



Polarity Mapping – 1 hour Workshop

This is a practical, interactive exercise to help your team stop wasting energy on debates and start focusing on what matters most with a 'Yes and' mindset.

There are polarities you need to manage.

- Structure **and** flexibility.
- Speed **and** agility.
- Short-term results **and** long-term vision.

"The tyranny of the word OR pushes us to think we can only have one or the other. The genius of the word AND encourages us to pursue both simultaneously."
- Jim Collins (Author of Good to Great)

Introduction (5min)

Say: In the next 45 minutes we are going to use a polarity map to navigate team tensions.

We'll learn how to use polarity maps to explore a real tension the team faces, uncover the benefits and risks on both sides, and agree on simple actions to keep the right balance at work.

Ask: Think of a time when two opposite ideas were both true. What were they?

Explain: That's what we call a polarity, not a problem. Today, we'll learn how to balance them.

Ask: What's one recurring tension we face as a team?

Do: Capture suggestions and pick one to map together.

Examples: Planning vs action, flexibility vs structure, individual vs team goals

Build the Polarity Map (20 min)

Say: Let's brainstorm the benefits and consequences of one tension together.

Rules of brainstorming: Think outside the box. No idea is bad. Build on what somebody else said.

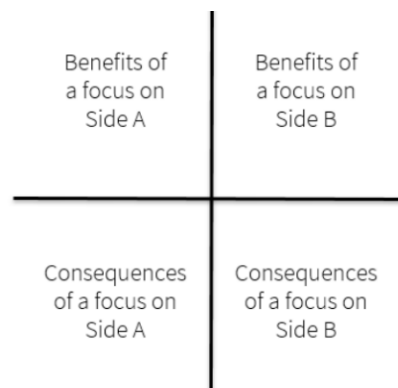
Prepare a flipchart or whiteboard. **Note:** If the team is bigger than 6 people, you could break them into two groups.

Ask 1. What is great when we focus on A?

Ask 2. What is great when we focus on B?

Ask 3. What happens when we over-focus on A?

Ask 4. What happens when we over-focus on B?





POLARITY MAPPING FACILITATION GUIDE

Stay on Course (15 min)

Ask: What warning signs will tell us we're going too far one way?

Ask: What small actions or steps could help us stay balanced?

Wap up & Close (10 min)

Ask: What's one insight you're taking from this conversation?

Ask: Where else could we use this tool as a team?

Agree on 1-2 next steps for applying the polarity map insights in your work.

Facilitation Tips

- Keep energy high. Don't let them overthink.
- Stay neutral. Don't favor one side.
- Draw out quieter voices by inviting individuals by name.
- Reframe conflict as healthy tension, not something to fix.
- Summarize key points visually as you go.

