



Capitalizing on Team Talents



Introduction to Team Talents®: It's a Jungle

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Goals

- Discover your own position on the Team Talents® map.
- Explore the contribution each talent brings to the team.

Sometimes we might be surprised at the variety of people we encounter. While some might be similar to us in the way that they approach work, others are so different that they might seem like they come from another species altogether.

Notes:

Prepared exclusively for:

Sample Workbook

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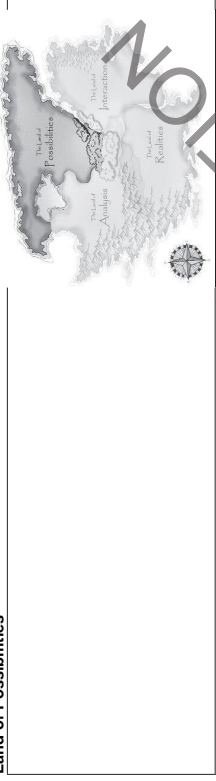
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It's a Jungle

Write down key words that will help you remember each area on the Team Talent® map.

Land of Possibilities



Land of Interaction



Land of Realities



Land of Analysis



My Team Talent

The different team roles are summarized below. Your most natural role is indicated by the checkmark. As you read the descriptions below, imagine group members who excel in each talent.



Creator: People who generate new ideas and fresh concepts are Creators. They prefer to live in the world of possibilities. Creators look for activities that are unstructured or abstract, and they thrive on innovation and unique solutions.



Advancer: Those team members who communicate new ideas and carry them forward are Advancers. They focus on the personal, interactive world of feelings and relationships. Advancers manage the human component of any solution, and they enjoy whipping up enthusiasm for a project.



Refiner: Individuals who analyze a solution for flaws or revise a project systematically are Refiners. They focus on the objective, analytical world of facts or theories. Refiners use logic and a systematic approach to redesign a solution, and they make sure that ideas are sound before moving them to the next level.



Executor: People who deliver concrete results and seek successful implementations are Executors. They tend to be realists. Executors make sure that important activities get accomplished, and they pay attention to details and the bottom line.



Flexer: Those individuals who are a combination of the other four roles are Flexers. They have an equal preference for most or all of the roles. Flexers can often adapt their styles to fit the needs of the team, and they probably view issues from different perspectives.

Remember that no role is better or worse than any other. A balanced team will have all the roles represented. The most effective teams have members who find the opportunities to do what they do best and give others the room to use their talents.



Exploring the Team Talents In Your Group

Goals

- Discover your own position on the Team Talents map.
- Explore the contribution each talent brings to the team.

Any successful group effort requires that individuals perform to the best of their abilities. But what are those abilities, and how can you make sure that your contribution counts?

Notes:

Understanding Your Team Talent

Sample, you're a CREATOR. This team role is not arbitrary or mysterious. Instead, it's the result of how you tend to focus your energy and attention in a group setting.

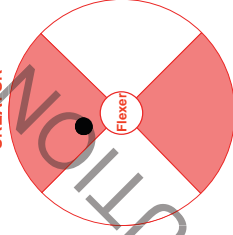
Read the description below and underline the characteristics that help you succeed in a team.

What makes you a Creator? Like most people, your role is based on your natural tendencies to focus your attention in certain directions rather than others. As described below, there are two dimensions that we can use to measure how people focus their attention.

One dimension measures if you prefer to focus on Possibilities or Realities. Like you, people who focus on **Possibilities** are more likely to appreciate imaginative or abstract activities. They enjoy having far-reaching discussions, hashing out a project's potential, or creating an innovative plan. On the other hand, people who focus on **Realities** are more likely to appreciate practical or systematic activities. They prefer tackling structured projects, performing detail-oriented work, and pursuing concrete results.

You can see that Creators have a strong focus on Possibilities and Executors have a strong focus on Realities. **Your focus is shown by the dot on the circle to the right.** You are a **Creator** because of your strong focus on Possibilities.

Focus on
POSSIBILITIES
CREATOR



Focus on
EXECUTOR
REALITIES

Write down examples from your experience that demonstrate the areas you underlined above.

Primary Talents

Mark your location on the rope according to your primary talent.

Possibilities _____ Balanced _____ Realities

Analysis _____ Balanced _____ Interaction

Notes about this group based on how we are placed on the rope.

SAMPLE - NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

Team Talent Contributions

Take notes on the contributions of each talent group.

Possibilities

Realities

Analysis

Interaction

Flexer

SAMPLE - NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

My Secondary Team Talent

There is a deeper level to your talents. Read the description below and underline the characteristics that help you succeed in a team.

Are all Creators the same? No. Another dimension helps add even more clarity to your preferred role.

This other dimension asks if you are naturally more focused on Analysis or Interaction. You have slight tendency to focus on **Analysis**, which means that you probably look at the world from a logical and questioning viewpoint. You may strive for objectivity in your work and tend to be somewhat skeptical of new ideas. On the other hand, individuals who focus on **Interaction** are concerned with feelings and relationships. They pay close attention to personal communication and tend to be receptive to new ideas.

Looking at the figure to the left, you can see that Refiners have a strong focus on Analysis and Advancers have a strong focus on Interaction. Because of your slight focus on Analysis, you are a **Creator tending toward refinement**.

Write down examples from your experience that demonstrate the areas you underlined above.

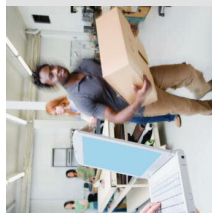
Secondary Talents

Mark your location on the rope according to your secondary talent.

Possibilities _____ Balanced _____ Realities

Analysis _____ Balanced _____ Interaction

Notes about this group based on how we are placed on the rope.



Understanding and Maximizing Your Strengths on a Team

Goals

- Understand the natural strengths you bring to a team.
- Recognize the value of these strengths in various team activities and tasks.
- Explore ways to use your strengths more often.

Being part of a team means working together, but sometimes we forget that we each need to perform the activities that take advantage of our individual strengths. Just because we are part of the same team doesn't mean we share the same strengths, so we need to figure out what we are best at and focus our energy on maximizing the time that we spend on those activities.

Notes:

Your Strengths

Each role brings its own unique strengths to the team. This page describes the strengths that are typically associated with your role. Highlight or underline specific statements in your description that ring true.



As a Creator, you probably think much like an inventor or scientist. By pulling a seemingly infinite number of ideas out of thin air, you uncover solutions that have never been explored. This strengthens the problem-solving process and often creates new options for the team. You are likely to stay open to new possibilities and respond well to fresh concepts and challenging tasks. In fact, original ideas tend to be your friends, and you may thrive when you have the freedom to explore alternatives. As a consequence, you probably don't need a lot of structure to get started on a project and can work fairly well with broad, undefined goals.

Like other Creators, you probably view brainstorming as a fun way to discover new options and solutions. When you help others knock down their preconceptions and outdated assumptions, you may help the team keep its options open. Reframing problems so you can analyze the issues from every angle allows you to make sure that a potential breakthrough receives full consideration. As such, your main contribution to the team process may be your tendency to create or propel innovative thinking. In fact, many of the highlights of a brainstorming session are likely to come from you. Therefore, you can help team members see the wealth of possibilities that they have in front of them.

Your preference for Analysis may help you to see the big picture or to formulate the master plan. Most likely, you enjoy getting wrapped up in theoretical discussions and brainstorming. Abstract or complex ideas most likely entertain rather than intimidate you. Like other Creators who lean towards Analysis, you may be gifted at creating conceptual frameworks and models. These can help the team organize its ideas and understand the relationship among different parts of the project. In essence, this helps fit the pieces of a plan into the big picture. You may also have a knack for putting words and definition to abstract and unclear ideas. Again, this helps people understand complex ideas in a practical way.

In summary, you may find that many of the following strengths come naturally for you:

- Generating multiple new ideas
- Thinking abstractly
- Envisioning the big picture
- Working independently and finding your own direction
- Building conceptual models
- Researching ideas
- Exploring relationships and patterns among ideas
- Blending theories and logic
- Identifying underlying principles and trends
- Succeeding even with broad, unclear goals

Remote Island

Imagine you've been traveling and have lost your way. You find yourself stranded on a remote island. The journey has taken a lot out of you, and you can only use two of your strengths, represented by the bullets on the previous page.

Which two strengths would you choose, and why would they give you the best chance of surviving?

What is the first strength you chose? Why did you choose it?

NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION - SAMPLE

What is the second strength you chose? Why did you choose it?

NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION - SAMPLE

How I Contribute to a Team

Write down the activity or task and how you could contribute.

Activity and My Contribution:

NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION - SAMPLE

How Often I Use My Strengths

Look at the bulleted list at the bottom of the "Your Strengths" worksheet again. Consider how often you are able to use each strength on the job. Write each bullet statement in the appropriate column below.

Frequently

--

Occasionally

--

Seldom

--

Contribution Opportunities

Contribution Opportunities



Understanding Your Discomfort Zone

Goals

- Recognize your discomfort zones and the activities that feel unnatural to you.
- Understand that activities that don't come naturally to you may cause stress.
- Discover that everyone has a discomfort zone, although others might be challenged by different activities.

As much as we'd all like to be good at everything, each of us has probably encountered activities and tasks that make us uncomfortable or that we don't feel that we can do effectively.

Building stronger teams requires that we recognize where each other's talents do not lie and understand the kinds of things that don't come naturally to us.

Notes:

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Understanding Your Discomfort Zone

» » »

Greta's Discomfort Zone

Greta's Role: _____

Take notes on the video.

What is Greta being asked to do?

What is involved with doing that?

Where do these tasks fall on the Team Talents® map?



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Understanding Your Discomfort Zone

» » »

Heidi's Discomfort Zone

Heidi's Role: _____

Take notes on the video.

What is Heidi being asked to do?

What is involved with doing that?

Where do these tasks fall on the Team Talents® map?



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Understanding Your Discomfort Zone

» » »

Ainsley's Discomfort Zone

Ainsley's Role: _____

Take notes on the video.

What is Ainsley being asked to do?

What is involved with doing that?

Where do these tasks fall on the Team Talents® map?



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Understanding Your Discomfort Zone

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Dan's Discomfort Zone

Dan's Role: _____

Take notes on the video.

What is Dan being asked to do?

What is involved with doing that?

Where do these tasks fall on the Team Talents® map?



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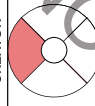
My Discomfort Zone

In all likelihood, you have some opinions about the type of tasks that you like and dislike performing. Knowing what causes you discomfort, however, can help you to make your best contribution to the group effort. While you read the description below, underline the parts that seem to fit for you.

Although your interest in new ideas and possibilities is valuable to the team, this natural curiosity may make you restless at times. You may grow impatient or bored if new challenges or outlets for your creativity do not come quickly. You also may fit from one plan to the other, rather than seeing a project through to its successful conclusion. You may have more interest in coming up with a new idea than doing the detailed follow through necessary to make it a reality. In essence, you may spend so much time embracing the Possibilities and dwelling on theoretical issues that you neglect to push for concrete results. The outcome of this focus could be a wealth of great ideas that go nowhere.

Focus on
POSSIBILITIES

CREATOR



You may find that you prefer the conceptual, abstract world of Possibilities to the more structured, restricted world of Realities. As a result, your drive for creativity may lead to impractical solutions that work well in theory, but fail to take real-world limitations and demands into account. And because you like to keep your options open, you may be reluctant to commit to a specific course of action. You may put things off until the last minute, causing trouble for yourself or others. Remember, even if rushing toward a deadline is exhilarating for you, it can be highly stressful for others.

Like many other Creators, your interest in unstructured activities could cause you to be disorganized or poorly prepared at times. You may find yourself devoting too much time on aspects of a project that are fun, but not terribly practical. In addition, you may have trouble following through on plans in a scheduled, organized way. Not only can this reduce your efficiency and productivity, but it can also frustrate those around you. Those who prefer a more organized approach to work may read this lack of structure as carelessness or disrespect for their priorities.

Because you also lean towards Analysis, you may tend to remove yourself from a situation so you can become truly absorbed in conceptual problem solving. You may be inclined to do this analyzing alone, away from distraction. As a consequence, however, you may get so absorbed in a theoretical, abstract world that you are unaware of the people around you. People who do not work with you on a regular basis may feel that you are a little distant or "hard to get to know." Further, you may find that channels of communication between you and your coworkers are not as open and clear as they could be. Your peers may feel that they are in the dark when it comes to your ideas or progress.

In summary, you probably face challenges in some of the following areas:

- Staying focused on routine work
- Adhering to a strict schedule
- Keeping track of details
- Organizing
- Doing things before the last minute
- Following through on plans
- Sticking to practical options
- Providing a stable structure for yourself and others
- Maintaining open communication with others

My Discomfort Zone is in the land of _____



The Tradeoff Between Focus and Flexibility

Goals

- Understand your own level of focus or flexibility with respect to your role on a team.
- Discover the varying levels of focus and flexibility in your group.
- Recognize the tradeoffs inherent in having a more focused area of strength or more flexibility.

Today's working environments often view flexibility as a highly desirable trait. Working with others often does require a certain degree of flexibility. And our level of flexibility is influenced by how strongly we prefer a particular role.

Flexibility, however, has its own tradeoffs, and often comes at the expense of a more focused area of strength.

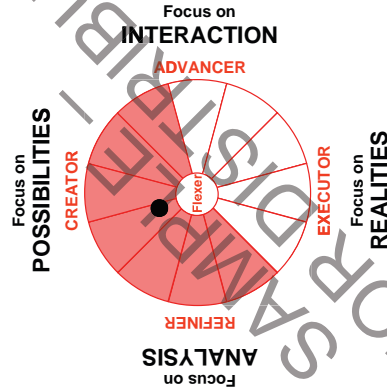
Notes:



Your Flexibility

Every day we find ourselves in situations that require us to adapt into different roles or work with someone who has different preferences. You may have noticed that some people find this easier than others. Why? One reason is that some people have a stronger preference for their natural roles than other people. For instance, even though all Creators focus on Possibilities, some Creators are completely absorbed in that imaginative, abstract world while others just have slight tendency in that direction. A very strong preference for a role can be a powerful advantage and make a person stand out from the crowd. On the other hand, people who have a really strong role preference often have a difficult time adapting to different roles. Further, they may have a more difficult time understanding the preferences of people in other roles.

How strong is your preference for the Creator role? Based on your responses, your preference is only **Slight**. You can see this for yourself if you look at the circular map below. The farther away your dot is from the center of the circle, the stronger your preference for your role.



Because your preference for the Creator role is only slight, you probably have a great deal of flexibility in adapting to different roles compared to most people. Consequently, you probably feel comfortable embracing a variety of different tasks, duties, or positions. **Most likely, you will find it easy to adopt roles in the shaded regions of the circle above.** As you move farther away from these shaded areas, you will probably find those roles less comfortable and enjoyable. And although you might be quite competent at them, you may find that they cause you stress. As discussed on the next page, if your primary job responsibilities are outside of these shaded areas, consider if this is, in fact, a source of stress for you.

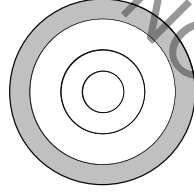


Levels of Flexibility

Mark your position on the circle, then circle the description of your preference level.

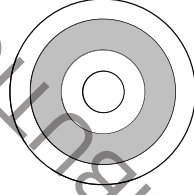
Very Strong Preference:

People with a strong preference often have one or two roles that are extremely natural and comfortable for them. Frequently, they are exceptionally talented in these roles, but may find it very stressful and draining to move to other roles outside this comfort zone.



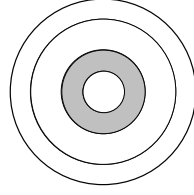
Moderately Strong Preference:

People with a moderately strong preference usually have one or two roles that are clearly most natural and comfortable for them. Although they can take on many other roles when the situation calls for it, it may be somewhat stressful and draining if they have to adapt for long periods of time.



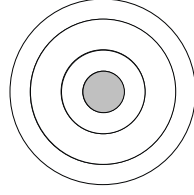
Slight Preference:

People with a slight preference usually have a clear leaning toward one or two roles as their favorites, but find that they are reasonably comfortable in most roles. Compared to most people, they tend to feel natural shifting among a variety of different tasks, duties, or positions.



Equal Preferences:

People with an equal preference have a similar leaning toward all roles. Although they may have their favorites, they usually don't have one particular role that stands out as dominant. Therefore, they can usually adapt and meet the changing demands of the situation with less stress and discomfort than most.



Exploring Your Focus and Flexibility

Color the wedges according to your comfort level.

- Use a **green** marker to color the wedge if you are comfortable doing three or more activities.
- Use a **red** marker if you are very uncomfortable doing three or more activities.
- Use **yellow** to color the wedges of activities you may be willing to do, but would rather not on a regular basis.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and testing theories • Discussing abstract topics • Solving conceptual problems • Designing a big-picture vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with unclear goals • Developing non-traditional ideas • Working with little structure • Using unusual strategies
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing research • Analyzing data • Working alone • Performing in-depth evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing in front of groups • Doing things at the last minute • Motivating others • Acting on instinct
--	---

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking facts for accuracy • Maintaining quality control • Working systematically • Following detailed procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting new ideas • Organizing groups • Selling • Mingling with strangers
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping track of critical details • Performing routine work • Sticking to a strict schedule • Organizing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training others • Planning events • Listening patiently • Comforting and supporting
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Total

Green Wedges

Red Wedges

Yellow Wedges

Focus and Flexibility Tradeoffs

Take notes from the group discussion.

Flexibility Benefits

	Drawbacks
--	-----------

Focus Benefits

	Drawbacks
--	-----------

"Great managers do not believe that a productive team has camaraderie as its cornerstone and team members who can play all roles equally well. On the contrary, they define a productive team as one where each person knows which role he plays best and where he is cast in that role most of the time."

- Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman, First, Break All the Rules



Collaborating to Reduce Stress

Goals

- Recognize that activities that feel unnatural to you may also cause you stress.
- Recognize that what stresses you might be a strength for someone else, and that others may be stressed by different activities.
- Discover strategies for collaborating to reduce stress at work.

Building stronger teams requires that we each play to our strengths, because if we don't pay attention to these strengths or do what comes naturally to us, we can become stressed. When we are stressed, quality and team output can suffer.

Collaborating with your teammates to build on each other's strengths can produce better outcomes for team projects, since we are more likely to be undertaking activities that correspond to our natural strengths.

Notes:

Stress Evaluation

Use the following scale to rate your stress level with each of these situations:

Not at all stressful	1	2	3	4	5	Extremely stressful	Stress Score

- _____ Present the results of a recent project to a large group of your co-workers and peers.
- _____ Read and interpret a new vendor contract, finding any potential loopholes.
- _____ Collate handouts for the quarterly department meeting packet.
- _____ Lead a training session for your department.
- _____ Sketch out a variety of possible themes for a new company website.
- _____ Look at data from a recent project to determine patterns.
- _____ Research competitors' practices and products.
- _____ Call five different clients and present the company's new idea to them.
- _____ Analyze customer feedback for trends.
- _____ Develop a variety of logo concepts for presentation at the team meeting.
- _____ Influence upper management to support your team's idea.
- _____ Organize and implement the redesign of the department floor plan.
- _____ Determine ways to improve funding allocation based on last year's budget.
- _____ Solicit speakers from your department for the quarterly department-meeting agenda.
- _____ Conduct a focus group to gauge reaction to a new concept.
- _____ Develop a long-range vision for a newly formed department.
- _____ Mingle with potential clients at a charity luncheon.
- _____ Organize the annual company outing.
- _____ Proofread a detailed report that is going to a client.
- _____ Organize and summarize your notes from a recent full-day meeting for your team.
- _____ Review a highly theoretical report and summarize the main points for the team meeting.
- _____ Respond to customer questions and concerns throughout the day.
- _____ Pull together components for a formal proposal of your team's idea and write the first draft.
- _____ Brainstorm new purposes for existing products/services to generate new revenue streams.

Trading to Reduce Stress

Trade with other participants until you obtain three situations that give you the least amount of stress possible.

Write down the situations.

Old Score	New Score	Difference between scores

Why did others agree to trade cards?

How did it feel to change my workload?

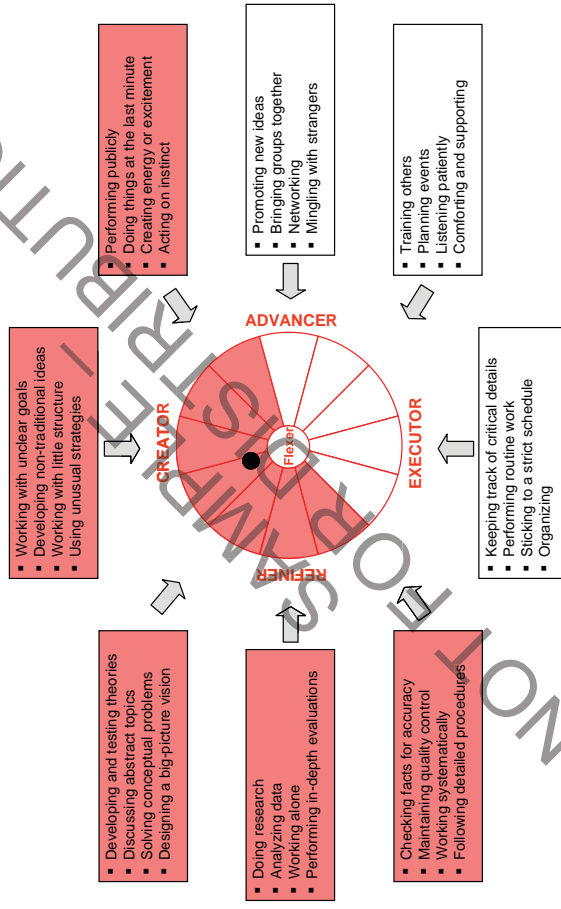
What did reducing my stress require of me?

Stress at Work

We all know that the people we work with can drive us crazy at times, but we also experience stress when our job duties include activities that don't come naturally to us. Even if someone is quite good at a certain activity, they might find it draining. For instance, some people love to mingle at a company event, others dread it. Some people find satisfaction in balancing a spreadsheet, and others find it dull and tedious. As you will see below, many of your likes and dislikes can be explained by your preference for the CREATOR role.

The shaded boxes around the circle below show your comfort zone: activities that are probably natural and comfortable for you. On the opposite side of the circle, however, the unshaded boxes describe activities that may be less natural for you. As mentioned earlier, you may be very good at these activities, but you probably find that they are draining if you do them for any length of time.

Read the description below and underline or mark the situations and activities that you find most stressful.



Reducing Group Stress

Record the new situations.

Stress Score Tally	
Mine	Group's

Record the group-assigned situations.

Stress Score Tally	
Mine	Group's

Notes:

Stress Score Tally	
Mine	Group's

Collaborating to Reduce Stress

Answer the following questions.

What was different about this experience?

How did the group distribute the situations?

Did the group reduce its stress score?

Did I reduce or increase my own score?

Collaborating to Reduce Stress

» » »

Reducing Your Stress

Answer the following questions.

Write about a work situation that has been causing stress lately.

NOT FOR SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

Consider who to collaborate with to reduce the stress.

NOT FOR SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

What would this collaboration entail? What might I be able to do in exchange?

NOT FOR SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION