

Team Canvas

What is a team canvas?

The Team Canvas is a collaborative framework that enables teams to visually illustrate their respective roles, goals, rules, and communication strategies. This structured format drives enhanced alignment, communication, and productivity among team members. By leveraging the Team Canvas, teams can foster an environment of effective collaboration and successfully navigate complex projects.

Attribution: Inspired by Alex Osterwalder's Business Model Canvas, the Team canvas was originally created by Alex Ivanov and Mitya Voloshchuk.

Why do we need a team canvas?

Use the Team Canvas exercises to adopt new team norms, introduce practices and rituals for how together everyone can work more effectively. The Team Canvas can help all team members begin conversations, gain clarity and produce results.

Firstly, it encourages alignment amongst team members by establishing a shared understanding of roles, goals, and processes, thus reducing the possibility of misunderstandings and ensuring everyone is on the same page.

Additionally, by providing clearly defined communication strategies, information gaps are minimized, and effective information exchange is enhanced, promoting clear communication.

Collaborative canvas creation fosters engagement, ownership, and diverse perspectives, ultimately leading to better teamwork and boosting overall productivity through streamlined task execution. The involvement of team members in the creation of the canvas also increases accountability for project success.

Furthermore, established rules and guidelines provide a structured approach to addressing conflicts, minimizing the potential for issues to arise.

Note: the team canvas is a “live” document, which means we need to cater for adjustments as the team evolves, to ensure that the team remains responsive and adaptable to changes.

Running a team canvas workshop

Step 1: Access the Team Canvas Template

Get a copy of the Team Canvas template at <https://www.theteamcanvas.com/>, or create one yourself.

Step 2: Acquaint Yourself with the various Sections

Step 3: Introduce your team members to the different Sections, and explain its use as a brainstorming tool to understand each other better:

- **People & Roles:** Request everyone to record their names and roles they play in the team.
- **Purpose:** Define your team's purpose. Sharing a sense of purpose fosters connection and motivation. Always ensure that your team's purpose aligns with your organization's mission and values.
- **Common Goals:** gather the goals that each team member envisions for the team's overarching purpose and any ongoing projects. Identify polarizing goals as potential areas for future discussion.
- **Personal Goals:** inquire team members about the individual goals that they personally have for the team.
- **Values:** Collaboratively establish the values your team holds, ensuring they are congruent with your organization's values and mission. Encourage participants to express these values succinctly in a single word.
- **Strengths & Assets:** Recognize the primary skills, encompassing both hard and soft skills, and the available assets within the team.
- **Weaknesses & Risks:** openly share individual weaknesses and areas for improvement, as well as the collective obstacles the team faces.
- **Needs & Expectations:** outline the practices highly regarded by the team and identify what additional elements are necessary for the team's success.
- **Rules & Activities:** Collaboratively reach a consensus on rules and activities that support responsibility, enhance communication, promote inclusion and trust, ultimately designed to cultivate desired behaviours among team members.

Step 4: Review and Adjust:

Review the filled-out canvas as a team (except for people and roles), and look out for similar themes

Encourage team members to vote for themes that are most important in supporting the team in achieving its goals.

Make any necessary adjustments to ensure accuracy and alignment.

Step 5: Save and Share:

Save the completed Team Canvas.

Share the canvas with team members as a reminder on what rules for working you have set together.

This can also be used to onboard new team members and approach new projects together.

Step 6: Regular Updates:

Periodically revisit the canvas to ensure it reflects the team's current status.

Update roles, goals, and other sections as needed.