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**Exercise:** Constellation Gallery**Dimension / TPI:** Diversity and Alignment**Supplies:**

Flip chart pages or other large pieces of paper. Flip chart pens for each team member. The drawings need not be color-coded so black is fine.

**Time:**

60 -90 minutes

**Set-up:**

This exercise is best in a large room with plenty of wall space so that each team member can work more or less privately on their drawing. Tape a flip chart page to the wall for each team member. Make sure the ink does not bleed through to the wall.

**Context:**

This exercise gives team members a way to visibly see how they and other team members view a particular issue or team challenge. It reveals the diversity of perspectives, opinions, and assumptions and provides the means for finding alignment.

**Instructions:**

1. Think of an issue or challenge the team is facing, especially one where there appears to be confusion about roles and responsibilities.
2. Draw a large circle. Your team and other influences that affect the team in its ability to address the challenge will be pictured using this circle. Generally speaking, inside the circle is the team's world. Outside the boundary of the large circle is the rest of the world. [*To help understand how to use this tool, imagine you are part of a team involved in a new product launch.*]



3. Place yourself **first**. As a team member, you will use a circle as a symbol. You decide on the size of the circle and the placement. You might be at the heart of the circle or further out, even outside the circle. *[If the product launch is in the center, where the light and heat of the launch are the strongest, where are you and your contribution or influence on the success of the launch? If you play a crucial role you might be near the center.]*

4. One by one place the other team members; put their initials inside the circle to identify them. Note that the members of the team too can be different sizes and can be placed either at the heart of the circle or on the periphery or even outside the circle. *[If this is a cross-functional project team, perhaps the person from finance is at the edge of the large circle or even outside whereas the team member from engineering is at the very center.]*



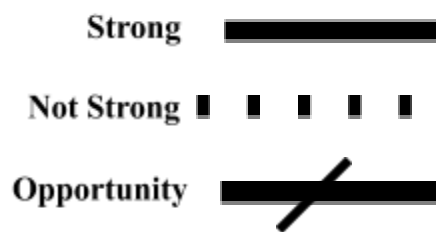
5. When all the team members are in place, think about other people, non-team members, who have influence on the success of this effort and place them on the graphic using triangles; remember to put their initials inside the symbol. *[This new product might be the pet project of the CEO, making it a high visibility project; place the CEO somewhere on the graphic.]*



6. Finally, use boxes to represent things or events, circumstances or conditions that have impact on the team's potential success. *[Things might include budget, suppliers, available raw materials, patent concerns; Events might include benchmark deadlines, a trade show, market testing, etc. A belief might be a condition that affects the result; belief that we are superstars or belief that the organization will not support us.]*

7. Next, designate the strength or weakness of the bonds between yourself and the other people, things and events in your constellation. A solid line represents a strong bond. A dotted line represents a not strong bond or relationship. Note that sometimes bonds need to be strong and they're not, and placing a dotted line is the correct representation. Sometimes a strong bond is not required and a dotted line is also the correct choice. *[In our example there might be a quality control representative on the team – an important function because this person has the power to approve or block the product release but they are not an everyday member of the team. A dotted line indicates the strength of that relationship.]*

Use a line with a slash through it to indicate a relationship that has an opportunity for action. It could be between you and a team member to resolve a conflict; it could be a contract with a supplier that needs to be negotiated; a report that is due to someone not on the team.



Connect YOURSELF to the other members first, using the lines.

8. Step back from the drawing; what do you notice? What surprises you? What needs to change? Identify 2 or 3 action steps you can take to improve this constellation. Look for the action that will have the most leverage.
9. (OPTIONAL: Take a new sheet of paper and redraw the system to reflect how **you want it to be.**)
10. You now have a gallery of visual representations showing how individual team members view the issue or challenge. Gather the team and walk the gallery as each team member in turn shares their drawing. The rest of the team may ask questions for clarification.

### **Debrief:**

The basic question for this debrief is, “What did you learn from this exercise?” And of course, the natural follow-up question would be, “What are the next action steps to take?” It’s important that team members understand that everyone had the right picture. Also, note that this exercise requires a level of vulnerability by team members—they are showing how they view relationships—coaches should be prepared for the possibility of strong emotional reactions.

\*This exercise is a variation on an exercise we first learned from The Center for Right Relationship (CRR)

