

PLAYBOOK

NEW WAYS OF WORKING FOR 2021 AND BEYOND

What did 2020 reveal about what is possible?

august



“ I’d say that 2020 was a trainwreck and a shitshow, but that would be offensive to trains and shit.”

– Leslie Jones, comedian

2020 was hard. We struggled to survive the COVID-19 pandemic. Millions of people fought for racial justice – in the streets, in governments, in local communities, and in our workplaces. And while we may be exhausted, the difficulties and challenges we faced also showed us what might be possible – if we are willing (or forced) to let go of some deeply held expectations and assumptions about how we work.

As we look ahead, eager to get to the other side of this period of crisis, we should take a moment to appreciate what 2020 revealed about how adaptable we can be, how we can support our teammates, and how resilient our organizations can be if we are willing to embrace change.

Our team at August has been inspired by how our clients responded to the challenges of the past year. Having led change with many different organizations over many years, it was incredible to see what leaders and teams were capable of.

We saw senior leaders trusting their teams, and committing to new decision-making processes that pushed authority toward the edges of the organization. We saw teams become more nimble by quickly adjusting priorities, limiting work in progress, and letting go of the need for overly detailed long-term plans. We saw individuals demonstrate vulnerability, bravery, and empathy for each other as they did their best to support each other through incredible personal and professional adversity.

This is a way of showing up at work that we have been advocating for and trying to help organizations develop for years. 2020 turned out to be a looking glass, revealing that this shift was more urgent and more possible than ever before.

Here are **5 specific mindset and behavior shifts** that we believe can be a foundational playbook for a new way of working.

2020

5 Shifts

New Ways of Working for 2021 and Beyond

FROM	TO	BEHAVIORS	PRACTICES
1 Plan to Predict	Plan to Change	• Evolve planning processes to focus on how to respond to continuous change, instead of focusing on how to execute with certainty.	• Prioritization Matrix – Evaluate ideas by defining two different criteria and mapping options against the criteria
2 Tools	Enablers	• Default to open, shared, online collaboration and communication to increase trust and speed.	• Work in Public – Share work in progress as you go to increase transparency, collaboration and learning
3 Lead by Telling	Lead by Listening	• Focus on how to create space for team members to speak up and feel heard, even over focusing on what the team needs to accomplish.	• Psychological Safety – A team environment where people can speak up and share ideas without fear
4 Is it Right?	Is it Safe to Try?	• Commit to decisions as soon as everyone consents that the way forward is worth trying, rather than waiting to find the perfect path.	• Consent – A way to make decisions that includes dissenting perspectives while also prioritizing progress over perfection
5 Diversity	Racial Equity	• Move beyond messages of support, and take accountability for the role of the organization in upholding systems of racial oppression.	• Rounds – Letting each person speak one at a time, in turn, without interruption Take Space / Make Space – A mindset and method to create space to hear all voices equally Intent vs. Impact – Separating what we intended from how our actions impacted the other person

1

FROM

Plan to Predict

TO

Plan to Change

Resilient organizations learned to let go of their need for certainty in 2020.

In more ordinary times, detailed planning could minimize wasted time and effort in the future. But 2020 showed us that the act of crafting detailed plans can itself be a waste of time and effort when the circumstances around you are constantly changing. Effective organizations evolved their planning processes to focus on how to respond to continuous change, instead of focusing on how to execute with certainty.

What did 2020 reveal?

The COVID-19 pandemic had a tsunami-like impact on businesses across the globe. At first it seemed like a distant and contained problem, and then it suddenly brought work to a screeching halt. Glancing back at headlines from mid-March 2020, it's remarkable to see both the level of alarm and how much we were underestimating the scale and duration of the crisis. Entire global industries shut down in a matter of weeks – overnight in some cases. Travel, public and private transportation, food and hospitality, entertainment, and retail businesses shuttered. Hoping at first that it would just be a temporary setback, businesses soon faced the harsh reality that survival would require massive changes to how they operate.

When your organization faces this level of disruption, what happens to your long-term plans and strategic roadmaps?

Every leader wishes they had a clear and trustworthy map that shows every task, milestone, and deadline

between where you are now and where you want to end up. We know, however, that things never go exactly according to plan – especially in an environment that is as unpredictable as the one we're in now.

Of course it's still important to consider options and be thoughtful about your way forward, but in a constantly changing environment detailed plans are like new cars – they begin to lose value the moment you drive them off the lot. As President Dwight Eisenhower put it, “Planning is essential. Plans are useless.”

Successful organizations learned to embrace uncertainty, and put their energy into practices that make it easy to adjust course as new information emerges.

Putting it into practice

A global CPG company had just celebrated the completion of a shiny new 2025 strategic plan, complete with a launch party, in January 2020.

Within 2 months the pillars of the new strategy – including bold innovation in natural products and sustainable packaging – had to be put on hold, replaced by the need to meet skyrocketing demand for anti-bacterial and sanitizing products. Suddenly, future growth was dependent on work that had just been deprioritized.

Using a disciplined, dynamic and fast prioritization process, leadership organized sprint teams to navigate competing priorities, and established a weekly cadence to evaluate progress and pivot as needed.

Using an agile prioritization process, the business stayed focused through immense uncertainty, and delivered one of the strongest years in recent history.

Getting Started

A practice we've seen be effective in making it easier to adjust plans, is a simple model for prioritization that we call the Prioritization Matrix. The practice helps teams make faster decisions about what to do now, what to put off until later, and what to eliminate.

When you're navigating a complex and quickly changing environment, it's important to keep things simple. This practice allows you to think strategically without getting bogged down in analysis paralysis.

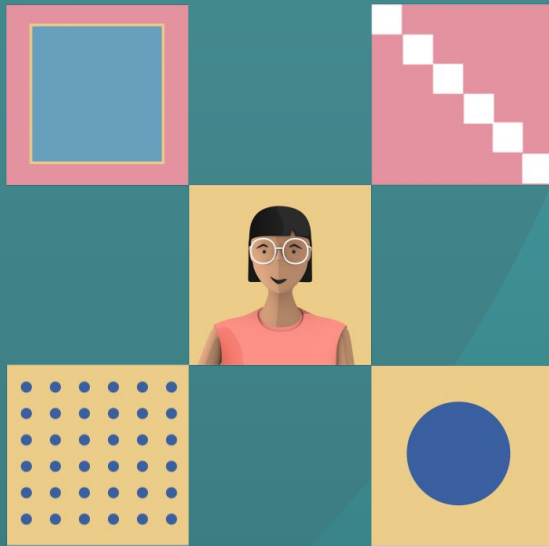
For most important decisions and projects people want to hold on to multiple actions. People are reluctant to give up things that they are personally responsible for. People have a bias to keep investing time and energy in things that they've already invested in - even when it may not be useful anymore. And people are attracted to new ideas. But, when you are trying to adapt to a quickly changing environment, trying to do everything slows you down and inhibits your ability to learn what can work best.

A few prioritization criteria that we have seen be useful to different leadership teams, include:

- Speed of learning
- Value to users/customers
- Impact on business performance
- Impact on growth
- Impact on profit
- Feasibility / ease of doing
- Potential upside
- Near-term impact

PRACTICE: PRIORITIZATION MATRIX

PRIORITIZATION MATRIX



Decide what to prioritize by simply defining and weighing two different criteria

PRIORITIZATION MATRIX

A method to evaluate ideas by defining two different criteria and mapping options against the criteria for prioritization

FACILITATION STEPS

1. Identify two different criteria
2. Rate each option as higher or lower across both criteria
3. Map the options in the 2x2 matrix
4. Review and commit!

Example:

CRITERIA A

Maybe Zone
(consider doing these)

Priority Zone
(do these)

CRITERIA B

Danger Zone
(avoid / stop doing)

Maybe Zone
(consider doing these)

SAMPLE CRITERIA

IMPACT

COST

FEASIBILITY

POTENTIAL UPSIDE

DESIRABILITY

USE THIS TO

Break down and compare options to deal with a complex issue

Understand multiple factors influencing a decision

Frame a discussion with your team on what decision to make

2


FROM
Tools

TO
Enablers

According to a McKinsey study* from October 2020, organizations implemented changes to increase remote working and collaboration 43x faster than they expected, in an average of just 10.5 days compared to their previous estimation of 454 days. Before COVID-19, people used web-based work software as a necessity, while preferring to “take it offline” when possible. The forced, mass-adoption of online communication and collaboration tools, however, showed us that some tech solutions can actually make work better.

* SOURCE:
<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/how-covid-19-has-pushed-companies-over-the-technology-tipping-point-and-transformed-business-forever>

What did 2020 reveal?



At the beginning of March 2020, we joined one of our clients for their annual global sales conference in Las Vegas. Days later the company cancelled all business travel, and within a week had closed its offices and instructed all employees to work from home. The move to remote working was sudden.

For many people, it's been a long time since we've been able to work with our colleagues in person. Daily check-ins, weekly project updates, collaboration sessions, and strategic planning workshops have all moved online. Learning and training activities have moved online. Reviews and feedback moments have moved online. Team building and bonding activities have moved online.

There are some aspects of being in-person that have been irreplaceable. We miss the social connection, the unplanned creativity and cross-pollination of ideas, and being able to understand each other without a digital filter.

But, being forced to adopt online tools for communication and collaboration has also had its

benefits. In most large organizations, it was common before the pandemic for some individuals to be remote while the rest of their team was physically colocated. Moving to all-remote helped to level the playing field and made it easier for all team members to feel equally included. We also saw teams become more critical of their meeting time. Teams became more focused on the purpose of every meeting, and adopted stricter agendas and processes.

When it came to learning and knowledge sharing, organizations traded bespoke in-person experiences for more scalable digital experiences. While online learning may not be able to provide the same level of depth, online learning can be more accessible, making it easier for more people to learn and contribute regardless of their location or role in the company.

Of course, new tech tools can't solve problems by themselves. The people using the tools need to change their behaviors and habits, as well, in order to make the most of what the tools offer, seeing tools as enablers for better ways of working.

Putting it into practice

In 2019 a multinational pharmaceutical and life sciences company had made a commitment to a global rollout of Microsoft Teams. But, as in many corporations, it was hardly in use. People still preferred to get work done in hallway chats, phone calls and in-person meetings.

When COVID-19 restrictions forced everyone to work from home, there was genuine concern among leadership about how work would get done. Suddenly, Microsoft Teams came to life. One-to-one private email conversations moved to shared, open channels. Working documents moved from private desktops to shared online folders. Project management moved from cumbersome spreadsheets to web-based agile task-management tools.

Less than a year later, leaders credited the new ways of working enabled by these tech tools with unlocking speed, improving customer centricity, and increasing adaptivity across the organization.

Getting Started

Even before the pandemic forced everyone to work remotely, we observed common problems across many different client organizations. People received feedback too late in the process, leading to wasted time and stressful fire drills. People lacked transparency about teammates' progress and individual priorities. People got stuck waiting for teammates to complete tasks while navigating competing schedules. And people put too much energy into trying to make work "perfect" before sharing it with key stakeholders.

Being unable to work together in person made these issues even worse.

One specific practice that we saw successful organizations embrace to avoid these problems was a practice we call Work in Public.

When everyone is relying on the same online collaboration tools, it becomes even more useful to ensure that everyone has easy access to the information they need to do their work.

Work in Public is a practice of sharing work as it is developed, rather than each person doing work separately and privately. Rather than waiting to share work and orchestrating a "grand reveal," we share our work as we go.

Work in Public makes it possible for anyone to participate in the work, no matter what stage the work is in, no matter what time of day, no matter where they are located.

When teammates can see the progress their teammates are making, they can help each other make progress more quickly. We move faster, and accomplish more work in less time, with less wasted effort.

PRACTICE:
WORK IN PUBLIC

WORK IN PUBLIC



Accelerate feedback and learning and
avoid wasting time and effort

WORK IN PUBLIC

Sharing work in progress with users and teammates as you go to increase transparency, collaboration and learning

STRATEGIES FOR WORKING IN PUBLIC:

Focus on
content first

Simple document formats, without design, make it easier for others to engage

Share a
“live link”

Live, web-based documents ensure a single source of truth; email attachments become outdated quickly

Avoid the
“Grand Reveal”

Waiting for the work to be perfect before sharing makes it harder to change course

USE THIS TO

Gather
feedback on an
early draft /
prototype of
your work

Test your
assumptions about
what users need
and what they
really value

Tell your team that
you are working on
something, and are
open to
collaboration

3

FROM

Lead by Telling

TO

Lead by Listening

In 2020, leaders were reminded that asking the right question can be more valuable than having the right answer.

For many people 2020 was one of the most difficult years of their life. Personal and professional hardship collided, impacting our work lives in ways we couldn't have imagined. Effective leaders leaned on their empathic skills, focusing on how to create space for team members to speak up and feel heard. We learned that good leadership depends on helping the team to listen and learn together.

What did 2020 reveal?

The hardship of 2020 required teammates to listen and try to understand each other beyond day-to-day work tasks in a new way. We learned about many different care-giving challenges - children, partners, aging parents, and others. We got a crash-course in online education. We became virtual guests in each other's homes. And we dealt with loss, grief, anger, and depression.

As teams found their way through this, thinking perhaps that this “emotional” work was a distraction from their “real” work, they were actually building a capacity that is at the core of great business performance. Teams cultivated environments where people can speak up and share ideas - even risky or challenging ideas - without fear.

We saw leaders show up in a new way. Leaders focused on what the team was trying to learn, even over what they had to do. Leaders asked questions that sparked curiosity and inspired creativity. Leaders

held space so that people with different, and even dissenting perspectives could be heard.

This ability to speak up is essential when we face our most challenging moments together. When personal difficulties made it hard to contribute in the same ways we were used to. When economic disruption made business-as-usual impossible. When we needed to help each other just get through the next week, the next day, or the next meeting. These were the moments when courage was critical.

When our team's success depends on someone sharing a thought or idea that might be hard for others to accept or understand - they must feel able to speak up, and we must be able to listen. Our teammates feel heard. And we learn and respond together.

Putting it into practice

A national nonprofit organization that provides health care services was already facing significant headwinds before the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic. And, as an organization that is committed to providing equitable access to health care for all people, the organization was deeply affected by the 2020 protests for racial justice.

Even as the needs of the patients and communities they served increased, leaders in the organization recognized that it was critically important to foster a culture where everyone could speak up with their ideas, listen deeply to each other, and learn together through a turbulent time.

August worked with this partner to quickly create and deliver a set of trainings focused on Psychological Safety and leading through change with empathy. These skills supported the organization in navigating the unique challenges of 2020 with humanity.

3 // From **Lead by Telling** to **Lead by Listening**

Getting Started

A specific practice that helps to cultivate this culture of speaking up is called Psychological Safety. Amy Edmondson, Harvard Business Professor, author, and August advisor, has been researching Psychological Safety for decades and is globally recognized as the leading authority on the subject. Edmondson defines Psychological Safety as: “a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes.”

Psychological Safety is a team-based phenomenon that enables teams to learn together, take smart risks, and navigate complex and challenging situations. A [2012 internal research study conducted by Google](https://rework.withgoogle.com/guides/understanding-team-effectiveness/steps/identify-dynamics-of-effective-teams/)* found that Psychological Safety is the single most important contributing factor for team effectiveness.

Contrary to what some people assume when they hear the term, Psychological Safety does not mean seeking comfort and avoiding conflict. In fact, in a truly psychologically safe team there can be more candor, and even conflict - but it is in service of the team's work together and results in deeper respect and trust among team members.

Psychological Safety is something that we create for each other. And leaders have an especially important role to play. If you want to increase Psychological Safety within the teams you are a part of, try these behavior shifts:

- Intentionally seek out different perspectives by asking “Who has an alternative idea to share?”
- Remind people what you are trying to learn together, “Remember, here’s what we don’t know, and are trying to find out...”
- When others share a challenging or risky idea, start by thanking them and reinforce that uncomfortable ideas can be valuable.

PRACTICE:
PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

* SOURCE:
<https://rework.withgoogle.com/guides/understanding-team-effectiveness/steps/identify-dynamics-of-effective-teams/>

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



Uncover more original ideas and
different points of view

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Psychological Safety is the quality of a team environment where people can speak up and share ideas without fear

3 TIPS TO INCREASE PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------|---|
| 01 | Make space | What has your attention as we start this meeting? What questions do you have to clarify your understanding? |
| 02 | Create a learning frame | What are we uncertain about? What do we hope to learn from this work? |
| 03 | Respond productively | Thank you for sharing. What might we do differently? |

Adapted from the work of Amy C. Edmondson

USE THIS TO

Facilitate meetings where each person feels safe to speak without judgement

Help team members feel valued for their contributions

Encourage team members to share new ideas that may be risky

4

FROM

Is it Right?

TO

Is it Safe to Try?

2020 showed us that our normal ways of making decisions aren't good enough. Traditional approaches to decision-making start with the assumption that there is a “right” answer, and that the process should maximize the chances of getting to that perfect solution. Being forced to navigate such an unpredictable environment revealed that a different decision-making process that prioritizes fast learning, and starts with the assumption that the best answers are unknown can be more effective.

What did 2020 reveal?

“Let’s get in a room and hash this out.” “We can grab coffee tomorrow and I’ll update you on where we landed.” “Let’s just wait until we get aligned with our other stakeholders.” These common approaches to decision-making didn’t work so well in 2020.

As teams faced one crisis after another, we realized that not changing the way we made decisions could have a disastrous impact. Making poorly informed choices about travel policies or safety protocols could put employees at risk. Making unclear decisions or communicating decisions poorly could unintentionally undermine critical work. Taking too long to make decisions could tank a business’ profitability or cause it to miss a fleeting chance at survival.

The truth is that clear, fast, and smart decision-making was rare before the pandemic. But, until COVID-19 came along, we put up with sub-optimal decision-making habits because they were familiar (and change is hard).

When all of our decision-making went remote, however, the shortcomings of our normal methods came into starker focus. 2020 gave leaders and teams permission to rethink how we make decisions. In an uncertain environment teams need to accept the limits of the available data, make tough choices, and commit to explicit actions. When the right answers are unknown, it’s more important than ever to seek out and include different perspectives; but, you also need a way to create space for those different perspectives without slowing down.

Instead of starting with the assumption that the best decisions benefit from more time, more analysis, and more “alignment”, effective organizations recognized that optimizing for trust, speed, and learning can actually lead to better decisions.

Good decision-making empowers teams by prioritizing what’s worth trying even over what might be best.

Putting it into practice

At the end of 2019, a leading global software company committed to developing a new decision-making capability building program as a strategic pillar in a broader culture transformation that was already underway. Partnering with the Global Head of Culture, August had just started the initial phase of launching the new program in February 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

With the endorsement and active participation of the CEO, the company quickly embraced the new decision-making program and methodology and fast-tracked the creation of a scalable online learning experience. Beginning with the top 200 senior-most leaders, managers were trained on a new decision-making playbook, and used the new methods to accelerate smarter and clearer decisions to deal with the emerging business, social, and pandemic-related crises.

“The new decision-making process put us in a position to respond quickly to changing circumstances.” – SVP

4 // From **Is it Right?** to **Is it Safe to Try?**

Getting Started

One behavioral shift that was effective in driving better decision-making was moving from consensus to consent. When we wait until everyone agrees that we've chosen the ideal path forward, we're unlikely to ever move forward at all.

For most of our decisions, especially in the current, uncertain environment, we're better off trying to learn our way forward and avoiding consensus. Consensus is a high-cost decision-making method that should be reserved for very few, very high consequence decisions. Consensus seeking can also be misused as a CYA tool to share accountability for a particular decision. When we default to consensus, no single person has to take responsibility.

Instead of defaulting to consensus, the practice of Consent is a method and mindset for making smarter, faster, clearer decisions. Rather than waiting for perfect alignment, the team commits to decisions as soon as everyone consents that the way forward is safe to try.

In your next meeting ask, "Is this safe enough to try, knowing we can revisit it once we have more data?" Or "Does anyone have any data that this is not safe to try?" Or, "This might not be the perfect solution, but is it worth trying?" These pointed questions are hallmarks of a consent-based decision process.

Consent is a powerful practice to move decision-making forward. Instead of trying to find the average of all opinions or design everyone's preferred solution, we are looking for a 'safe enough to try' decision that helps us take action and learn quickly.

PRACTICE:
CONSENT

CONSENT



Hear different points of view and
commit together even when
there is disagreement

CONSENT

A way to make decisions that includes dissenting perspectives while also prioritizing progress over perfection

INSTRUCTIONS

Propose

Share context and make a specific proposal; start with “I propose we...”

Clarifying Questions

Participants ask questions to clarify their understanding; only the proposer responds

Reaction Round

In turn, each participant shares a reaction

Amend and Clarify

Proposer responds and edits their proposal based on the feedback

Objections

Is the proposal “safe to try”?

Commit together!

USE THIS TO

Make complex decisions that require integrating multiple points of view

Avoid going around and around on a decision without any progress

Eliminate “silent dissent” - people agree in the moment and undermine later

5

FROM

Diversity

TO

Racial Equity

In June 2020, millions of people across the United States, joined by many more around the world, gathered to protest ongoing police violence and America's long legacy of anti-Black systemic racism. These protests brought new attention and urgency to an ongoing movement for racial justice. For many organizations, this was a tipping point. They started to move beyond messages of support, and began to take accountability for their role in upholding systems of oppression.

What did 2020 reveal?

When it comes to truly dismantling the systems of racial oppression in the U.S. and around the world, there is so much work still to be done. The shift that some organizations started in 2020 is only a tiny sliver of a lifelong journey. And, at first, initial responses to the calls for racial justice were superficial. Company communications and marketing departments got to work quickly drafting carefully worded statements of support, without taking responsibility.

But, unlike other recent moments of protest and activism in support of racial justice, the coalition of people calling for change this time was broader and their voices were more determined than ever.

A few organizations went beyond empty messages to candidly acknowledge their responsibility and what was at stake. [Ben & Jerry's was one example](https://www.benjerry.com/about-us/media-center/dismantle-white-supremacy).*

Organizations who engaged in a true reckoning reassessed their actions as allies to those on the front lines of the fight for racial justice. Going deeper

than surface-level communications and gestures, organizations confronted how racism lives within their own organizational cultures.

They asked: Who makes decisions at the highest levels of the organization? Who controls the finances? Whose perspectives and experiences are at the center of the culture? [Cisco, for example, committed to 12 specific actions to address their role in furthering social justice](https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/about/social-justice.html).*

Importantly, some organizations looked closely at how systemic oppression conspires to make it easier for some people to get ahead while unfairly making it harder for others. They began to analyze and take initial steps to address how structural racism makes it more difficult for many people to access influence and power.

It is only a small first step, but organizations are beginning to move forward by learning and adopting new behaviors and practices that help them operationalize racial justice.

* SOURCES:
<https://www.benjerry.com/about-us/media-center/dismantle-white-supremacy>
<https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/about/social-justice.html>

Putting it into practice

A national foundation working in the public education sector committed to a broad culture transformation focused on improving diversity, equity, and inclusion internally. August began our partnership by facilitating an Equity Learning Summit. There, leaders identified different equity needs, explored different personal definitions of equity, and identified opportunities to redesign core processes with a racial equity lens.

Next, we led a 6-month learning cohort for all managers to increase foundational knowledge of equity and inclusion topics. This cohort also applied a new set of practices for everyday work that center racial equity and inclusion. These practices led to more transparent decision-making and honest conflict about the organization's big-picture strategy. Throughout the engagement, we also helped leaders get unstuck through one-on-one coaching.

Getting Started

The collision of the COVID-19 pandemic and the protests for racial justice in 2020 showed us how critical it is to ensure that we are making it as easy as possible for all people to contribute to the work of our organizations, regardless of who they are. You never know where the next great idea is going to come from.

And 2020 helped organizations recognize the cost – in lost ideas and untapped creativity – that we pay when we allow systemic racism to persist. Talent and intelligence is wasted or excluded. Innovation is thwarted. Success is blocked.

Even more important, however, than this potential impact on business performance is the cost in lost humanity. Every day, team members who hold more marginalized identities are made to feel less valuable than their more privileged colleagues.

We found three specific practices that enable organizations to operationalize their intentions to become more equitable.

A simple, but powerful, practice we call Rounds makes it easy for everyone at a meeting to be heard.

Take Space / Make Space reminds people to check their communication biases, and steer toward more balanced conversations.

Intent vs. Impact is a clear way for team members to appreciate the difference between what we may want for each other and the true effect that our actions may have.

PRACTICES:

Rounds

Take Space / Make Space

Intent vs. Impact

ROUNDS



Make every voice feel
heard & included

ROUNDS

Letting each person speak one at a time,
in turn, without interruption

TYPES

Check in To begin: What has your attention as we start this meeting?

Agenda Share topics to discuss during the meeting

Creativity Silently write down ideas, then share one person at a time

Questions What questions do you have to clarify your understanding?

Reaction Share your feedback: What works? What would you change?

Closing To end: What are you taking away from this meeting?

USE THIS TO

Include different
personalities
and ways of
communicating

Make conversations more
balanced and less
dominated by the loudest
voice in the room

Avoid defaulting
to the most
senior person's
opinion

TAKE SPACE / MAKE SPACE



Balanced and inclusive conversations

TAKE SPACE / MAKE SPACE

A mindset and practice to create space to hear all voices equally

If you are someone who normally takes up more space by speaking a lot, sit back and make space for others.

- Pause and count to three
- Only speak if you have something new to add
- W.A.I.T. – Why am I talking?

If you are someone who normally makes space by staying quiet, invite yourself to speak up.

- Ask to pause if you need more time
- Remember that your perspective is valuable

USE THIS TO

Minimize the influence of overly dominant voices

Make it easier for quieter personalities to participate

Challenge the default ways of communicating within a team

INTENT VS. IMPACT



Focus on the impact of your actions,
not on you or your good intentions

INTENT VS. IMPACT

Separating what we intended from how our actions impacted the other person

MAKE OTHERS AWARE

OBSERVATION

"I noticed that you ..."

INTERPRETATION

"I interpret this as ..."

IMPACT

"I felt hurt/frustrated/dismissed..."

REQUEST

"In the future, I'd appreciate if you..."

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

GRATITUDE

"Thank you"

REPEAT AND CLARIFY

"What I heard you say was..."

EMPATHIZE

"I can see why that made you feel..."

COMMIT

"In the future, I will..."

USE THIS TO

Avoid being defensive
or dismissive

Validate other
people's feelings

Develop empathy for other
people's experiences

Our Team

August has built a team of people who are obsessed with learning what makes organizations great, how our world is changing, and what organizations can do to create a better future for everyone.

Our team includes 8 full-time members, in New York, Oakland, Denver, and Cambridge, England.

We operate as a self-organizing and self-managing company.



For more information, or to launch your program, **contact team@aug.co**

Our Values

Team • Public Benefit • Learning • Joy • Equity

