# Evaluating your team:
## Two tools

[Creating the right team composition](#) and [dynamics](#) is not as intuitive as it might seem. We need to know what makes a team in the first place; how teams come (and stay) together, and how we can create the right conditions to develop the right, positive dynamics for healthy collaboration and performance.

Whether we're assembling a new team, assuming responsibility for an existing team or just need to breathe some new life and energy into a team we know well, taking the time to evaluate how a team is working is an invaluable first step to planning for improvement and development.

**Here are two tools that can help.**

## Tool #1:
### A team SWOT analysis

A simple strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats (SWOT) grid can be used in a range of contexts. It can support strategic analysis about future direction; it can be used to chart our own personal progress and it can also help a team to identify where it's performing well, what's going less well and where the opportunities lie for doing things better.

Here are the four SWOT categories, with some sample team-related questions for each:

**Strengths:** internal qualities that give our teams competitive advantage: we might have unique skills, perhaps, or the benefit of years of experience. Do we consistently meet deadlines and/or produce high-quality work? Do team members feel safe airing opinions or challenging others?

**Weaknesses:** internal weaknesses where our team is vulnerable: does the team work together as collaboratively as it might? Do we make the most of set pieces like team meetings? Are we prone to prevarication at times?

**Opportunities:** external conditions that play to our strengths: how can we use our advantages more effectively? Might our unique skills be applied in new contexts?

**Threats:** external conditions that threaten team performance: do we need to develop new skills, for example? Are we struggling with a lack of resources? Are communication channels as open and clear as they might be?

### How to conduct a team SWOT

Think about the questions you might ask under each category, and then gather the team together to conduct the analysis as a group, using the template below as a guide and agreeing the key factors at play in each quadrant.

Once your analysis is complete, involve team members in creating plans for improvement: build on strengths and focus on how they can be applied to opportunities; evaluate how to strengthen weaknesses and eliminate threats.

Keep these plans front of mind and under review. Updating our team SWOT regularly will help to keep us sharp and focussed and can also be a useful tool when team composition or our working environment is changing.

# Team SWOT analysis

| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
|---|---|
| | |

| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
|---|---|
| | |

## Tools #2:
### Haas and Mortensen's team evaluation questionnaire

In their classic Harvard Business Review article, *The Secrets of Great Teamwork*, Martin Haas and Mark Mortensen identify four enabling conditions that teams need to perform and succeed:

- compelling direction
- strong structure
- supportive context, and
- shared mindset.

They also offer a diagnostic based on these conditions and taking into account teams guru J Richard Hackman's criteria for team effectiveness: output, collaborative ability and members' individual development.

## How to use the diagnostic

Use the template below to score current team performance against the three effectiveness criteria and the four enabling conditions.

Use the scale of 1 (worst) to 5 (best) to rate your team in each category.

The results will show where we're on track and where we might need more work, or where we might need to take pre-emptive action. For high-scoring categories, how might we build on that success?  For lower-scoring areas, reflect on how improvements can be planned and implemented.

|  | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Effectiveness criteria** | | | | | | |
| 1 | Are our customers happy with our output—with its quality, quantity, and delivery? | | | | | |
| **2** | **Do our team's dynamics help us work well together?** | | | | | |
| 3 | Are individual team members improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities? | | | | | |
| **Enabling conditions** | | | | | | |
| **4** | **Direction: Do we have a common goal that is clear, challenging (but not impossible), and consequential?** | | | | | |
| 5 | Structure: Do we have the right number and mix of members? | | | | | |
| **6** | **Structure: Are people responsible for tasks from beginning to end?** | | | | | |
| 7 | Structure: Do we have clear norms for acceptable conduct? | | | | | |
| **8** | **Supportive context: Do we have the resources, information, and training we need?** | | | | | |
| 9 | Supportive context: Are there appropriate rewards for success? | | | | | |
| **10** | **Shared mindset: Do the team members have a strong common identity?** | | | | | |
| 11 | Shared mindset: Do we readily share information with one another and understand one another's constraints and context? | | | | | |