

FRICTION

SYSTEMIC Connection by Design

The Experiment: The Connection by Design Sprint

Duration: Two weeks plus one planning session

Time required: 45 minutes upfront, 10 minutes per week during the experiment

Goal: Identify where connection on your team is being left to chance and install one designed rhythm or ritual that makes belonging more likely for everyone.

Step One: Map Your Team's Connection Landscape (10 Minutes)

This experiment pairs with *The Offline Connection Dividend*, which contains a connection mapping exercise—four prompts that surface where connection is currently happening and, more importantly, where it isn't. If you've already run that experiment, pull up your map now. If you haven't, spend 10 minutes writing fast answers to those prompts before continuing. Note which groups or individuals are least likely to appear in your answers. Those are the people your current design is failing.

Step Two: Score Your Connection Ecosystem Across Five Lenses (1 to 5)

Circle your lowest two scores. Those are your design targets.

Intentionality: We can explain why we gather.

Equity: Hybrid and remote people get genuine belonging, not secondhand access.

Cadence: Connection happens predictably, not only by chance.

Mixing: Cross-team and cross-level relationships form without special effort or permission.

Repair: Connection barriers are identified and addressed.

Step Three: Design One Small Rhythm or Ritual (15 Minutes)

Based on your two lowest scores, design one specific practice you can run for two weeks. Keep it small enough to be able to do it. Examples:

- An anchor hour once a week where the team is in the same place and nothing gets scheduled over it
- A standing opening ritual in team meetings where one person shares something worth celebrating or acknowledging
- A monthly session dedicated to sensemaking and learning, not status updates
- A norm that new team members have a one-on-one with three people outside their immediate role in their first month

For your chosen practice, complete these sentences:

- “We are making it slightly harder to skip .”
- “So it becomes easier to .”
- “The smallest two-week version of this is .”
- “The thing most likely to break this is ,
so we will .

Step Four: Run the Pilot for Two Weeks, Then Ask Two Questions

At the end of each week, in a pulse check or in one-on-ones, ask:

- “Did you feel more supported this week than a typical week?”
- “Name one meaningful interaction you had that you would not have had otherwise.”

If support increases, keep the practice and refine it. If it does not, adjust the design rather than abandon the goal. In systems work, you do not judge the value by one attempt. You iterate until the human thing you care about becomes easier than the alternative.

Reflection prompt:

Think about someone on your team who is least likely to describe themselves as well-connected or belonging. What does your current design offer them? What would it take to build one thing that makes connection more available to them specifically, not as a special accommodation, but as a feature of how the team works?