

Priority Alignment Matrix & Guide

When everything seems important, nothing truly is. The Priority Alignment Matrix helps leaders and teams escape the tyranny of competing priorities by providing a systematic framework for evaluating initiatives against both purpose alignment and practical constraints. This visual decision-making tool transforms subjective debates about priorities into data-informed conversations, reducing politics and personal preferences in favor of strategic clarity. By making priority decisions explicit and transparent, leaders can confidently allocate resources, manage stakeholder expectations, and empower teams to focus their energy where it matters most.

Author

This tool was developed by Michelle Watson-Grant.

Goal

This tool provides a visual decision-making framework to evaluate and rank initiatives based on their alignment with team purpose and practical constraints.

Advice

- Use this quarterly to set major priorities and monthly to adjust
- Involve the full team in scoring for buy-in and diverse perspectives
- Be honest about capacity limitations - everything can't be high priority
- Revisit previous matrices to check if priorities shifted and understand why

Facilitator's Agenda: Co-creating Team Purpose

Team: _____

Date & Time: _____

Intended Outcome: A clear, ranked list of initiatives with explicit rationale for prioritization decisions

Timing (1 hr 40)	What	Why	How
10 min.	Priority Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review team purpose statement Discuss organizational constraints and opportunities Outline decision-making process and criteria 	<i>To ground prioritization in purpose and current realities</i>	Facilitator presentation with brief discussion
15 min.	Initiative Inventory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List all current and proposed initiatives/projects Clarify scope and expected outcomes for each Identify any non-negotiable initiatives 	<i>To ensure comprehensive consideration of all options</i>	Group brainstorm with clarifying questions
10 min.	Evaluation Criteria Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain scoring dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose Alignment (1-5) Resource Efficiency (1-5) Timeline Feasibility (1-5) Stakeholder Value (1-5) Review weighting formula 	<i>To establish shared understanding of evaluation approach</i>	Facilitator explanation with examples

Timing	What	Why	How
30 min.	Initiative Scoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For each initiative, discuss and assign scores across all dimensions Calculate weighted scores using formula: (Purpose Alignment \times 2) + Resource Efficiency + Timeline Feasibility + (Stakeholder Value \times 1.5) Sort initiatives by weighted scores 	<i>To apply consistent evaluation criteria across all options</i>	Structured group discussion with visual tracking
15 min.	Capacity Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimate total capacity available Determine realistic number of initiatives to prioritize Draw cut-off line based on capacity 	<i>To ensure commitments align with realistic capacity</i>	Facilitated discussion using data on team capacity
10 min.	Decision Documentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record rationale for top priority selections Document explicit decisions about what won't be prioritized and why Identify communication needs for stakeholders 	<i>To create transparency and commitment to decisions</i>	Group documentation in shared template

Timing	What	Why	How
5 min.	Q&A What questions or comments do you have?	<i>To clarify wonderings and deepen understanding</i>	Whole Group Discussion
5 min.	Closing & Next Steps How would you like to conclude the meeting? (e.g., gratitude, kudos, summary of key points, etc.) Share next steps	<i>To strengthen community and clarify next steps</i>	Whole Group Discussion Facilitator closing

Priority Alignment Matrix

Initiative Name	Purpose Alignment (1-5)	Resource Efficiency (1-5)	Timeline Feasibility (1-5)	Stakeholder Value (1-5)	Weighted Score
<i>Initiative #1</i>					
<i>Initiative #2</i>					
<i>Initiative #3</i>					

Scoring Guide:

Purpose Alignment: How directly does this initiative support our team purpose?

- 1 = Minimal connection to purpose
- 5 = Direct fulfillment of core purpose

Resource Efficiency: How efficiently can we execute with available resources?

- 1 = Requires significant new resources
- 5 = Can be accomplished with existing resources

Timeline Feasibility: How realistic is completion within our planning horizon?

- 1 = Highly uncertain or very long timeline
- 5 = Quick win with high certainty

Stakeholder Value: How important is this to key stakeholders?

- 1 = Limited stakeholder interest
- 5 = High priority for multiple key stakeholders

Weighted Score Formula:

$(\text{Purpose Alignment} \times 2) + \text{Resource Efficiency} + \text{Timeline Feasibility} + (\text{Stakeholder Value} \times 1.5)$

This formula emphasizes purpose alignment and stakeholder value

Priority Visualization Grid

After scoring, plot initiatives on this 2×2 grid.

