



- Create your collaboration blueprint
- Mind the Communication Gap
- Fire up your creativity
- Be serious about fun
- Celebrate failures

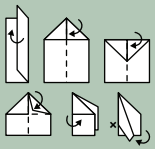
- Invest in your glue
- Align your compass
- Embrace your imposters
- Tap into the Collective Intelligence
- Uncover your team's unique element

Unlock
Your **Team's**
Potential



ELEMENTS

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You can fold this poster into a paper plane: to keep it on your desk or to have a competition with your team!

Align your compass

Would you board a plane which does not have a clear destination? Unless you are very adventurous you probably wouldn't. The same applies for your team. Yet many of us are working in teams where the direction is not clear. Unless your team has an agreed-upon destination and feels excited to get there, it will be challenging to reach it as you may not all be moving in the same direction. A simple exercise is to ask each person in the team to write down what they believe the destination is. Compare the responses and align your team's compass if needed. You know you have found your destination when it sparks excitement to get there!

Embrace your imposters

Chances are that several members of your team cope – in silence – with some version of the Imposter Syndrome. This is the feeling that your work achievements are undeserved and that you are likely to be exposed as a fraud. If you recognize this feeling, you are in the good company of talented people like Lady Gaga and Meryl Streep. When team members feel like a 'fraud' despite their achievements, it can hijack their creativity, joy, and initiative. Dare to ask who in the team recognizes this feeling. Their inner critic will lose its grip once it is out in the open and team members realize they are not alone!

Create your collaboration blueprint

Have you explicitly shared your expectations vis-à-vis one another? If not, it may well be worthwhile to create a collaboration blueprint: how do we want to communicate with each other? How often? Through which means? What are your and my red flags? If there is an issue, how do we bring it up? Then when a problem arises, you can refer to this blueprint instead of reacting based on unexpressed expectations and assumptions. This simple action significantly reduces possible (hidden) conflict.

Fire up your creativity

Einstein said: "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them". Therefore, next to creating the fertile ground in which creativity can flourish (celebrating failures, being serious about fun...), we need methodologies that stimulate creative thinking and that go beyond the traditional brainstorm. What is important here is to shift into a different gear than the one used for solving day-to-day problems. One technique is to channel a completely different persona: How would a pilot solve this problem? Or a carpenter?

Tap into the Collective Intelligence

In many organizations, there is a strong focus on individual achievements and performance. In our current complex world this is outdated. The smartest teams are not those with the highest Individual- but with the highest Collective Intelligence (CI). Great ideas arise when the team liberally exchange their thoughts and discover connections that individuals alone don't make. One way to encourage this is to ensure that nobody dominates the discussion. How? First have people reflect on a question or challenge alone, then in pairs, then in groups of 4, and then debrief with the whole group.

Invest in your glue

Trust can feel like such an elusive concept, yet it is the glue that holds your team together. When trust is weak, we tend to avoid any form of dependency on others. This makes collaboration extremely challenging, to say the least. High levels of trust are essential to build psychologically safe environments in which people dare to challenge each other, admit mistakes, and share creative ideas. Developing trust starts with discovering the person beyond the job role. How? Find something you have in common with each other. You'll not be the first to suddenly discover there is another Star Wars fanatic among your team!

Uncover your team's unique element

Every human being is unique. And for that simple reason, each team is unique! What do you do – beyond the elements described here – that makes your team fun, creative and connected? Having difficulties finding out what your 10th element is? Just imagine that a journalist is writing a cover article for a well-known magazine about what makes your team so special. What would they write about? That's your team's own unique element!

Why the Unlock Your Team's Potential model?

A great team does not only depend on the manager of the team. A good manager certainly helps, but more than anything else, it is all about the connection between the unique individuals in the team. This connection cannot be engineered or imposed by one person alone, but is a shared endeavour. These 10 elements help you to unlock your team's potential: for more **connection, creativity, and joy.**

Mind the Communication Gap

"The great enemy of communication, we find, is the illusion of it". William Whyte nailed it. Often, there is a gap between what we say and what the other person understands. The fact that you speak the same language does not mean that you use and understand the language in the same way! Add to that our personalities, our perceptions, our biases, and the probability for 'noise on the line' increases exponentially. A good starting point is to strengthen your listening muscles: listen for intent instead of only hearing the words, and ask questions that allow you to check your understanding.

Celebrate failures

The first (failed) attempts to fly a plane led the Wright Brothers to predict that "man will probably not fly in our lifetime". Luckily, they proved themselves wrong. No innovation was ever brought into this world through perfection. Mistakes are essential for us to learn and explore new ways. However, if people feel unsafe to make mistakes, they still make them but will cover them up, which takes away the opportunity to learn. Therefore, make it safe to fail. One way is to organize a dedicated moment in which you celebrate the biggest mess-up(s) of the month. This way mistakes can become a powerful catalyst for learning and innovation.

Be serious about fun

How serious are you about creating moments of joy and fun together? When team members laugh together, their levels of creativity and trust soar. Laughter increases oxytocin, which strengthens our trust and closeness towards one another; it lowers cortisol, making us feel more resilient and less stressed; and it increases dopamine, making us feel happier. Therefore, be serious about sparking levity, joy and fun at work! And perhaps finish that next team meeting with a paper plane contest?

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