

A HIGHQ PRACTICAL LEADERSHIP TOOL

The HighQ Alignment Check

Has your team reached alignment, or simply ended the conversation?

OVERVIEW

An honest conversation is only the beginning. This tool helps leaders examine whether consequential disagreement has been heard, a decision is understood, and commitment is showing up in action. Use it alongside the Perspective and Executive Brief, When Alignment Becomes Avoidance.

HOW TO USE IT

Choose one decision. Use the relevant section as the decision develops, or work through all four to review a recent decision. Start individually, then compare responses with your team.

Allow 15-20 minutes for discussion. Invite candor, explore differences, and record specific examples. Close with an action, an owner, and a check-in date. Revisit the tool as implementation progresses.

FOUR SECTIONS

01 Candor | Before the decision

Check whether dissent, tradeoffs, and unresolved concerns were heard.

02 Clarity | At the decision

Clarify the decision, rationale, open questions, and responsibilities.

03 Commitment | After the decision

Watch for four early signals that agreement is not translating into action.

04 The alignment conversation

Address what needs attention and agree on visible follow-through.

THE HIGHQ

Alignment Check

A practical tool for determining whether your team has reached alignment or simply ended the conversation.

Choose one consequential decision. Use alone to prepare, or have team members respond independently before comparing answers. Plan 15-20 minutes for discussion. Different answers are a place to begin.

Decision / issue: _____

Team / date: _____

01 BEFORE THE DECISION

Did we hear what needed to be heard?

Mark one response per statement. Discuss every Not Yet or Unsure.

	Yes	Not Yet	Unsure
We surfaced the consequential disagreements.	☐	☐	☐
We named the important tradeoffs.	☐	☐	☐
People could challenge the direction without fear of relational penalty.	☐	☐	☐
We heard information that complicated our preferred answer.	☐	☐	☐
People had a meaningful opportunity to influence the thinking.	☐	☐	☐
We addressed concerns or named what remains unresolved.	☐	☐	☐

What concern may still be unresolved?

02 AT THE DECISION

Are we actually clear?

Ask people to write their answers before discussing them. Compare the meaning, not just the wording.

"This would not have been my decision" can coexist with alignment.

Commitment does not require identical preferences. It requires clear expectations and an honest account of what each person can support.

What did we decide?

State the decision in one or two sentences.

Why did we decide it?

Name the rationale and the tradeoff we accepted.

What remains open, if anything?

Separate settled decisions from questions still needing an answer.

Who owns what next?

Name the owner, next action, and timing.

What does commitment require from each of us?

Describe the behavior or contribution expected.

03 AFTER THE DECISION

Watch what happens next

Alignment early-warning dashboard | Review after implementation begins, then revisit at an agreed checkpoint.

Decision date: _____ Review date: _____

Mark one per signal. Note a specific example rather than an assumption.

THE DISAGREEMENT CHANGES ROOMS

Are consequential concerns now appearing in side conversations?

☐ Not Present ☐ Emerging ☐ Recurring

Example: _____

THE DECISION KEEPS RETURNING

Are we reopening the issue without materially new information?

☐ Not Present ☐ Emerging ☐ Recurring

Example: _____

EXECUTION BECOMES UNEVEN

Are areas interpreting or implementing the decision differently?

☐ Not Present ☐ Emerging ☐ Recurring

Example: _____

PUBLIC DISAGREEMENT FOLLOWS PRIVATE AGREEMENT

Are leaders distancing themselves after appearing aligned?

☐ Not Present ☐ Emerging ☐ Recurring

Example: _____

Use the signals to open a conversation. They may reflect unclear expectations, capacity constraints, or unresolved disagreement. New evidence or changed conditions can warrant reconsideration. Use the final section to decide what needs attention.

04 THE ALIGNMENT CONVERSATION

Turn the check into action

Invite each person to speak. Start where answers differ, then agree on a concrete next step.

1. Have we heard the disagreement that actually matters?

What needs to be surfaced or addressed before we move forward?

2. Are we clear about what has been decided?

What needs clarification about the decision, authority, or expectations?

3. What will alignment look like tomorrow?

What will people do, communicate, or follow through on?

AGREE ON THE FOLLOW-THROUGH

Next action / visible evidence	Owner	By when

Check-in date: _____ Evidence we will review: _____

CANDOR

Say what needs to be said.

CLARITY

Know what has been decided.

COMMITMENT

Move together.