For Building Winning Teams

LISTENING

MEETINGS

COMMUNICATING
EFFECTIVELY

NAVIGATING CONFLICT

RECOGNITION

COACHING
CONVERSATIONS

EFFECTIVE STYLE

corestrengths®

A simple Google search of "the greatest teams of all time" will get mixed results. USA Basketball's 1992 Dream Team, Brazil's National Team in 1970, the New Zealand All Blacks, or the '72 Miami Dolphins. Each of us has different opinions about who we think is the greatest team. But no matter who you choose, there are some recurring themes. They overcame adversity. They communicated as one. They bonded and built trust through difficulties and challenges. And even amid internal conflict, they chose a productive path forward.

As we shape the new normal together, one thing remains. The foundation for winning teams is trust and relationships. This guide is a small sample of the Core Strengths Platform designed to help your teams generate commitment, strengthen trust, and develop positive regard for each other. Because if they're going to win, **they have to do it together.**

Communicating Effectively

Winning teams know how to communicate. They understand and respect each other's views and differences. They understand that they all view the world through a different lens and therefore give and receive messages differently. They know how to listen with intent and don't wait for the opportunity to speak. They look beyond the communication style of the messenger to find the true intention and motive behind the words. And they adapt their communication style to suit their audience.

Effective communication starts with a greater awareness of your values and motives, including your natural strengths and the things that energize/de-energize you or may trigger conflict for you. The next step is to consider how well you understand the others in your team — their values, motives, natural strengths, and the things that energize/de-energize them or may trigger conflict for them. How we communicate with each other is fundamentally connected to our core values. For teams that have taken the SDI 2.0, our platform provides specific and customized communication tips for each team member. But if you or your team have yet to take our assessment, here are some quick tips to improve communication with your team.

If you're **communicating** with a person that values:

Putting others first (Blues)

Don't mistake kindness for weakness; they are really trying to help.

Getting things done quickly (Reds)

Be energetic, direct, and focused on results.

Making sure the right process is followed (Greens)

Allow plenty of time for consideration. Be comfortable with periods of silence.

Encouraging others to succeed (Red-Blues)

Show a sense of urgency when others are in need. Quickly do what seems best.

Helping others become self-sufficient (Blue-Greens)

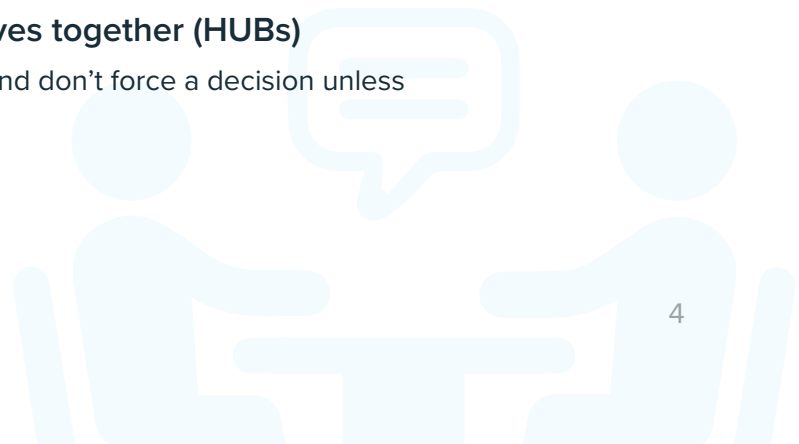Don't mistake caution for unwillingness; they want to identify risks so they can give you appropriate warning.

Crafting winning strategies (Red-Greens)

Be direct, logical, assertive, and objective.

Bringing all team perspectives together (HUBs)

Compare diverse perspectives, and don't force a decision unless time is of the essence.

Coaching Conversations

The first rule of communication is: ***know your audience.***

Every person you coach is different, and your approach in coaching conversations should reflect that. As a coach, you may know what you want to say, but do you know how to say it depending on who's listening?

And do you know how to listen so you can have a more productive coaching relationship?

A lot goes into connecting with people, but understanding their motives and values is a great place to start. If you can frame coaching around what matters to ***them*** (not just to you), you'll have the foundation for great results. Here are some helpful things to look for to help your coaching resonate.

If you're **coaching** a person that values:

Putting others first (Blues)

Take the time to ask how they feel about things.

Getting things done quickly (Reds)

Keep a brisk pace. Always look ahead to what might be coming up next.

Making sure the right process is followed (Greens)

Don't mistake silence for disinterest; they are waiting to understand completely before offering input.

Encouraging others to succeed (Red-Blues)

Be enthusiastic, considerate of others, and focused on action.

Helping others become self-sufficient (Blue-Greens)

Take time to consider the implications of decisions and how they will affect others.
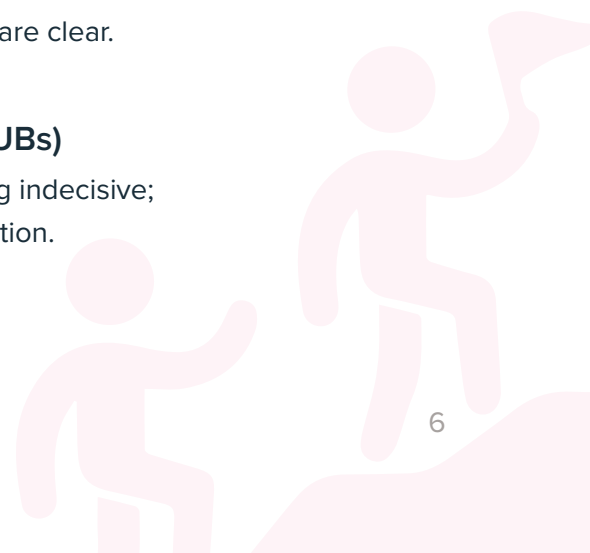
Crafting winning strategies (Red-Greens)

Take time to clarify goals. Move quickly when plans are clear.

Bringing all team perspectives together (HUBs)

Don't mistake their consideration of options as being indecisive; they don't want to get locked into a set course of action.

Effective Style

In a world that's so connected, we shouldn't struggle with connection. Yet many times, what we say isn't what others hear. Misunderstandings and miscommunication lead to frustration and even hinder team projects. That's because how you say it matters just as much as what you say.

Communication isn't one size fits all. Like wearing colored lenses, everyone sees the world differently and interprets things differently. Some see life through a red lens. And that looks different than it does for those with blue or green lenses. So it's essential to learn how to recognize the way others on your team see the world and adjust your communication style accordingly. When you understand the things that energize/de-energize them, you'll be more effective than ever before. Here are some quick tips to improve communication with your team.

If you're **working** with a person that values:

Putting others first (Blues)
Be open, honest, one-to-one, personal, sincere, trusting, inclusive.

Getting things done quickly (Reds)
Be clear, direct, positive, and brief.

Making sure the right process is followed (Greens)
Remain objective, logical, fair, in control of emotions.

Encouraging others to succeed (Red-Blues)
Be positive, enthusiastic, forward-thinking.

Helping others become self-sufficient (Blue-Greens)
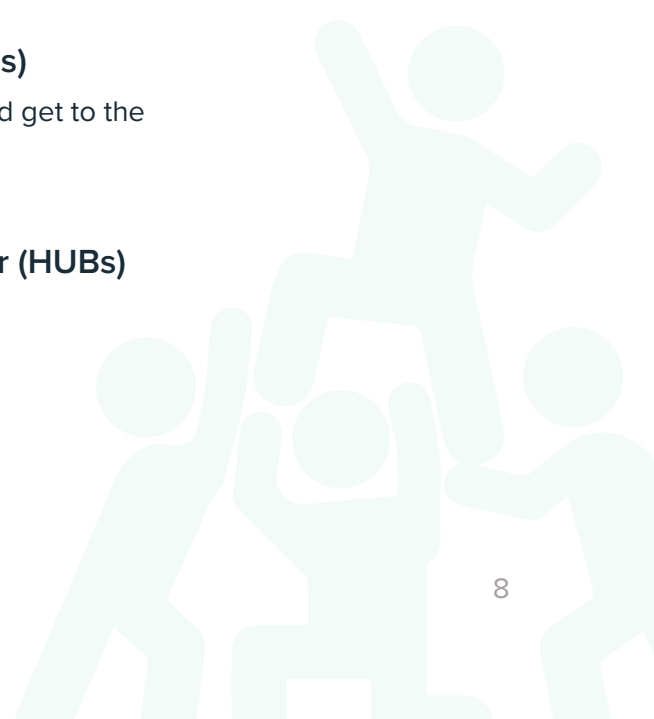Be calm, patient, open, and genuine.

Crafting winning strategies (Red-Greens)
Demonstrate understanding of the situation and get to the point quickly.

Bringing all team perspectives together (HUBs)
Be flexible, sociable, playful, and collaborative.

Listening

Everyone agrees that listening is an essential skill (whether they do it or not is a different story). It improves relationships, builds trust, and transforms teams. But if we're honest, most of us aren't as good at listening as we'd like to think. Walk yourself through your last experience as a listener: did you demonstrate attentiveness? Did you consider the other person's motivations behind the conversation? Did you share how you felt only when it was appropriate? If you answered no, it could be time to reassess your listening approach.

When we show we're truly listening, it's much more rewarding for the person talking to you, and you'll get more out of it too. Active listening — listening for a person's motives and values — helps avoid misunderstandings and reduces potential conflict. To help you know what to listen for, here are some ideas.

If you're **listening** to a person that values:

● **Putting others first (Blues)**
Interpret through the lens of who they are trying to support.

● **Getting things done quickly (Reds)**
Interpret through the lens of their ultimate goal or objective.

● **Making sure the right process is followed (Greens)**
Interpret through the lens of underlying principles or logic.

● **Encouraging others to succeed (Red-Blues)**
Interpret through the lens of how they are trying to build up other people.

● **Helping others become self-sufficient (Blue-Greens)**
Interpret through the lens of security and predictability.
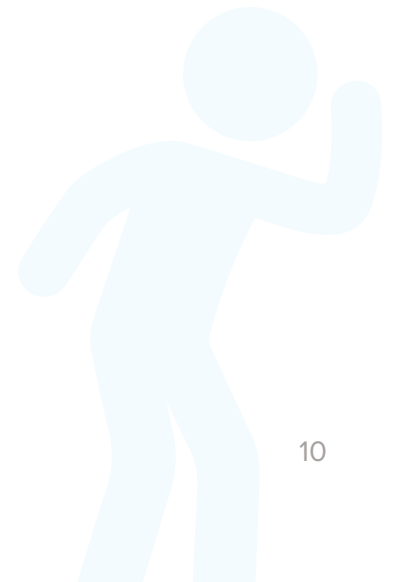
● **Crafting winning strategies (Red-Greens)**
Interpret through the lens of how things fit with the bigger strategy.

● **Bringing all team perspectives together (HUBs)**
Interpret through the lens of how they are trying to maintain future flexibility.

Meetings

Every interaction matters. Many of us on teams have never even met in person. We don't know each other's backstory. We haven't mastered reading each other's body language. Often, we cannot see if someone's in conflict or having a rough time. Whether your teams work remotely, back in the office, or hybrid, every interaction either strengthens connection or puts it to the test.

Keeping everyone on the same page is challenging, so getting meetings right is more important than ever. If your teams have taken the SDI 2.0, we give you specific meeting tips for each of them. But if they haven't taken the assessment yet, ask yourself, "How can I tailor this meeting to each person involved?" To get you started, here are some ideas.

If you're **meeting** with a person that values:

Putting others first (Blues)

Allow a little informal time for personal connections and conversations at the start.

Getting things done quickly (Reds)

Document decisions made. If a decision cannot be made now, identify a time/place to decide.

Making sure the right process is followed (Greens)

Clearly state the process you will follow to move through the agenda and make decisions.

Encouraging others to succeed (Red-Blues)

Acknowledge the ideas and contributions of others; applaud good work and sincere effort.

Helping others become self-sufficient (Blue-Greens)

Don't push for quick decisions. Give people time to think.
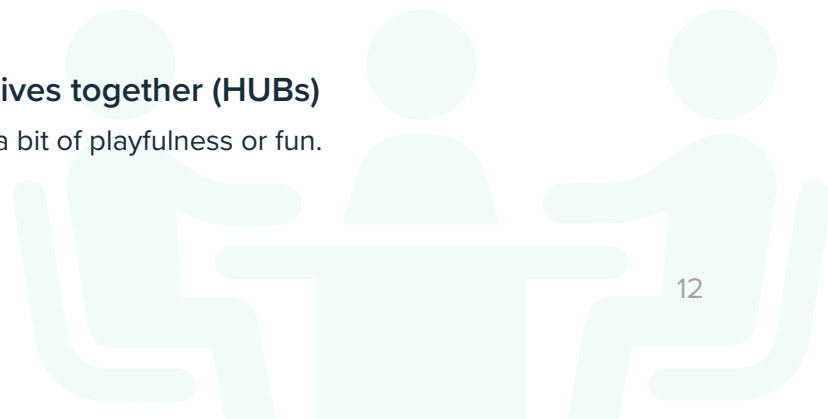
Crafting winning strategies (Red-Greens)

Think systemically, focus on how the topic relates to other priorities and objectives.

Bringing all team perspectives together (HUBs)

Allow some time at the end for a bit of playfulness or fun.

Navigating Conflict

Conflict in the workplace has a hefty price tag. The annual cost of conflict is **$359,432,645,000.** It's a pre-pandemic number, not counting the cost of the past year's burnout, stress, and massive resignations. But it doesn't have to be this way. It's possible to not only prevent conflict, but you can also learn to make it productive.

Many conflicts can be resolved and even prevented by understanding a few essential things about the other person you're interacting with.

1. What's important to them in this situation? What do they value most?
2. What were they expecting that they didn't get?

Understanding the motives and values of the other person is crucial. If you can show that their values matter to you, you're already a step ahead of most. And once you align expectations, you'll strengthen trust with them and generate a commitment to solving the task at hand. To help you navigate conflict, here are some ideas.

If you're **navigating conflict** with a person that values:

Putting others first (Blues)

Be sincere, genuine, and authentic.

Getting things done quickly (Reds)

Stand and engage with passion and energy.

Making sure the right process is followed (Greens)

Be logical and substantive in support of your opinions.

Encouraging others to succeed (Red-Blues)

Emphasize that you understand how important the issue is to them and that you are committed to solving the problem.

Helping others become self-sufficient (Blue-Greens)

Avoid raised voices and appearing aggressive or confrontational.

Crafting winning strategies (Red-Greens)

Be unemotional and direct.

Bringing all team perspectives together (HUBs)

Keep your sense of humor.

Recognition
that Connects

One of the significant challenges for leaders today is to help all team members (especially remote and hybrid team members) feel seen, heard, and valued.

The American Psychological Association found that 93% of employees who feel valued are motivated to do their best at work. However, only 33% of employees surveyed feel valued, motivated, and engaged in their work. That means two-thirds of the workforce struggle to give their best because they don't feel like their work is valued and their contributions aren't appreciated. That is a HUGE gap.

One way to show an employee that they're valued is through recognition. But before you recognize their contributions in your style, take a minute to consider their style. Some people like getting the spotlight on a team call. Others would much prefer a private note of appreciation. If your teams have taken the SDI 2.0, we give you specific tips for each of them. But if they haven't taken the assessment yet, ask yourself, "How do they prefer to be recognized for the recognition to be the most meaningful?" To get you started, here are some ideas.

If you're **recognizing** a person that values:

Putting others first (Blues)

"You really did your job well, and everyone benefited from your efforts."

Getting things done quickly (Reds)

"That project would never have happened without your focus, passion, and ability to get things done."

Making sure the right process is followed (Greens)

"Your cool, level-headed approach restored objectivity and saved hours of confusion."

Encouraging others to succeed (Red-Blues)

"It was great to see how people worked so well together under your direction."

Helping others become self-sufficient (Blue-Greens)

"Your careful, well thought-out plan made a positive difference for the people involved."
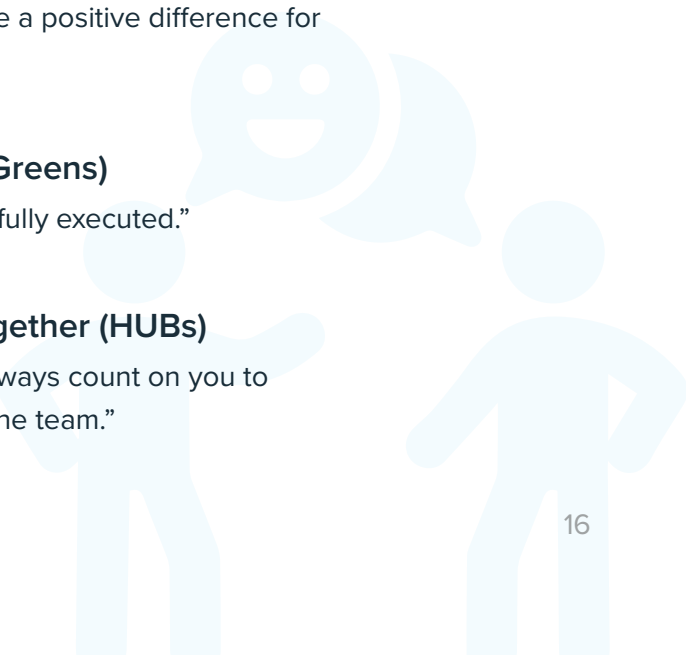
Crafting winning strategies (Red-Greens)

"That was elegantly planned and masterfully executed."

Bringing all team perspectives together (HUBs)

"Thanks for filling in. We know we can always count on you to step in and do whatever is needed for the team."

Anything is possible when teams work together.

Experience the Strength Deployment Inventory (SDI 2.0) for yourself.

corestrengths®