

# MAKING THE CASE FOR THE TEAMWORK KIT

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We've based a lot of the thinking in The Teamwork Kit on research that ranges from mid-20th century organizational theory to more current projects. This includes work on group dynamics in [Susan Wheelan's integrated model of group development](#). Insights on team performance from [Google Re:Work](#) validate some of the same beliefs we have around building trust together. It's a practical formula, not a magic one, but we know we're on the right track.

We've designed it around our own experience, with a consistent focus on creating environments that are safe for people to speak up, be heard, and do their best work. Even if you can see the value, we know that it might not be enough. It can be tricky to change the organisation you're in.

This chapter is designed to help you make the case for the time, space, and patience needed to make a real impact.

## **We've been there, too!**

You're probably reading this handbook because you know the value of building safety into your team and you want to take some practical steps. But it takes time and shared commitment before you can reach the rewards of The Teamwork Kit. And that means you might need to convince others before you can start.

Maybe you need to persuade a manager concerned about time budgeting, or who is reluctant to add what looks like more meetings to an already busy schedule.

Or there could be people around you who doubt the value of anything perceived as “touchy-feely.” Perhaps you’ve been using the toolkit and you want to convince your organisation to adopt it more widely.

Or maybe you need to show skeptical teammates that yes, there are good reasons to talk about our feelings at work.

The next pages are written directly for the people you need to convince.

You can print or send the overview on the next few pages, or the full chapter, with links to further reading.

# How the Teamwork Kit helps organisations

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High-performing teams aren’t special because they have the perfect mix of superstar employees. What they have in common is that they have a high level of shared trust and safety, often because they spend time talking about the ‘how’ of work. And their work is more robust and often more innovative. The Teamwork Kit helps teams reach this state by taking steps and making commitment to their own group development.

The goal of this approach is a creative, resilient team. This is defined as a group of people who, when given a task they haven’t seen before, have the habits and norms to build reflection loops, cultivate safety, and solve a problem effectively, reliably.

## **Teams that have a high level of trust and safety perform better because they:**

Have higher collective intelligence than teams where social sensitivity isn’t an explicit goal

Address mistakes and ask questions earlier in a process than teams that don’t specifically cultivate psychological safety

Cultivate a ‘we’ culture that leads to more active knowledge transfer

Produce more innovative work because they dedicate space to reflection loops and risk-taking

More easily meet milestones and delivery dates because they spend time aligning and share a sense of mutual accountability

Are more likely to persist through challenges and complete projects successfully than teams where roles and responsibilities are less clear

# What it takes to build a team like this



The Teamwork Toolkit is free, but it requires commitment and support.

## Time and space

The team needs a place to meet and about half a day to get started, then a 120-minute meeting at the end. We can plan the other activities as part of regular project meetings, but we'll need dedicated time within those.

## Support

It works best with a facilitator from outside the team. This can be someone from our organisation, or an external professional. The team will also need help convincing people to drop in on the 30-60-minute Popup feedback sessions along the way.

## Patience and encouragement

The benefits come from commitment over time, so the team needs your help navigating internal structures, and managing expectations, inside the group and out. Showing others what we've achieved by working in this way will help us do so with greater confidence.

# What our organisation gets



## Increases team performance

[Teams that receive strengths feedback are 12.5% more effective.](#) They have higher collective intelligence, which [leads to better, more innovative deliverables.](#)

## Benefits the overall brand

Managers can help employees [connect their work to the company's wider purpose.](#) Satisfied employees [increase company returns.](#)

## Contributes to employee retention

[Reshaping collaboration](#) helps employees learn more and feel less stressed. It can even [support diversity and inclusion work by bringing its goals to the level of employee conversations.](#)

# We know your evangelism is never done

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Maybe you're halfway to convincing those around you that The Teamwork Kit is a valuable approach, but they're still looking for more. Even if everyone is on board, it's important to remember that evangelism for new methods is never done.

It can help to keep making connections between the foundational elements of the formula with increased team performance, and the way these things benefit the overall brand and contribute to employee retention.



The next section is full of concise arguments and links to research. It's designed to help you with ongoing advocacy for the time, space and resources to see the processes through.

# Increases team performance

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The Teamwork Kit is based around cultivating trust and safety in teams by ensuring that each member is accountable, responsible and transparent, but also valued, heard, and supported.

It's designed to facilitate regular project progress tracking, which makes managerial reporting easier. There is even a way to measure its success.

Because there's so much focus on alignment and updates, it's easier to acknowledge mistakes and ask for help early, as well as onboard and offboard new and departing team members mid-project. This helps with knowledge transfer and keeps communication open.

Clear roles and responsibilities and nonviolent communication encourage a culture of positive feedback and belonging, as well as ensuring shared and individual accountability.

- Studies show that teams that receive strengths feedback [are 12.5% more effective.](#)
- [Google's multi-year study](#) demonstrated that performance is linked, not to individual members on a team, but how the group behaves together.
- Transparent, fair conversation can contribute to [more equal environments.](#)
- Higher collective intelligence in more equal teams is shown to bring better, [more innovative deliverables.](#)
- When it's [safe to raise issues](#) early and be honest about mistakes [video], it leads to broad organisational improvements.
- Teams with [high levels of psychological safety](#) learn more, take more risks, and are more innovative.

# Benefits the overall brand

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With The Teamwork Kit, project deliverables are of higher quality, and teams perform better, but over time, approaches that focus on the 'how' of work can have broader benefits for companies.

The focus on shared values and norms is an opportunity for employees to feel they contribute to the overall company goals.

Cultures where teams and managers cultivate safety are more able to take risks and innovate.

Team members who feel valued and are praised for their strengths do better work, building brand reputation and leading to growth and revenue gains.

- Managers can help employees [connect their work to the company's wider purpose](#).
- Satisfied employees [increase company returns](#).
- Team members who experience more stress are more likely to need [sick leave and health services](#).
- Workplaces that have [a positive culture are also more productive overall](#).
- Strengths feedback [correlates with revenue gains](#), even where it's delivered to managers.

# Improves employee retention

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Recruitment is expensive, but retention doesn't have to be. You don't need to pay for everyone's dry cleaning to keep your great people from leaving or underperforming.

People want to improve their skills, connect with others, and see the value of their work to an organisation. A dedicated, defined approach to teamwork helps with all of these.

Employees are more likely to stay in a company that gives them room to develop, grow, and make mistakes they can learn from.

Attention to equal speaking time and creating safety for all can make it easier to address the needs of underrepresented groups.

- Reshaping how collaboration works can [help employees learn more and feel less stressed](#).
- Psychological safety [increases knowledge transfer](#), promoting a learning environment.
- Employees who feel connected and supported are less likely to quit.
- Supports inclusion and diversity work by [bringing empathy and acknowledgement](#) of differences to the level of employee conversations.
- Creating space for emotional check-ins can counter some of [the conditions that lead to employee burnout](#).
- Employee retention has more to do with recognition, learning and communication than 'perks'.