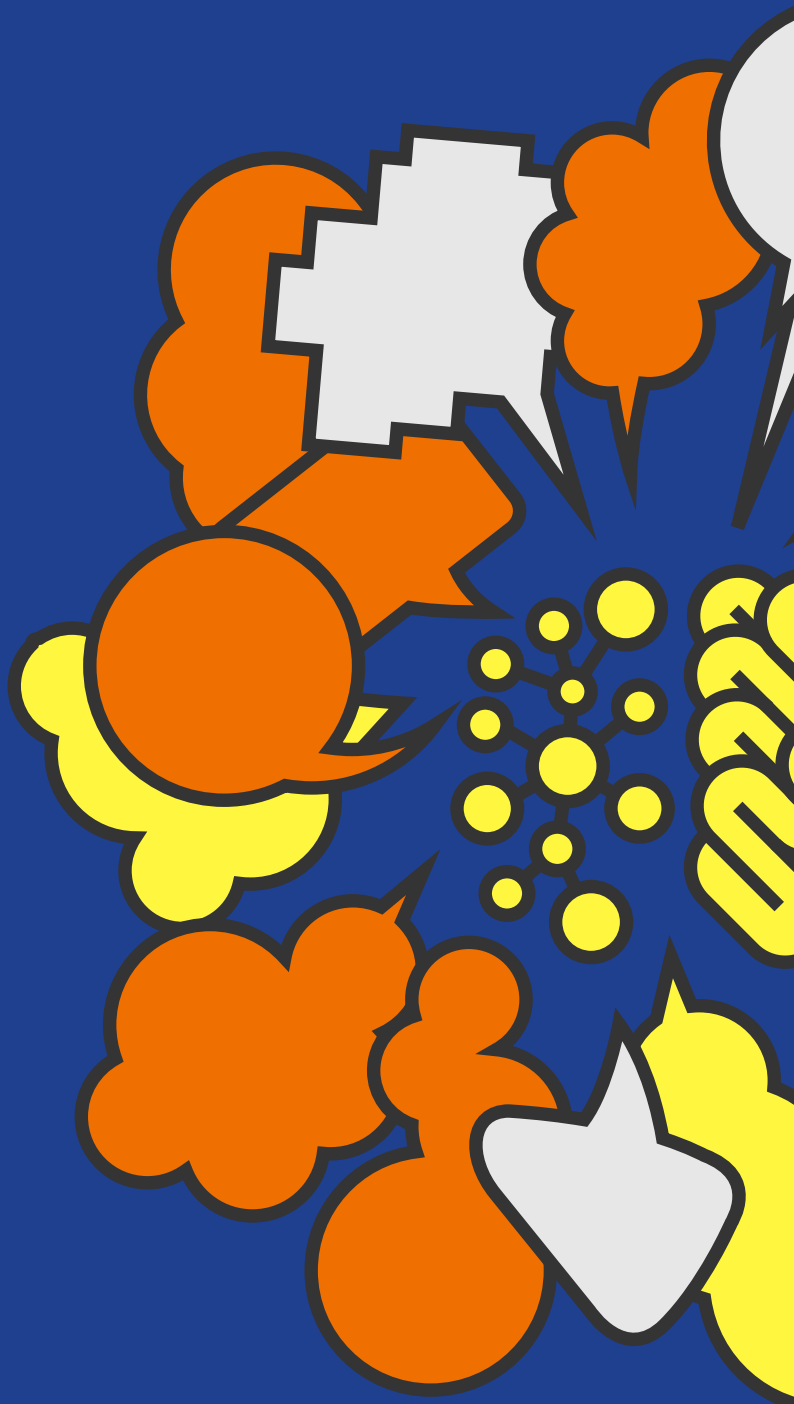


Getting Started Guide To Make Your Teams More Effective

A getting started guide to start improving the effectiveness of your teams with Columinity



Columinity: Improve Your Teams



Based on the latest scientific research, Columinity is a pioneering tool to help teams improve where it matters most. It's your evidence-based companion for continuous improvement. Highlighting performance patterns on multiple levels and illuminating how to move forward.

This guide contains all you need to get started. For more information and steep-by-step-guides, visit [our expansive support Wiki](#).

A Scientific Approach To Make Your Team More Effective



Many factors determine how effective teams can be. Columinity allows you to diagnose the effectiveness of your team(s) through the lens of one or more complementary scientific models.

Each model measures **team effectiveness** as the outcome. Teams are most effective when their stakeholders are happy, when they deliver a lot of value and when team members experience high morale.

Each model brings its own focus:

- **Agile Team Effectiveness:** Developed by [Christiaan Verwijs](#) and Professor [Daniel Russo](#) from the University of Aalborg, based on 13 case studies and data from 2.000+ Agile teams. This model identifies five core factors and over twenty sub-factors that shape the effectiveness of Agile teams.
- **Teamwork Quality (beta, 3rd stage):** Developed by [Christiaan Verwijs](#) and Professor [Daniel Russo](#) from the University of Aalborg, with help from Ornella Vasiliauskaite. This model focuses on the quality of teamwork and the factors that shape it. It is agnostic to framework or methodology.
- **Agile Mindset (beta, 1st stage):** Developed by [Dr. Karen Eilers](#) and [Christiaan Verwijs](#). This model focuses on the extent to which teams hold values and beliefs consistent with Agile methods, and the extent to which their environment allows them to develop such beliefs.

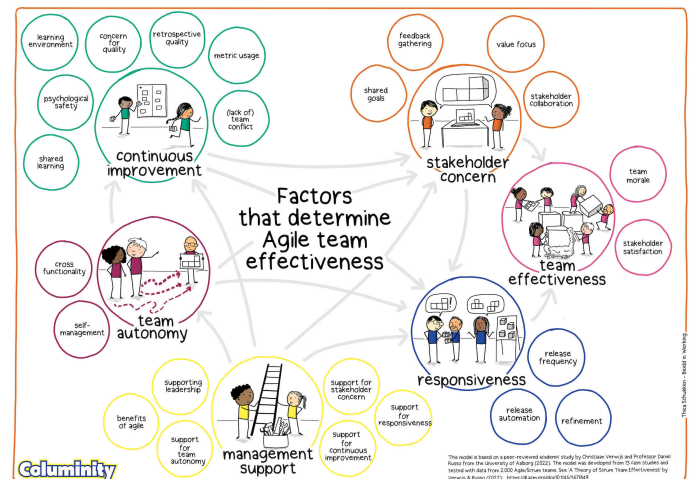
Because every model is a simplification, we encourage teams to benefit from the different perspectives provided by each model. The Agile Team Effectiveness is a good foundational model for Agile teams.

Our models are grounded in peer-reviewed empirical evidence, not personal opinion. Models in **beta** are still being validated. 1st stage validation means we have yet to validate the model with at least 50 teams, 2nd stage validation is with at least 200 teams and 3rd stage validation is with at least 1.000 teams and with a submitted paper for peer-review by other academics.

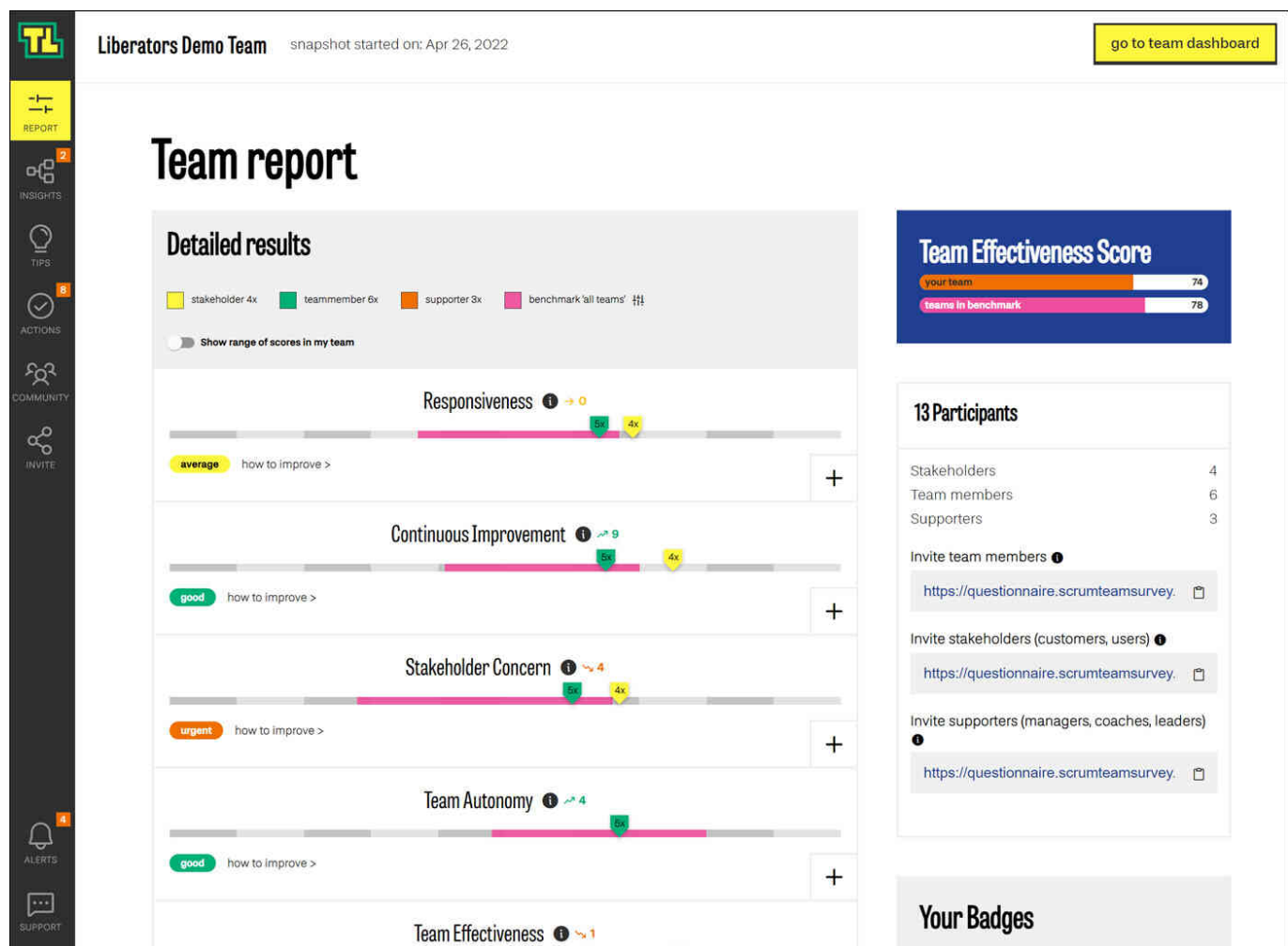
How to understand the models

Each model presents a number of **core factors**. Each core factor is measured through two or more **sub-factors**. For example, the Agile Team Effectiveness model identifies as core factors: stakeholder concern, responsiveness, continuous improvement, team autonomy and management support. In turn, stakeholder concern is high in teams when teams have a) a strong focus on value, b) high-quality feedback gathering, c) shared goals and d) frequent stakeholder collaboration. All indicators are in the picture below.

Each model also shows effects between factors, which offers guidance on what to improve. If we take the Agile Team Effectiveness model as an example, if morale is low you are bound to benefit from increasing your "Responsiveness" and "Stakeholder Concern". If those are hard, you can work on improving "Team Autonomy", "Management Support" and "Continuous Improvement". How is that for evidence-based improvement?



Quickstart To Diagnose Your Teams



How To Diagnose One Team

1. Go to <https://questionnaire.columinity.com> and hit "Start".
2. Set up your team, choose the scientific model and relevant topics and start the survey. [Consult this step-by-step guide](#) for more information.
3. Invite your team and/or enter the questionnaire yourself.
4. You receive a team report. If you didn't leave your email address as part of the questionnaire, make sure to bookmark the team report so you can revisit it later.
5. The Team Report is updated every time someone participates.
6. You can also invite stakeholders, like users and customers, to include their perspectives. Use the invitation link to invite them to a short questionnaire.
7. You can also invite supporters, like managers, leaders, and coaches, to evaluate the level of organizational support for your team. Use the special invitation link to invite them to a short questionnaire.
8. Organize a shared retrospective to inspect the results together. We offer a Team Report without your personal scores under "Invite" in the sidebar which is ideal for this. Optionally, use the facilitation guide further down this PDF to make this retrospective as useful and productive as possible.
9. Repeat periodically to drive continuous improvement. Follow this [step-by-step guide](#) for more information.
10. You should see improvements over time in various areas of our model for your team.

How To Properly Invite Your Team



Columinity is a great tool to create transparency and drive change. It can also harm teams when it is used improperly. Here's how to prevent that.

The Wrong Way

- Don't allow management in your organization to use the results to compare teams. Every team is different and faces different challenges. If people sense that their teams will be compared, they will enter fake data or paint a much rosier picture of the situation.
- Don't share reports with management, or people outside the team, unless every member of your team unequivocally consents.
- Don't pressure or demand that people participate. If they are skeptical, you have to investigate your approach and motives.
- Respect the anonymity of the survey. Don't ask people to bring their individual responses, or share them with you.
- Don't casually share the survey without any introduction or prior conversation. If people don't expect it, they won't like this surprise.

The Right Way

The core concern that you need to address for the members of your team is: "How will this benefit me and my team?". If you don't have a clear answer, people will understandably resist, enter fake answers or disengage altogether.

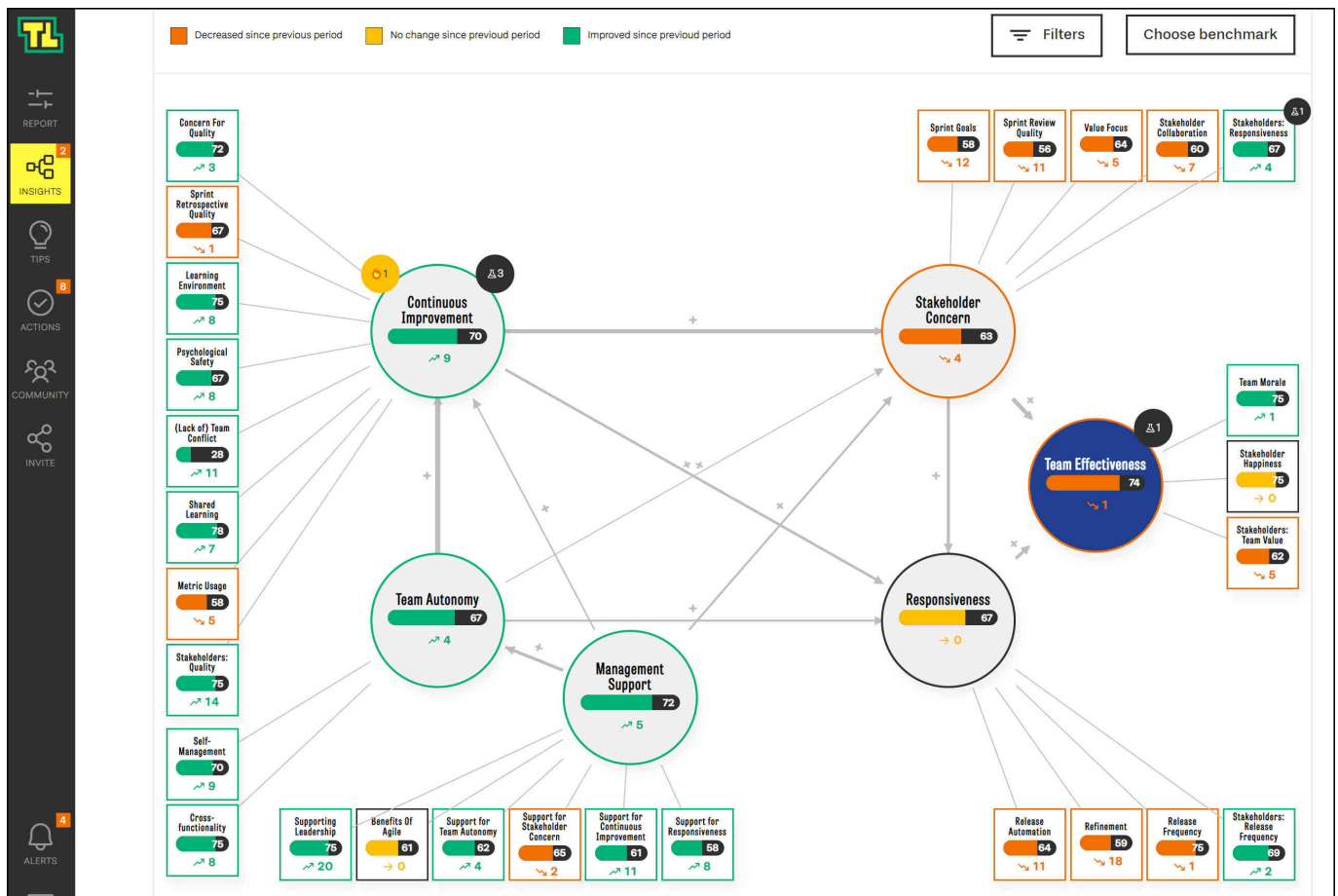
Our favorite approach is to first use the retrospective to explore under what conditions external tools – like Columinity – can encourage learning and improvement in your team. Following that conversation, you explain the steps involved in participating in the survey. Also, explain that you will make sense of the team-level results together, and without outsiders, on a scheduled date in a 100% collaborative fashion. So you won't be telling the team what's wrong and what to improve, but you will invite them to understand the patterns for themselves and work together to identify improvements. Also, be clear about what happens with the results afterward.

The Invitation

In your invitation, make sure to address the following (briefly):

- Address what you hope to achieve with the survey data, and how it benefits your team and its members;
- Address concerns about privacy. Our platform only shows your individual scores, but you can't see scores of other individuals under any condition;
- Address how and when you will make sense of the results together;
- Address how the data will (and will not) be used and who (and who doesn't) have access to the team-level profile afterward;
- Emphasize how transparency, and honest answers, are the best way to identify actual improvements. There's no need to sugarcoat the painful truth.

How To Use The Team Report To Drive Change



The first step is to make sense of the results as a team. The team report shows the results for the five core factors, along with the overall effectiveness. You can expand each core factor to see the lower-level indicators that make up the factor. For example, "Release Automation", "Refinement" and "Release Frequency" are the indicators we used to calculate the score for "Responsiveness". You can see how everything is connected under "Insights".

Per factor, we also show how your team compares to a benchmark of other teams from our database. Subscribers can select different benchmarks. If you've taken a snapshot with your team before, the report shows where the results changed.

We've found it particularly helpful to first identify the core factor that scores the lowest, and then explore which underlying indicators are the lowest.

Identify Adaptations Together

Once you've identified areas for improvement, work together to identify actionable improvements. To help you on your way, we offer many evidence-based recommendations under "Tips". We ordered them by the expected impact on your team.

Collect the improvement actions you identify together under "Actions". You can set a "Reminder" to retake the questionnaire a few months later to discover where your team improved due to the actions you took.

Next, we offer a facilitation guide to run a diagnostic workshop with your team.

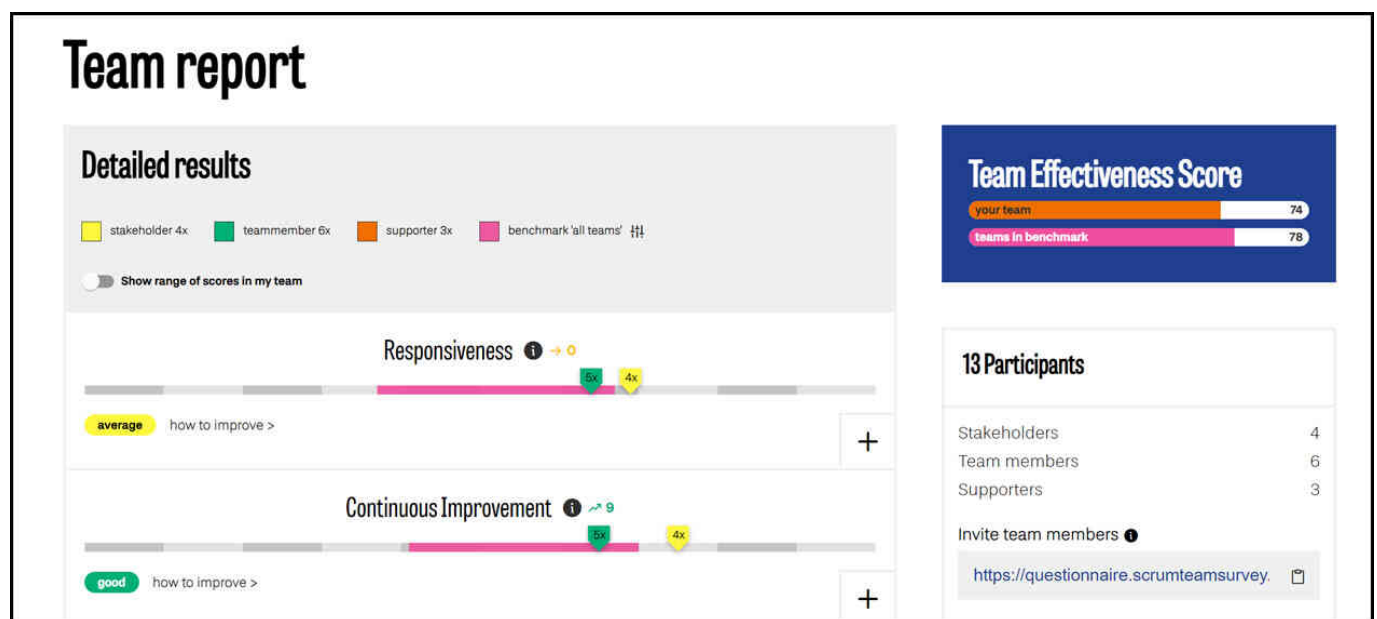
Step 1: Explore The Results Individually



The first step is to give everyone time to look through the results so they have everything fresh in their mind. We do this in silence and individually to avoid social pressure and biases.

Steps

1. **1 min** Share a link to the "Team Report" with your team. You can find it under "Invite". This report is similar to your personal report but doesn't show your personal results (in blue). Alternatively, you can print the results or share screenshots.
2. **9 min** Give everyone 9 minutes to explore the results under "Report" and "Insights". Encourage people to take notes. Also, emphasize the need for silent reflection as a way to avoid strong opinions from dominating the conversation later on.





 30 min

Step 2: Identify Patterns Together



Now that everyone had the opportunity to inspect the results, we're going to debrief with the Liberating Structure ["1-2-4-ALL"](#).


Invitation

"What patterns did you observe in our team, and how do you think they contribute to or limit our effectiveness as a team?"

Steps

1. **1 min** First individually and in silence, ask people to write down the biggest patterns they observed.
2. **4 min** Ask everyone to pair up with another person and exchange what they noticed. If you're doing this virtually, move people into breakouts.
3. **8 min** If you have at least 8 participants, invite each pair to pair up with another pair into groups of 4. If you have fewer than 8 participants, ask people to form a new pair with someone else. In this round, ask everyone to build on the patterns they discussed in the previous round.
4. **10 min** Now together with everyone, invite all groups to share the most impactful patterns they observed. You can capture them on a flip, whiteboard, or a virtual workspace.



 15 min

Step 3: Identify Actionable Next Steps



Now that you've made sense of the data, and identified starting points for where to improve, now is a good time to crystalize those ideas. The Liberating Structure [15% Solutions](#) is super useful for this.

Invitation

"Identify one concrete action you can take personally to help our team invest in one of the impactful patterns we identified. What is something you can improve or contribute without approval from someone else or resources you don't have access to?"

Steps

1. **1 min** Invite everyone to reflect on the impactful patterns from the previous round and identify one action they themselves can take to contribute or improve it.
2. **5 min** Invite people into small groups (2-3) to briefly share their ideas and give and get help.
3. **10 min** Debrief with the entire group and give everyone the opportunity to share the actions they will take. You can collect them under "Actions".

We highly recommend adding an action to retake the questionnaire a few months down the road. If you'd like us to remind you, you can set a "Reminder" in the Team Report directly.

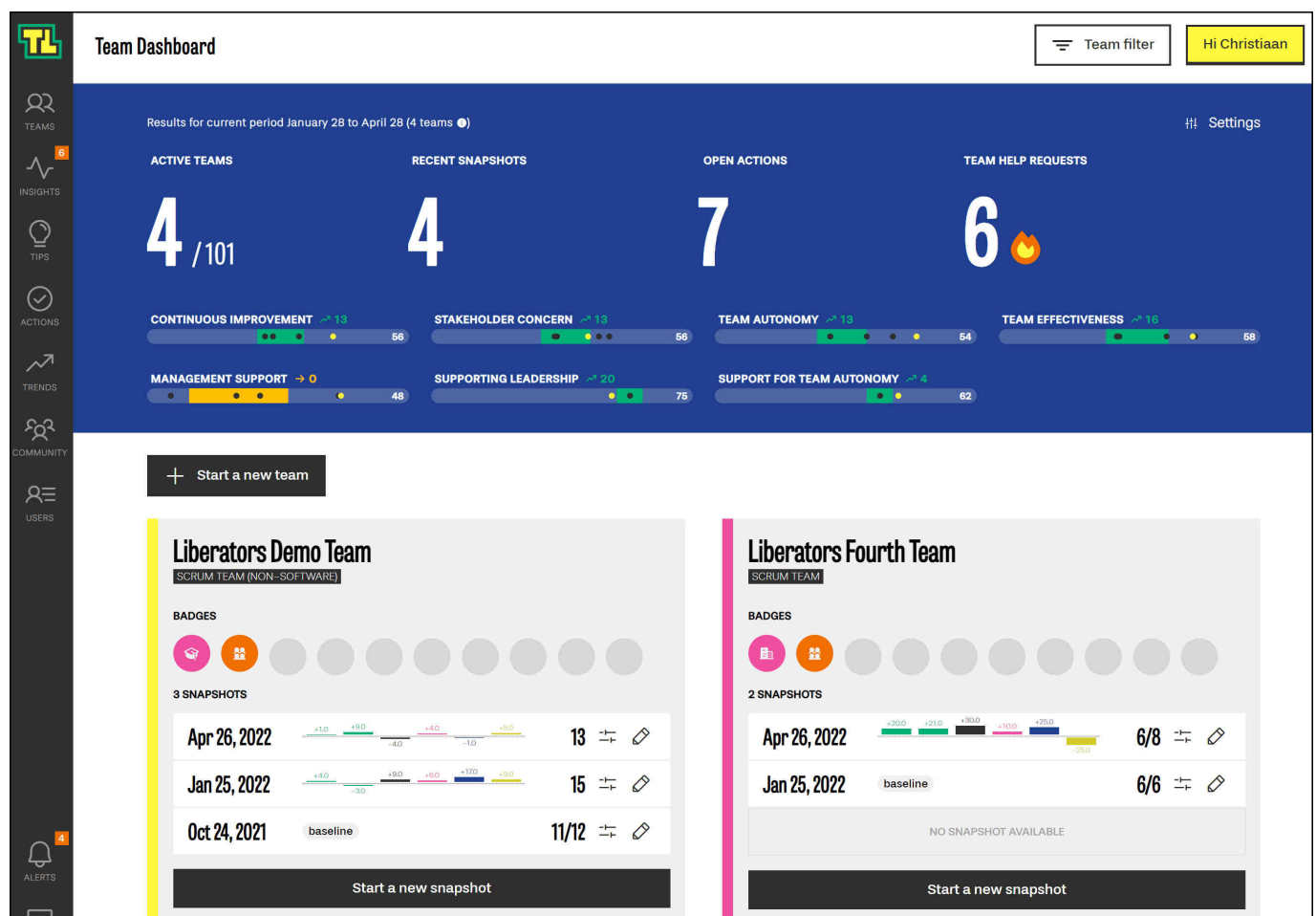
Drive Change Across More Teams



If your organization has more (Agile) teams, you might be interested in our "Teams Dashboard". It is part of our [subscriber features](#). We created the Teams Dashboard to track patterns and improvements across many teams. It allows you to:

1. Create snapshots for teams and invite members, stakeholders, and supporters directly from the dashboard.
2. See reports for all your teams combined, or group teams into value streams, departments, or units. This is a great way to drive organizational-level change.
3. Track improvement actions from a single place.
4. Add accounts so that teams can also log in and view the results from the Teams Dashboard.
5. Receive evidence-based feedback based on all participating teams.

You can explore a demo of the Teams Dashboard [here](#).



Other Considerations

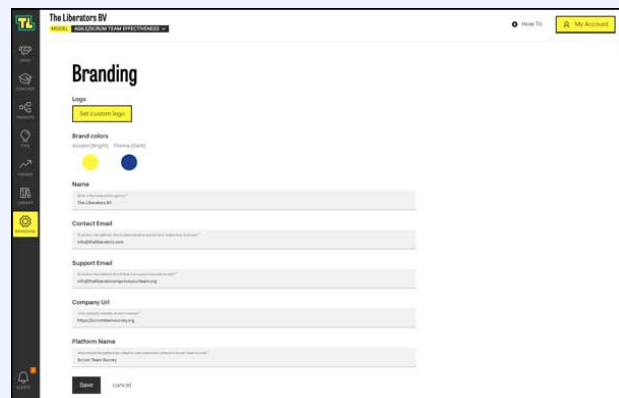
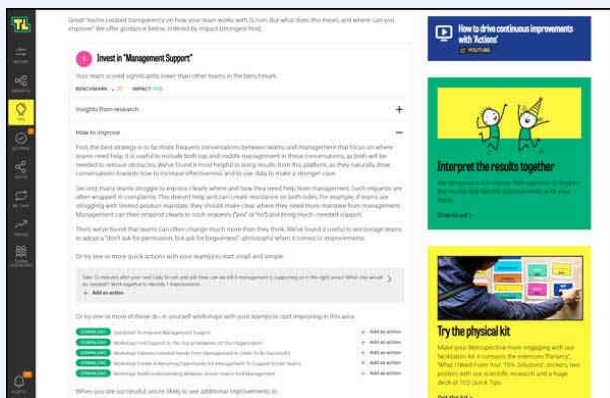
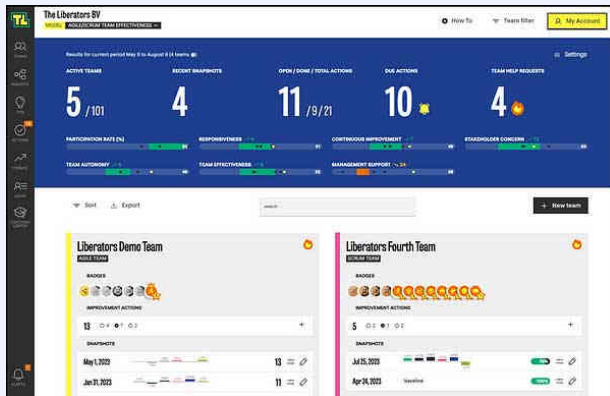


- Teams are often tempted to identify dozens of potential improvements and end up doing nothing at all. We've found it more helpful to identify one or two actionable improvements and ensure they are implemented in the next iteration, and then identify more.
- Teams should use the outcome of the survey as a conversation starter. Don't use the results to judge teams.
- The entire team should participate in the diagnosis, interpretation, and identification of improvements. Don't limit to just the Scrum Masters, Product Owners, or coaches. Otherwise, it will quickly become a tool to assess the Developers. This will not only damage trust but entirely misses the point of the survey.
- Continuous improvement means you have to do it more than once. So retake the questionnaire a few months later. Most teams prefer a cadence of once every quarter. But you can do it more often or less often.



Improve Your Team(s) Continuously

We offer a pioneering tool to help teams improve collaboratively by illuminating the quality of their teamwork continuously based on scientific insights. Diagnose one or many teams, receive extensive feedback and resolve broader organizational issues.



	Free	Professional	Enterprise
Invite team members & stakeholders	unlimited	unlimited	unlimited
Actionable feedback for your team	3	unlimited	unlimited
Unlimited data retention		✓	✓
Industry benchmarks		✓	✓
Maintain one or many teams from a single dashboard		✓	✓
Track multiple teams in your organization		✓	✓
Track teams across multiple clients			✓
Apply your company brand to our tool			✓
Pricing per team per month (annually)	€ 0	€ 20	€ 40

Subscribe at columinity.com

Looking For Help?

At Columinity, we're ready to support you and your teams with coaching, advice and support. We can facilitate this workshop for you. Contact us to get the most out of Columinity.

