



Crucial Teams.



BETTER RELATIONSHIPS, BETTER RESULTS

SKILLS TO BUILD HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS

HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS

What do high-performing teams do differently than the rest? What's the secret behind team success?



We surveyed more than 800 professionals to find the answer. According to the study, a team's ability to perform well isn't the result of how homogenous or how diverse a team is. It's also not the size of the team, the type of team, or even what department the team sits in. **What matters more to a team's performance is how strong the relationships are between team members.**

So how do you create a high-performing team through high-performing relationships? We have a variety of teams in our life, whether it be at work, in the community, or in our families. The teams in our lives are the source of some of our greatest joys as well as some of our hardest and even ugliest moments.

And that's the challenge of teams: when you bring human beings together who have different views, different motivations, and different styles, you invite the risk of irritation and even conflict. But when you know the skills to appreciate and leverage those differences, you can build fulfilling, productive relationships and, ultimately, high-performing teams.

A team is a collection of personalities held together—or torn apart—by the relationships among them.

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

What do you believe leads to strong relationships between teammates? Is it specific personality types? Is it kindness and common interests?

Many of us assume good relationships are the result of having similar hobbies, knowing each other's favorite sports teams, and whether you enjoy hanging out at happy hour. We pride ourselves on knowing that our coworker is a dog lover who likes to vacation in Europe. But while it's nice to have personal connection with those we work with, it's not what generates the type of relationships that lead to high-performance.

In fact, 86% of workers in our study say strong workplace relationships depend more on psychological safety, even if they don't share common interests. Actually, only 14% of respondents think having strong team relationships depends on having the kind

of shared interests with their teammates that they have with their friends.

Alternatively, our study found that nearly **half of what makes a team perform well (or poorly) can be linked to the strength of the following relationship factors:**

- Feeling understood and accepted
- Assuming the best of others
- The freedom to make mistakes
- Openly expressing opinions
- Ability to resolve friction

WITH THESE PRINCIPLES IN MIND, ASK YOURSELF:

- What **insights** do I need to gain about myself and others to create better relationships with my teammates?
- What **skills** do I need to employ to create better relationships with my teammates?

Through the insights and skills taught in Crucial Teams[®], a course built on the Strength Deployment Inventory[®] (SDI[®]) assessment, we can better understand our teammates and strengthen our relationships in ways that will move the needle on performance.

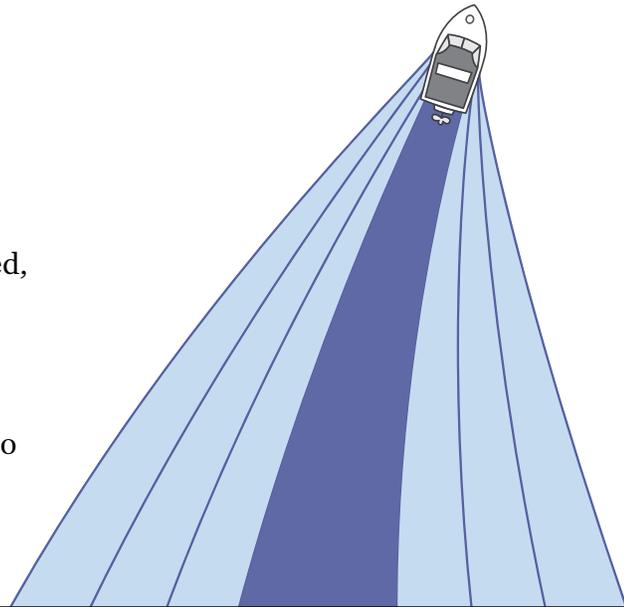
During the course, teammates explore their own and each other's motives, the different strengths each member brings to the team, and the behaviors that can trigger conflict in the team. People also learn skills for applying these insights to their workplace interactions. As a result, learners improve self-awareness and understanding, helping team members better manage their perceptions and behaviors and collaborate more effectively.

In this ebook, we'll teach a few skills from the course to help you strengthen your team relationships.



Mind Your Wake

As we move forward with our own goals, we often fail to look back and check for the impact our behavior has had on others. We each have behaviors we use to help us succeed, but these strengths can become weaknesses when they're overdone. For example, being too persuasive becomes abrasive, being too principled becomes unbending, and being too helpful can become smothering.



When your strength causes irritation or conflict for others, consider which dial to turn down:

- **Frequency:** Using a strength too often
- **Duration:** Using a strength too long
- **Intensity:** Using a strength too loudly
- **Context:** Using a strength in the wrong time or place or with the wrong person

Imagine if you knew about the overdone strengths you and your teammates were susceptible to ahead of time. Imagine how you could improve your Crucial Conversations with these insights—or help to prevent them from happening at all!

The most important way to reduce defensiveness in others is to eliminate offensiveness in yourself.

Cultivate Curiosity to Build Respect

Consider moments of disagreement with your teammates; how often have you thought, “I wish they saw my point of view. If they understood how I see it, they’d understand MY way is the RIGHT way.”



What often causes problems in teams is that we think our lens is the only one that makes sense. And when we do, what ends up happening? Irritation and conflict . . . and even isolation. Instead of valuing differences, we exaggerate them in negative ways. We amplify the virtues of our lens and villainize the lenses of others.

Instead, we need to see more than **what** a person does or says—we need to see **why** they do or say it. Understanding others for what they value, not just what they do, creates the conditions for empathy and connection.

All of us see the world through our lens, through our motivational value system, our core “why.”



We can do this by cultivating our own curiosity to build respect. Here are some questions you can use to begin:

ASK YOURSELF:

- What motives could be contributing to this behavior?
- How might this behavior help them feel good about themselves?
- What is the most generous interpretation I can give?

ASK THEM:

- Why is it important to you?
- What do you care most about (on this project, in this relationship, for this team)?
- What worries you (about this project, in this relationship, for this team)?

When we strive to build a relationship with empathy and an open mind, we create an environment where trust and communication thrive.

Speak Their Language

We all want to do things that make us feel good about ourselves—to feel a sense of self-worth. So, have the other person's value system in mind when discussing a project together. Behavioral science research has found that we each have a combination of three main motives: People, Performance, and Process.

Wanting to
help others

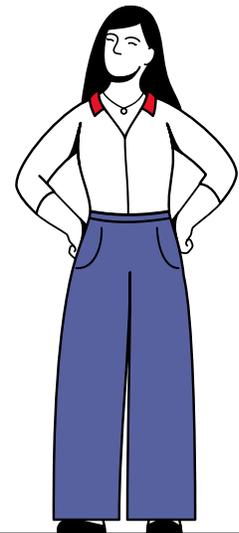
PEOPLE

Wanting to
achieve results

PERFORMANCE

Wanting to
establish order

PROCESS



Some of us are motivated by helping people. Others are performance driven and want to get things done. Some focus on process and want to work in a methodical, orderly manner.

All of us are a blend of the three motives. You, for example, might have process as a primary motive—but that doesn't mean you don't care about helping people or about performing well. It does mean that you get more of a sense of self-worth when you can work in a methodical, efficient, process-oriented way. Some people even have the three motives in fairly equal parts.

*All of us are
a blend of the
three motives.*

When working with others, ask yourself: are they most concerned about the people involved? The process? The results? Small shifts in your phrasing to focus on your colleague's motives helps them know you care, that you respect them, and that you value their unique contributions.

Remember: a team is a collection of personalities held together or torn apart by the relationships between them. When we strive to utilize these skills and the many other insights found in Crucial Teams, we'll have better relationships, better results, and higher-performing teams.





Crucial Teams®

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Bring Crucial Teams to your organization to improve relationships, address personality friction, and **elevate team performance**.

Call +33(0)388666670 or visit us at axelperformance.com.

ABOUT CRUCIAL LEARNING

Crucial Learning improves the world by helping people improve themselves. By combining social science research with innovative instructional design, we create flexible learning experiences that teach proven skills for solving life's most stubborn personal, interpersonal, and organizational problems. We offer courses in communication, performance, and leadership, focusing on behaviors that have a disproportionate impact on outcomes, and an assessment that helps individuals and teams form productive relationships. Our award-winning courses, assessments, and bestselling books include Crucial Conversations® for Mastering Dialogue, Crucial Conversations® for Accountability, Crucial Influence®, Crucial Teams®, The Power of Habit™, Getting Things Done®, and the Strength Deployment Inventory®. Together they have helped millions achieve better relationships and results, and nearly half of the Forbes Global 2000 have drawn on these solutions to improve organizational health and performance. CrucialLearning.com

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