

# 2 Strength lies in differences

## What?

This is a tool that helps you to see what you can contribute with, i.e. your knowledge, your competencies and your interests. This can also help people in a group to learn from each other and shed light on existing competencies of group members.

## Time?

30-60 minutes, depending on how many people participate.

## Why?

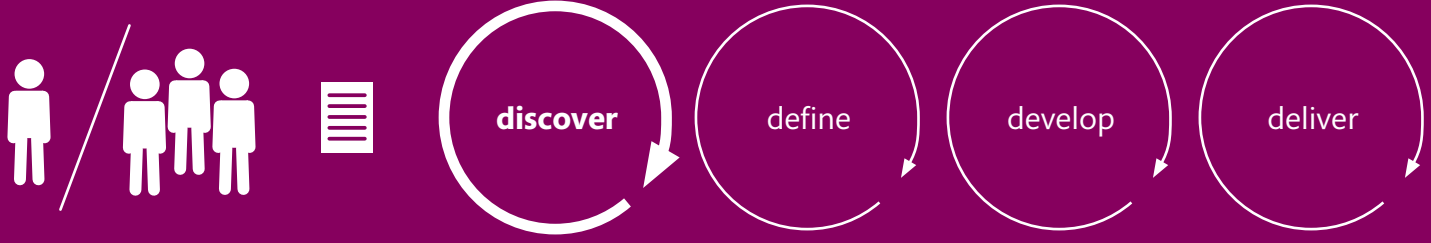
With the help of this tool, you can lay the foundations of good group processes by identifying your and others T-shape. The T-shape shows the depth of knowledge you have (the vertical part of the letter T) within a specific area or profession. It also shows what you are curious about, what other interests you have and your capacity to work across professional boundaries (the horizontal part of the letter T). You can do this alone and focus on your own competencies. If you use this tool in a group, it becomes clear which competencies there are among the participants, both on an "expert level" and an "interest level".

## What is needed?

Each participant needs a worksheet and a pen. As facilitator, it is good if you have the example adjacent to the worksheet for your reference.

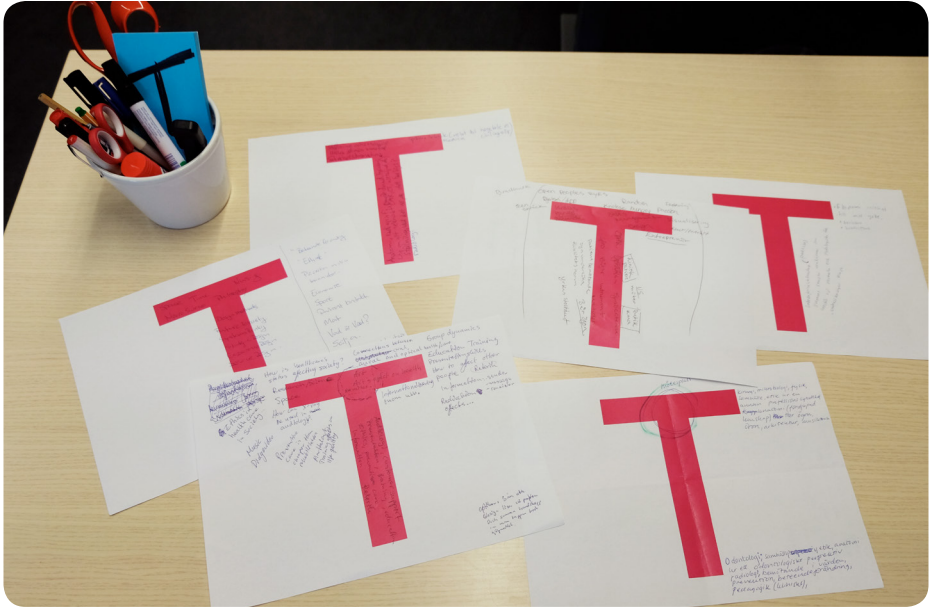
## How?

1. Ask everyone to use the worksheet and write down their own deep knowledge on the vertical part of the letter T. On the horizontal part they write down what they are curious about, what they want to know more about, or what they would like to do.
2. Give the participants enough time and encourage them to interact.
3. When you notice that everyone is finishing up, you can give the participants the opportunity to present their T-shape. Encourage the others to comment and maybe even add things if they know each other. Also try to find connections between people in the group and identify differences. Identify the diversity and bring it to attention.
4. Ask the participants if those things they are curious about match the skills and deeper knowledge that others in the group have. Maybe these people want to work together!



5. If you do this exercise to start a group project, it could be good to ask which skills are available in the group that could help to execute the project. Ask also which skills and what knowledge the group would need. Do you need to complement with some expertise in the form of more group members/project members?

6. Take notes and share them with the group after the discussion.



**Hints!**

If it's going a little bit slow you could help by explaining that deeper knowledge (vertical) is about specific knowledge and that the horizontal aspect is about things they may like to do in their spare time, i.e. things that inspire them or maybe a job they dreamt of having when they were children.

If you notice that participants find it difficult to formulate their deep knowledge or those areas they are interested in, get help from the other participants in the group who maybe know them ("But you know a lot about xxx").

**Read more**

Brown, T. (2005). Strategy by Design. *Fast Company*, (June, nr. 95). Retrieved 2015-10-02 from <http://www.fastcompany.com/52795/strategy-design>  
 Donofrio, N., Spohrer, J., & Zadeh, H. (2010). Research-Driven Medical Education and Practice: A Case for T-Shaped Professionals. *IBM Working Document*.

# Worksheet: Strength lies in differences

Interests and curiosities:  
these are fields that you  
are interested in and  
want to know more  
about

Deep knowledge: areas  
or topics that you know a  
lot about, perhaps you're  
even an expert

# Example

