SoftSkills
FOR KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Teamwork & Leadership Teaching Toolkit

Additional Print Out Materials (Not in this document)

- 🔒 Confidential Briefs for Teamwork Role-Play - From Lab to Market Alignment Meeting
- Slides - Teamwork and Leadership Module

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Teamwork & Leadership Syllabus

Duration: Approx. 4 hours

This course introduces the concepts of teamworking and leading teams, which are key aspects of organizational and collaborative success. The principles and practices fundamental to building and leading effective teams in dynamic settings will be analysed. The conditions under which teams thrive and the factors that can hinder collaboration will be considered. The participants will gain an understanding of team dynamics, while also examining the critical behaviour and leadership styles that foster collaboration, trust, accountability, and team performance. Participants will reflect on their own team leadership experiences and develop actionable strategies to enhance team cohesion and outcomes. Real-world cases, interactive exercises, and peer feedback will provide a hands-on approach to strengthening teamwork effectiveness and team leadership capabilities.

The focus on knowledge transfer ensures that learners will be able to apply teamworking and leadership strategies and approaches in their professional knowledge transfer activities, in interactions with a range of varying stakeholders: researchers, business partners and peers.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

General objective

Strengthen professionals' ability to build, manage, and inspire effective teams. In fast-paced and complex organizational environments, team leadership is a critical capability, and teamwork is a key asset to achieve competitive and successful outcomes.

Specific ILOs

- ILO-1: Apply situational leadership approaches to guide diverse stakeholders—such as internal team, researchers, industry partners, and legal teams—toward shared knowledge transfer goals.

- ILO-2: Analyze how different leadership styles and Fiedler's Contingency Model apply to various knowledge transfer scenarios to enhance team effectiveness.
- ILO-3: Apply Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory to design motivation strategies tailored for professionals involved in research, innovation, and commercialization.
- ILO-4: Create a goal-setting framework using the "Why-How-What" model to align diverse team members around shared project outcomes in a knowledge transfer context.

Methods & Materials

Teaching Method(s)

- Group discussions & peer feedback
- Role-playing simulations
- Frontal Lecture

Required Learning Materials (during-course)

- Course slides
- Confidential Briefs for the Role-play exercise

Additional Learning Materials

- Fiedler, (1993). "The contingency model: New directions for leadership utilization". In Michael T. Matteson and John M. Ivancevich Eds. Management and Organizational Behavior Classics.
- Book by Paul Hersey: "The Situational Leader"
- Book by Simon Sinek: "Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action"
- TED Talk by Simon Sinek: https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action

Lesson Plan

30 min	**Introduction & Icebreaker** - Trainer introduces the session objectives and participants play an icebreaker game called "Pictionary Game". **Telephone Pictionary:** Participants pair up. One person describes a simple drawing (e.g., a house, a tree, or a shape) without showing it, while the other person tries to recreate it based only on the verbal description. Afterward, they compare drawings and discuss what helped or hindered understanding. Objective: Demonstrates the importance of clarity, active listening, and effective verbal communication in knowledge transfer. *Instructions for the trainer*	Group discussion
30 min	**Theories** on teamwork, leadership and motivation *More information on course slides*	Mini-lecture & Q&A
15 min	**Break**	-
75 min	**Guided Role-Play** - Participants participate in a role-play simulation focusing on internal dynamics of knowledge transfer processes, applying learned concepts. • Preparation 30 - 40 min • Negotiation 35 - 45 min Confidential Briefs for Teamwork Role-Play.docx *More information for trainers: Trainer Instructions - From Lab to Market Alignment Meeting*	Structured role-play
45 min	**Debriefing & Discussion** - Trainer and peers provide feedback on negotiation effectiveness.	Peer feedback

	More information for trainers: Trainer Instructions - From Lab to Market Alignment Meeting	
15 min	**(Optional) Action Planning & Closing** - Participants create action plans to apply teamwork and leadership skills in real-life situations.	Personal reflection

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Trainer Instructions: How to run the “From Lab to Market” roleplaying exercise

Before the Session

- ☐ Read all the materials
  - ☐ Confidential Briefs (4 Roles)
  - ☐ Trainer Introduction to Role-Play Exercise (below in this document)
  - ☐ Slides
- ☐ Print out confidential briefs for the class
- ☐ Set up the room
  - Ideally, arrange separate spaces for each group.
  - Make sure participants keep track of time

During the Session

Introduction (5 minutes)
Explain the purpose of the simulation (e.g., applying communication strategies, managing tension).

Preparation (30 minutes)

Give confidential briefs to each participant. If the number of participants is different than 4 people you have 2 alternatives:

- Make groups of 5 people: 2 people will have the same role
- Make groups of 3 people: the group won’t have the Lawyer or Business Development Lead

Emphasize the importance of active engagement, confidentiality, and staying in a role. Participants should not disclose their confidential briefs to others. They can ask you questions if needed.

Simulation (40 minutes)

- Clarify the simulation time.
- Let participants engage freely without interruption.
- Walk around, observe dynamics, but avoid intervening unless needed.
- If necessary, give a 5-minute warning before time is up.

Debriefing

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Show the summary table (Slide 18: Analysis of the Simulation)
- Give participants feedback
- Show the debriefing questions (Slide 19) to initiate further discussions

Trainer Introduction to Role-Play Exercise: From Lab to Market Alignment Meeting

The university recently secured a promising research outcome in the field of biomedical diagnostics. A prototype device developed in the lab has shown strong potential for market application. However, there is a need to align internal stakeholders before proceeding with external partnerships, IP protection, and possible spin-off discussions.

An alignment meeting is called by the **Knowledge Transfer Officer (KTO)** to:

1. Clarify the next steps for valorisation,
2. Address diverging priorities and risk perceptions,
3. Prevent potential bottlenecks in the commercialisation path.

The meeting brings together:

- **Researcher (Dr. Marjo Rossi)** – is concerned about publishing the findings quickly for academic impact and needs short-term research funding.
- **Knowledge Transfer Officer** – mediator between academic, legal, and commercial sides; aims for balanced progress and clear agreements.
- **University Lawyer** – focused on legal risk, institutional liability, and cautious progress; wants full due diligence.

- **Business Development Lead** – aims to fast-track industry interest and external partnerships, prefers a practical approach that embraces some calculated risk.

3 Key Issues to Be Discussed

Issue	Researcher	Knowledge Transfer Officer	University Lawyer	Business Development Lead
Licensing vs. Spin-off Pathway	☑ Favors **licensing**; wants to stay in academia.	⚠️ Neutral; wants clear criteria and alignment.	☑ Favors **licensing** to reduce legal exposure.	✗ Favors **spin-off** for control and value capture.
Timing of Publication vs. IP Protection	✗ Wants to publish now; IP can wait.	⚠️ Suggests **provisional patent** first; seeks compromise.	☑ IP must come first; no exceptions.	⚠️ Fast IP filing, but avoid blocking communication.
Approach to Industry Engagement	✗ Reluctant to approach industry before validation.	☑ Proposes **phased, NDA-backed** outreach.	⚠️ Allows contact, but **only under legal agreements**.	☑ Pushes for immediate outreach.

1. **Licensing vs. Spin-off Pathway**

Core Dilemma:
The team must decide on a commercialization route:

- **Licensing** the technology to an established company, or
- Creating a **university-affiliated spin-off** to develop and market it independently.

Considerations:

- **Licensing** involves less operational burden for the university and the researcher, faster revenue if a partner is found, but **less control** over how the technology is developed or used.

- **Spin-off** creation may offer greater **long-term value and control**, but requires a founding team, funding, and acceptance of **higher risk and legal complexity**.

Tensions:

- The **Researcher** prefers to focus on science and publishing, not business.
- The **Business Development Lead** may see a spin-off as more agile and potentially lucrative.
- The **Lawyer** will flag risk, liability, and regulatory compliance issues that are more demanding in spin-offs.
- The **KTO** needs to balance short-term feasibility and long-term impact, often mediating between competing priorities.

2. **Timing of Publication vs. IP Protection**

Core Dilemma:
Researcher wants to publish her breakthrough findings quickly to support her academic track record and secure new research funding. However, premature publication may **invalidate patent rights** and reduce commercial potential.

Considerations:

- Public disclosure before patent filing can result in **loss of novelty**, especially in jurisdictions with strict "absolute novelty" rules.
- A **provisional patent** can be filed quickly to create a placeholder and enable publication.
- Coordination between academic timelines and patent strategy is essential to avoid **lost opportunity or conflict**.

Tensions:

- The **Researcher** is under pressure to publish and gain recognition.
- The **Lawyer** wants airtight IP protection and warns against any public presentation or publication.
- The **BD Lead** supports quick IP action but also wants to maintain **commercial visibility**.
- The **KTO** tries to find middle ground by offering a rapid provisional filing path and reviewing drafts before submission.

3. **Approach to Industry Engagement**

Core Dilemma:
There is pressure to begin speaking with external companies, investors, and accelerators. However, early discussions can pose **legal risks** and lead to **misaligned expectations** if not carefully managed.

Considerations:

- Engaging industry early can lead to **co-development opportunities**, feedback on commercial feasibility, and investment interest.
- Without NDAs or clear IP rights, discussions can inadvertently disclose confidential information or trigger **ownership disputes**.
- Some researchers fear **loss of academic independence** or misuse of their ideas.

Tensions:

- The **BD Lead** wants to act fast to secure market interest and funding.
- The **Lawyer** demands **strict protocols and legal review** before any outreach.
- The **Researcher** is ambivalent, wanting recognition but wary of losing control.
- The **KTO** must define **safe engagement channels**, facilitate NDA templates, and ensure all parties are aligned on the purpose and limits of initial contact.