

**NEW!** Monthly newsletter to help you stay on track with your business interactions

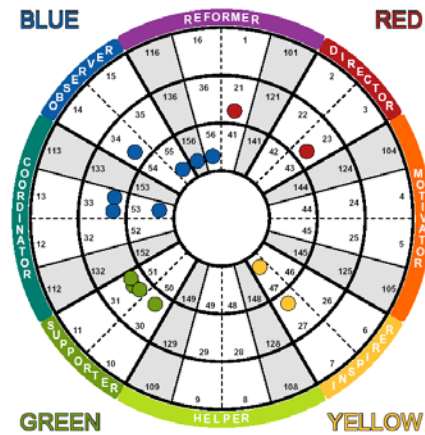


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## diversify your team

*"Teamwork is essential; it allows you to blame someone else..."*

Building a new team can be one of the most exciting, and frustrating, aspects of leadership. We want to hire people we readily connect with; people who we think see things the way we ourselves do. That tendency is human nature, we like people who are like us. To ensure an effective team, however, we should be looking for diversity in ideas, skills and approaches to task. It takes a strong leader to hire people with alternate perspectives, but the payoff is a dynamic group of individuals who add value in differing ways. It has been said that if two men see things exactly alike, there's no need for one of them! One way to determine and explore the diversity on your team is to use a psychometric tool such as Insights® (©Andrew Lothian, 2003). Understanding the differences in those we work with allows us to better understand our own value to our team, while learning how others contribute. It is a powerful tool to help build a diverse team, and an *insightful* way to understand an existing team. The graph above is a *Team Wheel*, used with a TriOpus Group client to identify the various personality types contributing to their team. From looking at the wheel, can you determine how diverse this team is? To learn more about the work we do with teams click on: <http://www.triopusgroup.com/toservices.html> and select "individual/team effectiveness".



**"Next month, a doctor with a flashlight shows us where sales projections come from"**  
- Scott Adams



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**"A unique relationship develops among team members who enter into dialogue regularly. They develop a deep trust that cannot help but carry over to discussions. They develop a richer understanding of the uniqueness of each person's point of view."**  
- Peter Senge

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**Is this how employees describe your office?**

I bruise easily, and when it comes to leadership, self-discovery has provided me with my most valuable bruises. Whenever I talk to groups about the nuances of Leadership or how to become an effective Leader, I emphasize that my failures are the things that I learned from the most. What we discover for ourselves, as opposed to what we are merely told, makes the biggest impression on us. I have learned to consider these bruises the growing pains of my personal development. What have you learned through trial and error? How are you helping to assist others in their own self-discovery? When asked what I have learned to be the most significant issues effecting Leaders and Leadership, I introduce people to the five that stand out above all others: *Be Trustworthy, Coach Everyday, Diversify Your Team, Involve Everyone and Keep People Accountable*. It's true that leadership is an evolution. Today's Leader is not the same as yesterdays. Growing into tomorrow's Leader will require traveling down that path of evolution, beginning with these five issues. Where do you stand along this path?

## **BE TRUSTWORTHY**

It is no accident that trust is at the top of my list. Failure by the Leader to resolve trust issues in the workplace will result in a team that is ineffective, that will just do the minimum, and will be totally uncommitted. Unfortunately, regardless of how trustworthy a leader you may be, you may have to carry the baggage for previous untrustworthy leaders. We've all worked for them. We know what they are like, and workers have long memories. I remember an employee of a client saying to me, "I don't trust my boss." When I asked why, she said, "In 1993, he said I could have the first two weeks in July for my vacation. Just a week before I was to go away, he said he was taking that time and that I would have to switch." Eleven years later, she still doesn't trust him. It can take a long time to build trust, one action at a time. You can destroy it forever in mere moments with simple acts of disregard. Trust manifests itself in many ways. Simply put though, to build trust, just do what you say you are going to do – every time, without exception.

## **COACH EVERYDAY**

"If you don't hear from me, you'll know you are doing OK." To some leaders that is Coaching. To others it sounds more like, "*I want to work with you to develop your skills and knowledge, in order that you can achieve both your goals and the organization's goals. My commitment is to create a safe environment for you to learn, be able to make mistakes, and to take chances. In short, I want to help you be as good as you can be and I want to make sure you are as ready as you can to move on.*" As leaders, we may fall somewhere in between these two ends of the coaching continuum. Coaching is not a diary note that pops up once a month. Instead it is a culture, a way of life. It is also a simple business issue. You will not meet your business goals with your team if coaching is not a standard in your workplace. In the well known "Coaching Controversy" research conducted by Xerox Corporation in the 1970's, 87% of all skills learned through training were lost in the workplace if coaching and support was not present. **87%!** If you are not Coaching to support skill development, start today. And if you don't know how, get help.

## **DIVERSIFY YOUR TEAM**

This is a simple but important issue. Leaders often surround themselves with people who are just like them, people who act alike and think alike. Resist this at all cost. You need diversity in the team that you lead. If you are a numbers person, make sure you hire people that know the cost of nothing but the value of everything. If you like to make fast effective decisions, take on employees that will challenge you and get you thinking laterally. You get the idea!

## **INVOLVE EVERYONE FOR SUCCESS**

So many of us achieved the lofty heights of Leadership by being very good Subject Matter Experts. As a result, many of us have been making most, if not all, of the significant decisions. As natural as this may feel, resist this tendency and include your team in the decisions. Unless you involve all team members, they will feel disenfranchised. Remember this. Given the same information and parameters that you have, they will make as effective or more effective decisions than you. Frankly put, if you make all the decisions, the quality of the decisions will never get any better. Learn the skills required for consensus building. Decisions made with your team using consensus are filled with commitment. Sure, they may take longer to make, but you never have to get people to buy in. Consensus is not for everyday or for every decision. But it is a great way to involve everyone for success.

## **KEEP YOUR PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE**

"My people keep coming to me for all the answers to their issues." I hear this all the time from exhausted leaders who keep solving everything for everyone. No wonder they are tired. They can't get out of the mindset that they must have all the answers. Break this habit and break it now. Your people are not going to grow if you allow them to come to you for all the solutions. Make them accountable starting today. Yes, your door should be open. But it should not be open for people to rely on you for your expertise all the time, or no one else on your team will ever develop their own expertise. Give them the freedom and latitude to make decisions and to make mistakes. When they come to you with problems, demand that they come with alternatives and solutions as well. It's up to you.