

The Collective Edge
Guide to Midpoint Reviews

The
**Collective
Edge**



"An eye-opening guide to making teams more than the sum of their individual parts. Essential reading."
—DANIEL H. PINK, author of *Drive* and *The Power of Regret*

Unlocking the Secret Power of Groups

Colin M. Fisher

The Collective Edge

Guide to Midpoint Reviews

The midpoint is an especially pronounced and predictable breakpoint [in a team's work]. Halfway through a cycle, a meeting, or a project, teams tend naturally to reorganize and reorient their processes in preparation for the second half. The midpoint, therefore, is a time when a team is likely to be ready (or, in some cases, even eager) for consultative leader interventions, which help members revise and refine their work strategy.

—Wageman, Fisher, & Hackman (2009), pp. 195

Functions of a Mid-Project Review

1. To reflect on how your individual behavior contributes to team effectiveness and solicit feedback from your teammates
2. To reflect on team goals (i.e., SMART and vivid), behavioral norms (i.e., communication, feedback mechanisms, information sharing techniques, roles), and performance strategies used in the first half of the project
3. To revise or reaffirm the goals of the project, accounting for what has happened in the first half and to tailor behavioral norms and performance strategies to the unique demands of the second half of the project
4. To identify areas in which the team needs outside knowledge, skills, or expertise
5. Design well initial sub-tasks, taking care to account for member interests and skills

Midpoint Reflection Exercise

Part I: Individual Reflection

The following questions ask about your assessment of your team's behavior thus far. Please consider in your assessment any (but not necessarily all) of the following common issues that teams need to manage:

- How the team prioritizes learning and development of members
- How clear and challenging our goals are
- How leadership and control of the group are shared among members
- How the group makes decisions and engages the commitment of members
- How the team manages feedback and check-ins
- Whether the team addresses conflict directly and productively
- How well members listen to each other
- The degree to which your team has fostered a psychologically safe climate
- How much your team fosters innovation and pursues new and better ways of working
- Any other issues you feel your team needs to manage.

As you answer these questions, please think broadly about the criteria for team effectiveness, including: (a) doing high-quality work, (b) becoming a stronger team over time, (c) the learning and satisfaction of team members, and (d) the quality of relationships between team members. If you are worried about the team achieving or balancing various effectiveness criteria, please note that in the “challenging” part of compelling direction.

A. SMART, vivid goals: Please articulate what you personally see as the team’s purpose and most important goal(s) in the remainder of this project? Why is it important to you? What, specifically, will be challenging in achieving that goal(s)?

B. Continue: What, specifically, have we done well as a team and strive to continue to do going forward?

C. Stop: What, specifically, most impeded our team effectiveness in the past and should be avoided in the future?

Part II: Team Report and Discussion (60 min)

- A. Sharing Individual Reflections from Part I-E.** Give each member a few minutes to present their self-assessments of their main contributions to the team and opportunities for improvement. The purpose is for each member to be heard and understood, not to debate these claims.
- B. Adjust and affirm the team purpose and goal (Part I-A).**
- C. Sharing Team “Continue-Start-Stop” Ideas from Part I-B, C, D.** Is there alignment between what members believe the team should do? If not, try to find consensus on the most important issues facing the team.
- D. Action Planning.** Create a concrete plan for the team to address its most pressing issues. This should include SMART goals and specific accountabilities.

Part III: Summarize the Results

Document the results of the meeting and share them with all members. If you have a Team Charter, update it to make Team Charter 2.0.