

**Tactic: This, Not That**

*“This, Not That” makes choices visible. It surfaces priorities in a way that builds alignment and sets the stage for sharper strategy and action.*

**When to Use It:**

When a group is ready to explore different approaches, structures, or priorities, use this exercise to make abstract preferences visible through tangible spectrums and to ultimately build something concrete. It’s especially useful when shaping a mission or vision statement, or when defining the operating principles and identity of a team, coalition, or initiative.

**How it Works:**

**Step 1 (10 minutes)** | **Reflect on spectrums**

Present participants with a set of opposite extremes (e.g., *Formal and Structured ↔ Informal and Flexible*). On each spectrum, participants mark where they believe the group should fall. Encourage honest reflection—there are no “right” answers.

**Step 2 (10 minutes) | Share and explore**

Invite participants to share their positions and reasoning. Ensure a range of perspectives is surfaced by inviting anyone who disagrees to contribute. Ask participants:

* What values or goals influenced your choice?
* What trade‑offs come with leaning toward one end of the spectrum?
* Are there important characteristics we haven’t named?

**Step 3 (20 minutes) | Align on key attributes**  
Look across all spectrums and synthesize where the group is gravitating.

* Example: “We want our coalition to be *‘formal yet adaptable’* and *‘regionally anchored, globally aware.’*” Use voting or clustering to prioritize.

**Step 4 (15 minutes) | Summarize & discuss**

Capture the group’s selections visually on a board or shared document. Discuss patterns, points of alignment, and where further exploration might be needed.

**Helpful Tips:**

* **Use visual aids.** Create large, visible spectrums on flip charts or walls so participants can see the full range and place their marks clearly.
* **Get people moving.** Consider taping a giant spectrum on the floor or wall and inviting people to physically stand where they fall—this creates energy and sparks conversation.
* **Pair contrasts and discuss.** After placing marks, consider pairing people with contrasting positions to share reasoning, which deepens insight and surfaces nuanced trade‑offs.

