

Interpersonal Dynamics

"If I were to summarize in one sentence the single most important principle I have learned in the field of interpersonal relations, it would be this: Seek first to understand, then to be understood."

*The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People,
Stephen R. Covey*

A. Overview.

Relationships are highly complex in nature. Every relationship has common information embedded in it that determines the rules leading to the success of that relationship. Every new bit of information that enters the common domain or either of the individual domains has the potential to strengthen, keep stable, or weaken the relationship. When more than two people are in relationship the complexity and resulting capacity becomes nearly unimaginable.

The oversimplification of this complex dynamic using the RGB allows constructive predictions about capacity, and it allows reliable strategies to be used to either restore stability that might have been lost, or increase capacity to higher levels or performance. In any event, the use of RGB Technology is an option with utility - it improves the likelihood of achieving improved performance when it might not otherwise exist.

A special note about the notion of rapport is critical to a complete understanding of why this topic is of such great importance. Underlying the feeling of rapport between two people is the sense that both people believe they are the same or similar in ways that are important to each of them. When rapport is high, both individuals are more capable of influencing the other and more understanding of the other's points of view. It is also true that when in rapport, the possibility of synergy, of getting more done than either is capable of doing independently, is at a peak. Although it seems paradoxical: similarity is a gateway to rapport, and opposites attract in way that is often fulfilling to both.

B. Role comparisons.

Optimizing work is something we do in concert with others. Isolated work is, of course, necessary; but rarely produces the kind of "breakthrough" results that dazzle our customers. We are meant to work with others in a way that combines our talents and produces overwhelmingly enthusiastic results. Relationships that contribute to those results are often balanced by relationships that detract from those results - and relationships are everywhere. Expecting us to leave our personal relationships at the front door of the office is as unrealistic an expectation as expecting our work relationships to dissolve as we head home at the end of our day. The weave we create in

our relationships allows us or even propels us to make the contributions we make.

1. Family and Friends. I've chosen to begin the dialog about roles with family and friends because life itself begins with these relationships. Father, mothers, siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, extended family, and neighbors - all impact our lives in the critical formative years. As we enter the formal educational environment we learn more about authority and our place in the world of work. Classmates become a forerunner of coworkers, and the future boss begins to emerge through the teacher roles that progress throughout the educational journey. Relationships abound: life partnerships form - synergy evolves as more than just a concept. And through it all, some individuals have become memorable detractors by robbing individuality, stealing innovation, and being a thief of my vital enthusiasm. I've learned to become an integral part of the organizational world. Collaboration and competition have become second nature.

2. Coworkers. Professional relationships ebb and flow with transfers, hires, and departures, as making a living becomes a paramount concern. Still some people contribute to what has become "career" progress, others detract from it. The transition to coworkers from classmates increases the steaks from academic to lifestyle. Relationships that one might not seek out and intentionally develop have become foundational to success. We use the term "coworkers" here to include those in authority and those absent authority. Coworkers include those with whom there is a formal long-term working relationship, a temporary "teaming" relationships, or an intermittent relationship. Understanding and keeping track of all the possibilities is difficult, yet essential for success.

3. Customers. The most important business relationship ought to center around the customer. In some cases, this might be confused with internal customers - but be assured that the external customer who is ready and willing to exchange money for products and service is of vital importance to all organizational relationships. Knowing the predisposed RGB tendencies of every customer helps improve rapport and influence over the buying decision-making processes.

4. Vendors and Suppliers. Organizations buy raw materials and services from vendors and suppliers who have an influence over organizational profitability. The added value derived from those relationships will often depend upon the "chemistry" between players. RGB becomes a filter through which those relationships can be better understood and optimized for maximum effectiveness.

5. Other Relationships. The nature of extended relationships become paramount when you consider networks, social contacts, dealings with centers-of-influence, or one-time interactions. Knowing the composition of the Board of Directors is often more important than knowing the predisposition of an ad hoc team grappling with a troublesome issue. The pulse of organizations is measured in the synchronicity of its relationships. That synchronicity emerges from the RGB dominance's as they interact.

C. The Red Relationship Set.

1. Red/Red.

a. Collaboration. Priorities establish what tasks or activities ought to be undertaken first, second, third, etc. Often, priorities will also reflect the amount of time or care taken on each priority task or activity. When a team of two or more is well synchronized, its members agree on the sequence of tasks to be accomplished and generally on the commitment of time and attention to each task.

When this occurs, the team "clicks." Things happen quickly and easily, few errors are made. Fun is a part of the activity as people work together in harmony. Although this seems rare in organizations today, when it exists it is very synergistic. Often, common priorities are established by some external deadline or threat that everyone can readily identify with. The group becomes galvanized easily in this situation.

b. Competition. When priorities are in competition, the work results in poor quality output, and often work stoppages. People of opposing views will try to work on their own sense of priority, even to the detriment of the members of their team. The lack of common priority and urgency has, in essence, eliminated the team bond that was necessary to produce the synergy and feeling of productive contribution. When the cues are apparent over competing priorities, stop and get the priorities straight before going on, if possible. It will pay project dividends in quality of the final product and service.

c. Development Suggestions. As a team, establish the importance of tasks or activities based sequence and quality of results. Sequence may be the easier to establish because of the mechanical nature of what has to be done. Setting quality emphasis may be more difficult because people of good faith have differing opinions about the meaning of acceptable quality. Taking this initial step is paramount in the process of uniting priorities, however. If established, look to the organization value set to get insight into potential priorities. By continuously using the overall alignment architecture as the yardstick for success, teams can unify priorities and streamline work tremendously.

2. Red/Green or Green/Red.

a. Collaboration. When specific teams are tied directly to product and service delivery this sets up the natural environment for internal and well as external progress. Customers, whether internal or external, prefer to be served by a team of service providers or product experts, rather than by a single individual. This is especially true when the team is perceived to be well synchronized. In the absence of one team member there is always additional depth upon which to depend. In addition, people believe that a team will have established better standards than a single individual might. (The belief that two heads are better than one is alive and well!)

Matching service delivery and customer satisfaction criteria to specific individuals within

teams provides the quantitative measures needed for success, the qualitative measures needed for success, and the cultural measures needed for success. The combination of all three is extremely powerful.

b. Competition. When competition exists between people serving on a product and service delivery team, both internal and external customers suffer. The competition manifests itself over product or service loyalty differences when choices between the available products and service will benefit one or more members but not all equally. Competition may also arise when achieving the objectives favor one or more individuals over other members of the team. Favoritism may extend beyond simple monetary gain. It may also include recognition or other forms of extrinsic rewards.

Even competition between external providers may be excessive if that competition does not serve the best interests of customers. This is especially true if the values that separate external providers from the organization can be associated with varied product and service mixes internal to the organization as well.

c. Development Suggestions. One way to fuse objectives to a product and service mix is to establish them for combinations of individuals (teams) rather than for individuals. Also, remember to associate every product with an appropriate service or service set. A service without an appropriate product is little more than a favor and normally in jeopardy of being terminated. To prevent this, be careful to arrange product and service mix packages.

3. Red/Blue or Blue/Red.

1. Collaboration. One of the toughest bridges to cross is the stretch from Beliefs to Work Regimen because it literally goes from conceptual to tangible/practical. Often, those members of teams-of-two who make this difficult connection become highly dependent upon one another as each fills a void the other prefers to ignore. The collaborative relationship in this category is truly a lasting one. In many cases, the close dependency that develops makes it difficult for others to combine with this relationship in a meaningful way. Temporary accommodations are usually more the norm than the rule.

2. Competition. Competition may develop in this arena as a natural by-product of misunderstandings that surface through natural language barriers. Blues and Reds both have an abbreviated shorthand language discrete to their predisposition. Language gets in the way, and often there is not a direct translation from one to the other. As one individual sees the other doing something different than originally expected, a sense of shared priority often leaves the relationship, and strong connections weaken.

In some cases (minor in number), one person has a primary and secondary at each end of the scale (Red/Blue or Blue/Red). This swing from one end to the other means that the person will quickly and easily go from the value standard to the task, with little or no need to have anyone else involved. Often, this person would prefer to work alone rather than have the complication of a teammate. Although work may progress more quickly in

some cases, the quality of that work normally heightened by diverse opinions is diminished.

c. Development Suggestions. Allow people the freedom to define the tasks they must perform and develop the standards of performance within which the tasks will be deemed successful. This does not mean abdicating responsibility, nor does it mean giving employees free rein. It does mean providing maximum latitude for success. As the relationship improves, revisit the standards and tasks to tighten performance as quickly as possible without choking anyone. Engage methods that allow internal and external customers to participate in the process in a meaningful way.

D. The Green Relationship Set.

1. Green/Green.

a. Collaboration. Standards allow one's work and efforts to be judged either successful or not successful. (Naturally there are also shades of gray.) Standards are based on a set of values (typically the values of those who have established the standards rather than those who necessarily must meet those standards). When a team of two judges the result of their labor to be successful, they are applying the standard of success based on their values. Often, this measure of success produces a desire to want to work together again on another project when the standards are the same or similar. Teams of two or more who have formally or informally established a standard by which they judge their work to be successful will take pride in their accomplishments and expect others to perform in a similar manner.

b. Competition. If there is a difference in the standards by which success will be measured, the desire to collaborate will be low or nonexistent. People may actually avoid working together, for instance. This often happens without them knowing clearly why they prefer not to work together, and eliminates the very catalyst needed to make the relationship more productive. When standards of success are in competition between people, the relationship degrades, and typically people will avoid working together. It is also important to remember that standards may vary widely depending upon the "scenario" various team members have in mind as they approach the project. Competition may be diffused somewhat if the scenario is clarified in advance.

c. Development Suggestions. When standards do not match, the best avenue to correct this situation is to discuss the standards by which a project can be judged successful in at least two ways: minimally successful, and wildly successful. Often, the team of two or more can work well on those aspects of the project that will achieve minimal success, and then stretch to meet the higher standards having already achieved the minimal success plateau. If the project is being completed for someone outside the team, it is often a good idea to determine in advance the standards they will be using to accept the project results. Depending on the conditions, the standards expected

by the person for whom the project is being completed may become the minimum standard to meet.

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3. Green/Blue or Blue/Green.

a. Collaboration. Within each established mission area, strategy is developed that will produce continuously new programs, products, and services toward the organization's vision. Along this path, initiatives are activated as those responsible judge the organization's ability to be successful. When critical relationships are collaborative and synergistic, new initiatives come on line regularly. Excitement

permeates the culture with fresh challenge on a continuous basis. One can smell success with the mention of every new weighed risk. Profit centers spring up from the work force easily.

Simultaneously, as initiatives are undertaken, teams are stimulated into new planning efforts for the next initiatives. Planning becomes a fluid notion rather than a periodic reaction to poor quality implementation. Collaborative relationships also aggressively pursue ways to interface with others who are also trying to bring about change. Ideas are applauded and cheer leading sections spring up regardless of who originally conceived the change.

b. Competition. In the mission/initiative area lies a dangerous barrier that manifests itself in one of two ways. People want either to refrain from doing anything new for fear of failure, or they don't want to do anything new because it will deplete resources currently being devoted to successful operations. In the latter case, success actually prevents fresh ideas. Often, people will assert, "If it isn't broken, don't fix it." The new paradigm suggests that "if it isn't broken, break it before it breaks itself." This mentality retains control rather than being controlled by events at random.

Launching initiatives within well-defined mission areas is only part of the potential competition, albeit an important part. Of parallel concern are those yet unidentified mission areas that ought to be identified and launched apart from everything else that is being done currently. This is a matter of adding a whole new mission to the organization, not just continuing to add new programs within current mission areas. Naturally, the competition comes from those in charge of the current missions, because, in their minds, the current mission strengths are diminished by further unique development.

c. Development Suggestions. Since competition may rise from a threat to security if the current missions and initiatives disrupt the status quo, institute a system of rewards for providing assistance and encouragement to those involved in implementing initiatives. Spread ownership in planning for breakthroughs across the entire organization. Publish widely the plans and visible steps that initiatives take so that others can be involved in that is desirable. Foster an open environment so that one element of the organization can readily provide assistance to other elements with minimal difficulty.

E. The Blue Relationship Set.

1. Blue/Blue.

a. Collaboration. Strongly held beliefs between two people are always a clear signal that potential collaborative effort will be high. Identifying the value norms shared between two people provides a clear window to the basis of their relationship. Shared value norms will often sustain the relationship from one project to another and be stable over long periods of time. A danger of this highly collaborative relationship, of

course, is that the bond created is often a barrier to others who may need their time and attention and feel reluctant to enter the relationship.

b. Competition. Strongly held values that are not congruent among those in a critical relationship can and will eventually create a competitive situation. Each person, believing they are right, will endeavor to muster a following of other people who believe like they do. The two separate camps can be a very divisive instrument in the internal defeat of an organization. Competitive values are far different from friendly competition. Often, people not in the presence of others will subvert the best efforts of those with whom they disagree. Without the correct labels for this behavior, turf battles rage with little potential for remediation. Bystanders often look on in disbelief and fail to understand the true nature of the rift.

c. Development Suggestions. Often, identifying the shared values and expressing them to others openly can be a catalyst to expanding the relationship to include those who may have been excluded. People can fundamentally disagree on issues without the relationships becoming destructive. Such relationships may even become very valuable and productive because of the diversity of problem solving approaches taken. The probability is high that all conflict in organizations can be traced to a fundamental disagreement between people of good will who do not understand each others' points of view. An individual has come to associate all points of view from another person with a negative lens rather than an accurate interpretation. The bad news is that once a rift like this occurs, it is difficult to bridge the gaps because of the natural reluctance to set emotions aside long enough to identify the hidden root value differences. Individuals with value differences are virtually helpless to settle their own differences and need outside peer assistance of some type.

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F. *CapacityWare*TM Software Assistance.

There are two routines that assist the user with developing a better understanding of RGB Interpersonal dynamics. Both options are presented in detail in the *CapacityWare*TM Manual, Tab 6, Displaying Results.

1. Comparison RGB Individual Graphic Profiles. This pie chart compares two individuals' RGB results with their strengths overlapping.

2. Comparison of an Individual with a Group Graphic Profile. This display compares one individual with a group composite.

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www.LTODI.com - June 2006 - (757) 591-0807 - "unimaginable" - 10-72-4381 - RGB Manual, Tab 2