

# SELF-SELECTION KIT

This Self-Selection kit is a companion to the book "[Creating Great Teams - How Self-Selection Lets People Excel](#)" by Sandy Mamoli and David Mole.

It provides ready-made checklists for preparing and running self-selection events of 100 people or more.

If you're fewer people you obviously won't need as much time and can cut down on some of the logistics and process. This kit is mainly a starting point and you should tweak and adapt it to your own needs.

Any company can run a successful self-selection event. To get started ask yourself a series of questions to understand whether you have everything in place to be successful.

## SELF-SELECTION READINESS CHECK

### Before you even think about it:

- Do you have, or can you get, support from senior management?
- Are people open to trying self-selection?
- Is it the right time to self-select?
- Do you or can you have stable cross-functional teams?
- Do you feel personally ready to try this?
- Are you confident that this can work in your organisation?
- Are you ready to answer people's questions?
- Have you considered a trial or twenty-four-hour hackathon?

Don't underestimate the the need for people to be prepared - both practically and emotionally, it's a big change!

## SELF-SELECTION PREPARATION CHECKLIST

### Weeks before

- Define the squads you need and their purpose and mission statements
- Decide who will participate in the event
- Communicate to everyone that they will be asked to self-select into teams and why
- Ask the product owners to prepare their purpose statements, high level roadmaps and pitches for their squads.
- Organise logistics such as a date, a room, meeting invites etc.
- Prepare your FAQs (see next page for an example)

*Keep a list of questions people ask and distribute your answers to everyone involved.*

## FAQs: SELF-SELECTION DAY

### **Q. Do I have to stay where I am?**

This really IS self selection, you don't have to stay where you are if you don't want to - although it is totally fine if you do! You choose!

### **Q. What squads can I choose from again?**

Have a look at the list of all squads and think about things like:

- What do I want to learn?
- Where would I learn the most?
- Where would I teach the most?
- What is best for the company?

### **Q. When will I start with my new squad?**

It's important to know that this reorganisation won't be in place straight away; people have projects to hand over and things to finish. We'll sit with each squad and talk through questions, issues and current projects, then agree a plan. Hopefully the transition occurs sooner rather than later, but the timing is dependent on who chooses with team.

### **Q. Can I be in more than one squad?**

Our experience so far tell us that one squad per person is best. It allows people to commit to their team mates and to the work, which means they are always available to their squad. There are exceptions to this, of course, and the decision is ultimately yours.

### **Q. What should I do if I can't be there on the day?**

We would love everyone to be there but with this number of people it is inevitable that some people won't be able to make it. If you can't be there don't worry; you can either nominate a proxy (that is, someone you trust who you can explain what you would like to do) or you can let one of the facilitators know.

### **Q. What about my current work/projects?**

This is important and we'll account for this, but don't worry about it right now. We are defining the end goal with self-selection. Once we know the squad layout we we'll tackle your current workload.

## FAQs: SELF-SELECTION DAY

### **Q. How many Test/Design/Development slots are there in each squad?**

We have a squad blueprint that you will have seen, but this is a suggestion and not a strict layout. The exact requirements will vary based on the work. If in doubt, talk to the others in a squad and the product owners.

### **Q. I just want someone to tell me where to go, can you just put me in a squad?!**

We think you know more about what you should work on and who you should work with. If you're really unsure, you can select the "I have no squad" section initially and then listen for issues and gaps to fill. We really don't want to select on your behalf; you will do a better job!

### **Q. How long will I be with my squad for? Am I signing my life away?**

We want stable squads, but you aren't signing your life away. We'll review the lay of the land within six months.

### **Q. Where should I put my photo if I just don't know where to go?**

Just choose the 'I have No Squad' Section (for now!)

### **Q. What if someone else is already doing what I want to do?**

If someone is already doing what you want to do, talk to that person and the rest of the squad, and do this against a backdrop of finding the best solution for the company.

### **Q. What happens next?**

We will arrange to sit down with each squad to answer any questions and discuss any issues and define a plan for becoming a new squad. That plan will involve a day when the squad sits down as a group and decides which elements of agile will best suit their work (choosing from a list of ingredients). We aren't the scrum police and we don't enforce agile, but we can provide a list of things and help you pick.

## SELF-SELECTION PREPARATION CHECKLIST

### Days before

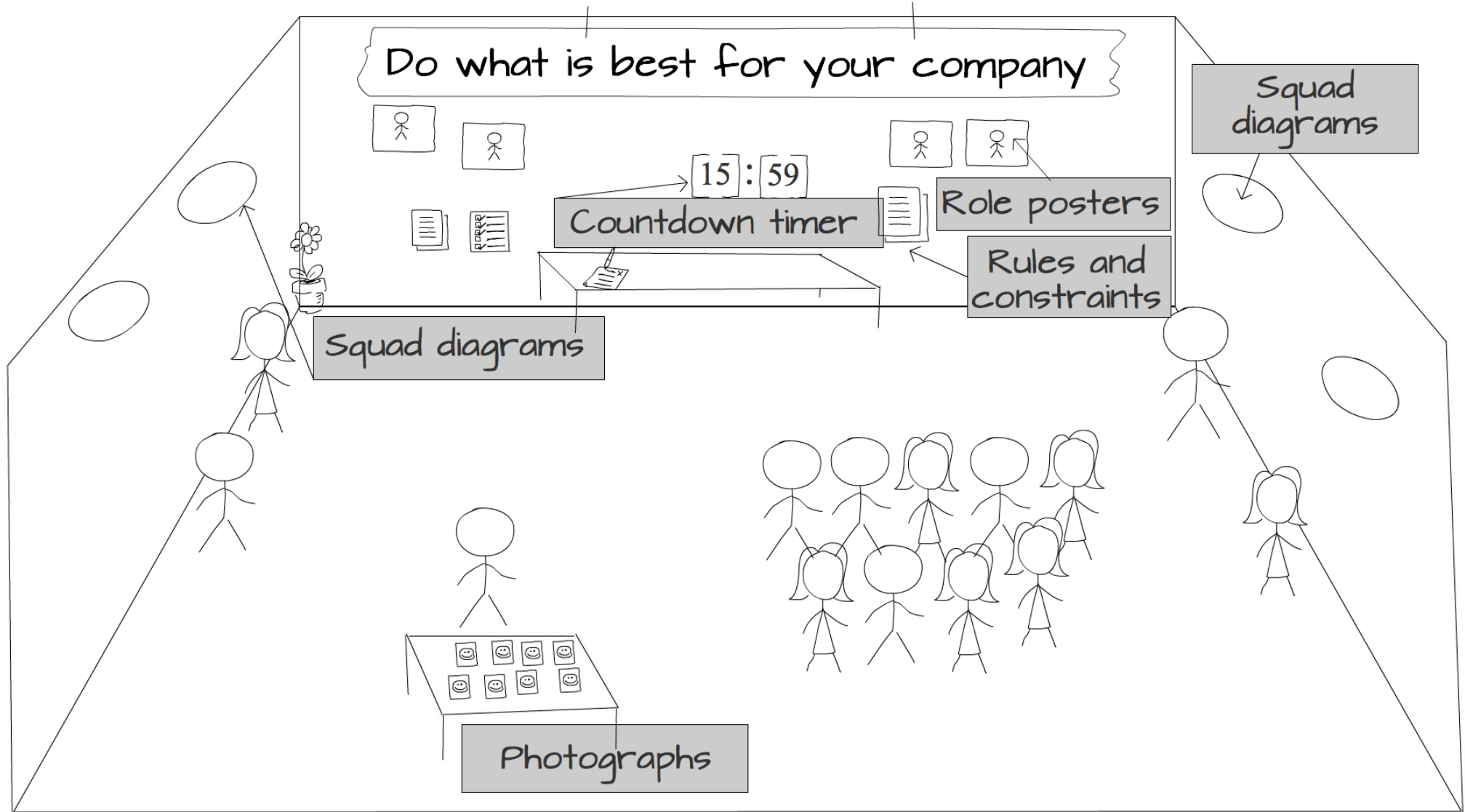
- Send out an agenda for the day
- Create a facilitation plan
- Organise facilitation helpers to be your ears and eyes on the ground
- Prepare materials and stationary for the day
- Define your squad rules and constraints

## MATERIALS CHECKLIST

### Things you need for the day

- Squad diagrams for the wall
- Photographs of all participants
- Skills checklists
- A list of rules and constraints
- "Do what is best for your company" banner
- Printouts with descriptions of key roles
- Coloured post-its to show skill sets
- A big timer
- Printouts of your FAQs
- Squad mission/purpose statements

# ROOM SETUP





Have as few rules and constraints as possible to avoid added complexity and pushing towards management selection.

Keep your rules short and simple!

## SQUAD CONSTRAINTS

### A fully formed squad is...

- Capable of delivering end-to-end
- 3-7 people - think hats, not roles!
- Co-located

This is a sample running order.

The timings are indicative for a group of 70 - 150 people.

If you're fewer each of the steps will be faster.

## SELF-SELECTION RUNNING ORDER

### SET UP THE ROOM (30 min)

- Posters on the walls : 1x for each squads, 1x "Not yet in a squad" , company banner, squad constraints
- Photos of everyone on a table
- Spread out the tools for the day (post-its, markers, blu tac, skill check-lists, index cards for issues)

### WELCOME (5 min)

- When people arrive, hand them their photo, a copy of the FAQ and a copy of the squad missions.
- If not everyone knows each other, have them write their name on the photo.

### KICK-OFF (10 min)

- Explain and present to the group how the day will work.
- Re-enforce 'why' we are doing it this way
- Explain the rules of the game
- Any quirks. How to deal with people who aren't here, not signing up for life, not going to happen tomorrow etc (anything from the FAQ that's worth mentioning explicitly)
- Questions?

### PRODUCT OWNER PITCHES (30 - 45 min)

Product Owners talk through roadmaps and squad missions

- The name and mission of their squad
- The next two most likely things the squad would work on
- Roadmaps
- Questions?

<BREAK 15 minutes>

As a facilitator be strict on time.

People should stay physically with the squad they have assigned their photo to.

Anyone not yet selected, goes to the "Not yet in a squad" section.

## SELF-SELECTION RUNNING ORDER

### SELECTION ROUND 1

- Go! 10 minute time box to self-select. **(10 min)**
- Checkpoint review: Fill out the skills checklist and stick it on the wall. Visualise current issues. **(5 min)**
- Representative from each squad to read out the current status to the room **(5 min)**

### SELECTION ROUNDS 2-3 (30 - 40 min)

- Repeat to resolve outstanding issues.

<BREAK 30-45 minutes>

### SELECTION ROUND 4 (30-60 min)

Based on how far you got before the break:

- Run another selection round with everyone
- Send away any "fixed squads" and do another selection round with people who are left in the room

### CLOSE (5 min)

Stop when we have as many complete squads as possible and/or when the energy levels in the room drop significantly.

### DEFINE NEXT STEPS (5 min)

Tell people what will happen next:

- Lean coffee to talk about details and start date
- Company-wide communication

# Creating Great Teams

How Self-Selection Lets People Excel



## WHO WE ARE



### Sandy Mamoli

Sandy is an Agile enterprise coach and consultant at Nomad8 with a focus on culture and leadership.

From working in Amsterdam and Copenhagen to being one of New Zealand's leading coaches, she brings her practical European flair and passionate advocacy for all things Agile to businesses around the world. Sandy is a former Olympian, a geek, book author, gadget junkie, and an international public speaker.

[sandy@nomad8.com](mailto:sandy@nomad8.com)



### David Mole

David coaches, consults, and presents about Agile processes, teams, and motivation.

He recently led an Agile transformation at Trade Me where, building upon the work of Spotify's culture, he created dozens of high-performing Agile squads. He is a highly regarded public speaker and author. A former professional poker player, David works for Nomad8 helping teams and organizations perform better.

[david@nomad8.com](mailto:david@nomad8.com)