

Polarity Mapping Worksheet¹

by Michael Welp, Ph.D., www.equalvoice.com

What are Polarities? Polarities are interdependent opposites which function best when both are present to balance with each other.

Common Polarities:

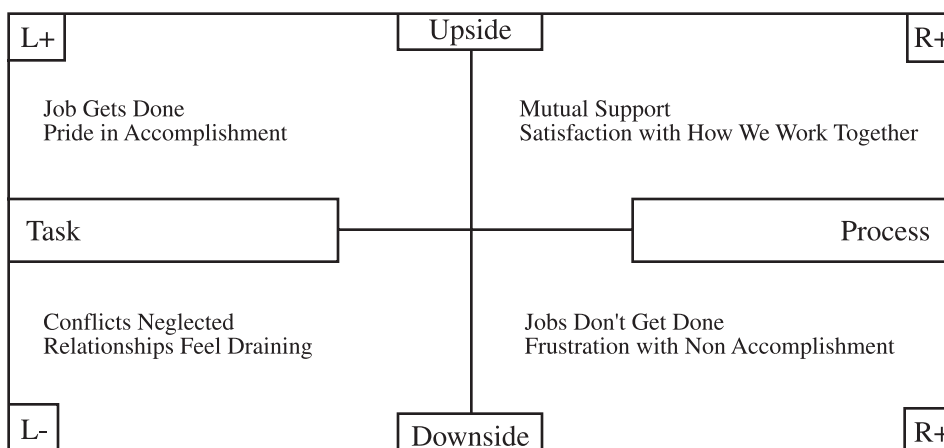
Individual and Team
Clarity and Flexibility
Stability and Change
Task and Process

Critical Analysis and Encouragement
Planning and Action
Action and Reflection
Centralized and Decentralized

What is Polarity Management? Some challenges are polarities to manage, rather than problems to solve. Polarity management involves moving from focusing on one pole as the problem and the other as the solution (either/or thinking), to valuing both poles (both/and thinking). Good polarity management gets the best of both poles while avoiding the limits of either.

What is a Polarity Map? A polarity map identifies the upsides and downsides of each pole, resulting in a whole picture of the polarity to be managed.

Example: Task and Process Polarity Map:



Steps in Creating Polarity Map

1. Identify a key polarity. Agree on names for the poles. Write them into the map. A map structure is provided on the back of this sheet.
2. Brainstorm together the content for each quadrant.

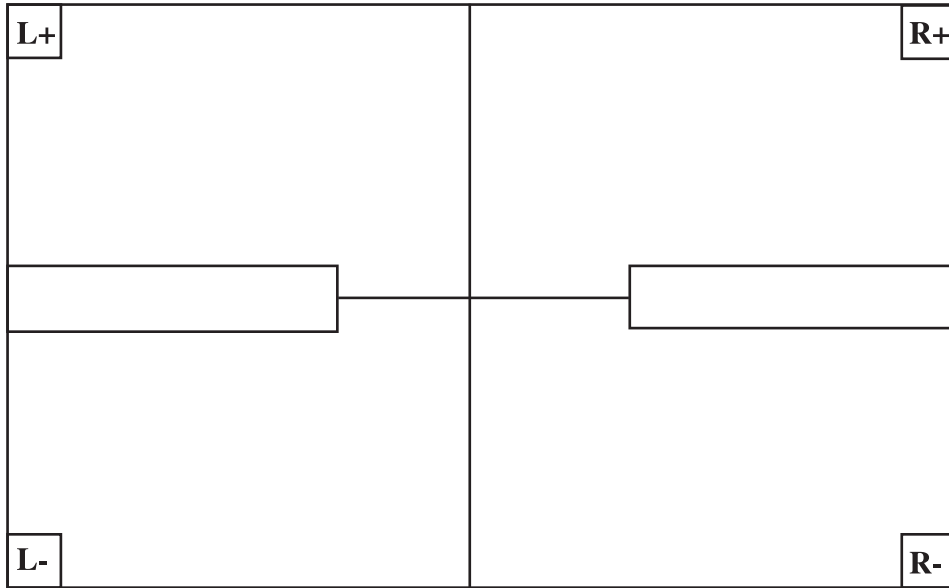
Tips for Using Polarity Maps

1. Remember that to pursue the benefits of one pole, you must also pursue the benefits of the other pole. The solution is not static.
2. You may want to identify indicators for each pole which will let you know when you are experiencing its downside. Putting feedback mechanisms in place aids in managing the polarity.

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2. Brainstorm together the content for each quadrant. Write this into the map.

¹ Polarity Mapping is described in detail in Barry Johnson's 1992 book, Polarity Management. Visit www.polaritymanagement.com for more information.



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