

## WHAT MAKES AN ADAPTABLE TEAM: PLAYING TO ALL YOUR STRENGTHS

**Do you and your team fully appreciate the strengths that you have between you? Are you making full use of them for the shared purpose?**

Team members have at least two types of role. The first are the formal or functional roles defined by a job description. The second are the informal roles derived from personality and experience. Examples of the latter might be:

- Some people thrive when they are organising work, whilst others ensure delivery
- Some are strong at exploring creative solutions to problems, whilst others excel at hard-headed evaluation of the options
- Some act as guardians of relationships, ensuring there is trust within the team, and good connections with stakeholders.
- Many will have networks or knowledge from their life before or outside the team, which they would readily put at the service of the team if asked.

Most teams appreciate the value of understanding each other better, but the relentless pressure of business can make it hard to create the time and space, especially in an era of hybrid working.

**By always focusing on urgent tasks teams can miss opportunities to ask themselves:**

- Are we at risk of rushing to the nearest available solution? Who amongst us provides challenge when we incline to the predictable? What ensures we listen to them?
- If we are in deadlock with a stakeholder, who amongst us has the relationships that could unlock the conflict?
- If one of us is stuck on a problem, what can stop us asking for help from colleagues?
- What do we notice about our team behaviours when we disagree? Do some voices dominate whilst others go quiet? Who has the skills to alert us to what is happening within the team dynamic and encourage a more constructive approach?

When we ask people about the best teams they have known, they put **mutual trust and support** at the top of the list. They know they have each other's backs, and each feel that all their strengths are valued and used. They can enjoy engaging together, whatever the challenge.

Our current sequence of Prompts is exploring how teams can be at their best.