

The **Red** Dominant Group

The **Red** Dominant Group is a supreme paradox among groups, especially if the dominance is strong. Under ideal conditions, the strong “**Red**” participant would prefer not to be in a group environment at all. Independent work completed largely in isolation is the best possible condition for most strong “**Reds**.” Strong “**Reds**” often think that the demands of work and regular routine “back at the workplace” far outweigh the potential to be gained from a group work environment. They often ask to be excused from group sessions and count on their indispensability to get excused. Strong “**Reds**” tend to be quiet while in group settings, making only minor contributions to the collaborative effort. Strong “**Reds**” believe they were hired for their specific expertise and shun involvement in collaborative group problem-solving efforts.

Without the involvement of a strong “**Red**” dominance in a group setting, collaborative problem solving is apt to run shy of the details and “front-line” reality required for high quality solutions. Highly participative “**Reds**,” although not commonly involved, add depth to the dialog and generally add a high degree of common sense to potential solutions.

Greens and Blues will often initially dominate the dialog and wonder if the **Reds** are withholding information because of their reluctance to make an open group contribution. During initial group sessions, the strong “**Red**” will often be thinking of the work they are not getting done because of their absence at the regular work site. In other cases, they will remain silent because the dialog isn’t productive for them (and it rarely will be productive until they become involved).

The bottom-line nature of the **Red** Dominant Work Group is paradoxical because strong “**Reds**” are reluctant to be involved thereby prohibiting the essential details from emerging that would otherwise develop a comprehensive solution. The lack of early and comprehensive involvement breeds disaster which might be prevented.

It would be easy to overcome this paradox if one could simply command involvement. Yet this is as impossible as commanding creativity – ready, get set, go! It just doesn’t happen that way. Are there strategies that might increase or accelerate involvement that would bring about faster and better solutions? Yes, we think so.

1. Measure the group conditions to determine HOW **Red** the group is.
2. Make tangible progress at each event.
3. Feedback results to everyone involved to be sure a clear track record is maintained.
4. Sustain a crisp pace that meets pre-set milestones.
5. Make sure every activity has a reality check with the designated “**Reds**.”