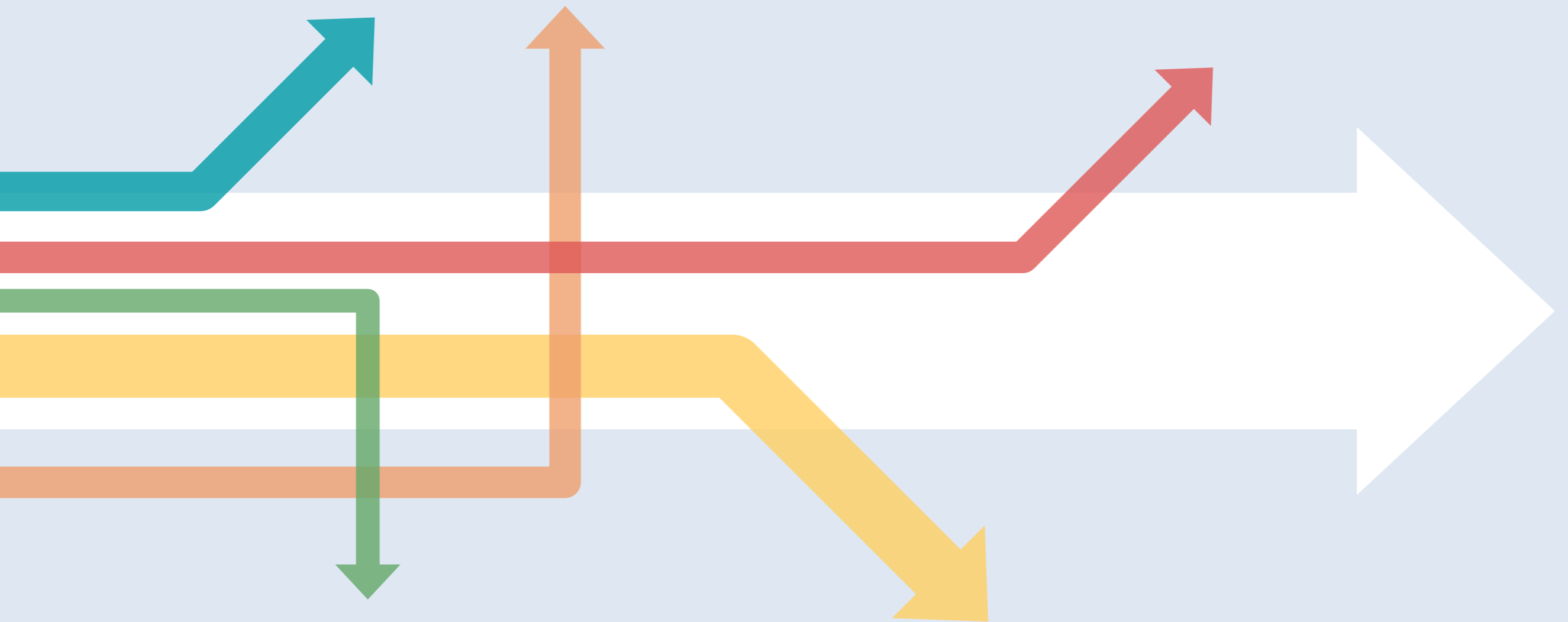


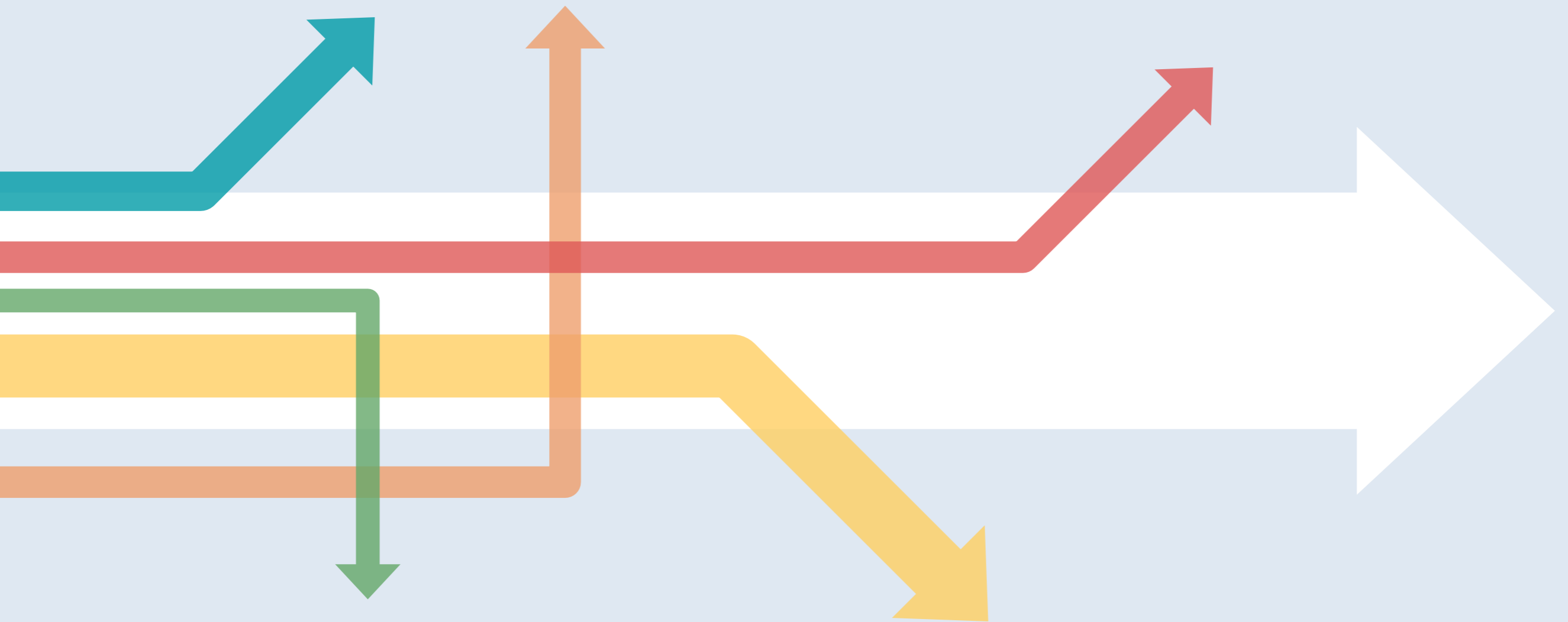
Integration Accelerator

Facilitator Guide





Do you and your leadership team see eye-to-eye on three critical areas of your integration?



**If you don't get aligned,
you can't get going.**

Dear Marketer-Amid-a-Merger:

There are two critical facts to know about mergers: first, most fail. Second, yours doesn't have to. To help make sure it doesn't, we created The Integration Accelerator Kit, to:

- Raise the profile of three critical marketing-related areas of business that are commonly overlooked during integration
- Provide a framework to help you and your team objectively diagnose these three areas
- Help you and your team engage in a structured conversation that will uncover where you are and aren't aligned on viewpoints and expectations
- Determine your needs and next steps
- Speed up and improve your organization's integration outcomes and reach your synergy targets

Of course, we're happy to help if you'd like, so please feel free to call us at anytime. But whether or not we ever work together, we know from years of experience that using The Integration Accelerator Kit will improve your merger integration process and outcome tremendously.



Bob Domenz

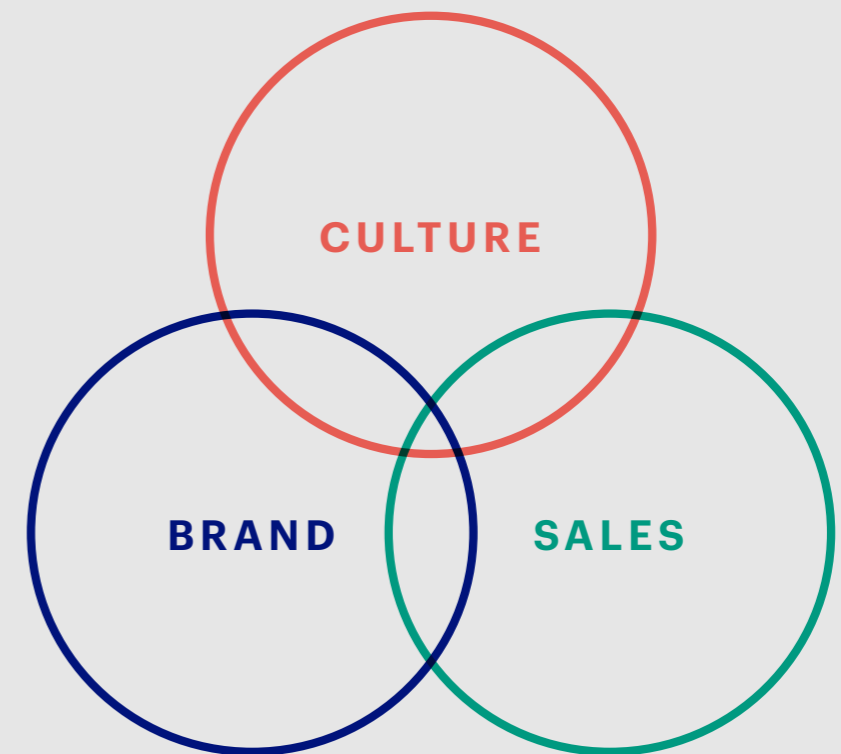
CEO, Avenue

Certified M&A Integration Specialist

What is this?

A self-help tool kit for leaders of integrations.

Included are several diagnostic tools and guides that will help reveal where you and your team are misaligned (which would derail your integration plans) on three key areas: culture, brand and sales.





Why do it?

To get aligned, fast.

Merging companies tend to focus on financial, legal and operational concerns, often ignoring culture, brand and sales. Misalignment in these areas can cause confusion with employees, your product portfolio and ultimately, customers, slowing or defeating integration plans.

Anywhere from 50–85% of mergers fail to achieve their targets, (depending on whose research you believe).



Why you?

You are uniquely positioned.

As your organization's senior marketer, you should lead this particular charge. You have the insight—and live at the intersection of your business' vision and culture, marketing and sales, and customers' needs. You have the ability to create and communicate an integration plan that will inform and motivate all key stakeholders.



Why now?

Your first steps are critical.

Aligning as early as possible on these three areas will promote a smoother, faster integration and prevent “organizational swirl,” that state of confusion that sets in and just keeps building when merging organizations haven’t clearly established and communicated the vision, objectives, priorities and benefits of a merger.



**Let's
get
started.**

There are six steps to getting aligned:

1. Getting prepared

2. Scheduling your meeting and inviting the team

3. Filling out your Participant Workbooks

4. Running your meeting

5. Assessing your results

6. Determining next steps

STEP 1

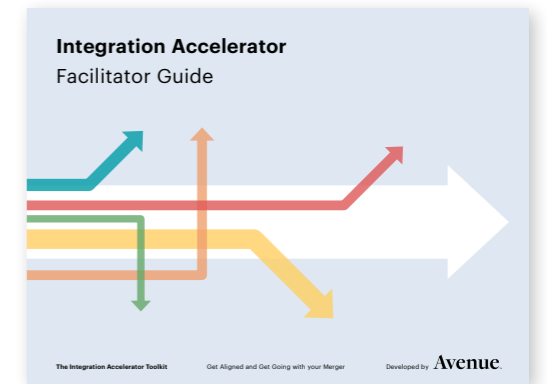
Getting prepared

This kit consists of two elements:

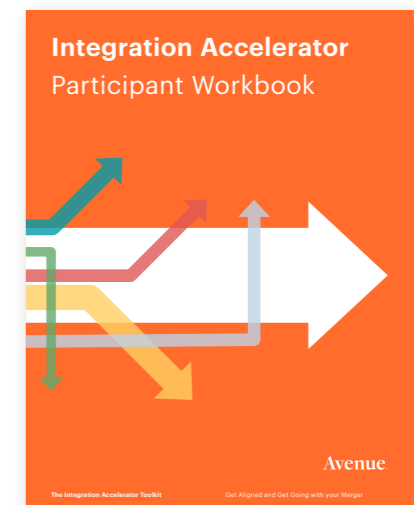
1. **The Facilitator Guide**—the one you're reading right now.
2. **The Participant Workbook**—for each person who will be in the meeting (including yourself).

Make sure you've downloaded and familiarized yourself with both.

ELEMENTS TO REVIEW



Facilitator Guide



Participant Workbook

[Download the Workbook](#)

STEP 2

Scheduling your meeting and inviting the team

Key to building alignment is ensuring the right people are in the room, and all are prepared to have a healthy discussion.

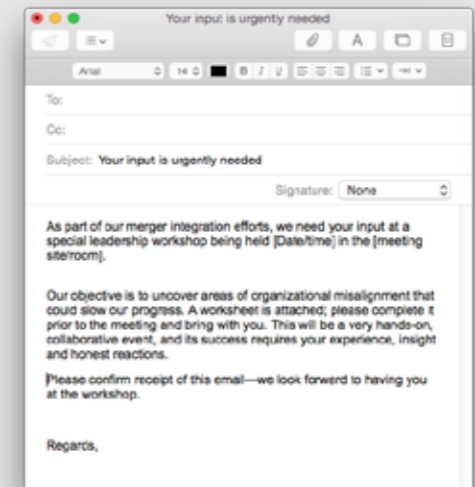
Identify those who are instrumental to the integration plan and responsible for strategic decisions related to the culture, marketing and sales strategies of the newly combined entity. Ideally, your meeting will include business leadership as well as functional leadership.

Six to twelve participants is desirable. Many more, or less, can make the group dynamic difficult to manage.

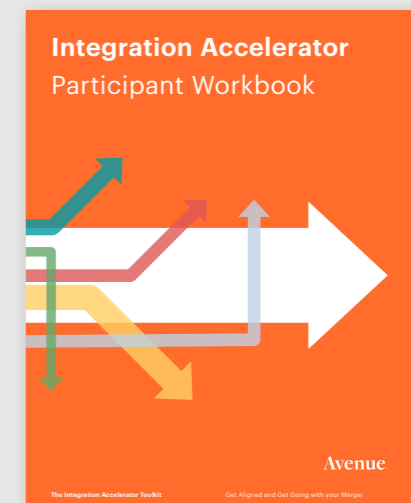
Pick a date and time for the meeting, at least one week in advance. The ideal location will be offsite, or somewhere free of interruptions and conducive to focus. Plan for a minimum of two hours, preferably three or more depending on the size of your group.

Feel free to use the provided email language (see following page) as is, or modified as you see fit.

KIT ELEMENTS TO USE



Invitation template



Participant Workbook

[Download the Workbook](#)

STEP 2

Invitation template—copy and paste into your email

Subject: Your input is urgently needed

As part of our merger integration efforts, we need your input at a special leadership workshop being held [Date/time] in the [meeting site/room].

Our objective is to uncover areas of organizational misalignment that could slow our progress. A PDF is attached; it provides an overview and worksheets. Please complete the worksheets prior to our meeting and bring with you. This will be a very hands-on, collaborative event, and its success requires your experience, insight and honest thoughts.

Please confirm receipt of this email—we look forward to having you at the workshop.

Regards,

Attach calendar invite if that is your organization's protocol.

STEP 3

Filling out your Participant Workbooks

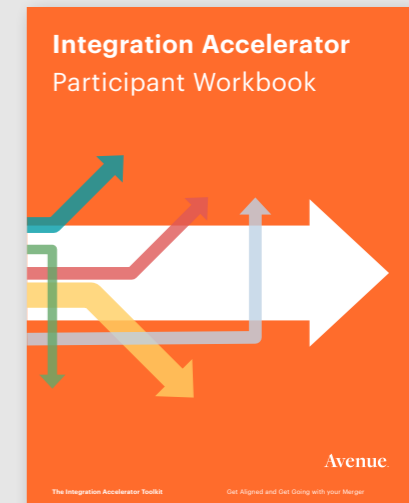
Once the meeting is scheduled and location secured, every participant should read his/her workbook and fill out the worksheets.

This should take 15–20 minutes.

Every participant—including the facilitator—needs to print and bring their completed worksheets to the meeting.

Tip: Remind participants the day before the meeting to bring their finished worksheets with them.

KIT ELEMENTS TO USE



Participant Workbook and Worksheets

[Download the Workbook](#)

STEP 4

Running your meeting

As the facilitator, it's your job to manage time, keep the conversation moving and productive, and avoid one person dominating the discussion.

To open the meeting, remind everyone why you're there and what you hope to accomplish.

Before starting the dialogue, ask the group to vote on which topic they'd like to start with—Culture, Brand or Go-to-Market/Sales.

Within each topic, take each subject question-by-question. Ask for a show of hands on each, first for all who disagree with the statement (note the number of hands on a blank worksheet of your own). Ask that group to briefly explain their viewpoint, encouraging each person to answer. Repeat the show of hands and discussion for the group agreeing with the statement.

The show of hands will make similarities and differences visible, and help reveal which issues need the most attention. Remember, the objective of the workshop is to uncover differences in perspective that need to be resolved, but not yet to try and resolve them.

Tip: There aren't necessarily right or wrong answers to the questions—every person is entitled to their viewpoint and opinion.

MAKING RESULTS VISIBLE



Voting by hands

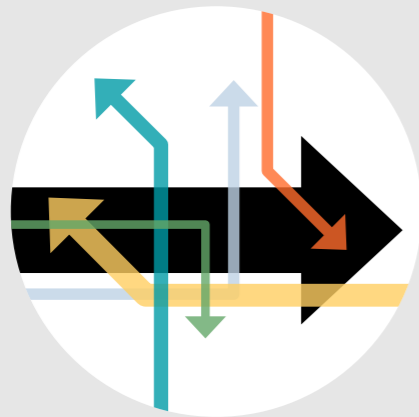
TOPICS	DISAGREE	AGREE
1. The mission of our newly combined organization is clear and compelling to both employees and customers.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Our vision is clear and meaningful to employees and customers.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. We have well-defined values to guide how our newly combined entity should think and act.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4. Our purpose—why we matter in the marketplace and the world—is meaningful and credible to employees and customers.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. The merger is an opportunity to transform our culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6. We have diagnosed the differences in the operating styles of our merging companies and have a plan to reconcile the differences in them (leadership, decision-making, financial style, etc.)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Both organizations have a similar customer-centric culture.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Review of completed Worksheets

STEP 5

Assessing your results

Based on the overall discussions in your workshop, it should be fairly evident to you that your team is either misaligned, unaligned or aligned. You can assess this based on each topic individually—Culture, Brand and Marketing, Go-to-Market and Sales—as well as all topics together.



MISALIGNED

You have significantly different (even opposing) viewpoints on key topics. It will likely take several additional meetings to fully uncover the roots of your differences before you can begin effectively planning, communicating or implementing the integration.



UNALIGNED

Your viewpoints aren't opposing, yet there are some differences in the perspectives and understanding of the team. Before you begin integration planning, communication or implementation, your team would benefit by working out the nuances of your differences.



ALIGNED

You have many common viewpoints and agreements on the topics and questions. As a team, you are in the best position to begin effectively taking next steps in your planning, communication and implementation of the integration.

STEP 6

Determining next steps

Remember, this Kit is only an initial diagnostic.

You'll need to self-evaluate whether you have the right expertise in-house, and the availability of staff, to execute the next steps you've identified in Step 5.

Whatever your next step is, we encourage you to share the worksheets and workshop results with an outside integration expert, like Avenue. An expert has the experience and know-how to help you navigate the inherent challenges with integrations and improve your organization's outcomes.

The Integration Accelerator Kit was developed by the team at Avenue, the marketing strategy and activation firm specializing in helping mid-size B2B companies drive change and growth.

We work with clients to realize the full vision and value of their mergers and acquisitions, changes in leadership, outside investments and new product launches.

To learn how we can help you, contact Bob Domenz, our CEO.

Email: bob.domenz@avenue-inc.com

Phone: [312-787-8300](tel:312-787-8300)

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