



# Roles and Responsibilities

In this exercise, you'll define roles and responsibilities, and clarify your interactions so the whole team can shine.

## USE THIS PLAY TO...

Understand each member's contribution to the team, and learn what everyone needs in order to be successful.

If you're struggling with balanced team or managed dependencies on your Health Monitor, running this play might help.



### PEOPLE

All team members



### DIFFICULTY

Moderate



### PREP TIME

15 min



### TIME

90 min

## RUNNING THE PLAY

Defining roles and responsibilities helps move your team from “storming” to “norming”, or help “performing” teams who've lost their way get back on track.

## WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

Bring the whole team in for this one – whether a 4-person special project team, or a 40-person cross-functional product team.

### STEP 1

#### Set the stage (5 min)

This is a long workshop. Some snacks and caffeine wouldn't go amiss.

The goal is two-fold: to better understand what roles exist on the team (either officially or unofficially), and to see how responsibilities could be re-shaped a bit, or ways existing roles can interact better. Ultimately, your task is to help yourselves operate more effectively as a team.

**PRO TIP:** Form a team and do a project kick-off first. If you're still not gelling as a team, try this play.

### STEP 2

#### Define your own roles (15 min)

Ask everyone in the team to take out a notepad, paper or collaborate on a Confluence page and answer these questions:

- What is your role?
- What are 2-3 important tasks you work on, or ways you help the team?
- What resources and/or support do you need that you are currently receiving?
- What resources and/or support do you need that you aren't receiving?
- What's getting in your way?

Group people with similar skills or roles and have them fill out the worksheet together to save time.

**PRO TIP:** To save time, set this task as pre-work.

### STEP 3

#### Define somebody else's role (10 min)

Now for a bit of role-playing. Pick another person on the team and attempt to define their role using the same set of questions. The facilitator should make sure all people or roles on the team are covered.

### STEP 4

#### Compare notes (25 min)

Have each team member share what they wrote for their role and the role they selected.

Remember that this is as much a listening exercise as it is a sharing exercise. It may take a long time, but the benefits are tangible as people have an opportunity to tell the team exactly what their responsibilities are, and what may be preventing them from doing a truly awesome job.

By now you should have a deeper empathy for your teammates. But before you go sing Kumbaya down by the campfire, pause for some visualization and problem-solving in the next two steps...

## Roles & Responsibilities

### STEP 5

#### Create an interaction map (20 min)

On the whiteboard or butcher's paper, in groups of 2-4 draw circles representing each distinct role on your team and label them. Leave plenty of space between the circles – you're gonna add a lot more information before the end of the workshop.

Based on what you just heard, annotate each role with their most important deliverables, objectives, or skills.

Now connect the circles with arrows representing the interactions between roles and support they need. Label all connecting lines. The arrow should start from the role producing something and point to the role(s) who relies on it. Draw an extra-thick arrow or use a special color to indicate the most critical interactions.

### STEP 6

#### Identify pain points and remedies (20 min)

Here it is, ladies and gentlemen: the moment you've been waiting for. Time to channel that new-found empathy into helping your team work better together. Call out painful points in the way roles interact, and write them along side the arrows. Then have team members come up and place dots by the three pain points they're most keen to resolve.

In addition to pain points, look for gaps in capabilities and areas where only one person is able to take responsibility. Brainstorm ways to fill those gaps and maybe even get a bit of redundancy. When you're under the gun, you'll be glad you have every skill covered.

As a group, brainstorm ways you could ease the pain. For service teams, the flow of interactions may be strictly defined and adhered to. But project teams are different – the way they interact needs to be flexible so they can adapt to different situations and Get ~~It~~ Done™.

Prioritize three ideas to try out, with an eye toward the thickest interaction lines and the highest concentrations of dots. Break your top three ideas into bite-sized tasks, and agree on owners and due dates for each.