Framework 2/ Perspectives on team interactions

→ We now generalize the process of communication to look at social interactions in a team and understand underlying aspects that can cause challenges, if you are in a highly diverse team context.

→ The various dimensions introduced are based on Erin Meyers "Culture Map". It seems important that understanding diversity should not be limited to cultural backgrounds but must comprehend the whole personalities of the people in your team, or work context. Generalization helps to illustrate dynamics – but people are all different and can change.

Your thoughts?

→ Consider a (homogenous) "national" work environment, where all colleagues grew up in the same culture, and where trained following a similar education system. There will be a lot of "implicit" understandings based on the similar backgrounds.

→ Compare this to an (heterogenous) "international" work environment, where colleagues come from all over the world, brought up in different education systems. You can also add diversity in terms of personalities to the equation if you'd like. There will be a lot of need to form "explicit" understanding and agree a common approach for action.

We are not making a case here that one or the other work environment is better, or more effective.
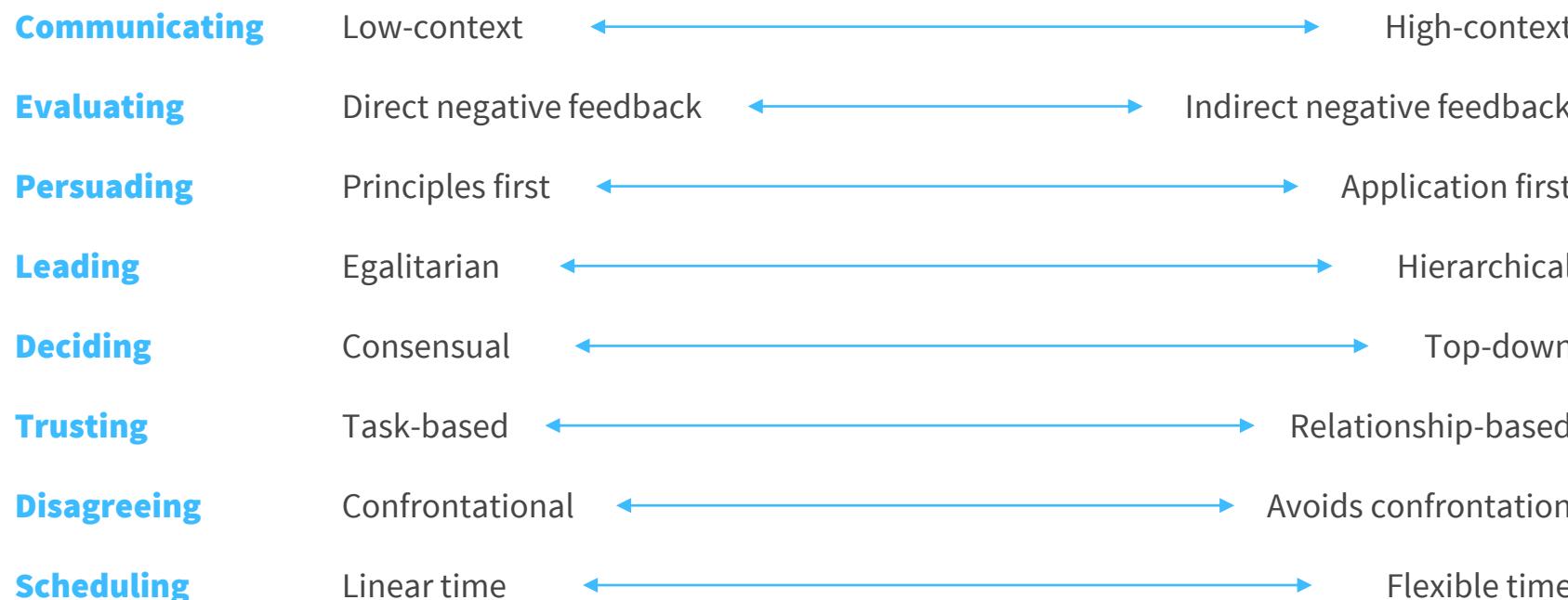
Our goal is to develop sensitivity to understand the environment around us and enable effective interactions therein.

Source: Erin Meyer (2014) The Culture Map - Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business, Public Affairs Books – you can also find further resources on www.erinmeyer.com

Framework 2/ Perspectives on team interactions (2)

→ The Culture Map illustrates key dimensions that can impact team interactions – both positively and negatively. Our goal is to become more aware of these dimensions, reflect how they might impact your specific team context, and what you can do about this.

→ **Key dimensions to consider are:**

Communicating	Low-context ←——————→	High-context
Evaluating	Direct negative feedback ←——→	Indirect negative feedback
Persuading	Principles first ←—————→	Application first
Leading	Egalitarian ←——————→	Hierarchical
Deciding	Consensual ←——————→	Top-down
Trusting	Task-based ←——————→	Relationship-based
Disagreeing	Confrontational ←————→	Avoids confrontation
Scheduling	Linear time ←——————→	Flexible time

Detailed explanations follow on the next pages.

Framework 2/ Perspectives on team interactions (2)
Communicating

Low-context ←――――――――――――――――――→ **High-context**

Good communication is precise, simple, and clear. Messages are expressed and understood at face value. Repetition is appreciated if it helps clarify the communication.

Good communication is sophisticated, nuanced, and layered. Messages are both spoken and read between the lines. Messages are often implied but not plainly expressed.

Your thoughts?

→ Where would you place yourself in this dimension? Do you remember colleagues, which were acting in the extremes of this dimension? Any issues, effective strategies that you observed when thinking of this dimension?

Framework 2/ Perspectives on team interactions (3)
Evaluating

Direct negative feedback ←———————→ **Indirect negative feedback**

Negative feedback to a colleague is provided frankly, bluntly, honestly. Negative messages stand alone, not softened by positive ones (totally inappropriate, completely unnecessary) when criticizing. Criticism may be given to an individual in front of a group.

Negative feedback to a colleague is provided softly, subtly, diplomatically. Positive messages are used to wrap negative ones. Qualifying descriptors are often used (sort of appropriate, slightly unprofessional) when criticizing. Criticism is given only in private.

Consider the relation to the communicating dimension:

How direct/indirect negative feedback can be communicated in explicit (low-context) or implicit (high-context) ways?

Your thoughts?

→ Where would you place yourself in this dimension? Do you remember colleagues, which were acting in the extremes of this dimension? Any issues, effective strategies that you observed when thinking of this dimension?

Framework 2/ Perspectives on team interactions (4)
Persuading

Principles first ←――――――――――――――――→ **Application first**

Individuals have been trained to first develop the theory or complex account concept before presenting a fact, statement, or opinion. The preference is to begin a message or report by building up a theoretical argument before moving into a conclusion. The conceptual principles underlying each situation are valued.

Individuals are trained to begin with a fact, statement, or opinion and later add concepts to back up or explain the conclusions, as necessary. The preference is to begin with a message or report with an executive summary or bullet points. Discussions are approached in a practical, concrete manner. Theoretical or philosophical discussions are avoided in a business context.

Your thoughts?

→ Where would you place yourself in this dimension? Do you remember colleagues, which were acting in the extremes of this dimension? Any issues, effective strategies that you observed when thinking of this dimension?

Egalitarian ←————————————————→ **Hierarchical**

The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is low. The best boss is a facilitator among equals. Organizational structures are flat. Communication often skips hierarchical lines.

The ideal distance between the boss and a subordinate is high. The best boss is a strong director who leads from the front. Organizational structures are multilayered and fixed. Communication follows set hierarchical lines.

In hierarchical contexts, people are less likely to voice disagreement with their boss openly.

They will also seek a formal "ok" before taking action more often than in egalitarian cultures.

Communication is at the same hierarchy level only (position matters) and seldomly across.

Your thoughts?

→ Where would you place yourself in this dimension? Do you remember colleagues, which were acting in the extremes of this dimension? Any issues, effective strategies that you observed when thinking of this dimension?

Deciding

management **kits**

Consensual ⟷ **Top-down**

Decisions are made in groups through unanimous agreement.

Decisions are made by individuals (usually the boss only).

Your thoughts?

→ Where would you place yourself in this dimension? Do you remember colleagues, which were acting in the extremes of this dimension? Any issues, effective strategies that you observed when thinking of this dimension?

Framework 2/ Perspectives on team interactions (7)
Trusting

Task-based ←————————————→ **Relationship-based**

Trust is built through business-related activities. Work relationships are built and dropped easily, based on the practicality of the situation. You do good work consistently, you are reliable, I enjoy working with you. I trust you.

Trust is built through sharing meals, evening drinks, and visits at the coffee machine. Work relationships build slowly over the long term. I've seen who you are at a deep level. I've shared personal time with you, I know other well who trust you, I trust you.

Your thoughts?

→ Where would you place yourself in this dimension? Do you remember colleagues, which were acting in the extremes of this dimension? Any issues, effective strategies that you observed when thinking of this dimension?

Disagreeing

management **kits**

Confrontational

Disagreement and debate are positive for the team and organization. Open confrontation is appropriate and will not negatively impact the relationship

Avoids confrontation

Disagreement and debate are negative for the team or organization. Open confrontation is inappropriate and will break group harmony or negatively impact the relationship.

Also consider how emotions can be different for both settings.

While you might be in an equally confrontational (or avoiding confrontation settings) some cultures will express emotions openly, and others suppress their emotions through a more rational communication.

Your thoughts?

→ Where would you place yourself in this dimension? Do you remember colleagues, which were acting in the extremes of this dimension? Any issues, effective strategies that you observed when thinking of this dimension?

Framework 2/ Perspectives on team interactions (9)
Scheduling/Time

Linear time ←————————————→ **Flexible time**

Project steps are approached in a sequential fashion, by completing one task before the next. One thing at a time. No interruptions. The focus is on the deadline and sticking to the schedule. Emphasis is on promptness and good organization over flexibility.

Project steps are approached in a fluid manner, changing tasks as opportunities arise. Many things are dealt with at once and interruptions are accepted. The focus is on adaptability, and flexibility is valued over organization.

Your thoughts?

→ Where would you place yourself in this dimension? Do you remember colleagues, which were acting in the extremes of this dimension? Any issues, effective strategies that you observed when thinking of this dimension?