5 tips to immediately improve **team interactions**

1 'Break the ice' more often

'Icebreakers' are popular introduction activities that help team members get to know each other better. However, when projects start it's easy to become focused on tasks and deadlines – and overlook the people in the team. Add a short icebreaker activity in the middle of a project to pull the team back together during stressful times.

2 Remember the two Cs

A well-known study of high-performing teams in the US Navy* showed that **competence** and **collaboration** were primary features. In these successful teams, each team member demonstrated specific task-oriented competence and a willingness to collaborate. If you make sure that your team members have the two Cs, you'll see the team work more efficiently and perform to a higher level.

3 Make leaders self-aware

If a leader's behaviors do not match the team members' interpersonal needs, it can cause misunderstandings and miscommunication. For example, if a team member has a high need for inclusion, but the leader shows a low level of inclusive behavior, the team member could believe they're not trusted or valued. A self-aware leader will know how they are perceived by team members – and will act to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

4 Don't judge a book by its cover

Some people are easy to read. What they say and what they want is the same, but some people aren't like that. Some people act one way but want something different, and this can cause miscommunication. To reduce the chances of this happening, remember that what you see isn't necessarily what you get.

5 Use an agenda to reduce tension

A good agenda does two things. It guides a meeting toward action or closure, and it acts like a facilitation guide for the leader. This can be useful when team members want independence but the leader tends to have a micro-management approach. By setting an agenda, asking for input and then allowing the agenda to guide facilitation of the meeting, tension can be reduced. An agenda can increase trust within the team.

Build on these tips and find new ways to improve team performance with the FIRO-B (Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation Behavior) instrument.

Based on people's interpersonal needs for **inclusion, control** and **affection**, the FIRO-B tool shows the dynamics between people in teams. It also shows that what people say and what they want from others can be very different. The FIRO-B tool gives you a framework for understanding interactions better.

Learn more about the FIRO-B instrument, how you can become certified to administer it and how to incorporate it into your training programs at **www.themyersbriggs.com**

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