

Getting Along in the Workplace

Have a challenge with your colleagues or boss? There may be a reason why you don't get along. They're different from you.

You may believe that organizations with employees who are alike inspire the best outcomes. But you might want to re-think that.

Consider this. Bosses who have employees who all think and act the same can find themselves with a team that becomes fast friends but may be one that doesn't generate many innovative ideas. President John Kennedy was the most notable victim, surrounding himself with like-minded staff and ultimately creating "group-think" – an environment where people all get along because they are alike but who miss opportunities because no one challenges them to think differently or consider opposite perspectives.

Great managers and leaders know how to capitalize on difference. That's why they may put in place someone who is good with process and details, someone who is an innovative, big-idea person and someone who is highly competitive. So, while you may not like someone who is competitive and outspoken because you're more conservative and introverted, that's something you may need to change if you want to advance in your career or be happy at work.



The sooner you understand the strengths and talents of your colleagues, the sooner you will be able to work in harmony with them because you'll appreciate what they have to offer. At the same time, learning to promote and use what you have to offer will help you better mesh with your polar opposite at work and deliver the desired results.

After decades of testing and study by Carl Jung, Myers-Briggs, Don Kiersey and now Don Lowry, results show that we all have a dominant personality preference, and subsequent secondary preferences, that determine our intrinsic responses.

Any application that leverages predictable human behavior and requires engagement in order to achieve reasonable success is can be invaluable.

Using this tool, we can identify our intrinsic preferences by employing a simple to remember and easy to understand color system: Gold, Blue, Green and Orange.

Managing our "true colors" often determines healthy relationships, careers and even our ultimate success.

If you are:

● **Gold. You are 35-40% of the population. Employees with these strengths are good at organizing people and processes and are goal-oriented.**

Working with a Gold Boss: To best connect with a gold boss, demonstrate your responsibility and ability to follow procedures. That also means arriving on time for meetings and avoiding any vague statements. The devil is in the details for gold. Use words like "proven," "traditional" and "respected."

Working with a Gold Team Member: Come prepared with as much detailed structure for any idea you want to present. Understand their value to the process is in making sure that the basic framework is in place and that key points or details are not missed. They are loyal supporters to an organization and as such resist change. Supply them with details to offset.

Professions: Teachers, Accountants, Office Manager, Engineers

Famous Golds: Warren Buffett, George Washington, Margaret Thatcher

● **Blue. Naturally nurturing, harmonious, empathetic, creative and expressive, blue individuals are about 35-40% of the population.**

Working with a Blue Boss: Be friendly and warm. Avoid or minimize any perception of conflict and criticism. Ask them how they "feel" and share your feelings also. Show appreciation for their creative contributions and desire to establish a cohesive environment.

Working with a Blue Team Member: Ask them how they feel the decision would impact others. Show appreciation for their desire to create a harmonious atmosphere – especially when brainstorming new opportunities. Give them a chance to be creative and verbal. These employees are natural negotiators, communicators and good at being the optimistic, inspirational glue that bonds.

Professions: Social Workers, Personal Assistants, Customer Service, HR

Famous Blues: Katie Couric, Mr. Rogers, Princess Diana

● **Green. If you're abstract, philosophical, theoretical, always driven to acquire knowledge and are good at dealing with complex systems, you are probably a green. Only 10-15% of the population falls into this category.**

Working with a Green Boss: Always remember, less is more – be concise but do provide information. Avoid emotional appeals or using words like "feel" or "believe." It's better to ask what they think and appeal to their sense of fairness and logic rather than diplomacy. Limit chit-chatting.

Working with a Green Team Member: Show respect for their knowledge and vision. Avoid saying anything that would appear to mitigate their intelligence or competency. Appreciate that they will want to go and investigate in private for more information before making a decision.

Professions: Attorneys, journalists, scientists

Famous Greens: Hillary Clinton, Bill Gates, Al Gore

● **Orange. These are people who are action-oriented, spontaneous and enjoy freedom and fun. They represent 10-15% of the adult population.**

Working with an Orange Boss: Keep details to a minimum and concentrate on painting the "big picture". Focus on results. Ask for input. Be willing to change and change often without being offended. Don't continue if they're distracted. They have already mentally moved on. Reinforce their attention by using words such as "exciting" and "interesting". Stay upbeat.

Working with an Orange Team Member: Get the best results by talking face to face since emails and memos don't engage them. They need stimulation, fun and independence but will withdraw when presented with too many projects requiring details. However, they thrive in a crisis and will be the go-to people to promote an upcoming change and they engage with variety. They respond best when they are asked to be included in the process as they don't sit on the sidelines well.

Professions: Fire Fighters, Professional Sports, Sales, Law Enforcement

Famous Oranges: Bill Clinton, Lady Gaga, Steve Jobs

While we all typically have a dominant preference, all of the colors are a part of our intrinsic personality. But a word of caution before proceeding! Using a color system is not intended to label people but rather to create an environment of respect and understanding that embraces diversity and facilitates effective communication – vital to a happy and successful workplace.



When acknowledging our own preferences and those of others, we elevate our opportunities for success by fostering healthier communication and ultimately forming healthier relationships. And by understanding the intrinsic personality and associated behaviors of others, we are also acknowledging the strengths that we all contribute to an organization.

Want to know more about the Colors? Click here for additional information:

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