

Foreword

For over two decades I have been using a simple diagnostic tool with people that begins to explain their behavior. It is similar in nature to personality tests that measure preferences for different types of work. When I first began to develop this diagnostic, it measured two opposing dimensions, but it didn't take long for a third dimension to emerge that also has important implications.

Since 1985 I've used the RGB diagnostic in a wide range of organizational settings. I've collected thousands of inventories from each branch of the US military, from dozens of civilian federal and state agencies, from local county and city governments, from health care providers, from public education sources, and from general industry participants. The RGB has been the theme of hundreds of workshops over the last decade. It has bridged the enormous abyss of cultures that range from the Virgin Islands to remote villages in Alaska and has touched some group in almost all 50 of the United States. The results have been highly consistent, and highly useful. This work is full of examples that are all drawn from experience. I've changed the names of organizations, and the names of individuals, to protect their anonymity.

The contents of this work are taken from early theoretical understandings, and modified significantly by learnings along the way. I've never conducted an RGB workshop that some new thread of learning hasn't emerged to guide me in yet another subtle direction. As much as I believe the discovery of this Technology is nearly complete, I must admit that I can't know how close to completion I really am based on my own roller coaster experience. Just when I thought I could close a chapter on what I'd learned, new experiences seemed to demand another page or two, or at least another paragraph.

My first explorations were in 1985. The initial two dimensions were straightforward; an investigation of and a method for measuring one's bias for either leadership or management. At that time these two dimensions seemed to be opposing, and at the root of it I believe they continue to be in opposition. Underlying these dimensions are a tug of war between ambiguity and precision within which are embedded several paradoxes that have gigantic implications on people as they work together in organizations. There is more to the definition of these dimensions, but I'll save the full details for later chapters.

Shortly after I began measuring one's bias for leadership or management, a third dimension arose. I had difficulty labeling initially, so I temporarily settled for the "mix," believing that this third category was a blend or mixture of the two primary dimensions. Eventually, I learned that this third dimension was more of a catalyst, evoking or orchestrating the proper mixture of the initial two dimensions, than a separate dimension all together.

Over years of testing, I reached several conclusions. First, the initial labels were all wrong. I was not measuring leadership or management, but subtle characteristics found within an idealistic persona of both those dimensions. Second, the third dimension, initially labeled "mix," was not a blend of the two initial dimensions, but rather a discrete element of its own. Third, I learned that the root of each of these dimensions was embedded in a natural talent that people have. That talent begins to show itself early in life and remains with people, to a large degree,

throughout their life. Fourth, that these simple three ingredients interacting are the wellspring of an organizations culture. Fifth, that people are largely unaware of these elements and therefore typically misjudge, or fail to judge altogether, their influence on organization life. I'll include observations about these conclusions and the lessons leading to them throughout the text.

By 1990 I had relabeled the three attributes simply Red, Green, and Blue (RGB). As I used these new neutral labels they began to have functionality beyond my initial expectations. These labels allowed people to create meaning for behaviors that did not demand an association with existing labels such as "leadership." What emerged was a new positive organization vocabulary, one that would catch-on quickly – almost intuitively in any organization. Throughout the text there are numerous techniques that I recommend you use in your organization to improve the speed and depth with which this RGB Technology is applied.

During the same period, I continuously experimented with two related questions. Does an aggregate of the dominance of the attributes of individuals in an organization roll up to define the organization as a whole? Do individuals interact predictably based on an interchange of dominant characteristics? I believe the answers to both questions are a resounding - Yes! The implications have dramatic impact on the organization scene. What that means is that measurement of these dimensions becomes a reasonable predictor of behavior in an organizational setting. Of equal and perhaps greater importance, it means that deliberately shifting relationships in an organizational setting to optimize the contribution of individuals and optimize the potential of combinations of people as to their structure becomes an imperative.

Armed with this understanding, I also set out, around 1992, to redefine a nested structure for people in organizations. The seven structures I have since defined are: the individual, the team, a work group, networks, whole organizations, communities, and bodies of governance. All of these structures fall squarely on the individual, as if at the bottom of an immense inverted pyramid. The single individual is always a member of several teams, several work groups, etc. I will illustrate each of these structures later in this work and draw some RGB implications for each structure.

Earlier I mentioned the notion that RGB is the wellspring of an organization's culture. My concern for an organization's culture is focused on the capacity that will result from a healthy versus an unhealthy culture. There are many other favorable yields from a healthy culture, but the focus must be on capacity. I mean by capacity an organization's ability to adapt, to continuously improve its means of fulfilling its purpose through goal and objective attainment.

Finally, I want to validate how difficult it is for the human mind to keep track of all the RGB variables in a complex organization. For over a decade I've been working with some very talented programmers to devise a computer system to keep track of all these variables. The results have been significant. People are better able to remember their own RGB Profile and the Profile of others as displayed graphically by the computer. In addition, the computer is able to link RGB results with the results of other diagnostic measures, such as survey results. Also, with the aid of the computer, electronic coaching becomes a viable option. With computer assistance, the limits of RGB are extended well beyond the range of any manual system.

During my study of “types” I was fortunate enough to become acquainted with Will Schutz, a pioneer in this field. By any yardstick I consider Will’s opinions to be profound. Among other things Will suggested that if we come to know one relationship completely, it will be a gateway into understanding all relationships. I believe he challenges us to look deeply for answers, and to learn from our findings. He also convinces me that for all the rhetoric about our differences, we are fundamentally the same at some core level of existence. I believe that the RGB is one of those core elements that can and will unite us.

I use the RGB every day in developing relationships in business and elsewhere. It is an imperative. Because it is simple to understand and use, it has easily become a part of my life. It’s made a difference in my business success. It’s helped me cultivate friendships by allowing me to understand others’ perspectives. Most important, it has enabled me to understand my wife and children in ways that I might never have been able to understand them.

Rarely is anything absolute. Life seems to have dealt us a mixed blessing in this regard in a never-ending fabric of diversity that continues to leave us guessing. For example, I will make an assertion that a Red dominant individual will tend to make lists – “To Do Lists.” This does not mean that other another color dominance will never make lists. Generally speaking, the Red dominance is more likely to make lists and stick to them than either of the other two dominant colors. Making lists is a “Red thing.”

I am a dominant Blue. I am the author of this work and find myself at a distinct handicap writing about the Green and Red dominance areas and will overcome that handicap with high collaboration. Lots of people have read and edited this work before you. I have asked them to pay particular attention to those areas that focus on their particular characteristics, and I’ve paid considerable attention to their suggestions. In addition, I’ve used the transcribed charts from dozens of RGB workshops to assist me in documenting RGB preferences. In this research, I learned a great deal at a new depth about these RGB “types” that I could have learned in no other way.

The RGB is often hailed as being more productive than other popular typologies such as Myers-Briggs because of its simplicity. It is easier to understand and remember, it is easier to apply because it has neutral labels (Red instead of Thinker/Feeler, for example), and it is more easily anchored into the mainstream language of a broader range of users (executives to the loading dock crew).

The premise is that workers are predisposed to certain types of work. Knowing this predisposed mix can lead to combining people into groups or teams for optimum results, shifting group work assignments to optimize achieving goals will less effort, and helping organization leaders and managers develop a high capacity culture.

The first Chapter focuses on individual predispositions in three categories: Red, Green and Blue. One or two of these categories usually dominate the way individuals think and prefer to work. Knowing one's own preferences and the preferences of others allows potentially dysfunctional labeling like "anal retentive" to be replaced with more functional and complimentary language.

Chapter two takes a broader view by incorporating the dynamics of interpersonal relationships. Once an individual's preferences are known, comparisons between individuals with the same or similar profiles can be easily made with effective behavioral predictability. An individual interested in their relationships between themselves and others can use this, or a third party who might be interested in the dynamics between two coworkers, supervisors, or subordinates can use it.

The third Chapter begins a deeper examination of the tasks an individual or group is expected to perform as part of their job by "typing" individual tasks and sets of tasks. The ability to calculate accurately the capacity of people who work together using the RGB combinations is sharply tuned by the ability to further calculate the ability to calculate the capacity of individual and group efforts based on the compatibility between natural predisposition and task-typed assignments.

A fourth Chapter provides the detail necessary to apply this organization development approach to systemic organizational culture on the largest scale. It tracks completely with other popular innovations, such as the Balanced Scorecard or competency management approaches, that do not fill the void of talent application. This approach combines the skill and predisposed talent to produce a synergistic result not currently offered by any current literature.

The final Chapter addresses the "measurement" of RGB and other quantitative options. It offers web links and software options that can supplement the text to provide powerful change management options.

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