

Start, Stop, and Continue

Context for Use: Members of an interdependent team that works together daily provide feedback to each other to improve performance and/or relationships. This is an emotionally intense process in which team members reveal their innermost thoughts about each other.

Size of Group: Two to 12. The more members, the longer the activity. Each member adds about 45 minutes to the activity.

Overview of the Activity: In the first phase, each member receives one worksheet for each team member. Each individual makes three lists for each member of the team—what they want each member to start doing, stop doing, and continue doing. In the second phase, the facilitator compiles the individual lists. Finally, each member reads their composite list to the entire team, discusses each request, and makes commitments.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. **Prepare worksheets.** Make a copy of the Start, Stop, and Continue Worksheet at the end of this activity, or draw one for yourself. You can choose one of three versions—traits only, traits and values, or omni. The traits version asks team members to identify traits related to their demands of each other, such as the demand to stop. The traits and values option asks team members to identify values as well as traits that relate to their demands. In the omni version, members consider the entire palette of personality elements—traits, values, mental abilities, experiences, and physical characteristics. For an explanation of these five personality elements, see Chapter 6, “Fit—Building on Your Strengths,” in Howard (2013) and Chapter 5, “Defining the Self—A Matter of Style,” in Howard (2016a).
2. **Make entries.** Have participants silently fill in the left column of the three rows of the worksheet, one worksheet for each team member. So, if the team comprises eight members, each member will have eight worksheets—one for self and seven for each of the other members. This could be done as homework before this session, or you could build it into the time that the team is together. We prefer to allow people to find a quiet, private place—either indoors or outdoors—to reflect on these questions. Participants will need about 10 minutes per team member to fill out the forms, so allow one hour for a team of six. Here are the instructions:

- a. **Start.** Think of behaviors, policies, practices or other things that the target person does not do that would benefit you and the team if they were to begin doing them. For example, they might not ask anyone to review important documents before transmitting them. Perhaps that person has a low C1: Perfectionism score, but also has a higher A1: Others' Needs score and would find it natural to take a moment to minimize the risk of an embarrassing document representing the team.
 - b. **Stop.** Think of all the behaviors, policies, practices, or other things that the other person does that are detrimental to you and/or your team. For example, the other person may poke fun at your dietary idiosyncrasies, which is characteristic of their low E6: Tact.
 - c. **Continue.** Think of behaviors, policies, practices or other things that the other person has already been doing, and that support you and/or the team. For example, they might have a habit of praising your work publicly, at staff meetings and other settings, perhaps because they are high in A1: Others' Needs, high in A3: Humility, and low in A4: Reserve.
 - d. For each Start, Stop and Continue item in the left column, enter in the right column traits (and other qualities if you choose) that might help or hinder each request.
3. **Compile.** The facilitator collects all sheets. For a six-member team, that would be 36 sheets, six sets of six sheets each for each member. For example, in one set, one sheet is completed by member A about themselves, and the other five are completed by team members B, C, D, E and F about member A. And so on. The facilitator compiles the results, entering all Start suggestions for Member A on a new sheet, then all of the Stop suggestions, and finally all of the Continue suggestions. **Note:** If time and your facilities permit, it would ideal for members to complete their sheets on a computer in a Word or Excel document so that the facilitator can copy and paste to create the composites. Having participants email their Start, Stop and Continue suggestions to the facilitator speeds up the compilation. Participants could send one email for each team member, with that team members' name in the subject field. Or they could send a single email with headers for each team member and subheads for Start, Stop and Continue suggestions. Alternatively, you could use a wiki app, such as WikiTouch, or a survey app, such as Google Forms. It would be ideal to then sort the suggestions alphabetically within each of the three sections in order to mask authorship of individual items.

- 4. Sharing and Negotiating.** The team convenes to evaluate all of the Start, Stop, and Continue suggestions. The emphasis is on the substance of the suggestions, and not on their source—all too often people discount suggestions based on who made them. In most cases, the leader of the team goes first, but it is fine to ask for volunteers. Each member will spend about 30 minutes as the focus person. The first person in the “hot seat” will read the suggestions item by item, something like this: “Someone suggests that I start having others take a look at my major documents before sending them to customers. Could we discuss this—I’m not sure if the suggestion is to send all documents to review or just certain ones. And to whom? Who has time to do this?” The focus person agrees to the suggestion or rejects it. Ideally, the team should reach consensus about whether a suggestion is good and should be implemented. However, that is not always possible. After all items have been evaluated, thank the focus person and move on to the second person.

**Possible Variation:**

1. A similar exercise called “Resent, Demand and Appreciate” is aimed at students. (<http://education-counsel.blogspot.com/2010/03/resent-demand-and-appreciate.html>). Our first encounter with this exercise was in Simon, Howe, & Kirschenbaum (1995), pp. 287-290. These three writers used the term “Demand” in an earlier edition, but they have since softened it to “Request,” as in Resent, Request, and Appreciate.

Start, Stop, and Continue Worksheet (Traits Only)

Name: _____

<p>Start: Behaviors, habits, policies, practices that you would like this person to start doing, or do much more of.</p>	<p>Traits that might make it natural to start each item, or make it difficult to start:</p>
<p>Stop: Behaviors, habits, policies, practices that you would like this person to stop doing, or do much less of.</p>	<p>Traits that might make it unnatural to stop each item, or might make it easier to stop:</p>
<p>Continue: Behaviors, habits, policies, practices that you would like this person to continue doing, to stay the course.</p>	<p>Traits that sustain each item, or traits that might make it difficult to sustain:</p>

Start, Stop, and Continue Worksheet (Traits & Values)

Name: _____

<p>Start: Behaviors, habits, policies, practices that you would like this person to start doing, or do much more of.</p>	<p>Traits and values that might make it natural to start each item, or make it difficult to start:</p>
<p>Stop: Behaviors, habits, policies, practices that you would like this person to stop doing, or do much less of.</p>	<p>Traits and values that might make it unnatural to stop each item, or might make it easier to stop:</p>
<p>Continue: Behaviors, habits, policies, practices that you would like this person to continue doing, to stay the course.</p>	<p>Traits and values that sustain each item, or traits and values that might make it difficult to sustain:</p>

Stop, Start, and Continue Worksheet (Omni)

Name: _____

<p>Start: Behaviors, habits, policies, practices that you would like this person to start doing, or do much more of.</p>	<p>Traits, values, experiences, mental abilities, and physical characteristics that might make it natural to start each item, or make it difficult to start:</p>
<p>Stop: Behaviors, habits, policies, practices that you would like this person to stop doing, or do much less of.</p>	<p>Traits, values, experiences, mental abilities, and physical characteristics that might make it unnatural to stop each item, or might make it easier to stop:</p>
<p>Continue: Behaviors, habits, policies, practices that you would like this person to continue doing, to stay the course.</p>	<p>Traits, values, experiences, mental abilities, and physical characteristics that sustain each item, or that might make it difficult to sustain:</p>