

FREE RESOURCE

The Product–Engineering–Data Health Check

Twelve statements, scored separately by each function. The number that matters is not the average — it is the spread between them.

The instrument used in Bridge engagements, published in full

Most organisations have no honest measurement of how far apart their functions are. They have an engagement survey, which measures mood, and delivery metrics, which measure output. Neither tells you whether product, engineering and data are living in the same reality.

This does. It takes five minutes to answer and about twenty to read properly.

How to run it

Ask each function separately

Product, engineering and data answer the same twelve statements, but you keep the three sets of answers apart. If you merge them you have destroyed the only number that matters.

Keep it anonymous within each function

Individual answers are nobody's business, including yours. You need the group's position, not a list of who is unhappy.

Score one to five

1 is strongly disagree, 5 is strongly agree. No neutral option is offered on purpose — the middle is where uncomfortable answers go to hide.

Run it twice

Once before you change anything, once eight weeks after. A single measurement is an opinion; two measurements are evidence.

The twelve statements

UNDERSTANDING

- 01 ☐ I understand why the last significant technical decision was made.
- 02 ☐ Work arrives with enough context for me to challenge it, not just build it.
- 03 ☐ I know what we are not doing this quarter, and why.

ESTIMATES AND COMMITMENTS

- 04 ☐ When I give an estimate, I trust it will be heard as a range rather than a promise.
- 05 ☐ I can say “this will take longer than you want” without it becoming a conversation about my competence.
- 06 ☐ The roadmap reflects what we are actually able to do.

DECISIONS AND OWNERSHIP

- 07 ☐ I know who decides when we disagree about scope.
- 08 ☐ I know who owns the definition of our most important metric.
- 09 ☐ When I need a number, I know who to ask and roughly how long it will take.

QUALITY AND TRUST

- 10 ☐ When something breaks, we find out why rather than who.
- 11 ☐ When we use AI to produce something, we agree on who checks it.
- 12 ☐ If I raised a concern about quality tomorrow, it would change something.

How to read it

Work through these in order. The third one is the point of the whole instrument.

The average tells you morale

Useful, but you probably knew it already. A whole-organisation average below 3.0 is a culture problem and this is not the right tool for it.

The lowest statements tell you where to look

Any statement scoring below 2.5 in any function is worth a conversation on its own, regardless of what the other functions said.

The spread between functions is the diagnosis

For each statement, take the highest function average and subtract the lowest. A gap of 1.5 or more means the two groups are describing different companies. That gap — not the average — is what a good engagement moves, and it is what you should re-measure after eight weeks.

Three patterns that come up again and again

Product scores high where engineering scores low — usually statements 1, 4 and 5

Product believes there is a shared understanding that engineering does not feel. This is almost never a communication problem, whatever the retro says. It is a decision-rights problem: engineering is being informed of decisions it believes it should have been consulted on. Writing down who decides fixes more of this than any number of extra meetings.

Data scores low across the board, and lowest on 8, 9 and 2

The data function is being used as a ticket desk. It receives orders rather than questions, so it cannot challenge a request, cannot prioritise between requests, and owns no definitions. The fix is the intake process, not the tooling and not the headcount.

Everyone scores low on 7 and 3

Nobody knows who decides, and nobody knows what was deprioritised. This is the cheapest thing on this page to fix and the one most often left alone, because it looks like bureaucracy until the first time it saves you a quarter.

ONE WARNING

Do not run this as a performance exercise, and do not let anyone see individual responses. The moment people believe the answers are attributable, the spread collapses to zero and you have measured nothing except how well your team reads a room.

Scoring sheet

One row per statement. Fill in each function's average, then the spread. Photocopy it, or rebuild it in a spreadsheet — the shape is the useful part.

STATEMENT	PRODUCT	ENGINEERING	DATA	SPREAD
01 · I understand why the last significant technical decision was made.				
02 · Work arrives with enough context for me to challenge it, not just build it.				
03 · I know what we are not doing this quarter, and why.				
04 · When I give an estimate, I trust it will be heard as a range rather than a promise.				
05 · I can say “this will take longer than you want” without it becoming a conversation about my competence.				
06 · The roadmap reflects what we are actually able to do.				
07 · I know who decides when we disagree about scope.				
08 · I know who owns the definition of our most important metric.				
09 · When I need a number, I know who to ask and roughly how long it will take.				
10 · When something breaks, we find out why rather than who.				
11 · When we use AI to produce something, we agree on who checks it.				
12 · If I raised a concern about quality tomorrow, it would change something.				

The Bridge is a training academy for product, engineering and data leaders — workshops, programmes, mentoring and advisory on the decisions the three functions have to make together. Taught live by a practising CTO. Everything here is drawn from the catalogue and published openly. **thebridge.academy**