

# RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP



Improve Your Team Leadership  
with these 4 Strategies

CINDY STEWART



# INTRODUCTION:

## Are you killing off your team - *I was!*

Do you remember the first time your leadership style was critiqued?

Boy, I do! I was actually quite shocked.

I was the manager of a call center that handled some of the most prestigious companies in our region. My boss and I were chatting over coffee about work, when he said, and I paraphrase, "You know Cindy, you are terrific at meeting the corporate goals, however, sometimes you leave a body count in the wake of your success. You are so determined to make the goals; you forget it takes people to help you achieve them." I was taken by surprise! I was extremely relational, as well as, being goal driven, but I was not incorporating them together. From that day forward I became intent on developing my skills as a relational leader.

### What is a ***Relational Leader***?

A relational leader carries the ability to build a rapport with their team in a way that maximizes everyone's potential while creating synergy among them in achieving clear set goals.

I learned the hard way that in order to be a relational leader, I first had to understand who I am and how I lead. These became my cornerstones in building a strong team.

**CINDY STEWART**

Relational Leadership

[www.cindy-stewart.com](http://www.cindy-stewart.com)

1

## Leading without the “Relational” factor *Will Cost You!*

Many leaders believe their employees are hired to do a job and the relational element is not necessary. [Gallup poll](#) results indicate only 34% of employees are actively engaged in their work. Think about your staff, and imagine only 34% actually engaging in their current position. Gallup continues stating, “What they (employees) want most is a great boss who cares about their development, and a company that focuses on and develops their strengths.” They want a relational leader.

Without this key factor in your leadership toolbox, a negative domino effect is created in two ways.

First, it can have a negative impact on your career. You may be hitting every current goal, but when there is a body count of unhappy, burnt-out team members then you will eventually experience underperformance. The backlash of turnovers, losing well-trained qualified people, will reflect on your leadership ability.

Secondly, it can affect the profitability of your bottom line. Whether your employees are not performing at their maximum capacity, you are experiencing communication difficulties within your team, or your bottom line is shrinking, it is time to reassess by asking – *What is missing?*

Your willingness to work on becoming a great leader from an ordinary leader will be a game changer for everyone who is within the sphere of your influence. When you develop a team who functions at a high level, it equates to success, and success adds to your bottom

**CINDY STEWART**

Relational Leadership

[www.cindy-stewart.com](http://www.cindy-stewart.com)

In every leader there is an ah-ha moment, like I had, in which you realize you could have had greater success by being a relational leader.

## 4 Strategies for Developing *Relational Leadership*

### Strategy #1: Understanding Your Leadership Style

There are many free tools online to assess your personality and your leadership style. However, the one I have systematically used over the years is [Myers-Briggs](#). All of my team takes this test when they are hired, including interns and volunteer staff. It provides a greater understanding of the team as a whole. It also provides the information needed to understand their individual capacity, which used properly can strengthen the team as a whole.

Myers-Briggs (MB) assists you in identifying preferences within your personality. I use the free test on the [16Personalities site](#). This type of test provides the key to unlock the understanding of a person's very core. This in turn provides optimum performance and a greater engagement for each team member.

There are 4 Personality Preferences you will read about at [16Personalities Our Theory](#). The assessment helps you to understand the 4 key elements and how they operate as a whole.

**CINDY STEWART**

Relational Leadership

[www.cindy-stewart.com](http://www.cindy-stewart.com)

- 1) Which environment saps your energy and which one recharges you?  
(Extravert - E or Introvert - I)
- 2) How do you process incoming information?  
(Sensing - S or Intuition - N)
- 3) What is your go to decision process?  
(Thinking - T or Feeling - F)
- 4) What structure do you use in dealing with the outside world?  
(Judging - J or Perceiving - P)

I am a ENTJ.

- 1) As an *Extravert*, I live in a world where my energy is charged by being with others.
- 2) My decisions are *Intuitive*, meaning I work in big picture and look to others to put the detail together.
- 3) I am a *Thinker*, seeing what needs to be accomplished in order to produce the best results.
- 4) Lastly, the *Judging* in me speaks to the way I like my outer world to function. Specifically, with a plan in place, my inner world creates new ideas and possibilities.

Do you know how your leadership skills operate within your personality preferences?

### **Action Step:**

- 1) Take the assessment
- 2) Review the assessment details
- 3) Consider how your preferences effect leading your team
- 4) Decide the type of support you need to further advance your skills, i.e. Leadership Training, Relational Coaching, or additional Education

Do not forget – You are Your Greatest Investment!

**CINDY STEWART**

Relational Leadership

[www.cindy-stewart.com](http://www.cindy-stewart.com)

Remember my story of the body count? What I was missing was the ability to integrate my relational preference (E - excited and energized by being with the people I lead) with my decision process, (T - driven to accomplish the best results) which limited me to my bottom line goals at any cost. With mentoring, adjustments on my part, and additional training, I was promoted and gained a greater number of employees to lead.

## **Strategy #2: Understanding Your Team**

First, let's define what we mean by your team. Your team is the people who are direct reports and who are responsible for assisting you in accomplishing your set goals. For example, when I was a Director, I had managers located across the country. They were my direct reports – they were my team.

As leaders, we hire believing the right education and experience is enough to fill the position. Often we forget to place equal importance on their ability to work within the team dynamics.

My worst hire happened many years ago and it cost my team and our company profoundly. We hired a person who had the experience and training, and made it through the multiple interviews with all the right answers. Once hired, we realized he lacked the interpersonal skills to work in a team environment. Other team members left, costing the company valuable well-trained people. This one misstep in hiring took over a year to fully recover.

As I stated earlier, as a leader, understanding how each person in the team functions is critical. There is another key component, however, and that is assisting the team in understanding how they function individually, as well as how the other members of the team operate. This enables the team to draw the best from one another.

**CINDY STEWART**

Relational Leadership

[www.cindy-stewart.com](http://www.cindy-stewart.com)

One of my team members was extremely detailed and needed to process through all the options, the Sensing element, before they are able to talk through the scenario. For people who are Intuitive, like me, their process can be frustrating. It took time before I understood the necessity and value of their process. Now I have learned to give them space to process the options, layout the details and possible outcomes.

This was a Win-Win for our team! It provided the best for the team leader and team member in using their abilities to the fullest in accomplishing the goal. The uniqueness of both provides freedom for the employee to maximize their strength of processing information, which engages them. And for me as a team leader, this maximizes my strengths in making decisions clear-cut.

### Action Step:

- 1) Provide your team with the assessment. I like to do this as a group, to provide a common learning environment and team experience
- 2) Review the assessment details of each team member  
(The easiest way is on a spreadsheet, see below)

<b>Column:</b>	<b>Row:</b>							
<b>Employee Names</b>	<b>Personality Preferences</b>							
	<b>E</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>P</b>
Joe Smith (ESTJ)	x		x		x		x	
Susie Davis (ISFP)		x	x			x		x

Within this initial process you will begin to foster awareness for each person, and the way they interact with others, process information and make decisions. Once finished, you will be able to understand the preferences of each employee. By identifying these, you can provide the structure for each team member to reach optimal capacity.

### **Strategy #3: What is missing in your team?**

The one common mistake leaders make is self-duplication. They build a team which functions as they do, therefore limiting their ability to serve the company goals as a whole.

I was part of an organization whose CEO was brilliant – but an extreme introvert. All except one of their management team were brilliant introverts. The issue is not the introvert factor; it is the lack of diversity in the ability to interact with the general population. In addition, within this organization, a higher percentage of employees are introverts. The kicker being their customer base was mainly the outside public. Do you see the challenge?

Whether you are an introvert or an extravert is simply a preference in the way you recharge, being alone or with others, respectively. The bigger perspective is your goals and what type of education, experience, and personalities you need to accomplish them? The first two, education and experience are relatively easy to identify. However, personality preferences and how they fit into your organization take additional steps.

#### **Action Steps:**

#### ***Who, What, Where, How and Why of Team Member***

**CINDY STEWART**

Relational Leadership

[www.cindy-stewart.com](http://www.cindy-stewart.com)

These are developed for the interviewing of potential team members. It helps to evaluate and assess the applicant. Steps can be used with your current team in growing relationally, identifying advancement possibilities, and training they may require.

1) *Who is this person?*

The answer is not always found on the resume. There are several key elements to zero in on; Presentation, Eye contact, Ability to Communicate Clearly, and Basic Etiquette Norms. It does not mean without these they are a no-hire, it only helps you determine what additional training they may need.

2) *What are their goals and aspirations?*

Many times these questions are answered in a way to get hired. Don't be fooled – Dig Deep! Ask questions, listen intently and make notes! Maybe they have a degree in Fine Arts, so what made them take that direction? How do they see their career evolving over the next 5 years? These are important questions in connecting potential with position.

3) *Where would they bring the most value, and excel within the team and organization?*

You must be clear on what you need, your team dynamics, and the skill set for a right fit. Patience is the key. Do not rush the decision to have a warm body to fill the void. The right selection will save you money, time and a great deal of frustration. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, a bad hire can cost you up to 30% of the first year annual salary, i.e. \$50,000 per year bad hire will cost you \$15,000.

**CINDY STEWART**

Relational Leadership

[www.cindy-stewart.com](http://www.cindy-stewart.com)

Again, be well-defined in what the job requires.

How will this applicant fit within the team dynamics?

How will their skill set meet the position's requirements?

4) *How* would their education, experience, and personality preferences fit with your team, within the company's core values?

This is where you weigh the importance of each aspect of the potential team member. One company I worked for would only advance team members with degrees. It did not matter what your degree was in, only that you had a degree. They valued the process of education. Another, did not require a degree, valuing loyalty and commitment to service, and therefore were willing to invest in training. Still, with education and experience their ability to work within a team is the key for overall success.

5) *Why or Why not* the potential team member?

Our last question is *Why* hire them or *Why not* hire them? We hope for easy decisions and great applicants, although it is not always that simple. And this can bog down the decision process.

Over the years, I have interviewed people where everything seemed perfect, but my gut said – No! In fact after several interviews, including interviewing with my team, the applicant excelled in every way, but I could not pull the trigger and hire them. You have to be confident as you step back and wait for the right person, even if you cannot articulate why.

The yes of hiring must meet all of your clearly defined elements in order to maximize your team.

**CINDY STEWART**

Relational Leadership

[www.cindy-stewart.com](http://www.cindy-stewart.com)

## Strategy #4: Developing Your Team

As a leader, you invest in your team from the moment they are hired. It does not matter how long you have been with your team, you can always fine-tune relationally. Remember, fine-tuning leads to greater success as a whole. Taking it up a notch does not have to be drastic it can be taking small steps at a time. Here are a few Action Steps to start the process.

### Action Steps:

- 1) Communicate clearly with your team: your goal, and what you have learned and discovered about yourself.
- 2) Encourage their input and listen carefully - create an atmosphere for dialogue. (Only you can assess the ability of your team to communicate openly, with trust and honor. If this is a new step, try surveying your team with a short questionnaire. Then follow up with the necessary steps.)
- 3) Set up a regularly scheduled connection time with the whole team, Weekly, Bi-Weekly, Monthly, to provide an opportunity to connect and communicate with one-another. It would be best in person, but the meeting can be a videoconference or phone conference.

***Be Encouraged as a Relational Leader***

You have taken action by reading this eBook. Now take the next step and implement the Action Steps. You are not alone. As leaders we have tried many of the latest leadership fads, but there is one

**CINDY STEWART**

Relational Leadership

[www.cindy-stewart.com](http://www.cindy-stewart.com)

that is timeless – Relational Leadership. People are built for relationship and want to engage with others. Engagement provides a greater sense of accomplishment and commitment as a whole.

Speaking as a leader to each of you, synergy within your team provides the greatest ability to thrive even in the hard times. The team that is able to value you as a leader, as well as its other members, will be able to do the impossible together – as one!

**CINDY STEWART**

Relational Leadership

[www.cindy-stewart.com](http://www.cindy-stewart.com)