

TOOL DESCRIPTION

Role Negotiation



Role negotiation involves a dialogue-based workshop setting where people in certain roles negotiate their expectations of one another regarding their role fulfillment.

A change initiative often involves changes in the organizational structure (creation of new roles, changes in existing roles) and changes in the number of staff members. At the beginning of a newly defined collaboration, therefore, it is necessary to focus on the expectations of those in the cooperation and thus the expectations about different roles. The method can also be used if dissatisfaction or uncertainty is expressed about the current cooperation.





All members of a group can express their expectations about the different roles, and an open dialogue is held about the roles. In the end, more clarity should be gained regarding what can be achieved and/or what alternative behavior/actions can be offered.

Participants could be, for example, department managers and employees; section managers and departmental managers; or representatives of internal customers and representatives of departments.

The Role Negotiation method is based on the assumptions that unspoken expectations are often the basis for many misunderstandings and conflicts and that, by sharing personal expectations about others or the joint work together, the individual and collective learning processes are stimulated.

Duration 90–120 min	Participants 6–20 people	Facilitation no special material needed
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Role Negotiation | Process

Defining 10 min 	Collecting 15 min 	Negotiating 30–45 min 	Summarizing 30–45 min 
<p>Before beginning the role negotiation, it is crucial to specify the roles subject to negotiation, and this step is typically driven by a change initiative. This initial step involves setting clear boundaries by determining what/who is included and what/who is excluded from the negotiation process. Workshop organizers should provide a suggestion for which roles will be discussed in the workshop.</p>	<p>During role negotiation within the defined scope, each role, such as “department leader” and “section leader”, is allocated to a prepared pinboard. Participants outline their expectations for each role within a 15-min timeframe. For example, expectations from a department leader or section manager are specified as “What do we expect from X?” Additionally, a separate board addresses “common expectations of our cooperation”, fostering a collaborative understanding among the participants.</p>	<p>The group moves from pinboard to pinboard, addressing key questions such as the clarity of expectations, the extent of willingness to meet them and potential challenges in implementation. The goal is to create comprehensive role definitions that encompass both external and internal expectations for each role. Additionally, participants discuss alternatives if certain expectations cannot be fulfilled.</p> <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are the expectations comprehensible?• How willing are people to meet this expectation or to what extent is the implementation questionable?• If certain expectations cannot be fulfilled, what can be offered instead?	<p>The expectations were precisely documented in step 3, providing a shared picture of the expectations for each role. Now it is possible to determine what is needed to be able to turn these new envisioned roles into reality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What coordination and meeting structures, etc. do we need to act out the role properly?• What future framework could be used to dynamically develop roles further?