



TRAINING FOR CHANGE TOOL

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Team Types

Four Personality Tendencies in Team-Building

How to facilitate

Invite people to stand and give any brief context to the tool (frame the experience: is it exploring how you work as a team? Strategy? Personal reflection?). Explain that you will be describing four different roles. As you are describing them, people may reflect on if that applies for them.

Describe the roles

It is best if you can avoid reading it as a list but describe it in your own words. Explain the four roles in a number of different ways. For example, possible language might be:

- ▶ **East** • People in this role generate lots of ideas, seeing the big picture. They look at a situation and wonder what else might happen. They are rarely at a loss for a new idea. That might result in them being quickly sidetracked with the new possibilities, maybe becoming overwhelmed or resulting in losing time. They like future thought and experimenting.
- ▶ **South** • Okay, people from the South are relationship people. While the East people see ideas, the South people see relationships – they are value-driven, using the relationships around them to accomplish tasks. They are supportive, feeling-based, and tend to see the health of the group around them as primary. Because they are so feeling-based, they may have trouble saying no to requests and may internalize blame or accept responsibility even if they are not responsible. Again, the relationship people.
- ▶ **West** • Where East is idea-generation, and South relationship, West is into data and information. In a group, West people want to see all the information before making a decision, weighing all the sides of an issue. They use data and logic and are often seen as practical and thorough in tasks. Because of their emphasis, they can be seen as entrenched and even stubborn, sometimes being indecisive because they get so mired into the details.
- ▶ **North** • And finally North, sometimes called the warrior. They like to act, even enjoying rising to challenges. They are assertive, active and tend towards “shoot first, aim second.” They carry a sense of urgency and can ride roughshod over people. This means they can lose patience with others and may try to be in control – or moving ahead without the support of the group.

As you describe each position, physically signal where that position is in the room. You want people moving to that place in the room in a second.

Avoid giving people the handout at this stage. If you do, people will often nit-pick: “This line applies to me. This line does not.” You want people to get the general feel of each team type – not precision.

Get people moving

Answer any questions, but quickly get people moving into their four groups. Give them the first task to talk about what it’s like in that position. This lets them settle into understanding that group.

Some individuals may show some resistance, “But I’m all those things.” Encourage them to find a spot that best fits them, even listening into others conversations if they need. Sometimes people will create Southeast or Northwest positions. That is fine. Stand with any people who are alone so they can have a dialogue (or encourage them to converse with a nearby group, like encourage the Southeast to chat with the South group but share in the large group from their own perspective).

Large group dialogue

Give a question for the small group to answer. Then facilitate a dialogue with the large group. Give each group a chance to speak. Repeat this a couple of times with questions appropriate. For example:

- ▶ What do you like about your role?
- ▶ What annoys you about the other roles?
- ▶ What request might you make to the other roles to work more effectively with them?

During this conversation, notice the styles surfacing even in *how* people talk. When the North people go first, make note of that out-loud. Or when the South ask permission from the other groups to go next, acknowledge it. Or when the West make a list... Or when the East ask, “Can we just add one more thing?”... Each time this is a chance to help people internalize the concept and see the dynamics at play.

Stay light and encourage humor, especially as groups share what annoys them about the other groups. People laughing is one way to internalize a concept.

Application

After the sharing, people need a chance to think about how they might use this perspective. (If people got it, often the remainder of the group meeting or workshop will include referenes and jokes about the roles. Encourage it!)

You may want to share stories. For example, some examples:

- ▶ In a national board meeting a group did this. Out of a group of thirty, about five were South and two North. The remainder were all East. The sole people in the West were the two staff. The facilitator gave extra attention to expression from the West, including the sense of isolation and frustration with keeping the East people in check. After much conversation, the group decided to reconsider its composition it include more West roles.
- ▶ A national coalition asked for a nonviolent direct action trainer to work with them. When they did this tool, there were no North! “Why?” asked the trainer. Slowly, members talked about how the more rowdy, agitative members had been subtly and occasionally overtly encouraged to leave. “They always wanted to be confrontive,” said a coalition leader. “Well,” announced the trainer, “without North energy you won’t be able to sustain a direct action campaign. Rather than continuing this training, we are going to focus on whether you want to reach out to the past groups or how to bring in other groups that bring that energy. Because you can’t win a direct action campaign without North energy.”

Finally, give them a chance to share in small groups (or, if the group is a working group you might want they keep them in the large-group). If the group is relatively balanced they might even pair up with a role different from them and share how they could work better together.

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