workplace teams can—and should—be more than just the sum of their human parts. Beyond the skills and expertise each person has, it's the way these individuals come together to tackle a project that can give it a special boost—or act as a shackle. The interplay of personalities, roles, work habits, management styles, and more, can affect how teams get work done. These invisible factors, known as **team dynamics**, are the powerful forces that govern how people relate in executing their work tasks.

In this lesson, you'll learn what team dynamics are, and how they can influence decision-making and efficiency on your team. You'll get primed on what shapes these invisible forces, and how to recognise and manage these influences to set your team up for success. We'll also run through some situations to help hone your identification and application skills so that you can better manage how your team works together.





Introduction to Team Dynamics and Why They Matter

Watch this video to learn about team dynamics and how to manage them in your team environment.

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What Are Team Dynamics?

Perhaps you've heard the term **team dynamics**—but what exactly does it mean?



Team dynamics are the invisible behavioural forces operating between members of a team.

Teams are groups of two people or more working toward a common goal; and the dynamics between them refer to things like the personalities, roles, and

responsibilities, as well as the conscious and unconscious behaviours that each member brings to the group.



Team dynamics can influence how effectively and efficiently your team works toward an objective. A team might have individuals with the skill sets needed to do the job, but it takes cooperation to orchestrate the variety of project tasks required to complete the job in a coordinated, efficient way.

Characteristics of Positive Team Dynamics

Positive team dynamics are critical for organisational success. A well-orchestrated team brings out the best in each member and promotes progress toward achieving a collective goal. Teams with strong, positive dynamics typically have:

1

Trust: Team members need to be able to share ideas and information honestly, without wondering about their teammates' reactions, intentions, or motivations.



2

Connectedness: A team shares a group identity that forms a collective bond between members. A strong sense of connectedness helps team members feel that they're building something more valuable together than they could as individuals.

3

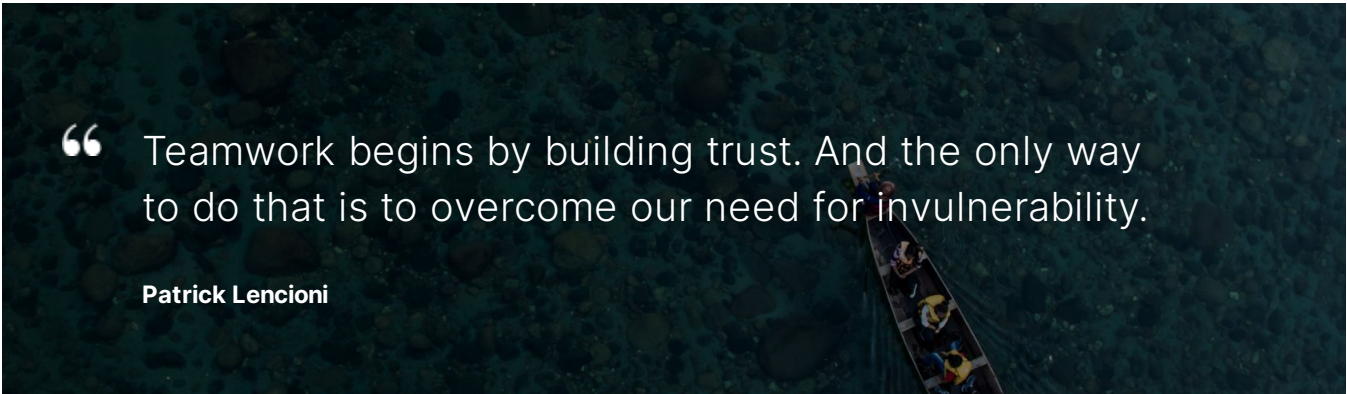
Leadership: A team leader gives guidance and support without stifling creativity. The best leaders know when to lead—and when to step out of the way.

4

Open communication: A team that freely engages in dialogue usually produces a more diverse set of ideas that can unearth an “out of the box” solution.

5

A sense of purpose: What separates a team from a group is a defined, shared goal that provides a sense of purpose.

A quote by Patrick Lencioni is displayed over a background image of a team in a boat. The quote is: “Teamwork begins by building trust. And the only way to do that is to overcome our need for invulnerability.” The background image shows a group of people in a small boat on a body of water, with a dark, textured background.

“ Teamwork begins by building trust. And the only way to do that is to overcome our need for invulnerability.

Patrick Lencioni

Scenario: New Project Kick-Off

Imagine a project kicks off, and you find yourself on a team of eight people. Two you've seen before around the office, and the other five have a longtime professional history.

In the kick-off meeting, it's clear that the five have strong chemistry and unspoken knowledge of each other's roles and areas of expertise. How does this cozy pod within the team affect the group as a whole?

It can be positive—say, if the group is inclusive and engages the other members to share their expertise. But it also can be negative if the pod eschews the additional team members and divides the group, lowering productivity and morale. How could you help set the right tone for the team from the start to make sure everyone's on the same page?

Factors Influencing Team Dynamics

Learning what factors influence team dynamics can help teams manage these forces and shape them for a positive outcome. Expand the rows below to read about each one:

Project Team Roles —

Team roles are critical in team dynamics, collaboration, and performance. Though many projects are similar, no two are exactly alike. That's why team leaders should always assess what roles are necessary for the project at hand. Ditching the *"what he/she's always done"* mindset frees a team to match the project requirements with the people who have the skills to do this particular job right.

Personality and Leadership Styles —

Everyone has a different way of saying, doing, and hearing things, and that will influence how messages are communicated within any team. Understand that personalities and management styles will vary from person to person, as will how people receive what those personalities and

styles are communicating. It can be helpful to acknowledge these individual attributes at the start of the project and focus on how to use them to optimise the team's productivity.

Diversity

A diverse working group can be a real asset. People with different strengths, perspectives, and experiences give the group professional breadth to tackle lofty goals.

Communication and Connectedness

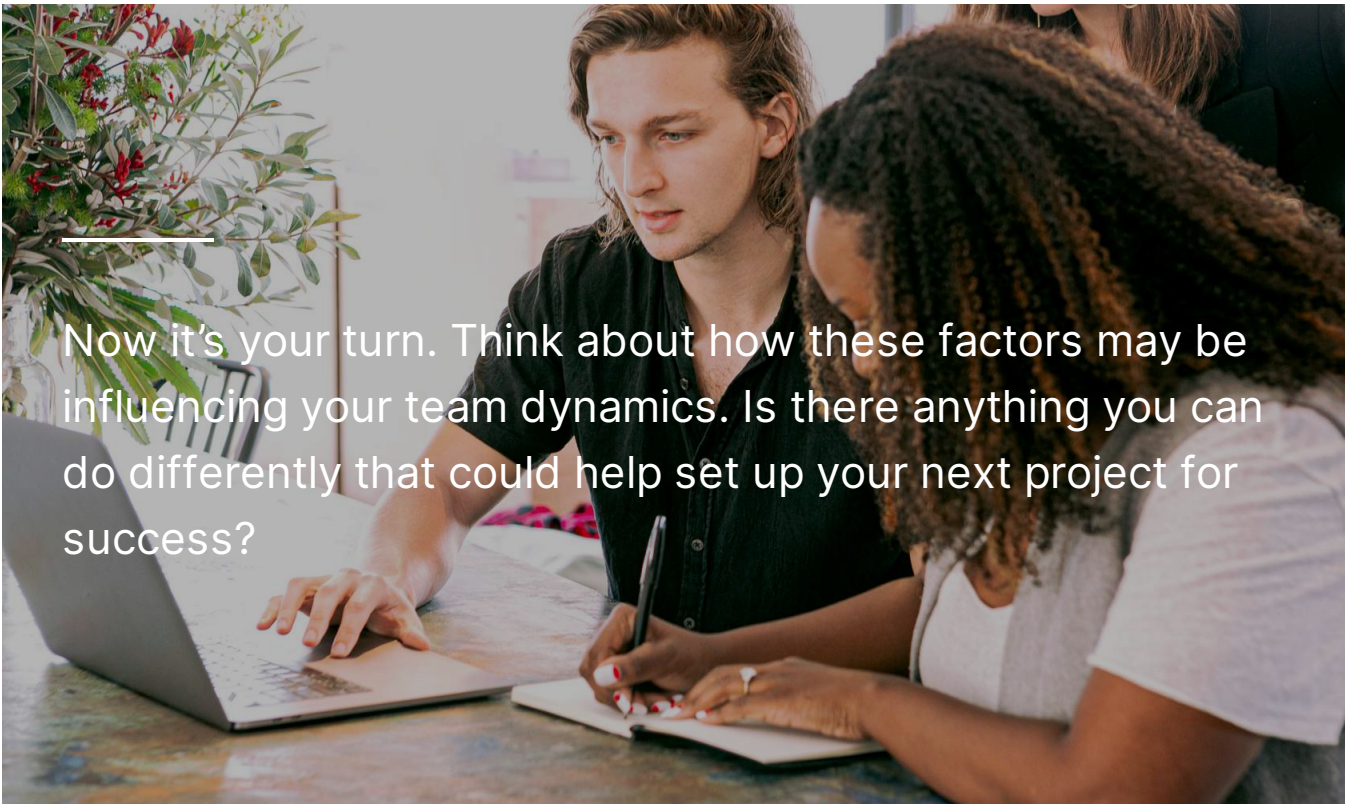
Groups that have a strong sense of connectedness and a high degree of communication have a better chance of success. Why? When people share and give access to the information teammates need to collaborate and move projects through the team's workflow, it reduces friction and propels a project forward.

Approaches to Problem-Solving

Groups and company cultures may have different ways of solving problems. There's no right way or wrong way, so long as in-group conflict is addressed, and issues aren't left to fester.

Type of Workspace

What type of workspace does the team have to conduct business? Does the team work virtually or in person? Workspaces can impact how work gets done on the team, and whether or not the team is moving at optimal efficiency.

A photograph of a man and a woman working together at a desk. The man, with long brown hair and wearing a black shirt, is pointing at a laptop screen. The woman, with dark curly hair and wearing a white shirt, is writing in a notebook. A potted plant with red flowers is visible in the background.

Now it's your turn. Think about how these factors may be influencing your team dynamics. Is there anything you can do differently that could help set up your next project for success?



Review what you've learned about team dynamics by completing the following exercise. Choose whether the statements below are true or false:

Question 1 of 3

At John's project kick-off meeting, most of the people on the team have worked together before, so it's okay for him to skip the introductions.

☐

True

☐

False

SUBMIT



Complete the content above before moving on.

Question 2 of 3

Stella, the team leader, frequently asks for ideas from the team but then cuts people off and doesn't listen to their full contributions. Everybody

notices, but so far, nobody has said anything. The eye-rolling and whispered frustrations are making Jake uneasy.

A few days later in their 1:1 meeting, Stella asks Jake how things are going on the team. This is a good time for Jake to raise the point to Stella.

☐

True

☐

False

SUBMIT



Complete the content above before moving on.

Question 3 of 3

Cindy's team works virtually and usually stays in communication over chat. The team accesses files on a shared drive and collaborates as needed.

Recently, Cindy has noticed that two team members are having trouble meeting their deadlines. Coincidentally, these same two barely participate anymore during meetings and chats. But because Cindy and her team value an autonomous working environment, Cindy thinks she'll just let them sort out how they work on their own. Good approach?

☐

True

☐

False

SUBMIT



Complete the content above before moving on.

Summary

Team dynamics influence every part of a team's functioning. These invisible nuances of how individuals behave, relate, and communicate in a team setting can set up a project for success—or make it feel like an uphill battle. What's key is to be aware of what these underlying dynamics are, and how you and your teammates can shape them positively, so that your projects are optimally efficient and effective—and even enjoyable.



Communicate. If you're unsure how to examine the dynamics of your team and improve them, start a conversation about it. Engage your team to ask what's working, what's not, and where people feel like they're getting stuck. Acknowledge individual strengths and styles, and brainstorm how best to put them to use. Encouraging people to share—and listen—will help break down barriers and open communication channels. Then, you can identify the invisible forces at work on your team and help move your project toward success.



Complete the content above before moving on.

Characteristics of High-Performing Teams



Introduction

Have you ever led, witnessed, or been part of a high-performing team? A team where each person pulled their own weight, supported others, and produced consistent, high-quality outcomes? Have you ever wondered why other teams struggle to achieve those same results?

High-performing teams are rare. When they happen, it's often by chance—a seemingly perfect mix of people comes together to form the perfect team. But with the right ingredients, you can create all-star teams such as these.

So, what ingredients do you need? In this lesson, we'll answer that question. First, you'll learn what a high-performing team is and how it differs from an average team. Then, you'll learn the six characteristics that go into making such a team so that you—as a leader—can duplicate those results.





Characteristics of High Performing Teams

Watch this video to learn the difference between an average and a high-performing team as well as the six characteristics that go into creating a high-performing team.

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An Average vs. a High-Performing Team

All teams contain two or more people working toward a common goal—aiming to achieve more than a single person could. Some teams are more effective in that ambition than others, though.

So, why is that? What makes one team average while another is high-performing? To understand the distinction, flip the cards below.

An Average Team

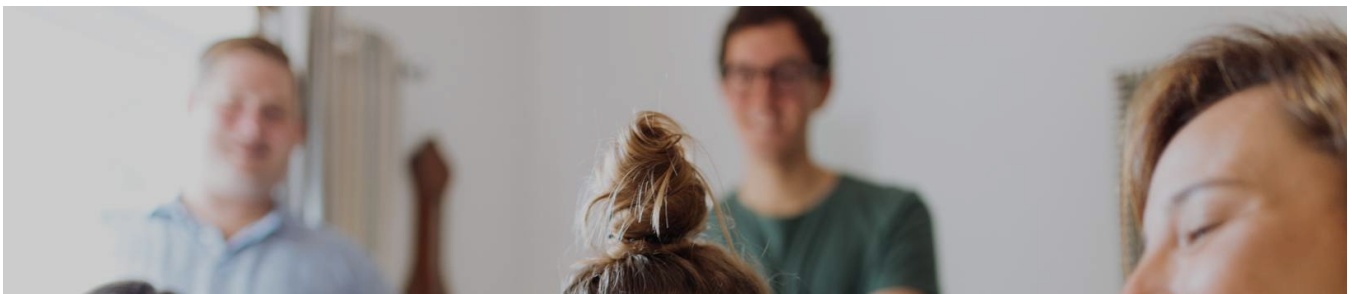
An **average team** produces **inconsistent results**. It may occasionally meet expectations, but it's also prone to falling short.

In these teams, people are often at odds with one another—holding conflicting goals and priorities,

A High-Performing Team

A **high-performing team** is like a well-oiled machine. Its results are **consistently excellent**.

In these teams, people work together and support one another—aiming toward the same target, sharing responsibility, and making





High-performing teams take group execution to a new level. These teams consistently get tasks done more efficiently, more effectively, and with greater enthusiasm.

Characteristics of High-Performing Teams

High-performing teams work together to achieve superior performance. Of course, the next question is: What ingredients do you need to create such a team?

While high-performing teams come in many shapes and sizes, several universal characteristics underpin their success. Expand the rows below to learn about six foundational characteristics of high-performing teams.

A Strong Sense of Purpose

A high-performing team has a strong sense of purpose—both on the team and an individual level. On the **team level**, everyone understands the big picture. They know why their team exists and what the group is aiming toward. On the **individual level**, each person is also aware of their unique role and how they support the greater goal.

Within these groups, you won't find clashing priorities, vague objectives, or hidden agendas. Rather, each person is clear about—and committed to—the same common target.

Open Communication and Transparency —

High-performing teams share a culture of open communication and transparency. People express themselves freely and frequently—holding regular meetings so that everyone feels heard and is aware of progress and developments.

When speaking, team members feel safe sharing their honest opinions, asking questions, and providing feedback. When listening, team members pay close attention, show respect, and are open to receiving feedback.

Overall, this transparent communication promotes cooperation and collaboration. It allows creative ideas to flourish and encourages people to talk through problems and concerns—thus resolving conflicts rather than dwelling on them.

Shared Ownership and Accountability —

Rather than taking it easy and letting others do all the work, high-performing team members share responsibility. Each person pulls their own weight and has an equal stake in the group's success.

Everyone is empowered with relevant information and resources to take ownership of their work. Everyone knows what they must do and how they must do it. So, rather than placing blame when results fall short, people hold themselves accountable.

Mutual Trust and Respect —

High-performing team members aren't only confident in themselves, but in their colleagues as well. Rather than doubting one another's abilities, they **trust** each other and **respect** what each person brings to the table.

Team members don't waste time keeping tabs on one other or second-guessing a colleague's intentions. Instead, they trust one another's capabilities, value each person's contributions, and believe in one another. They trust that if a colleague has a problem, that colleague will speak up. And, if someone says they're going to do something, others believe it will happen.

Diverse Skills and Perspectives

High-performing teams excel because they bring diverse talent to the table. Each person has a unique personality, background, work style, experience, and viewpoint. And that diversity helps the group achieve a higher standard of excellence.

High-performing teams don't value sameness. They understand that the best work happens when people with a wide range of skills and perspectives come together—leveraging their unique ideas to think more creatively, work more effectively, and solve problems with greater competence than any one person could.

Flexible and Adaptable

High-performing teams are experts at agility and adaptability. Within these groups, you'll never hear the phrase: "But that's how we've always done things!" These teams understand that if conditions or demands change, they must change as well.

Beyond that flexibility, high-performing teams also don't wait for change to happen. Instead, they embrace learning, growth, and innovation. Team members are always on the lookout for better, faster, and more effective ways of doing things. So, they measure their progress, evaluate their productivity, and adjust their processes when needed—thus continually improving their work quality, saving time, and increasing their output.

Where Does Your Team Stand?

As the above characteristics prove, creating a high-performing team is about more than just having a group of talented individuals. That group, to surpass expectations, must also work together. They must feel supported, while also offering support to others. It's a give-and-take relationship, and its foundation rests in teamwork.

As a leader, keep in mind the six characteristics outlined in this lesson. Knowing the ingredients of a high-performing team is the first step toward creating one. So, ask yourself: *“Where does my team stand? What characteristics does the group have, and where do they fall short?”* Use these characteristics as goal posts to measure yourself against, and you can take the first step toward creating high-performing teams within your organisation.



Check your understanding by answering the question below...

Based on what you've learned, check off all of the boxes below that are true statements about high-performing teams.

☐

High-performing teams may produce inconsistent results.

☐

To streamline productivity, one person often takes ownership of a high-performing team's performance.

☐

High-performing team members don't waste time monitoring others. Rather, they trust one another to get their work done.

☐

High-performing teams are characterised by agility and adaptability.

☐

To prevent distractions, high-performing team members are expected to keep conflicts to themselves.

SUBMIT

Summary

While an average team is prone to inconsistent results and conflict, a high-performing team is one that produces consistent, high-quality results. These teams are made up of six foundational characteristics:

1

A strong sense of purpose. The team has a common reason for existence, and each person knows the part they play.

2

Open communication and transparency. People express themselves freely and frequently—resolving conflicts quickly and promoting cooperation and collaboration.

3

Shared ownership and accountability. Responsibility is shared, and no one takes a back seat. Each person pulls their own weight.

4

Mutual trust and respect. Rather than doubting one another, team members trust each other and respect what their colleagues bring to the table.

5

Diverse skills and perspectives. These teams are made up of a wide range of work styles, personalities, backgrounds, and viewpoints.

6

Flexible and adaptable. Team members recognise that if conditions or demands change, they must change along with them. These groups embrace learning, growth, and innovation.

As a leader, consider where your team stands. Where are you falling short? Where are you excelling? As you grow your team, look to instil as many of these characteristics as possible—as that's the key to creating a high-performing team of your own.



The characteristics are interrelated. If your team is missing one characteristic, it's likely missing others. For example, employees cannot share ownership without sharing a purpose. The characteristics are interrelated. So, be mindful of the gaps. If needed, focus on one trait at a time, and soon, all the pieces will fall into place.



Complete the content above before moving on.

Common Roles in a Team



What Does Each Team Member Bring to the Table?

Imagine that you're hosting a potluck. You're in charge of decorations, drinks, and coordinating who brings what. Your brother offers to bring additional folding tables and chairs along with roasted potatoes. Alicia is famous for her pork chops, Liam is making a salad and bruschetta, and Jeanne opts to make a few side dishes using fresh vegetables from her garden. Cameron loves to bake, so he volunteers to handle dessert.

A big part of what makes a successful potluck is that everyone brings something different to the table. Imagine if nobody volunteered to host the party, or if everyone showed up with just a salad or just drinks? You need guests to serve different dishes to create a balanced meal.

The same idea applies to teams. Different team members bring something different to the table. You need members to serve different roles to create a balanced team.

So, what are the most common team roles? And how do you use team roles to maximise your team's effectiveness? In this lesson, you'll learn about the nine common

roles on teams as well as the benefits and limitations of each.

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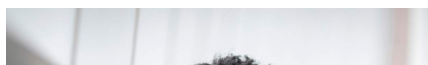
Common Roles in a Team

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What Are Team Roles?

Team members have both formal and informal team roles. **Formal roles** refer to a person's official job title or position within the team. But in this lesson, we're focused on exploring informal roles. **Informal roles** are patterns of behaviours, communication styles, and interpersonal interactions within a team.

For example, several people on your team may have the same formal role as a computer programmer. But when working together, you may notice three, distinct informal roles. Say that you notice how:





The example above describes **informal roles** that can form on a team. People naturally gravitate toward team activities and contributions that fit their interests, strengths, and personality.

Why Is It Valuable to Understand Team Roles?

Informal roles may not be part of a member's official job description, but there is often an unspoken agreement or reliance on particular team members for specific team needs. And those roles are a critical factor in team dynamics, collaboration, and performance. Understanding what the different team roles are, how they work, and who prefers what roles can help you to:

1

Create balance. You can recruit a mix of people whose roles complement one another's strengths and fortify one another's

weaknesses. Building a team of people with diverse roles will make your team more resilient and flexible to tackle a variety of projects or challenges.

2

Promote self-awareness. Team members can better understand why they like and dislike certain activities, and they can better recognise the strengths and limitations of themselves and others. They can lean on other team members in the areas they need help with, and they can identify where they can add the most value to the team.

3

Improve team dynamics. Finally, work will flow more smoothly, and fewer clashes will occur on a team where everyone has clear roles and knows what they're supposed to be doing.

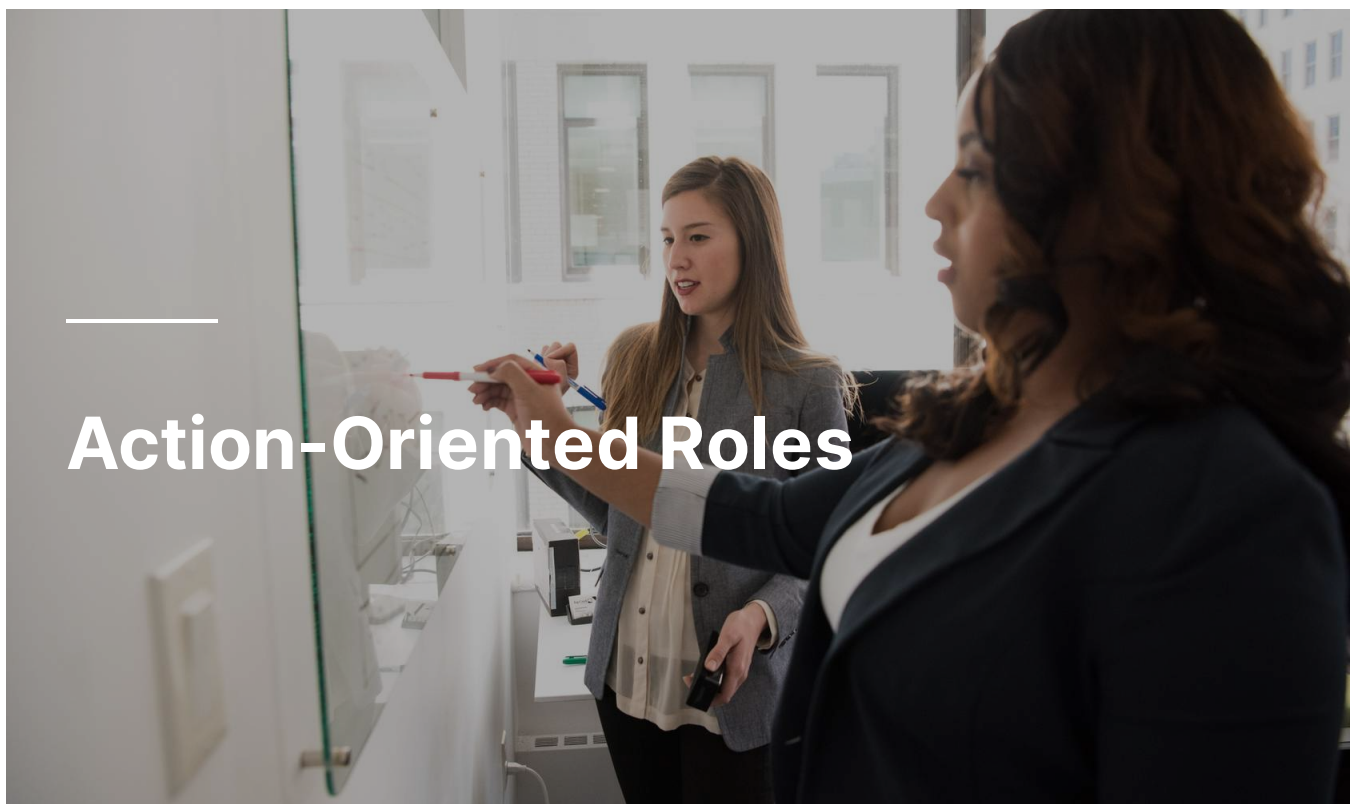


Consider how important it is to have clear team roles in sports. What if you had a team that only consisted of pitchers in baseball? Or, what if you lacked a goalie in soccer? Team roles are just as valuable in business settings as they are in sports. They help to ensure that everyone knows what they're doing, where they're supposed to be, and how they can best contribute to the team's success. For you, as a team manager, team roles can help you make

sure that all of your bases are covered, and that your team is prepared for any challenge thrown their way.

The 9 Belbin Team Roles

So, what team roles are you looking for? How can you identify them on your team? And what are the strengths and limitations of each role? While there are several different models that you can use to assess informal team roles, one of the most accessible and widely used models was developed by researcher Meredith Belbin. Below, you'll find a description of the nine Belbin Team Roles, which can be grouped into three categories: action-oriented, people-oriented, and thought-oriented.



The first category is action-oriented team roles, which include **shapers**, **implementers**, and **completer-finishers**. These roles contribute to the team by inspiring action or

performing the work that needs to be done. You count on them to complete tasks, set goals, or drive the team forward. Click on each role to learn more about it below:

Shapers —

Shapers serve to challenge and drive the team to achieve its goals. Shapers are typically high-energy, highly motivated, and headstrong individuals. A shaper's high standards and willingness to question norms often challenge their team to accomplish more. Obstacles don't scare shapers—instead, they're viewed as exciting challenges to tackle. The team relies on the shaper role to give them energy when the going gets tough, keep them focused when they're straying off course, combat complacency, and push their limits. Shapers are also natural leaders who inspire others to act.

- **Strengths:** Shapers are enthusiastic and dynamic leaders. They perform well under pressure and help to challenge their team to keep moving forward.
- **Limitations:** A shaper's attempt to challenge or rile others may instigate conflict. Also, their hyper-focus on getting things done may come across as aggressive or insensitive to others' feelings and needs.

Implementers —

Implementers are known as the people who get things done. They turn the team's ideas into practical steps and action plans—and then complete them. An implementer is typically disciplined, well-organised, and systematic in how they approach their work. They have an outstanding work ethic that the team can count on, and they rarely miss a deadline.

- **Strengths:** Practical, organised, and reliable. Implementers have a strong work ethic, and they consistently perform work to a high standard and on time.
- **Limitations:** Implementers may be inflexible to project changes or new ideas that they perceive as impractical or unrealistic.

Completer-Finishers —

The last action-oriented team role is the completer-finisher. Completer-finishers serve the role of “quality control” at the end of a project or task. They read the fine print. In other words, they’re known for reviewing work, correcting mistakes, and catching the small—but essential—details that the rest of the team may overlook. It’s not a surprise then that completer-finishers are often perfectionists.

- **Strengths:** Completer-finishers excel at reviewing others’ work or taking on tasks that require a high degree of accuracy. They’re detail-oriented, precise, and thorough.
- **Limitations:** Completer-finishers may be hesitant to trust or delegate work to others. They may also be so concerned with the details that they miss the big picture—or deadlines.



The next three roles fall under the people-oriented category. This includes **coordinators**, **team workers**, and **resource investigators**. While action-oriented roles focus on getting things done, people-oriented roles focus on fostering and developing the team's most important asset: its people. Their strengths revolve around coordinating, supporting, or forming relationships with others. Click on each role below to learn more about it:

Coordinators —

Coordinators manage the team's talent and work to promote collaboration and consensus. They're who you think of when you imagine team managers in the traditional sense. They're mature and collected individuals who naturally excel at bringing a team together to work toward shared goals. They do this by getting to know and understand the different individuals on the team, communicating goals and how individuals can contribute to them, and helping to solve conflicts. Coordinators are generally liked by the team and make great listeners.

- **Strengths:** Coordinators excel at creating consensus, delegating tasks, and bringing people together around shared goals. They're also great team managers and facilitators.
- **Limitations:** Some coordinators may take advantage of their power and delegate more than their fair share of the work to others.

Team Workers —

Team workers are all-purpose members who serve to support others on the team and keep the peace. What do you need help with? Even if it's outside their formal role, a team worker is always willing to jump in and do what they can to support the team's collective success. Besides being highly attuned to the team's needs, team workers are also highly attuned to potential conflicts between team members. They excel at defusing conflict and approaching others with sensitivity and diplomacy. Team workers offer a grounding presence for a team, and they're often well-liked by fellow team members. People respect them, and this can give them considerable influence on the team.

- **Strengths:** Team workers are helpful, diplomatic, and versatile. They care about collective goals and making sure that everyone feels supported. They are the glue that holds a team together.

- **Limitations:** Team workers might avoid confrontation or voicing unpopular opinions. They may also avoid making decisions for themselves.

Resource Investigators

Resource investigators are ideal for developing strategic relationships and gathering information, ideas, or resources for the team. They serve best as the face of the company. Resource investigators are often described as outgoing, charming, and social butterflies. They're natural communicators who can just as easily make new connections with others as they can persuade others. The team relies on its resource investigator to generate enthusiasm over new ideas, negotiate resources, and develop new contacts and partnerships.

- **Strengths:** Resource investigators make great representatives of the company. They are enthusiastic, affable, and persuasive.
- **Limitations:** Resource investigators are more motivated by social situations and exciting new opportunities than they are the details of day-to-day work. This can make them come across as flaky, or it can make it difficult for them to follow through on old projects.





The last category is thought-oriented team roles, which include **plants, specialists,** and **monitor-evaluators**. Thought-oriented roles deal with knowledge and ideas. You can rely on thought-oriented roles when you need to generate new ideas, evaluate multiple ideas, or tackle tasks that require more specialised knowledge or technical training. Click on each role below to expand it and learn more:

Plants —

Plants help the team by brainstorming new ideas or ways of doing things. Creative and inventive, plants are most likely to propel innovation, spearhead original concepts or suggestions, or find new ways to approach complex problems. That's why your team may turn to a plant when they're stuck. They offer something different and can think outside the box. While the entire team can contribute to brainstorming sessions, they often need the initial "spark" by a plant to gain momentum.

- **Strengths:** A plant's greatest value is their original way of thinking and ability to generate ideas. They help to drive innovation and creative problem-solving on your team.
- **Limitations:** However, a plant's ideas may not always be practical or realistic in implementation. A plant's way of thinking may also be disruptive to highly structured environments. Also, plants may not respond well to criticism or parameters on their ideas.

Monitor-Evaluators —

Next, monitor-evaluators are best at analysing and evaluating the ideas and suggestions posed by other team members (such as plants). They excel at weighing the pros and cons or strengths and weaknesses of multiple options. They're critical thinkers who approach problems using logic rather than emotion, and they always do their due diligence to consider all options from various angles. The team relies on monitor-evaluators to make objective decisions and to determine the feasibility of an idea and develop it further.

- **Strengths:** Monitor-evaluators excel at critical and analytical thinking. They make great decision-makers and help the team to evaluate their options objectively.
- **Limitations:** A monitor-evaluator might be overly critical when evaluating others' ideas. They may also take excess time to deliberate and thus, slow down progress.

Specialists —

Finally, the last team role is the specialist. Specialists offer the team specialised knowledge or technical expertise. The team relies on a specialist's in-depth knowledge of a particular subject for their success. The specialist may advise the team on key decisions relating to their subject area, or they may perform specialised functions within the group. Specialists typically pride themselves as an expert in this area, and they love to continue to learn and hone their skills. They tend to be highly professional and single-minded.

- **Strengths:** Specialists offer the most value to the team by providing specialised knowledge and skills. They are also eager to share their knowledge with others.
- **Limitations:** Because specialists have such a narrow focus, they may struggle to see or apply their knowledge to broader team goals. They also may feel isolated from the rest of the team.

How Do I Know Who Serves What Roles?

You may be able to guess what role each team member serves naturally. But your assumptions may not align with how each team member perceives themselves. Go to the source, and ask your team about their preferred roles directly. Openly discuss what different team roles are and how they add value to the team to increase role clarity and manage team expectations. Also, share the strengths and limitations of each role to help your team better understand each other and to collaborate more effectively.



Check your understanding of the nine most common team roles by completing the following matching activity.

Match each description with the correct team role.

≡ Supports others and keeps the peace.

Team Worker

≡ Forms strategic relationships and gathers resources for the team.

Resource Investigator

≡ Offers specialised knowledge and skills.

Specialist

≡ Gets work done and turns ideas into practical steps.

Implementer

≡ Evaluates and analyses the ideas of others.

Monitor-Evaluator

≡ Manages talent and promotes collaboration and consensus.

Coordinator

≡ Corrects mistakes and ensures that important details aren't overlooked.

Completer-Finisher

SUBMIT



Complete the content above before moving on.

How Can I Use Team Roles to Build More Effective Teams?

Finally, use your understanding of team roles to build more effective teams. Start by getting to know what roles your current team members serve. Then ask yourself the following questions:

☐

How well am I using each team member's strengths?

☐

Are any roles missing?

☐

Are multiple people fulfilling the same roles? If so, is it creating tension?

From there, you can decide how best to balance the team based on what you learn. For example, you might choose to reorganise your team to create more balance or to better align people's strengths and interests with their informal team roles. Or, you might work with individual team members to develop new skills and grow into new roles. Don't forget to think about your recruiting practices, too. How might you incorporate team roles in your recruiting efforts to build a more well-rounded team?

Summary

Team roles can be formal or informal. Formal roles describe an individual's job title or assigned position, whereas informal roles are more difficult to pinpoint. Team members

naturally fulfil informal roles based on their patterns of behaviour and interpersonal strengths. The Belbin theory of team roles cites nine common team roles:

- **Shapers**, who challenge and drive the team to reach its goals
- **Implementers**, who turn ideas into action plans and get things done overall
- **Completer-Finishers**, who edit, review, or polish work for last details or to correct mistakes
- **Coordinators**, who manage the team's talent and promote collaboration and consensus
- **Team Workers**, who support the rest of the team with what they need
- **Resource Investigators**, who form strategic relationships and secure team resources
- **Plants**, who brainstorm new ideas and creative solutions
- **Monitor-Evaluators**, who evaluate ideas and analyse options to make informed team decisions
- **Specialists**, who provide specialized skills or knowledge that the team needs

Discuss the different roles with your team as well as which roles they identify for themselves or that they recognise in others. Understanding and clarifying informal team roles are important steps toward creating a more resilient and well-rounded team.



Disclaimer! Remember that team roles describe patterns of behaviours and interpersonal styles. While people tend to adopt a particular team role, that role can change depending on the situation and the other team members. Use these roles as a flexible guide—not to conform others to rigid boxes.



Complete the content above before moving on.

Understanding and Leveraging Different Work Styles



Imagine This ...

You're holding a team meeting, and nothing's going right. Quinn is following a detailed agenda, but Harper says she feels stifled: *"Let's be spontaneous for once!"* Andy attempts to resolve the conflict: *"Could we compromise?"* But Skyler is tired of wasting time: *"Let's just get this done!"*

The above scenario—while frustrating—is common. It happens when people with different personalities and work styles clash. So, rather than coming together, groups struggle and performance suffers.

To overcome the problem, you must lead by example—tapping into and leveraging the various work styles on your team. And, in this lesson, you'll find out how that's done. First, you'll learn about four work styles and how to determine where people align. Then, you'll learn how to leverage your team's cognitive diversity and give each person what they need to excel.





Understanding and Leveraging Different Work Styles

Watch the video to learn about four common work styles-including how to leverage your team's cognitive diversity by supporting each style.

VIEW ON YOUTUBE >

4 Common Work Styles

A work style is how someone prefers to get things done. It covers a person's approach to problem-solving, decision-making, collaboration, and even stress.

Expand the rows below to learn about four, readily observable work styles:

Visualisers —

Visualisers are known for their **energy**, **enthusiasm**, and **outgoing** personalities. They're creative risk-takers who are highly adaptable.

You can count on Visualisers to always chase *“the next big thing,”* which makes them spontaneous, restless, and prone to pivot quickly. Visualisers use their imagination to brainstorm bold new ideas and unique approaches.

Overall, Visualisers value endless possibilities, but they tend to rely on gut feelings over logic—which can make them impatient. They dislike constraints, and they tend to get bored by details during a project's implementation stage.

What they add to a team: creativity, imagination, and spontaneity.

Prioritisers —

Prioritisers wear three primary hats: They're **competitive**, **logical**, and **direct**. First, they're highly ambitious, and they value winning. Extremely goal-oriented, few things distract them. They're curious risk-takers who work fast and stay focused. Also, enjoying a challenge, Prioritisers won't shy away from a debate.

Analytical decision-makers, Prioritisers tackle problems rationally and with data—looking at facts rather than feelings. That gives them a “call it like it is” approach to work, which makes them tough, blunt, and resolute.

What they add to a team: ambition, discipline, and candour.

Arrangers —

Above all else, Arrangers are **relationship-oriented**. They value human connection and inclusivity, which makes them non-confrontational team players. You can count on an Arranger to be optimistic, trusting, and attentive.

Arrangers score high on the empathy scale because they are attuned to others. They're great at gauging a group's emotions and taking a diplomatic approach to problems. Arrangers value listening, and that allows them to see multiple sides of a situation, create consensus, and smooth over negativity.

What they add to a team: trust, empathy, and consensus.

Planners —

Planners are **detail-oriented**, **methodical**, and **pragmatic**. For a Planner, everything must be *“just so.”* To feel at ease, they need stability and order, which can make them hesitant to embrace risks and take on new challenges.

Planners are reserved and need time to process information—preferring to look before they leap. Before making a decision, they like to learn from the past and gather facts. Overall, they’re thoughtful individuals who are deliberate, controlled, and organised.

What they add to a team: order, precision, and stability.



Determining a Person's Work Style

After reading through the above descriptions, you likely already have an idea of which of your team members fits where. That's because each work style is based on visible traits—no personality test needed. All the mentioned qualities are easily seen or inferred.

So, to determine a person's work style, use clues from your interactions. Consider the following questions:

- In a business setting, what is ___ inclined to do?
- What has ___ done in the past?
- How would ___ prefer to approach a task?

Based on how you answered those questions, assign your team members one or two dominant work styles.

Leveraging Your Team's Diversity

Now that you understand your team's unique composition, the final step is to use that knowledge to your advantage and leverage your team's diversity.

So, how's that done? As a leader, you'll need to support all work styles—not just your own. To get started, expand the rows below to learn about three best practices.

Embrace Differences

Often, managers get in the habit of following a “*My way is the only way*” approach. For example, a Visualiser may expect all employees to be spontaneous, but that path can be stress-inducing for Planners.

By forcing others to conform to an ill-fitting mould, all you’ll do is stifle potential. That’s because no work style is better or worse than another—they’re just different. Where some excel, others struggle. And where some struggle, others excel.

To tap into your team’s potential, don’t force people to follow any one style. Instead, embrace what makes people different. A team working with its strengths will always be more successful than one fighting against its weaknesses. Plus, when those various work styles come together, you’ll build a balanced team that’s creative, logical, connected, and detailed.

Adjust Your Communication

The most successful managers are skilled at moving beyond their work style and considering what others need. So, think about how you can adjust your communication to match the preferences of those around you.

Here are tips for each style:

- **Visualisers.** Adopt a big-picture approach and add emotions when sharing facts. Try to connect with Visualisers on a personal, friendly level.
- **Prioritisers.** Keep your messages logical, brief, and to the point. Also, don’t criticise yourself. Prioritisers prefer confident communicators.
- **Arrangers.** Arrangers prefer those who are authentic and friendly. So, be yourself when communicating and try to balance facts with emotions.
- **Planners.** For Planners, the more details you can offer, the better. Be precise and patient with questions, as that can help minimise feelings of uncertainty.

Offer Work Options

Don’t require everyone to approach their job in the same way. Instead, offer them work options. For example, if you have an upcoming team meeting, consider how Planners may need time to prepare, while Visualisers will want spontaneity. To appeal to both, you might distribute an

optional pre-read beforehand or structure the meeting to include a 15-minute “brainstorming session” at the end.

Use what you know about each style and ask yourself: *“Is everyone on my team getting what they need to succeed?”* Make sure you can answer “yes” to the following questions:

- Do **Visualisers** have the freedom to brainstorm and explore new ideas?
- Do **Prioritisers** have opportunities to work quickly without distractions?
- Do **Arrangers** have opportunities to collaborate and help others?
- Do **Planners** have time to consider details and prepare before making decisions?

Ultimately, you must build an environment that elevates everyone. Accept and support the needs of each work style, and your team will perform better as a whole.





Check your understanding by completing the matching activity below...

Based on what you've learned, match each description on the left with its corresponding work style on the right.



Enthusiastic, creative, and spontaneous

Visualisers



Detail-oriented, methodical, and precise

Planners



Logical, disciplined, and competitive

Prioritisers



Inclusive, empathetic, and diplomatic

Arrangers

SUBMIT

Summary

Work style is how a person prefers to get things done. Most often, people will associate with one or two of the following styles:

1

Visualisers. Creative types who value imagination, big ideas, and spontaneity.

2

Prioritisers. Analytical decision-makers who are competitive, logical, and candid.

3

Arrangers. Relationship-oriented individuals who value human connection, empathy, and diplomacy.

4

Planners. Methodical and detail-oriented, they are deliberate, thoughtful, and organised.

The four work styles are based on readily observable traits. So, use what you know about your team to assign each person one or two dominant styles. Then, leverage that cognitive diversity by **embracing what makes people different, adjusting your communication** to the individual, and **offering different work options** to different

styles. Follow those steps, and you'll play a pivotal role in helping your team accomplish more, together.



Adopt a custom approach. People are complicated, and some team members may border between styles. For example, maybe there's a Prioritiser on your team who also values relationships. In these cases, adopt a custom approach—mixing strategies so that you can appeal to the individual behind the style.



Complete the content above before moving on.

Tips for Improving Team Dynamics



Introduction

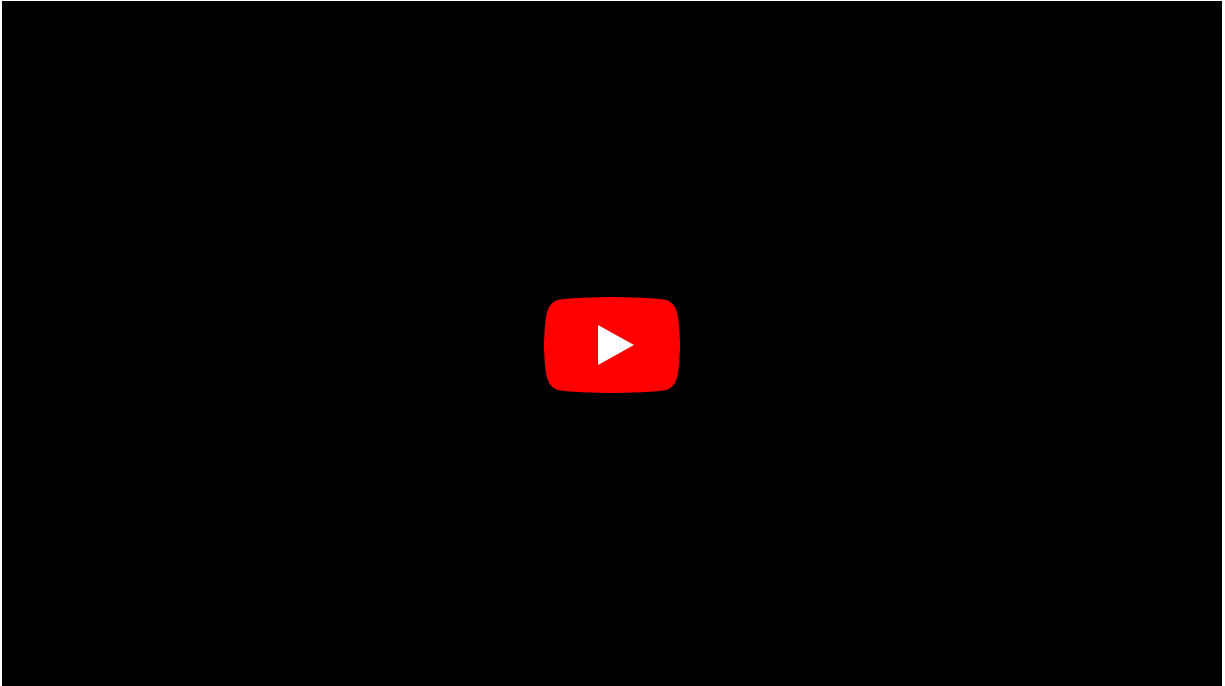
Have you ever managed a team where people regularly butted heads or complained about one another? What about a group where members didn't pull their own weight or defaulted to the phrase *"same here"* whenever they were asked a question?

How did those teams perform? Did they meet their deadlines? Were they creative?

If experience teaches us anything, it's that for a team to work, its members must work together. Success—on an individual and company-wide level—depends on positive team dynamics. But as you've also likely experienced, improving team dynamics is often easier said than done.

So, how can you, as a manager, enhance team cohesion? In this lesson, you'll learn about the impact of team dynamics on performance, why teams experience negative dynamics, and how to overcome those hurdles by following five tips.

 **YOUTUBE**



Tips for Improving Team Dynamics

In this video, you'll learn about the impact of team dynamics on performance, why teams experience negative dynamics, and how to improve team dynamics by following five tips.

VIEW ON YOUTUBE >

The Impact of Team Dynamics on Performance

Let's get started by defining the impact of team dynamics on performance. As a refresher, team dynamics refer to how various personalities, work styles, and behaviours interact. These interactions can be **positive** when people work well together, or they can be **negative** when people clash.

Flip the cards below to learn more:

Positive Team Dynamics

When dynamics are **positive**, team members trust and support one another—working together to arrive at collective decisions.

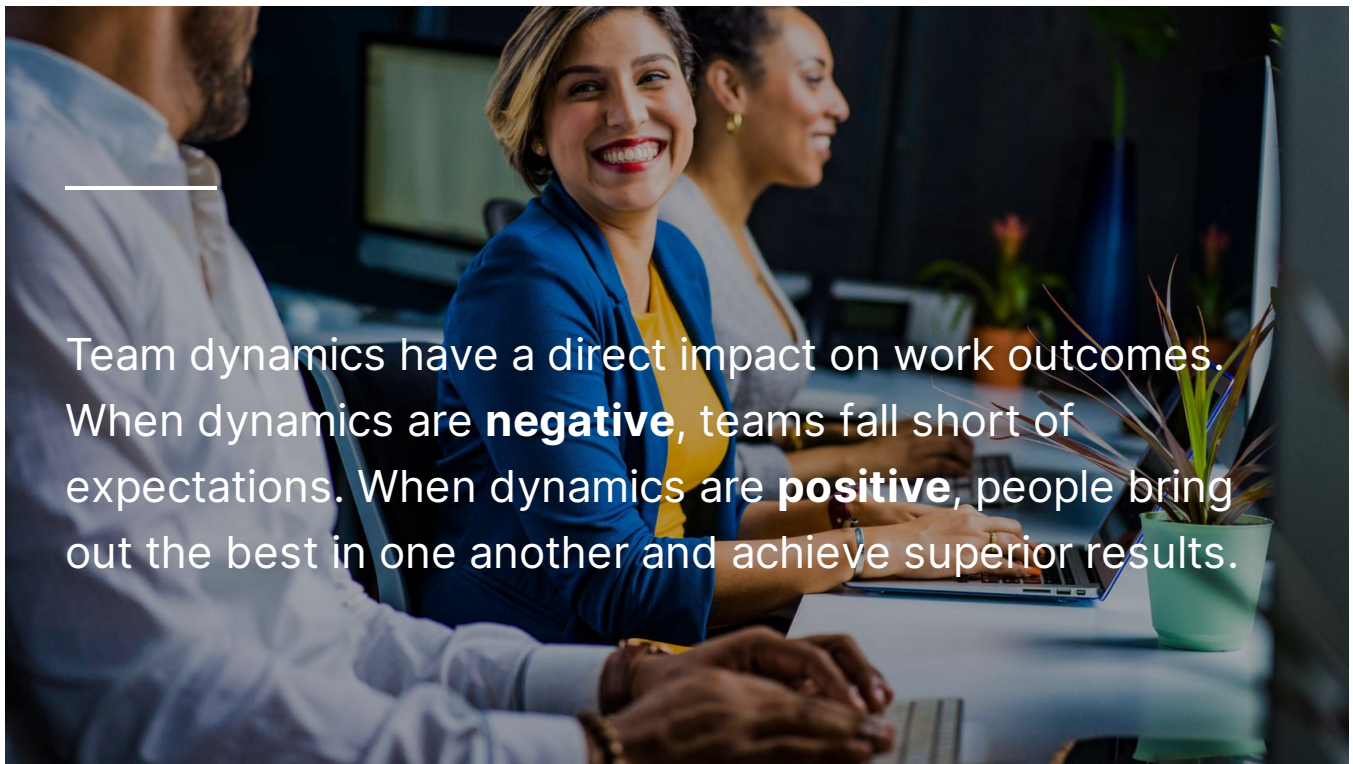
These teams are respectful of each other and leverage one another's strengths to

Negative Team Dynamics

When dynamics are **negative**, team members feel disconnected and at odds with one another.

These teams experience uneven power dynamics, unproductive conflicts, and disruptive behaviours—the impact of which **prevents**





Team dynamics have a direct impact on work outcomes. When dynamics are **negative**, teams fall short of expectations. When dynamics are **positive**, people bring out the best in one another and achieve superior results.

Causes of Negative Team Dynamics

For a team to be successful, its individual members must work together—contributing at equal levels and supporting one another. But often, that doesn't happen.

So, why is that? Why do some teams face negative dynamics? Several factors may be at play, but for the majority of workplaces, the most common culprits are the following:

1

Blocking behaviours. Blocking occurs when a person stops the flow of information. It can happen when a team member is overly aggressive, critical, or dominant. It can also occur when a person withdraws from discussions or adds humour at inappropriate times.

2

Weak leadership. When leadership is weak, a dominant or bullying member often fills that void—regardless of whether or not that person is qualified. As a result, not only does the group lack direction, but they're also prone to focusing on the wrong

priorities and building a hostile culture with in-fighting and conflict.

3

Overbearing leadership. If a team has an overbearing leader, group members may fear speaking up. In these situations, team members often lack the courage to voice their thoughts—so, they defer to authority. The results are stifled ideas, creativity, and collaboration.

4

Groupthink. Groupthink happens when a team defaults to a single way of thinking. In these cases, the group places the desire for consensus above all else. So, rather than promoting free expression and exploring alternative options, everyone simply agrees—even if the idea is wrong.

5

Free-riding. In the case of free-riding, some team members may take a back seat while others do all the work. In these situations, a person might work hard individually, but limit their input in group settings. The result is an unfair dynamic where people show up but don't contribute.

6

Evaluation apprehension. Fearful of being judged, team members may choose silence—keeping their thoughts, ideas, and feelings to themselves. As a result, those who are more vocal take control, and those who are more reserved feel stifled.



While separate, the above causes are interrelated.

They're all the result of **poor communication**. And they lead to unequal treatment, stifled expression, and an uneven distribution of power.



Check your understanding by completing the matching activity below...

You're managing a team that's falling short of expectations. To get to the root of the problem, you've made a list of all issues. Can you match each problem with its correct cause?



The group lacks direction and focuses on the wrong priorities.

Weak leadership



People always agree—even when ideas are wrong.

Groupthink



Many people are prone to keeping their ideas to themselves.

Evaluation apprehension



Team members are overly aggressive during conversations.

Blocking behaviours



Some people let others do their work for them.

Free-riding

SUBMIT



Complete the content above before moving on.

Strategies for Improving Team Dynamics

So, how can you, as a leader, improve team dynamics? The solution lies in creating an environment that supports each person's individuality and brings people together.

Expand the rows below to learn five strategies.

Know Your Team —

To help employees work together, you must first understand who needs what. Everyone has different skills, motivators, and traits—and that unique makeup influences how a person works

and interacts with others. For example, while some team members may prefer writing down their thoughts and thinking independently, others may prefer brainstorming aloud in groups.

So, get to know your team. What does each person need from the group, and how can you help? When following this step, observe your employees—paying close attention to how they interact with others. Also, dig a little deeper by holding one-on-one meetings. During these talks, consider some of the following questions:

- What tasks are you most comfortable working on?
- What role do you prefer to take on in a group?
- Are you comfortable speaking up during meetings? Why or why not?
- Are there some personalities you struggle to work with?

Define Roles and Expectations —

Adopting a free-for-all mentality is a surefire way to create poor team dynamics. In these situations, employees are prone to stepping on one another's toes, free-riding, and leaving gaps in their work. For a team to work well together, everyone must understand where their responsibilities begin and end.

So, take the time to define roles and communicate expectations. Consider the end goal, and then, ask yourself:

- What tasks must we complete along the way?
- What roles are required for those tasks?
- Who's best suited for each role?

When following this strategy, use what you know about your employees to designate responsibilities—keeping in mind that people should play to their strengths, not their weaknesses. Not only will that improve your team's overall results, but it also will encourage employees to feel accountable for their work.

Create a Culture of Open Communication —

For a team to work together, its members must talk to one another. We see this both in sports and in the workplace. Consider how quarterbacks yell out plays, basketball players say *"I'm open!"* and coaches call *"Time out!"* to reassess strategies.

Alone, actions aren't enough. To work together, team members need open and transparent communication. And, as a leader, you can help make that happen. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Uphold a motto of *"no idea is a bad idea"* to encourage free-flowing collaboration.
- Give every person a chance to speak up during meetings by going around the room and sharing wins and challenges.
- Encourage people to speak through whatever mediums they find most comfortable—whether that's through email, instant message, or face-to-face.
- During brainstorming sessions, challenge every employee to present an original idea.

Overall, your goal is to create an environment where people feel like they can voice their thoughts, even if those thoughts are unpopular.

Encourage Social Bonding —

Positive team dynamics are built on trust, respect, and support. Of course, those three qualities take time to develop. So, to speed up the process, encourage social bonding through team-building exercises.

Team-building exercises are valuable because they help people form deeper connections and break down barriers. Consider how people with different work styles are more apt to be patient, understanding, and supportive of one another if they get along on a social level.

To encourage social bonding, schedule events that encourage people to get together in unique and dynamic environments. For example, you might arrange an occasional Friday happy hour, team volunteer activity, bowling event, laser tag session, or workshop.

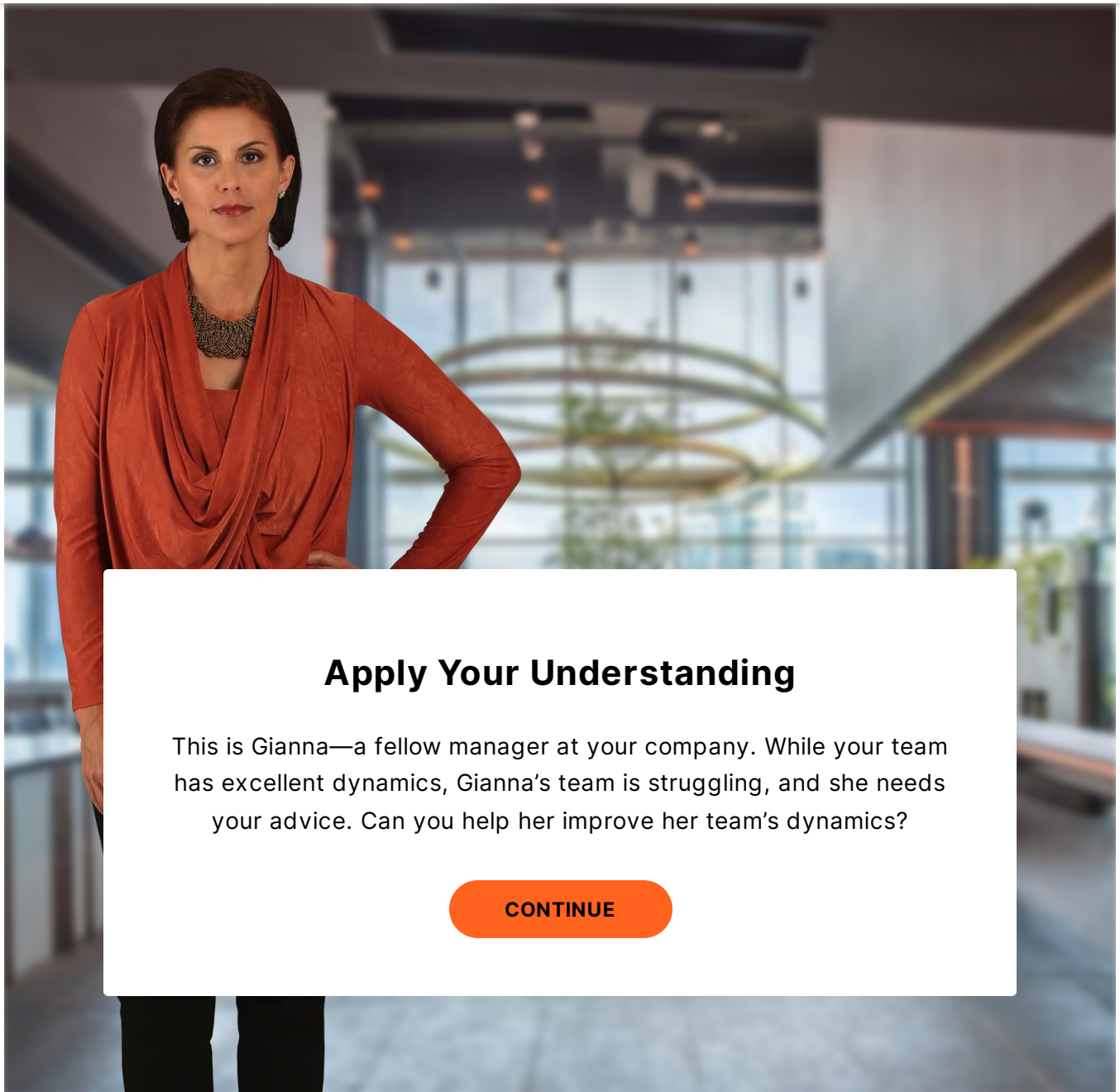
Reinforce and Redirect Behaviour —

Improving team dynamics is an ongoing activity. So, at the cornerstone of success is ongoing evaluation and—if necessary—redirection.

First, if you observe positive behaviours—such as respectful conversations, collective brainstorming, knowledge-sharing, and peer-to-peer support—reinforce that performance. Offer positive feedback and encourage your team to keep up the great work.

Second, if you notice warning signs—such as blocking behaviours, groupthink, or free-riding—redirect that performance. Don't assume employees will work out problems for themselves. Don't wait for issues to escalate. Instead, arrange a feedback meeting to describe the behaviour, offer suggestions, and agree on the next steps.

By reinforcing positive behaviour and staying ahead of conflicts, you can keep your team on track and running smoothly.



Apply Your Understanding

This is Gianna—a fellow manager at your company. While your team has excellent dynamics, Gianna’s team is struggling, and she needs your advice. Can you help her improve her team’s dynamics?

CONTINUE

Scene 1 Slide 1

Continue → Next Slide



A few of my team members are being overly aggressive and critical of others. I'm afraid this behaviour is negatively impacting my team's dynamics. What should I do?

1

If you interfere, you'll just add to the aggression. No one likes an overbearing manager. Give your team some space. They'll sort it out.

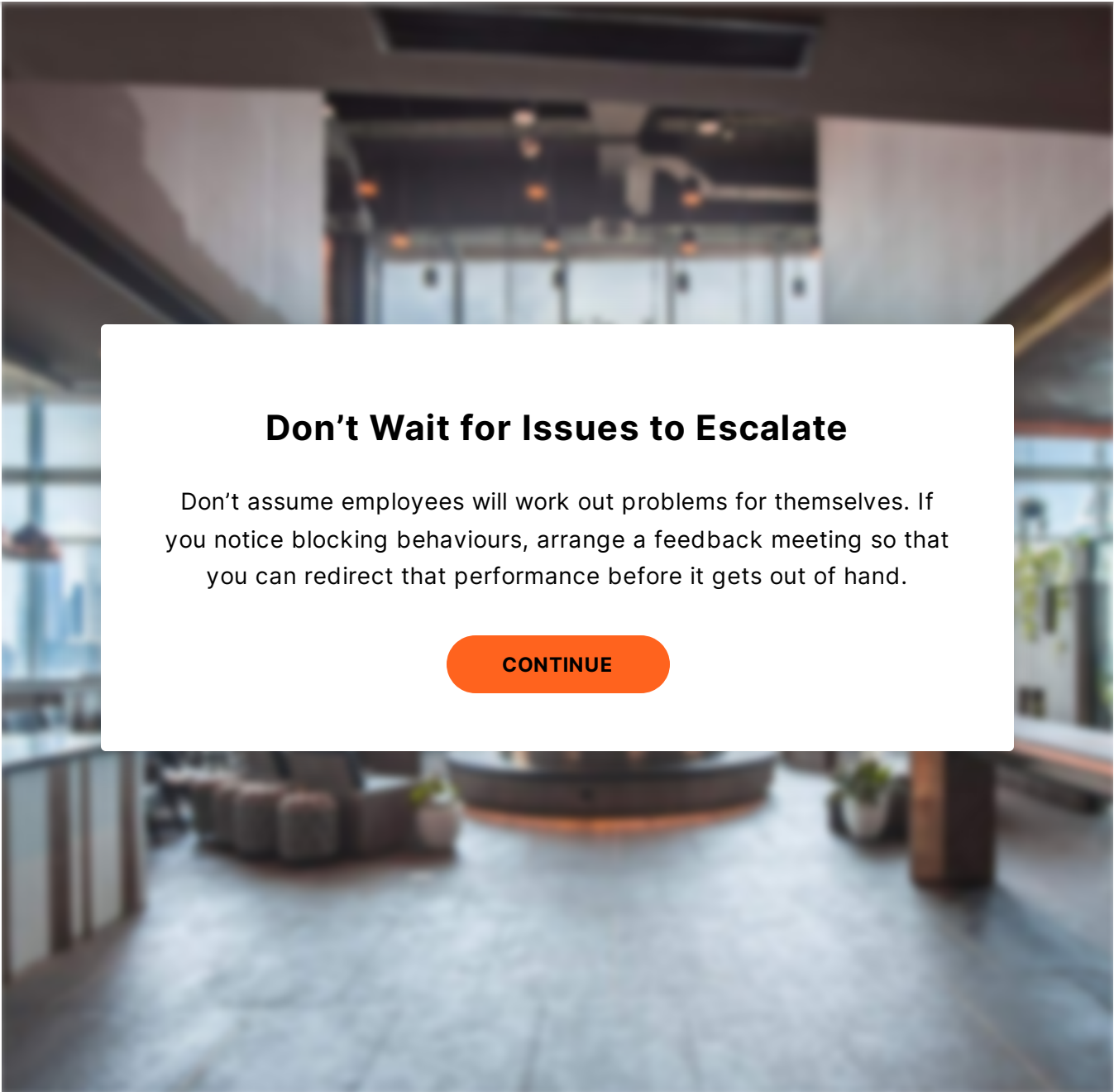
2

You need to interfere and redirect this poor performance. I suggest arranging a feedback meeting with those overly aggressive team members.

Scene 1 Slide 2

0 → Next Slide

1 → Next Slide



Don't Wait for Issues to Escalate

Don't assume employees will work out problems for themselves. If you notice blocking behaviours, arrange a feedback meeting so that you can redirect that performance before it gets out of hand.

CONTINUE

Scene 1 Slide 3

Continue → Next Slide



Things are much better now, but it seems like my team is getting along almost *too* well. They agree on everything, and no one has any original ideas.

1

That's a good thing! You want your team to get along. Teams with a strong desire for consensus often perform best.

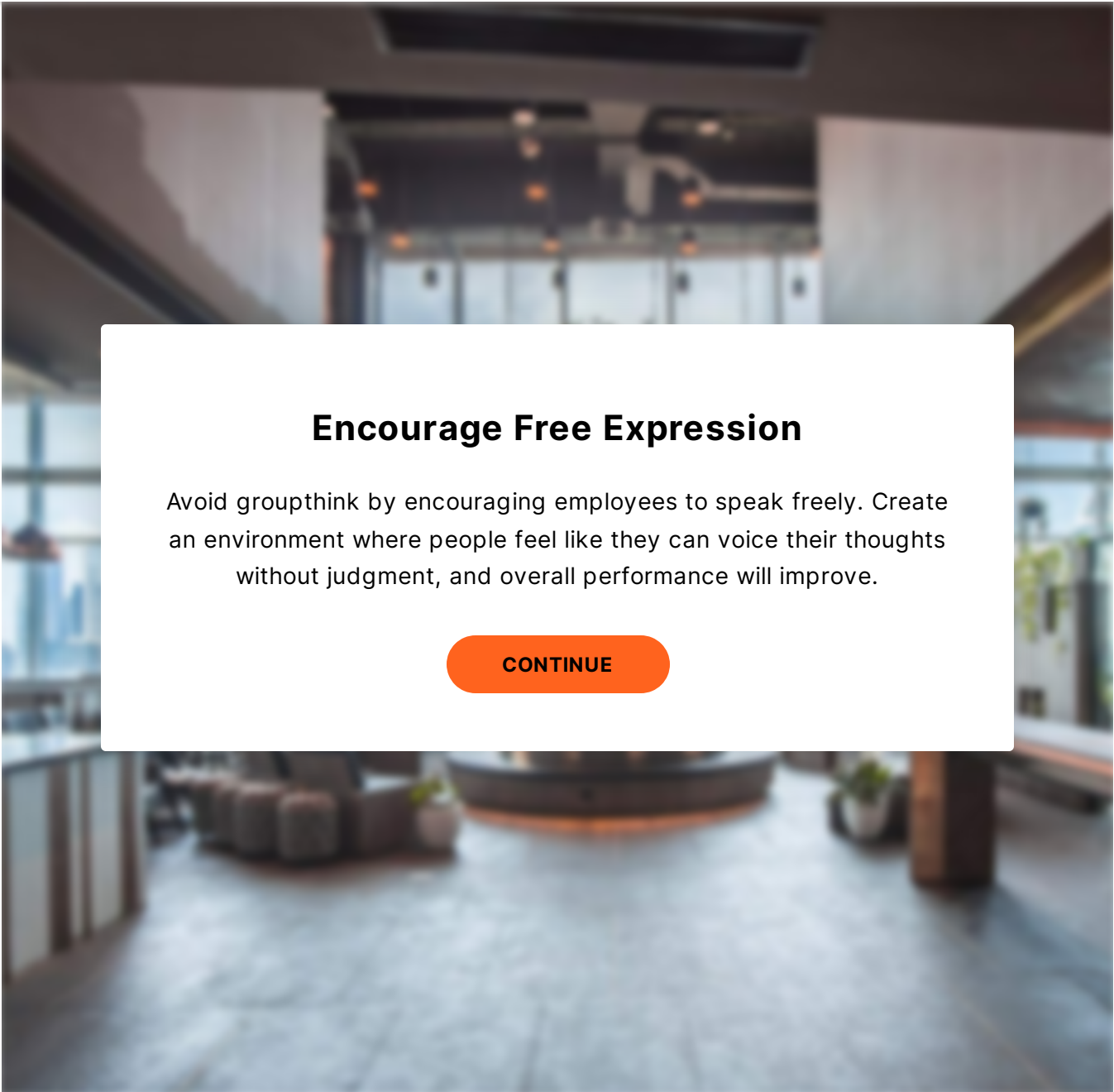
2

Your team needs help speaking up. At your next meeting, try asking each employee to share an original idea—reminding them that no idea is a bad idea.

Scene 1 Slide 4

0 → Next Slide

1 → Next Slide



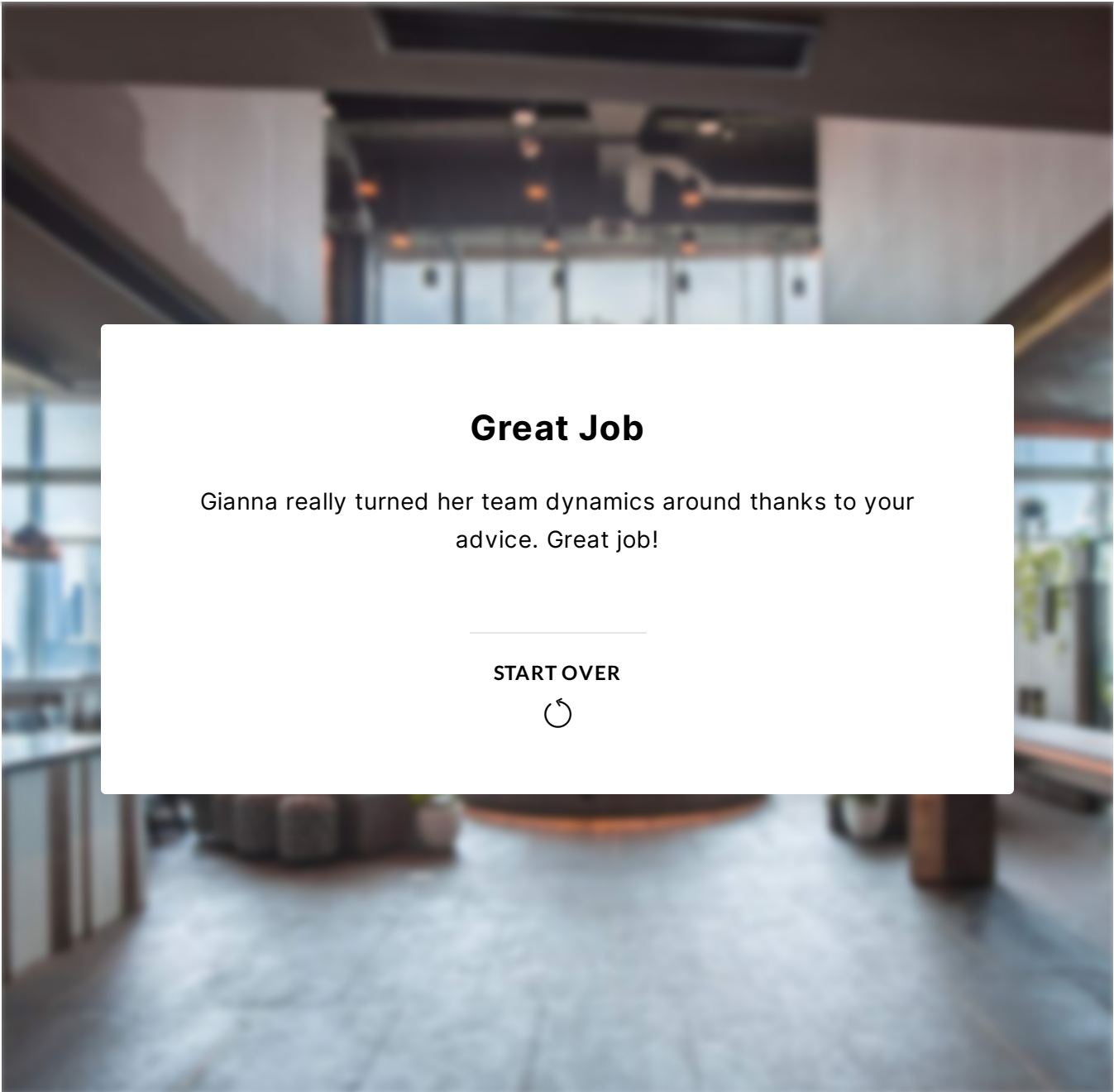
Encourage Free Expression

Avoid groupthink by encouraging employees to speak freely. Create an environment where people feel like they can voice their thoughts without judgment, and overall performance will improve.

CONTINUE

Scene 1 Slide 5

Continue → Next Slide

A blurred background image of a modern office interior with large windows, indoor plants, and contemporary furniture.

Great Job

Gianna really turned her team dynamics around thanks to your advice. Great job!

START OVER



Scene 1 Slide 6

Continue → End of Scenario

Summary

Team dynamics are influenced by how people in a group interact with one another. When dynamics are positive, people work together to enhance their performance. When dynamics are negative, team members clash and fall short of expectations.

Problems with team dynamics are caused by several issues. Most often, the culprits include blocking behaviours, weak or overbearing leadership, groupthink, free-riding, and evaluation apprehension.

To improve dynamics, **get to know your team**. Figure out how each person works, what they need, and how you can help. Then, create accountability by **defining roles and expectations**. Also, promote the free flow of ideas by **creating a culture of open communication** and **encouraging social bonding** through team-building exercises. Finally, continue to observe your employees so that you can **reinforce and redirect behaviour** when needed.

By following these strategies, you can continue to improve team dynamics—creating a productive team that works together to achieve more than any one person could.



Be patient: Improvement takes time. Team dynamics are about relationships, and, like all relationships, they take time to develop. So, be patient. If your team is struggling, don't give up. Continue following the five strategies covered in this lesson and remember that improvement takes time.



Complete the content above before moving on.

Managing the Multigenerational Workplace



Introduction

Take a look around your office. Who are your colleagues? Do you notice any significant age gaps? If you do, you're in the majority. As you might have already spotted, something unusual is happening in today's workplace. For the first time in history, older generations are staying professionally active for longer. And as younger generations continue to pour in, **the workforce is now the most age-diverse it's ever been.**

While having team members with a variety of perspectives and life experiences is valuable, age diversity in the workplace also comes with challenges. Each generation is unique, and developing tactics that appeal to all is no small feat. So, how can you take advantage of the benefits and curb the setbacks?

In this lesson, you'll learn how to manage a multigenerational workplace. First, you'll discover what makes each generation different and what problems arise from those differences. Then, you'll find out how to overcome the challenges and bridge the generation gap.





Managing the Multigenerational Workplace

Watch this video to learn about five generations in the workplace. Then, learn what problems arise from that age diversity and how to overcome them.

[VIEW ON YOUTUBE >](#)

Breaking Down the Generations

In today's workforce, it's not unusual to have as many as five generations working side-by-side. So, what are those generations? Here's a breakdown of each, separated by their generally accepted birth ranges:

1922-1945

Traditionalists

Also known as the Silent Generation, traditionalists make up a small, but no less significant, portion of the modern workforce. Though many are retired, others continue to hold jobs as executives, advisers, or part-time employees.

This age group comes from classic, nuclear families: two parents with a stay-at-home mom. They were directly impacted by the Second World War and are known for their **frugality**, **pride**, **caution**, and **loyalty**. While every individual is unique, traditionalists tend to conduct themselves **formally** and hold a deep **respect for authority**.

1946-1964

Baby Boomers

Baby boomers were born in an era of political freedom and education reform. They were also the first generation to have women and minorities enter the workplace in large numbers.

Given their substantial presence, baby boomers had to compete with one another to stand out—resulting in a **strong work ethic**, **ambitious** spirit, and **goal-oriented** mentality. Without the technology to work remotely, this generation often spent long hours away from their families. As a result, they tend to be less supportive of work-from-home environments.

Baby boomers are **hardworking**, **focused**, and **competitive**, and—while some have already retired—others continue to maintain a significant stronghold in today's workplace.

1965-1980

Generation X

Wedged between more populous baby boomers and millennials, Generation X is often dubbed the “*middle child*” or “*ignored generation*.” To make an impact, members of this generation had to carve their own path, which resulted in their characteristic **entrepreneurial** drive.

With two working parents, many Gen Xers grew up taking care of themselves and relying on technology like video games and personal computers to stay entertained. As a result, they tend to **appreciate new tech** and are known for being **independent**, **self-reliant**, and valuing a **work-life balance**.

At the height of their careers, Gen Xers are currently—if not already—moving up the corporate ladder and defining today's leaders.

1981-1996

Millennials

Also referred to as Generation Y, millennials are the largest generation in the workplace. Millennial children were raised in diverse families and received more attention and coaching than prior groups. As a result, millennials are **social**, **tolerant**, and have a reputation for needing **frequent feedback** on their performance.

As they were born in a time of rapidly advancing technology, many millennials don't remember life before the internet. That makes them **tech-savvy** digital natives who aim for **efficiency** and ease. Millennials prioritise **flexibility**, **freedom**, and value **work-life** balance. They're also committed to working smarter, not harder, which makes them skilled **multitaskers**.

1997-2015

Generation Z

Sharing traits from each of the prior generations, Gen Z is just beginning to enter the workforce—and they're being labelled as the most diverse and inclusive generation in

history.

Members of this generation grew up in a fully wireless world. They had unlimited access to advancing tech and social platforms, which gave them an **entrepreneurial** drive and made them **social, creative, and tech-savvy**.

Expecting immediacy, people in Generation Z are skilled **multitaskers**—though they're prone to having **short attention spans**. And, growing up after the Great Recession, members of this group tend to share some of the same **frugal** and **cautious** characteristics of traditionalists.

Growing up in dramatically different times, each generation is shaped and moulded by unique historical events. And those moments have made a lasting impact—defining the habits, views, and tendencies of a group.

Challenges of Generational Diversity

While people are individuals first, the circumstances of someone's upbringing will shape how they act and relate to others. So, having five generations in the workplace is bound to cause challenges. For many organisations, the following setbacks are most prominent:

1

Communication gaps. Each generation grew up sending and receiving information differently, and that has led to distinct communication preferences. In the workplace, those preferences can lead to misconnections—or lack of communication altogether.

2

Interpersonal issues. With decades between them, different generations may have trouble relating to one another. For example, a traditionalist may not understand a Gen Zer's values. Or a baby boomer may not give a millennial the feedback they crave. As a result, people may struggle to unite and form authentic bonds.

3

Divided work preferences. Every generation has its way of doing things. For example, a Gen X employee may want to work independently, while a millennial or Gen Z employee may prefer working with others. Overall, those clashing styles can make it difficult for employees to get along.

4

Stereotyping and bias. With lack of understanding comes stereotypes and biases. A Gen Xer may hold the bias that: *"Millennials are too needy!"* Or a baby boomer may roll their eyes at a Gen Zer who always has their phone. People are prone to generalising about one another, and these generalisations can lead to unproductive animosity.

Understanding the above challenges is the first step to overcoming them. And, with the right strategy, you can flip the script—turning setbacks into opportunities.

Bridging the Generation Gap

So, what does it take to bridge the generation gap? Expand the rows below to learn about four tactics you can follow as a manager:

Adopt Various Communication Styles —

Because each generation has its own communication preferences, the best strategy is a flexible one. So, give your team access to various communication mediums, including face-to-face, phone, email, instant messaging, and social apps.

Also, when communicating with others, tailor your delivery method. Here's an overview of what's typical for each generation:

- **Traditionalists:** Prefer in-person and phone communication
- **Baby boomers:** Use technology, but also prefer in-person and phone conversations
- **Generation X:** Lean toward email
- **Millennials.** Favour real-time technology, like text and instant message
- **Generation Z:** Also prefer text and instant message

Tip: Because the above list contains generalisations, consider distributing a feedback form to employees, asking them to write down their preferred communication methods. That will give you the most accurate understanding of what each person needs.

Offer Work Options —

Different generations have different work preferences. So, rather than following a uniform *“this is how we do things”* approach, implement some flexibility. Build stable systems but give employees options for how to use them. Consider the following:

- **Office space.** Include both private and open spaces so that millennials and Gen Zers can collaborate, while members of Generation X can work independently.
- **Remote opportunities.** Appeal to younger generations by allowing your team to work remotely a few days a week.
- **Schedules.** Create standardised hours but allow employees to choose their start and end times.

Overall, it's the end result that matters, not how your employees get there. Help your team members work how they work best, and they'll deliver better results.

Encourage Cross-Generational Connections —

As a manager, your goal is to help team members move past the labels and see one another as people. To help make that happen, encourage team members to interact and get to know one another. Here are two strategies you can follow:

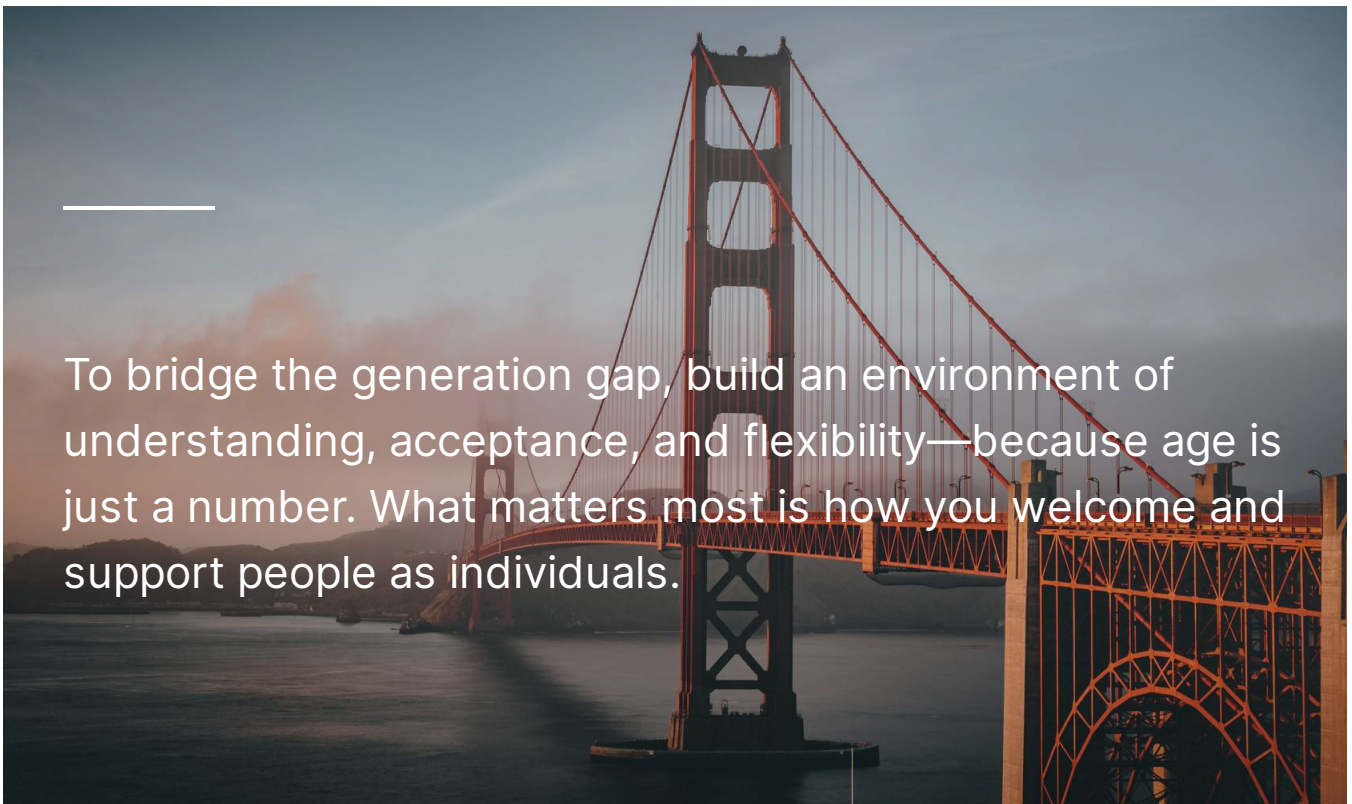
1. **Age-diverse teams.** Promote cross-generational connections with age-diverse teams. Encourage employees to work together and collaborate. As a bonus, these teams will also help you to leverage the unique strengths of each generation.
2. **Reciprocal mentoring.** Consider starting a mentoring program that pairs older, more experienced employees with younger workers. Encourage these pairs to share wisdom and build relationships.

Take a Personalised Approach —

While you will find common attributes within each generation, everyone has their own preferences and needs. For example, it's not unusual to have a millennial on your team who prefers independence—rather than group work.

So, take a personalised approach. Learn about each employee's individual needs and tailor your management. Start a dialogue, ask questions, and listen to your team members. Give your employees what they need as individuals, and you'll improve their overall happiness and working relationships.

To bridge the generation gap, build an environment of understanding, acceptance, and flexibility—because age is just a number. What matters most is how you welcome and support people as individuals.



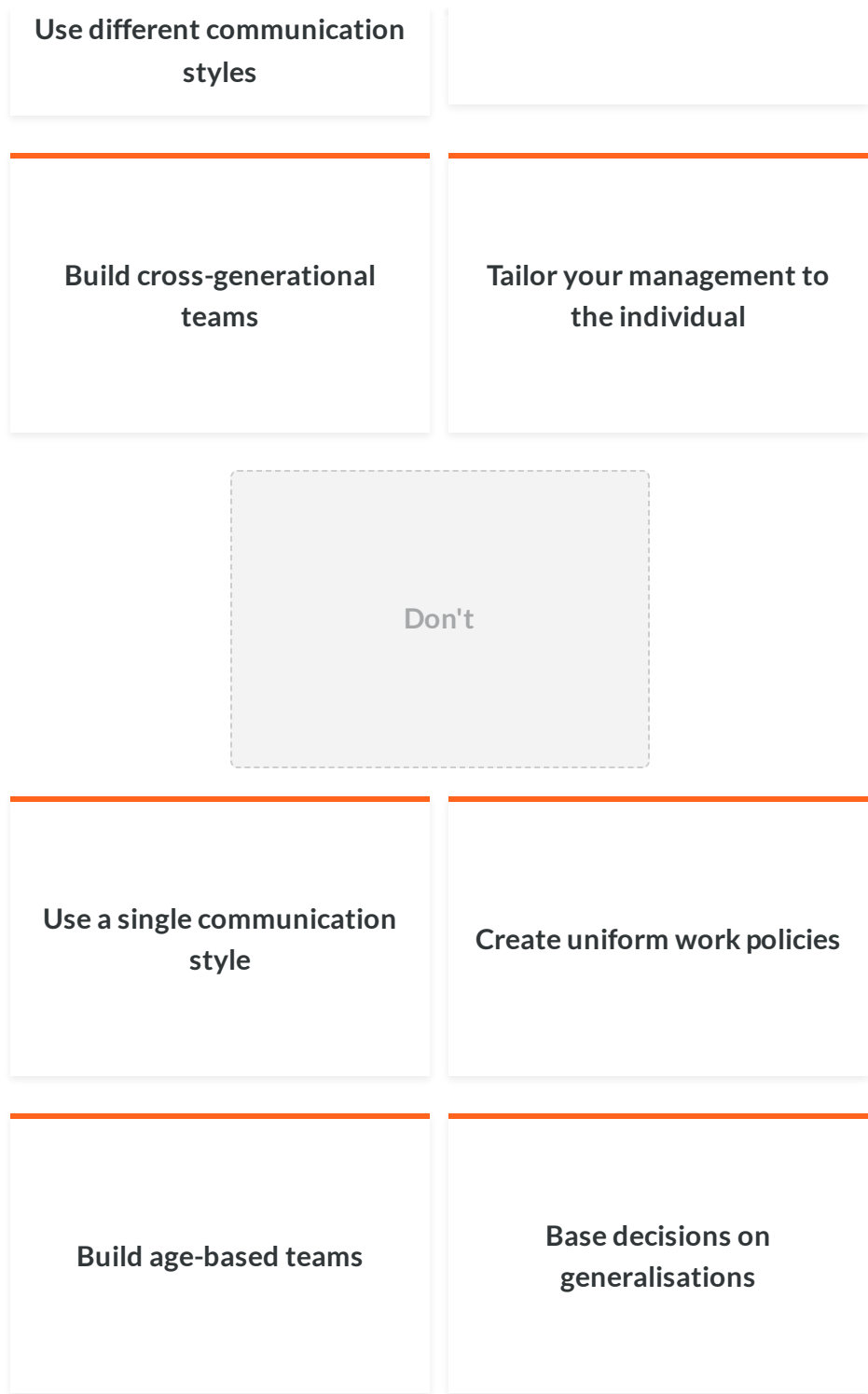


Check your understanding by completing the drag and drop activity below...

Angelica is managing a multigenerational workplace and needs some help deciding what she should and shouldn't do. Based on what you've learned, can you give Angelica some tips? Drag each card below into its correct category: *"Do"* or *"Don't."*

Do

Give employees work options



Summary

In the modern workforce, you can have as many as five generations working together:

- **Traditionalists:** Known for their pride, caution, and loyalty.
- **Baby boomers:** Known for being hardworking, competitive, and ambitious.
- **Generation X:** Known for their independence, self-reliance, and entrepreneurial drive.
- **Millennials:** Known for being tech-savvy and social, while also valuing freedom, flexibility, and feedback.
- **Generation Z:** Characterised by their diversity and creativity, Gen Zers are social, tech-savvy, and entrepreneurial.

Bring all the above generations together, and you're bound to experience challenges—such as **communication gaps**, **interpersonal issues**, and **divided work preferences**. Even more, your team is at risk of **stereotyping and bias**.

However, despite the challenges, you can bridge the generation gap by **adopting various communication styles**, **offering work options**, and **encouraging cross-generational connections**. At the core of a successful strategy is to **take a personalised approach**. Treat your team members as people first—because while it's helpful to understand what makes the generations different, there are no absolutes. And, ultimately, the most successful managers focus on people, not categories.



Don't dwell on the differences. It's easy to get caught up in what makes people different. But there are similarities across all groups. So, rather than dwelling on the differences, turn your attention to what connects your employees. Help your team

members understand and relate to one another, and you'll create a more united workforce.



Complete the content above before moving on.

Key Takeaways



What Are *Your* Team Dynamics?

Team dynamics influence every part of a team's functioning. These invisible nuances of how individuals behave, relate, and communicate in a team setting can set up a project for success—or make it feel like an uphill battle.

What's key is to be aware of what these underlying dynamics are, and how you and your teammates can shape them positively so that your projects are optimally efficient and effective—and even enjoyable.

Below are some key ideas to remember as you navigate your team:

- **Is your team consistently excellent?** High-performing teams have a strong sense of purpose and execute well over time.
- **What are your team roles?** Knowing which parts make up the whole helps create balance and allows you to leverage each member's strengths.
- **Are you embracing different work styles?** Support each style rather than enforce one method of working.
- **Can you identify positive and negative team dynamics?** Examine whether your team suffers from behaviours that prevent best performance.
- **Does your environment welcome all generations?** An inclusive workplace acknowledges rather than discriminates generational differences.

Thank you for completing this module!

CONTINUE TO THE KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Lesson 8 of 9

Knowledge Check



Module 5: Review Questions

Question

01/10

_____ are known for their energy, enthusiasm, and outgoing personalities.
They're creative risk-takers who are highly adaptable.

- ☐ Planners
- ☐ Visualisers
- ☐ Prioritisers
- ☐ Arrangers

Question

02/10

For a team to work well together, everyone must understand where their _____ begin and end.

- ☐ Tasks
- ☐ Roles
- ☐ Responsibilities
- ☐ Behaviours

Question

03/10

Match each description with the correct team role.

 Gets work done and turns ideas into practical steps.	Plant
 Manages talent and promotes collaboration and consensus.	Shaper
 Supports others and keeps the peace.	Team Worker
 Forms strategic relationships and gathers resources for the team.	Resource Investigator
 Generates new ideas and approaches.	Specialist
 Offers specialised knowledge and skills.	Implementer
 Evaluates and analyses the ideas of others.	Monitor-Evaluator
 Challenges and drives the team to achieve its goals.	Coordinator



Corrects mistakes and ensures that important details aren't overlooked.

Completer-Finisher

Question

04/10

At John's project kick-off meeting, most of the people on the team have worked together before, so it's okay for him to skip the introductions.

☐ True

☐ False

Question

05/10

Stella, the team leader, frequently asks for ideas from the team but then cuts people off and doesn't listen to their full contributions. Everybody notices, but so far, nobody has said anything. The eye-rolling and whispered frustrations are making Jake uneasy.

A few days later in their 1:1 meeting, Stella asks Jake how things are going in the team. This is a good time for Jake to raise the point to Stella.

☐ True

☐ False

Question

06/10

Cindy's team works virtually and usually stays in communication over chat. The team accesses files on a shared drive and collaborates as needed.

Recently, Cindy has noticed that two team members are having trouble meeting their deadlines. Coincidentally, these same two barely participate anymore during meetings and chats. But because Cindy and her team value an autonomous working environment, Cindy thinks she'll just let them sort out how they work on their own.

Good approach?

☐

True

☐

False

Question

07/10

All teams contain _____ or more people working toward a common goal—aiming to achieve more than a single person could.

- ☐ Six
- ☐ Four
- ☐ Three
- ☐ Two

Question

08/10

Match the following characteristics with the correct description.

 Shared ownership and accountability.	The team has a common reason for existence, and each person knows the part they play.
 Mutual trust and respect.	People express themselves freely and frequently—resolving conflicts quickly and promoting
 Diverse skills and perspectives.	Responsibility is shared, and no one takes a back seat.
 Flexible and adaptable.	Team members don't doubt one another.
 Open communication and transparency.	A wide range of work styles, personalities, backgrounds, and viewpoints.
 A strong sense of purpose.	These groups embrace learning, growth, and innovation.

Question

09/10

_____ roles describe an individual's job title or assigned position, whereas informal roles are more difficult to pinpoint.

☐

Formal

☐

Informal

Question

10/10

Team members naturally fulfil _____ roles based on their patterns of behaviour and interpersonal strengths.

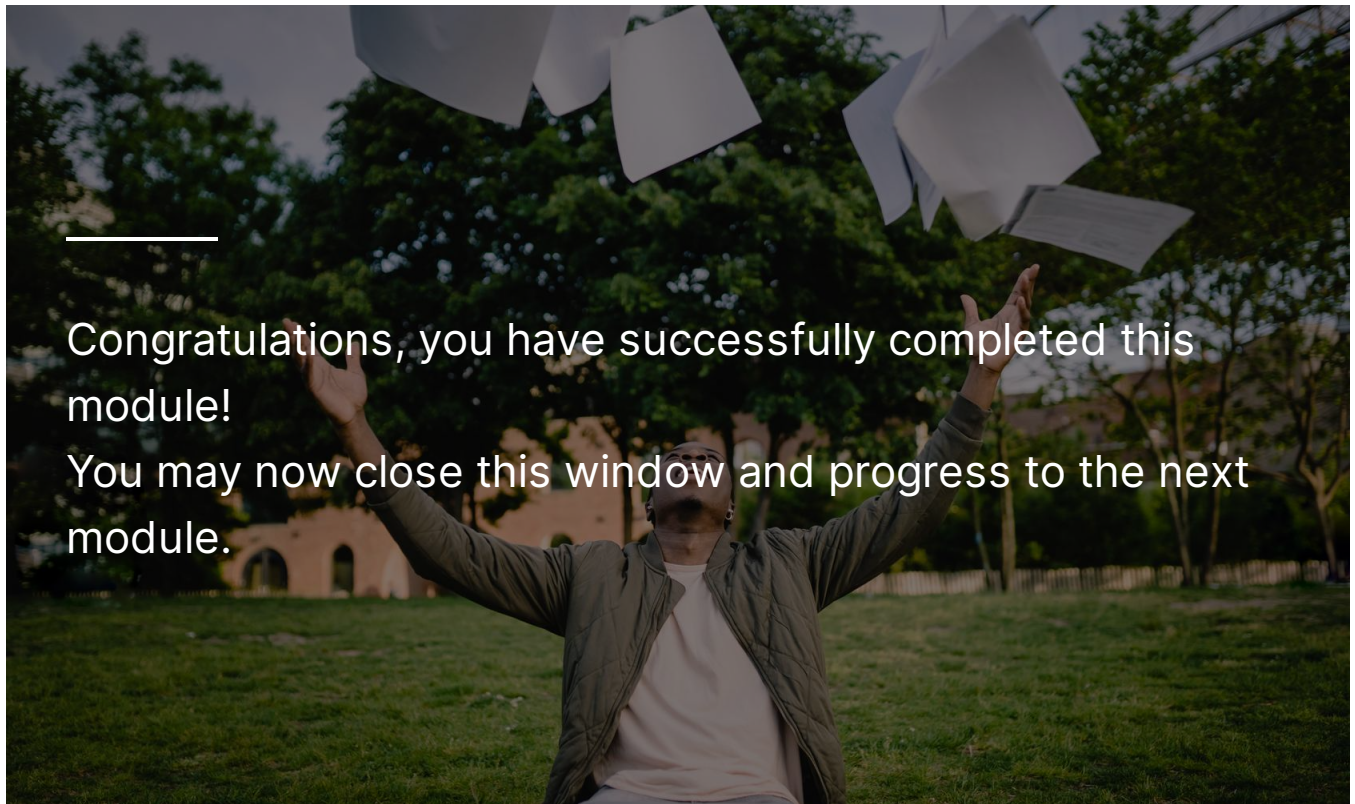
☐

Formal

☐

Informal

Module 5: Completed



Congratulations, you have successfully completed this module!
You may now close this window and progress to the next module.