Team Growth Canvas

For a shared understanding of ambitions and needs.
Commitment to continuous improvement big or small.
To communicate direction, intent, actions, and outcomes.

✉ breijer.matthijs@gmail.com
in https://www.linkedin.com/in/matthijsbreijer/

Team Growth Canvas

Introduction

Growth (change) is inherently messy. Contexts, challenges, and needs will vary from person to person, team to team. Additionally, our context, challenges and needs tend to evolve over time as new insights emerge.

The Team Growth Canvas is designed to elicit conversations as a means to discover new information, define actions, and achieve outcomes for the team and its stakeholders. The intention is to foster reflection, interaction, and action!

The Team Growth Canvas can be used independently or in addition to other Canvases. For example, this Team Growth Canvas can be used as an extension of the [Team Canvas](#) to make it more actionable.

In a nutshell, the Team Growth Canvas enables teams to:
- Have a shared understanding of the team's own ambitions and needs
- Commit to continuous improvement, big or small
- Communicate direction, intent, actions, and outcomes they aspire
- To take ownership of their improvement initiatives as an integrated part of their day-to-day work

Credits

I have used a [similar format](#) in the past which came from The Liberators (Barry Overeem & Christiaan Verwijs). This format reduces an improvement initiative to 4 straightforward and powerful steps:
1. Awesome state
2. Challenges
3. Next state
4. First steps

Lastly, a big shoutout to Ân Doan and Daniël de la Parra for their contributions regarding the Team Growth Canvas, its application, and for reviewing the writing within this document.

Team Growth Canvas

Team	Date

Direction

Awesome state

1

Context

Challenges

2

Internal — External

Learning goals

3

Personal — Team

Actions

Next State

4

First Steps

5

Outcome/Impact

What will change for ourselves?

6

What will change for others?

7

Measures

8

Team Growth Canvas Facilitation

Getting started

The Team Growth Canvas is intended to provide a structure for uncovering contextual details, making them actionable and measurable, and fostering the right conversations.

Each step comes with suggested facilitation options. The best approach may vary depending on your team's needs and preferences. If you feel deviating from the recommended facilitation options is preferable, you are encouraged to do so.

Filling in the canvas with your team will take approximately 2 to 3 hours.

Setting the stage

Set the stage by describing the context in which the team operates. Explain why you are going through the exercise of creating the canvas.

The Team Growth Canvas is a tool that helps teams communicate more effectively. It can also be used to bring balance to a top-down heavy culture by expressing direction and intent to remain (or become) a well performing team. Expressing direction and intent allows for constructive conversations between different layers of the organization.

Facilitation options
1. (Re)iterate over the team's purpose
2. Have a product owner, coach, manager share what the general direction is for the product/team/department/organization

1 Awesome State

Build a shared understanding of what the team would be like when it is high-performing.

What does a high-performing team look like? For example, pick the best team you were part of. It can be any kind of team; product development, management, sports? What made it work?

What behaviors does a high-performing team display? What practices do they apply? How do they interact within the teams and with others? What support do they have and from whom? What technical capabilities do they have?

Facilitation options
- 1-2-4-All with grouping of the input and reducing every input-group to their essence.

Additional considerations
- Make use of a Skill Matrix to clarify which skills the team would ideally have as well as visualize the current situation. This could help moving towards multi-disciplinary/cross-functional teams.

2 Challenges

Describe what hurdles the team needs to overcome and identify them as being internal or external.

Internal challenges are immediately actionable as they are within the team's span of control. External challenges are mostly within the team's span of influence. External challenges will often relate to how others perceive the team's effort, their quality of work, or a form of dependency.

Potential challenges can be identified with relation to:
- The product (quality, customer outcomes)
- Product delivery (automation, quality, time to market)
- Process (flow of work, quality, decision making)
- Collaboration within the team
- Collaboration with other teams, stakeholders, or customers
- Feedback from outside the team

Facilitation options
- 1-2-4-All and map the input as being internal/external
- Use TRIZ with the Awesome State as a starting point

3 Learning Goals

Clarify what we want to learn as an individual and/or as a team. Increased awareness of individual and overall learning goals makes it easier to include people in work activities that will contribute to their growth.

Facilitation options
- Have participants prepare their individual learning goals beforehand to more on to the next point;
- 1-All, if multiple persons share the same goal, consider turning it into a team goal

4 Next State

Consider the Challenges and Learning Goals identified in previous steps and determine what the team's Next State should be in order to overcome (or improve on) those challenges. The Next State would ideally be 2-3 months away.

Remind the team that this step is about describing the state the team needs to be in, not the improvements that need to be implemented to get there!

Results could include (but are not limited to) improved capabilities along the lines of:
- levels of domain knowledge
- technical quality of the product
- flow of work
- mastery of a certain technology
- levels of communication and collaboration
- knowledge of the product and the problems it solves

Facilitation options
- 1-2-4-All

5 First Steps

List the actions we need to take the coming 2-4 weeks or less to move towards the Next State.

Facilitation options
1. 1-2-4-All
2. Create 15% solutions for (some) parts of the Next State.
3. List actions and prioritize based on impact and effort.

6 What will change for ourselves?

Consider what the effects would be if the team is in their Next State. In what way will they yield the benefits of their improvements? What dfference will the team perceive? Will the team be able to better serve it's customers, users, or stakeholders?

The invitation to the conversation would simply be "When we have achieved the Next State, what will have changed for ourselves?"

Note that step 6 and 7 are of very similar nature. .Asking "When we have achieved the Next State, what will have changed?" could suffice. It would just require a step to split the answers across the appropriate boxes in step 6 and 7.

Facilitation options
- Open conversation
- 1-All
- Conversation Café

7 What will change for others?

Similar to step 6 but with an outward focus. What will change for others? What will others outside the team notice as a result of all the improvement actions taken?

Examples could be:
- The team is able to respond to requests sooner
- A decrease in error notifications in the product
- Increase in product uptime

Facilitation options
- Open conversation
- 1-All
- Conversation Café

Measures

Considering the anticipated outcomes in step 6 and 7. What would make good measures to communicate what the improvements were exactly once implemented?

Facilitation options
- Open conversation
- 1-2-4-All
- Conversation Café

What to do from hereon?

Now that you've filled in your canvas it is time to act!

Integrate the actions into your planning. Make sure the team reflects frequently on their progress towards the Next State. Adapt the approach if necessary to get results. And remember to share the results you've achieved!

Closure

I'm hoping this canvas has proven to be helpful in your team's journey. I would love to hear how this canvas has been of help! Also, for questions, feedback and/or tips feel free to reach out!

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By Matthijs Breijer