

# What is TMS

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The **TMS-scale** is a measure of the **knowledge distribution** within a team. A **transactive memory system (TMS)**, is a collection of multiple individuals, who divide the cognitive labor of their joint tasks. **Transactive memory** is knowledge, which is influenced by knowledge about the memory system of another person.

Take a simple example of a married couple. Together, they have a joint task of managing a household. One partner remembers when the trash needs to be taken out, the other when water- and electricity bills need to be paid. One remembers the birthdays of other family members, the other knows where the passports and of the important documents are stored.



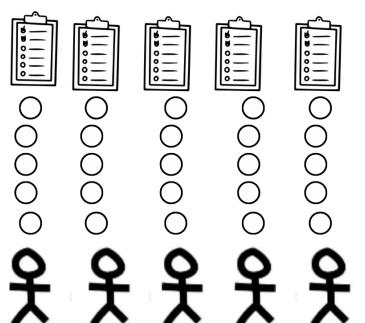
Alone, each partner would have to remember all these things. But as a team, they can divide the **cognitive labor** (i.e.: memory of where something is, memory of how something is done, ...) between each other. In other words, their memory about the household is influenced by the knowledge of what their partner knows about the household. This gives each of them more room to think about other things, and in the end, get more things done and work faster than if each had to do it alone.

This of course only works if both partners know *who knows what*, in other words, they possess adequate **metaknowledge**. Only if their assumptions about what the other partner knows are correct, can their transactive memory system work efficiently.

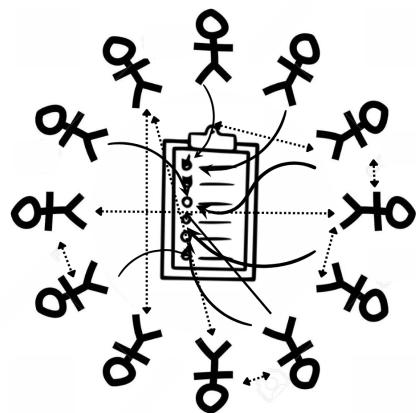
TMS and knowledge distribution in general relate to **organizational wellness** in the following way: Many organizations rely on the knowledge and expertise of their workers and design their teams in such a way that leverages the specific expertise of their individual team members. *The value of each team members knowledge is optimized when others can make use of it.*

Just like with the married couple, a well-functioning TMS gives each team member room to think about more things and allows the whole team to work faster and get more work done. According to **transactive memory theory**, group members divide the cognitive labor for their tasks, with members specializing in different domains. Members rely on one another to be responsible for specific expertise such that collectively they possess all of the information needed for their tasks.

So, by improving TMS, a team can go from this:



...to this!



Researchers have found that **TMS manifests in three different ways**.

1. Specialization: The differentiated structure of each member's knowledge
2. Credibility: Team members' beliefs about the reliability of other members' knowledge
3. Coordination: The efficiency of knowledge sharing and – processing.

These three manifestations have also been called **specialization, credibility, and coordination**. They can be assessed using 15 questions, with 5 questions for each category, which accumulated make up an individual person's TMS score. The **accumulated scores** for all team members determine the **TMS score** of an entire team. This is done by simply adding up the scores for each team member. So, a TMS score of 100% is only achievable, if all team members reach the highest TMS score.

#### How To Calculate the TMS score for a Team

#### TMS- score interpretation