

Interacting in High Performance Teams (2)

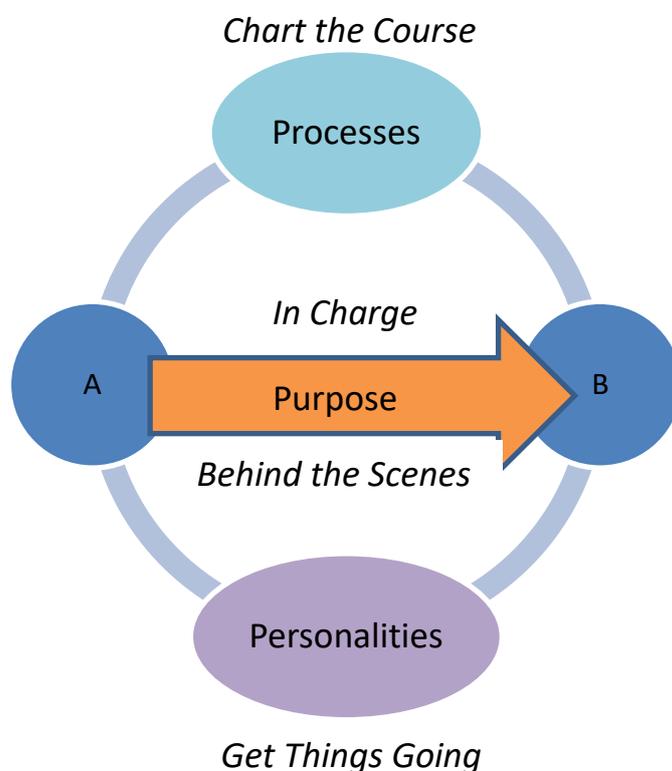
In *Typeface*, Spring 2015, I described a model for high performance teams linked with interaction styles. This article explores in more detail the contribution that people of each interaction style can make to effective team working.

We know that effective teams can get better results than groups of individuals, but also that team working is fraught with difficulty. One of the reasons for this is that when interacting with others, we react, sometimes negatively, to observable behaviour, but aren't aware of what is driving that behaviour, or of how our own behaviour may be causing stress for our colleagues.

Understanding interaction styles helps us appreciate what is driving our colleagues' behaviour and the contribution they could make if they were able to channel their energy constructively. We can learn to adapt our behaviour in specific ways to work effectively together to achieve the team's goals.

The 3Ps model of effective team-working directly links the key elements of high performance teams (clarity of **Purpose**, effective **Processes**, and management of **Personalities**) with the potential contribution of each interaction style. The In-Charge and Behind-the-Scenes styles share a focus on outcome, while Chart-the-Course focuses on the plan and Get-things-going focuses on the people.

3Ps Model of Effective Team-working



Effective teams manage their interactions and channel their energy to enable:

In-charge to get on quickly with the task

Behind the Scenes to consider all the options for achieving the task

Chart the Course to plan how to reach the goal

Get Things Going to get everyone involved

©Essenwood Consulting

The model shows the likely main focus of each interaction style to the different aspects of working effectively as a team, though of course their contributions are not limited to these aspects.

Stressful Interactions

When teams work well, they allow each person to make their unique contribution and they manage conflict and difficulties through appropriate supporting and challenging behaviours. When they don't work well, people of each interaction style can thwart the others' aims and disrupt their energy.

For example, In-Charge people get stressed when nothing is happening (eg when BTS is exploring options and CTC pinning down a plan); Chart-the-Course people get stressed when they don't know what is happening (eg when IC is rushing ahead with no plan, and BTS and GTG are throwing in too many options and ideas); Get-things-going gets stressed when people are not involved and enthusiastic (eg when CTC withdraws and BTS is quiet); Behind-the-Scenes gets stressed when not given time to decide (eg when IC charges ahead and GTG is distracting).

Instead of energy-boosting interactions, the team's energy drains away. Each person's behaviour in a team can lead to stress for others.

Channelling Energy

Knowing the stress points and understanding the positive intentions of ourselves and our colleagues means we can manage the impact of the behaviour in more emotionally intelligent ways.

The following charts show the potential contributions and potential pitfalls for each interaction style to the key elements of effective team working.

Tips on how to manage your own energy and how to help your colleagues manage theirs will be covered in the next article in this series.

References

Berens, L. (2011) *Interaction Essentials: three keys to effective relationships in the workplace and beyond*

Nash, S. "Manage your energy not your time – some type insights" in *Typeface*, Vol. 25, No 2 (2014)

Nash, S. "Understand Conflict through Personality Type Lenses" in *Typeface*, Vol. 24, No 2 and Vol. 23, No. 4. (2012, 2013)

Nash, S. *Contextual Coaching*, (2011)

Likely Contribution of each Style to Effective Team Working

	IN CHARGE	GET THINGS GOING	BEHIND THE SCENES	CHART THE COURSE
PURPOSE	<p>Pushes for completion Clear focus on the goal or task and removing obstacles Moves quickly towards the goal</p>	<p>Brings energy and enthusiasm to the task Encourages co-operation and motivates people to participate</p>	<p>Pushes for the best result possible Links discussion to the end result Sees wider issues related to the task</p>	<p>Defines the process for achieving the goal Considers the risks and anticipates problems</p>
PROCESSES	<p>Brings the team back on track Shares information when required Takes control of resources Makes quick decisions Clearly expresses what has to be done</p>	<p>Pushes for involvement Open style encourages information sharing Makes collaborative decisions</p>	<p>Thinks through all possible options and approaches Avoids mistakes by gathering as much relevant information as possible Controls quality of output Makes consultative decisions</p>	<p>Pushes for a plan Charts the key milestones to achieve the goal Monitors progress against plan and adapts it if needed Makes thought-through decisions</p>
PERSONALITIES	<p>Creates a pace-setting climate Communicates straightforwardly Builds rapport with colleagues around the goal Determined energy – pushes the team to achieve the task</p>	<p>Creates an affiliative climate Communicates persuasively Encourages and involves others to get buy in Engaging energy – pulls the team along</p>	<p>Creates a democratic climate Approachable communication style Provides support to others as needed to achieve the goal Open energy – draws input from the team</p>	<p>Creates an orderly climate Formal communication style Involves others to ensure the plan stays on track Focused energy – pushes the team to follow the plan</p>

Adapted from: Linda Berens, Susan Nash

Potential Pitfalls of each Style to Effective Team Working

	IN CHARGE	GET THINGS GOING	BEHIND THE SCENES	CHART THE COURSE
PURPOSE	May not achieve the best result, due to not fully exploring options	May lose focus on the task, due to involving too many people	May take too long to achieve the result, due to wanting too much input	May lose focus on the task, due to over-emphasis on processes and risks
PROCESSES	<p>May not consider all the possible options and approaches</p> <p>May neglect to share information with others</p> <p>May take decisions too quickly without getting buy-in</p>	<p>May spend too much time and energy on getting everyone's input</p> <p>May make suboptimal decisions</p> <p>May neglect to plan</p>	<p>May add information late in the process</p> <p>Decision-making process may be unclear to others</p> <p>May go off plan</p>	<p>May appear slow or process driven</p> <p>May appear dogmatic in decisions and reluctant to consider other options</p> <p>Colleagues may feel forced on to the wrong path</p>
PERSONALITIES	<p>May not listen to colleagues</p> <p>May not take the time to build rapport</p> <p>May ignore others' feelings</p> <p>May give advice when not needed and appear bossy</p> <p>May become impatient or aggressive when nothing appears to be happening</p>	<p>May talk too much and prevent others giving their views</p> <p>May get discouraged if others do not show enthusiasm</p> <p>Colleagues may be reluctant to express concerns</p> <p>May create a chaotic environment when trying to engage others</p>	<p>Colleagues may feel devalued when their input is not taken into account in the decision</p> <p>May not be clear about what they want others to do</p> <p>May avoid asking challenging questions</p> <p>May be too accommodating and unassertive when pressed to decide too quickly</p>	<p>May neglect to greet and chat to others</p> <p>May appear uninterested or unenthusiastic when interacting</p> <p>May not make an effort to ask questions of others</p> <p>May withdraw when plans are ignored or not supported</p>

Adapted from: Linda Berens, Susan Nash

