

FACILITATION TECHNIQUE	Trust Battery
CORE PURPOSE / FOCUS	#team-work #team-building #group assessment #intragroup openness #accepting feedback #providing feedback #conflict resolution
PHASE	#review #get-to-know
SKILL / CONTENT	#introspection #empathy #evaluation #self-reflection #leadership
TIME FRAME	Up to 30 minutes; up to 60 minutes; between 60 and 120 minutes
GROUP SIZE	1-5 / 6-15 / 16-30 / more than 30 persons
FACILITATION LEVEL	Beginner
COMFORT ZONE	Stretch

Introduction

The activity serves as a brief energizer during a workshop, and helps to get creativity flowing. At the end of this method, each team member will be a little more familiar with each other.

Tobias Lütke, CEO at Shopify coined the term: *"Another concept we talk a lot about is something called a 'trust battery'. It's charged at 50 percent when people are first hired. And then every time you work with someone at the company, the trust battery between the two of you is either charged or discharged, based on things like whether you deliver what you promise."*

The adoption of this concept helps to assess work relations with greater clarity. By measuring the charge on the trust battery, we have the context to frame any potential conflict. A low trust battery is the core of many personal disputes at work. When the battery is drained, things quickly get judged harshly.

A trust battery is a summary of all interactions to date. If you want to recharge the battery, you have to do different things in the future. Only new actions and new attitudes count.

A trust battery is personal: Bob may be at 85% with Alice, and 40% with Jim. While Alice may be at 25% with Bob and 60% with Jim.

So the point of this exercise is to give you and your team an honest assessment about what is your trust battery with other people on the team.

Necessary tools (what you need)

- Trust Battery Worksheets (self-made is absolutely OK)
- Pick a videoconferencing tool, ideally such that allows you to create breakout rooms.
- Pick an online collaborative tool such as Google Docs or online whiteboard tool.

Steps

1. Explain the concept of trust battery to your participants.
2. As participants are working individually on their responses, they can complete the tasks in a Google Doc or on paper. Paper is great if you need to change things up and get users away from the screen; Google Docs is great for sharing and record keeping. We would not recommend using an online whiteboard unless your team is open to sharing all feedback.
3. Ask people to write the name of their co-workers on the sheets.
4. Give a few minutes for everyone to reflect and fill in the trust battery worksheets based on the interactions they had with each person in the past: How much charged is your trust battery towards this person?
5. Ask participants to reflect on how they may improve the relationship with those people where they
6. Debrief the exercise with the following questions:
 - a. Why did you place some people's trust battery lower than others did?
 - b. Are there relationships where you perceive that your mutual trust batteries are at different levels of charge?
 - c. What actions can you apply to improve on a low trust battery?
 - d. As a leader or a colleague, what can you do to help your colleagues to succeed in charging their trust batteries?

Tips & Tricks

- We would not recommend using an online whiteboard unless your team is open to sharing all feedback.
- If choosing the advanced option for pair or group work, use a video conferencing tool where you can assign the participants into breakout rooms (eg. Zoom).
- You may use an advanced version of this exercise in a team where team members share their 'trust battery' assessments with each other, per pair. If you allow the trust

battery assessments to be shared, you need to have team members who are entirely open to honest and harsh feedback. And you as the facilitator of the activity must be prepared to deal with the potential tension in the dynamic in the group. Once you let the genie out of the bottle, you cannot let the group dissolve, but encourage a constructive conversation on how people can improve their 'trust bank' in the eyes of their colleagues, one-by-one.

Source

<https://www.sessionlab.com/library>

