

# Bringing Out the True Colors of Your Team for True Success



Working with together with others can be a motivating, rewarding and fulfilling experience. There can also be numerous opportunities for stress and frustration if clear lines of communication, effective leadership and commitment are not present. Since each of us has our own style, preferences and ways operating— how can we all work synergistically to accomplish our mission?

## Working Together

How well we work together depends on a lot of things: the project or goal, the number of people, organizations, or departments involved, the hierarchy, the communication habits we have developed over the years...*and there is something more.* The way we operate and work with others has a great deal to do with our basic personality.



We all have a blend of characteristics that make up our personality. True Colors© is a method that identifies personality styles by grouping common attributes into four colors. Being able to recognize your True Colors and the True Colors of others opens up lines of communication by revealing the motivation behind behaviors and directing focus on the project or department mission instead of organizational conflicts or personality clashes.

## Bringing Out the Best

Think of the people you have worked with in the past. Did you find some were a pleasure to work with while others more of a pain? How about yourself? Have you ever felt misunderstood or that your contributions were not fully appreciated?

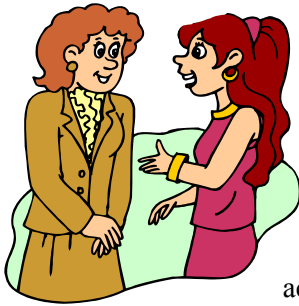
Understanding the distinctive ways in which different personalities approach work and working together is a key ingredient to success. Instead of tolerating certain behaviors, True Colors makes it possible to welcome diverse styles and recognize the value in their input and skills.



Keeping in mind that we are all unique individuals, yet often share values and motivations with others of a similar personality style, certain patterns of interaction and team participation can emerge.

As you read the various strengths and challenges each style brings to a team, determine which ones apply to you and the people you work with. Pay attention to the ways you can bring out the best in individual members. Experiment with the different methods until you find those that fit for you and your team.

# BLUES ON YOUR TEAM



Blues are motivated by connection and personal relationships. They seek meaning in their work and opportunities to help develop potential in themselves and others. Future oriented, Blues are able to see many options and possibilities and are generally optimistic. They need a sense of “higher” purpose and bring passion and enthusiasm to the team when they feel the work is meaningful. Blues empathize with individual members and try to involve everyone in the group process and increase team cohesiveness whenever possible. They enjoy the friendship and camaraderie of a team and take the time to give personal attention, remembering names and sharing personal anecdotes. They recognize others’ unique qualities and provide praise, acknowledgement and motivational encouragement. They usually have a strong network and know who to go to, to get things done. They champion people and causes and will put their all-out efforts towards someone or something they believe in. They need to know how a plan will impact the future and people involved.

## **Achieving the Objective**

Wanting to bring out the best in others and support their growth, Blues work up to the objective by inspiration and may use metaphorical comparisons to create a unified theme. Their hope is to bridge barriers and get everyone on the same page by bringing up an experience they can all relate to. They like having a direction and see the idea of planning as positive.

They are able to assist others through transition and see the process of working towards a goal as equally, if not more important, than achieving the goal itself because of the growth involved. They may provide an extra touch to projects such as decorating the room, providing flower arrangements or bringing cookies to add to everyone’s enjoyment.

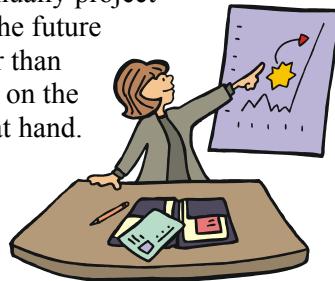
## **Potential Challenges**

Extremely optimistic, Blues may not consider the most practical options, wanting to go for a distant and difficult ideal. They may be unrealistic about the challenges facing the team and whether the team is succeeding or not.

They can get too wrapped up in relationships and have a hard time voicing disagreement or drawing the line with performance problems. Blues can seem wishy-washy in their attempt to avoid conflict and their tendency to put off making “tough” decisions.

They may “over communicate” or spend a great amount of time processing an issue. They have a tendency to use general, imprecise language and may have difficulty trying to articulate the specific data behind an impression.

They can lose focus if there are a lot of tedious details and may continually project into the future rather than focus on the task at hand.



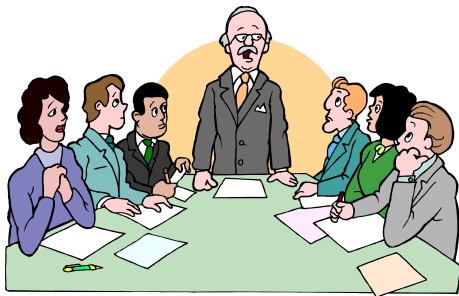
Blues’ empathy can get out of range as they read between the lines for deeper meaning, sometimes imagining negative meaning when it does not exist. If they feel a personal value has been violated they can treat others harshly and hold grudges for long periods in defense of their values or another individual. Blues have a need to be liked and may have difficulty accepting “negative” feedback.

They can go overboard with the recognition for birthdays, anniversaries and other personal celebrations, putting a great deal of social pressure on others to participate or be perceived as not being a team-player.

## **Bring out the Best in a Blue on Your Team by**

- Assigning projects that involve working synergistically with others
- Creating a vision that inspires and motivates them
- Offering a warm and personal working atmosphere
- Interacting as much as possible with openness and honesty
- Establishing harmony and avoiding conflict and hostility
- Showing your support, caring and appreciation by a gentle hand on the shoulder, a hug, or a smile
- Allowing them the freedom to express feelings and the time to heal emotional wounds
- Making use of their natural gifts for communication, nurturing and people-oriented ideas
- Acknowledging them personally and praising their imaginative and creative approach to the job
- Providing them with one-on-one feedback
- Remembering their name and connecting with them personally

# GOLDS ON YOUR TEAM



Golds are motivated by fulfilling responsibilities. They enjoy membership on a team and with an organization and derive pleasure from a job well done. Past conscious, Golds rely on the lessons they have learned from the past and provide a great historical perspective. They approach problem-solving in a step-by-step, structured, methodical way, gravitating towards solutions that respect rules and existing procedures. They provide great team loyalty, continuity, respect for authority and good follow-through. They are able to implement consistent procedures and are economical with resources. They are excellent planners that can manage large amounts of detail and create not only a comprehensive plan but several contingency plans as well. They keep meticulous notes and records to preserve the integrity of ideas and ask for information about role clarification. Golds consistently monitor systems and procedures to ensure stability and team performance. They help to build a strong team culture and uphold traditions. They will enforce policies and hold themselves and others to established standards.

## **Achieving the Objective**

Very realistic with time, Golds are able to accurately assess the amount of time needed to complete a task or project. They can provide task focus that leads to timely output, knowing where to start and what needs to be done. After acquiring the necessary details, they immediately break the project into manageable parts and set timelines for completion. They like to work in chronological order, finishing task “A” before moving on to “B.”

When necessary, they will take on a leadership role and maintain it year after year, comparing suggested approaches with prior experience and instituting norms. They will pick up the slack for others in order to accomplish the goal.

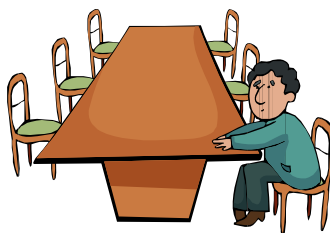
## **Potential Challenges**

Golds may lose the big picture when working on detailed implementation and have problems prioritizing among multiple tasks. They can have difficulty adjusting to unexpected changes and may be reluctant to try something that has never been done before. Golds have a tendency to stick to a procedure because “That’s the way we’ve always done it.” They may even slow down the response time with their cautious approaches.

Especially under time pressures, they may put the project before people needs and become too authoritative. They may try to micromanage the details and find it hard to multitask. They can get a bit pessimistic and waste time over-planning. Because they like closure, they can get impatient when a project gets delayed. They can get upset if team members do not abide by the rules or meet time demands.

Golds may feel unappreciated by others and complain when their dutiful nature pushes them to take on responsibilities of others. They can grow resentful trying to do everything for everyone. On the other hand, they can also get stressed if they feel they are not needed or allowed to fulfill their role.

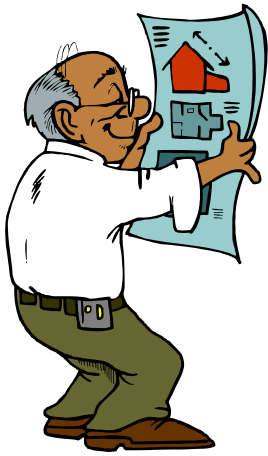
Some Golds find the team process so fulfilling that they may want to maintain the group when no longer suitable.



## **Bring out the Best in a Gold on Your Team by**

- Assigning work which requires detailed planning and careful follow-through
- Defining the tasks in clear and concrete terms
- Being punctual and reliable
- Providing a well-structured, stable work environment and avoiding abrupt changes
- Giving standard rules and regulations and setting a good example
- Sharing in the responsibilities and duties of the work place and taking the work ethic seriously
- Praising their thoroughness, organizational capabilities and efficiency
- Giving feedback every step of the way on a project to reassure them that they are on the right track
- Recognizing their need to be straightforward, dependable, responsible, and business-minded
- Giving tangible recognition for their work

# GREENS ON YOUR TEAM



Greens are motivated by projects that increase knowledge and competence. They enjoy control over their own direction and seek intellectually interesting work. Future focused, Greens may pay less attention to past or current experiences and concentrate instead on patterns and possibilities. They want to know the purpose for the meeting or team so they can begin to collect the necessary data and start generating ideas for solutions. Gathering this information is necessary to make valid, intelligent decisions and design an effective strategy. They focus on ideas, new concepts and results, analyzing a situation from multiple perspectives, using critical reasoning to identify any possible weakness in a plan or idea and like to debate probable approaches using precise language. Since Greens naturally see the team's role from a strategic perspective, to maintain peak functioning, they will assess the team's current performance levels and will use innovative approaches in repositioning the team, if necessary to the organization.

## Achieving the Objective

Using critical thinking to perceive problems quickly, Greens may first hone in on and consider what's missing or faulty. Naturally able to link key result areas with weekly and monthly planning, Greens are usually very proactive and like to invent a system or model to control results. They tend to be pragmatic and don't get distracted by relationships and emotional pleas. They are able to produce logistical parameters and avoid double effort. They deliver quality, well thought-out solutions and enjoy the intrinsic satisfaction of a job well done.

## Potential Challenges

With infinite time orientation, Greens may not allow sufficient time for implementation of new plans. When prioritizing, they may underestimate how long each task takes to complete. They have a tendency to be more interested in ideas, theories, and strategy than in planning out all the details.

If a change or plan is in a different direction than their own mental model, they may be stubborn to implement it unless they are thoroughly convinced that it is logical, valid and superior to their own idea. If it is their own, they can be ruthless at seeing it gets put into operation. Sometimes they do not do what

they say they will do, because they may come up with a *better* alternative, or see it as redundant. Greens may also overanalyze a problem— slowing down response time or over complicate situations by losing themselves in theory. They are very independent and may not value the consensus decision-making process.

Greens also can seem “picky” with team members’ word choices and esoteric language and appear to argue for the sake of arguing. They may only point out errors and ways to improve, forgetting to give positive feedback or acknowledgement and neglecting to consider people issues sufficiently.

They can become impatient when people spend too much time socializing and not enough time on problem-solving.



## Bring Out the Best in a Green on Your Team by

- Assigning projects that require analytical thinking and problem solving
- Discussing the “Big Picture” with them, get to the purpose then fill in details if asked

- Inspiring them with futuristic ideas and potentialities; they like visionary leadership
- Respecting their inclination to go beyond the established rules of the system
- Realizing they need to question, explore and ponder—allow time to think, process and debate
- Taking their ideas to the next step and allowing them freedom to improve the situation
- Recognizing their competence and intellect, praising their ingenuity
- Understanding their need to avoid redundancy and repetitive tasks; coach to ensure they cover details
- Giving them logical objective feedback; they prefer to receive feedback from an “expert”
- Focusing on facts and data rather than personal issues and emotional appeals.
- Keeping social chit-chat to a minimum or separate altogether from the project or meeting
- Seeking to understand their humor and wit



# ORANGES ON YOUR TEAM



Oranges are motivated by action and excitement. They derive joy from seeing the direct tangible results from what they do. Now focused, Oranges operate in the moment and like to get to the point quickly and keep moving from there. Able to see current problems in an instant, they can recognize the most expedient solution and will want to implement it immediately. Fast thinkers on their feet, they understand what each solution means for individual members and see creative contextual solutions for fixing problems. They can figure out how to make the impossible happen and are known as crisis managers. Their enthusiasm and zest makes them excellent at “selling” the solution to differing perspectives. Vibrant and lighthearted they are great story-tellers and can break drudgery with a good joke. They like to be the center of attention and have a tendency to want to take over a meeting or team if the current leader is tentative or less than dynamic. They are flexible and welcome change. To maintain peak functioning they will naturally see ways around rules to help the team perform. Oranges use creative ways to acknowledge achievement such as toys, gifts, celebrations and a round of applause.

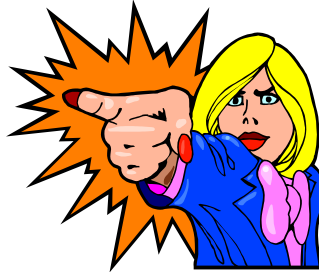
## **Achieving the Objective**

Possessing a strong desire for expediency, Oranges often simplify planning by using short “to do” lists with concrete action items. They thrive on challenge, competition, and goal achievement. Their desire to get it done and move on keeps them task focused. They like to cut to the chase and are able to put out “fires” quickly and effectively, delegating tasks wherever possible. Oranges will take things to the limit and push the envelope to obtain desired results. They consider people, along with their skills and interests, and make even the mundane seem like a fun adventure.

## **Potential Challenges**

Although entertaining, they may have to watch their propensity to be flippant when communicating with others and remember to use their humor appropriately. With a “now” time orientation, Oranges may not allow sufficient time for data collection, discussion or planning. They may have problems prioritizing because they want to do it all now and have a tendency to act before thinking—react rather than plan. Therefore, they may jump in before understanding all the ramifications, focusing on the short-term results and neglecting the long-term solution. Oranges

can become bored easily and may fidget or get up in the middle of a conversation and walk around or even leave the room disrupting the group. They can get impatient with what appears to be unnecessary discussions around problem analysis and consensus decision-making and may alienate others as they push to “Get the show on the road!”



Straightforward in their communication, they may hurt the feelings of others with their lack of tact. When the team is in its early stages, they may not feel they are seeing direct, tangible outcomes from their efforts. Although Oranges love to brainstorm ideas, they find details tedious and may lose steam if a project takes too long to complete.

## **Bring out the Best in a Orange on Your Team by**

- Assigning projects which are action-packed and/or require a hands-on approach

- Talking about concrete realities and practical application
- Providing opportunities to be skillful, adventurous, and entertaining
- Telling them the required end result then allowing them the freedom to do the job in their own style
- Getting to the point quickly and keeping things moving; avoid derailing side conversations
- Using visuals, props, humor or other ways to prevent boredom from too much information without action
- Praising their performance, mention their flair, expediency, and their having “saved the day”
- Recognizing their need for movement and preference for action over words
- Being prepared to take action and assignments, take notes to track details when necessary
- Offering the chance for competition or at least understand this as a motivator
- Making sure there is flexibility in their role and in the environment