

Chapter 10: Core Issues for Core Teams

Creative Team Resources Group, Inc. (www.ctrg.com) has identified twenty-one core issues that core teams repeatedly encounter. Regardless of the nature of the organization, scope and variety of its products, delivery mechanisms, customer or vendor relationships, whether for-profit, not-for-profit, large, small, public- or private-sector, the following topics are high priority items. Each must be examined and acted upon by any group that wants to flourish.

Growth is measured in how well these issues are recognized and articulated, and by how well their challenges and opportunities are proactively addressed. You and your team are encouraged to consider them.

They are presented alphabetically as a list, then with commentary where each issue is described and accompanied by solution recommendations. Practical applications are based on the principles articulated in *Leadership Is— How to Build Your Legacy, Industrial Strength Solutions Build Successful Work Teams!*, and *Core Teams Work Their Principles and Practices*.

21 Core Issues for Core Teams

1. *Accountability*
2. *Behavioral change*
3. *Commitments that stand*
4. *Communication*
5. *Conflict resolution*
6. *Consistent follow-through*
7. *Desires and decisions to help others succeed*
8. *Enlarged “global” awareness*
9. *Evaluation methods*
10. *Excellence in personal and team task completion, doing jobs right, and finishing well*
11. *Expanded service population numbers*
12. *Healthy relationships*
13. *Increased productivity*
14. *Increased profits*
15. *Modeling*
16. *Performance*
17. *Problem solving and solution-based thinking*
18. *Reward systems*
19. *Strength and solidarity in crises*
20. *Transfer of ownership*
21. *Trust*

21 Core Issues for Core Teams Commentary

1. *Accountability*

“Consider it done” is one of the genuinely expressed phrases I enjoy saying and hearing. When that phrase is combined with reliable action, the person who said it has fulfilled a responsibility and is one on whom the core team can count. If accountability is what a team really wants, it is modeled from its leadership to its followers

before it is required by leadership from those who follow. Coupled with authority, accountability is a staple of a strong and maturing group. Where authority is a relationship defined, accountability is functional proof that the relationship is true. (*Leadership Is —*, pages 30, 44, 54–57, 63–72, 164, and 165; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 78 and 164–167; *Core Teams Work*, pages 21, 36, 66, 84, 101–105, 117, 122, 133–135, 141, 143–154, 161, 177, and 178.)

2. *Behavioral change*

Desire, decision, and dedication are required when a person considers changing his or her behavior to achieve more positive results. Behaviors are choices, and desires to alter them can originate from many sources. Receptivity to ideology and values, with which the person agrees, is one source. Another is when new views become true views. These may cause reconsideration of foundations of thinking and acting. Open minds embrace opportunities to learn and apply principles into daily life. In this attitude of receptivity, a person and a core team weigh the merits of what they learn against the core values they share. If a desired result equates to a change in behavior, and the means and ends do not violate the values they hold, a person or a team will alter behaviors to align with new information. Remember, communication is not complete or as effective as it could be, and learning becomes living only when behaviors change. (*Leadership Is —*, pages 12, 64–66, 73, 74, 78, 85, 89, 108, 112, 130, and 175; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 82–86, 174, 192, 208, 210, and 224; *Core Teams Work*, pages 19, 22–24, 26, 36, 54, 63–94, 117, 122, 127–130, 142, 143, 149, 153, 158, 159, 164, 167, and 176–179.)

3. *Commitments that stand*

Loyalty is tried and tested in times of challenge. Loyalty is a demonstration of faithfulness. Faithfulness comes from unwavering commitment. Commitments that stand transcend and sometimes change the circumstances that may war against their will. A core team that stays committed to task fulfillment, honoring time, target, and treasure, as well as the people within its group, is one that learns and applies the lessons of building confidence and assurance through whatever they encounter. A committed individual is the one on whom the work group can depend, regardless of circumstances. A mixture of these people composes a great core team. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 30, 33, 44, 58, 61, 62, 72, 77, 83, 85, 88, 99, 128, 132, 144, 166, 175, and 176; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 14, 28, 37, 42, 44–47, 52, 63–67, 72–74, 76, 77, 82–87, 111, 119, 129, 134–137, 141, 148, 155, 156, 164, 165, 175, 176, 180, 181, 193, 197, 211, and 212; *Core Teams Work*, pages 19, 20, 41, 44, 49, 80–89, 95–97, 101, 104–108, 111, 123, 130, 138, 161, 162, and 176.)

4. *Communication*

The desire for consistent and efficient, open and honest exchange of ideas is the topic that nearly always tops the list of vital issues. Perhaps the single most important aspect of communication is that its effectiveness is revealed in improved behaviors. Communication that is information-sharing only may be profitable to a point. Communication that lasts, however, will cause people to act, to put decisions expressed in words into practices of works. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 12, 27, 31, 49, 52, 55, 56, 63, 69–74, 76, 77, 80, 85, 86, 97, 108, 117, 120, 132, 138, 140, 145, 153, 165, 167, 168, 174, and 182; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 15, 20, 28, 30, 74, 85, 91, 95, 135, 137, 139,

140, 152–158, 164, 172, 174, 175, 179, and 193; *Core Teams Work*, pages 22, 23, 25, 49–55, 64, 67, 68, 86–88, 98–105, 107–122, 124–142, 146, 159, 160, 162, 164–167, and 171–178.)

5. *Conflict resolution*

Expect conflict to be a part of the human experience. Seen in work, family, social settings, or any environment where people interact, conflict is probable where more than one person is present. Because participants on a core team are not robots, they will sometimes oppose each other relationally or functionally. In fact, some of the greatest solution provision may originate from challenging interchanges. Handle them well. Conflict that divides, casts negative aspersions, builds barricades to communication, and destroys healthy relationships is generally discord that is not being dealt with appropriately or in a timely manner. If a team wants to continue to grow through trying experiences, it will find and utilize proven methods to resolve conflicts, and mature each other through the process. Open lines of communication are required, as is complete honesty and adherence to shared values. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 31, 52, 74–79, 116–118, 120, and 182; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 102, 114, 137, 142, 159, 162, 193, and 209; *Core Teams Work*, pages 42–44, 90, 95, 103, 105, 111, 127, 136, 137, 165–169, 174, 177, and 178.)

6. *Consistent follow-through*

Stability, accountability, and reliability are three co-existent traits of healthy core teams that follow through and faithfully complete their duties. From *Leadership Is—*, “Stability is shown when the relational decisions toward being a person of trust and truth are given context and

illustration in outward demonstration in dealings with others. Accountability is stability in duplicative action; it is ongoing and able to be repeated." Reliability, as described in *Core Teams Work*, "...describes *reliance* on the *ability* of the person tasked to perform a job." A team that follows through is one that consistently attends to the details of task accomplishment and communication loop closure, not permitting essential elements of a transaction or process to fall through the cracks. They fulfill their obligations well because their competencies match their roles and responsibilities. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 26, 57, 68, 71, 73, 99, 116, 140, and 176; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 38, 67, 73–76, 110, 111, 176, 193, 197, 207, and 209; *Core Teams Work*, pages 19–24, 40, 41, 54, 55, 88, 95, 102–106, 121, 125, 141–144, and 159–161.)

7. *Desires and decisions to help others succeed*

Part of a strong relationship (the decision about someone else's success) is the evidence of the desire to help core team members achieve their goals. As noted in *Leadership Is—*, "Success in leadership achievement is defined as seeing another person fulfill their dreams and goals with the leader's teaching, modeling, encouragement, and support." Making positive decisions about a person's success does not mean that the one making the decisions owns the successes of the other person. It means that an atmosphere of assistance and encouragement is created by the one who cares for the other. In this environment, training and tools are provided, and affirmation and celebration are commonplace. Desires to help others win are openly expressed, never assumed. These traits are characteristics of a solid team and become evident to the people it serves. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 13, 14, 16, 29, 39, 44, 45, 50, 51, 57, 59, 62, 64–66, 71, 75, 76, 89, 90, 94, 96,

106, 112, 121, 122, 126, 128, 129, 133, 135, 137, 144, 146, 153, 168, and 175; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 18, 23, 27, 28, 30–35, 48–57, 61–68, 70–87, 95–98, 102–112, 118, 127–143, 148–167, 170–182, 186–188, 195, 203, 204, 210, and 211; *Core Teams Work*, pages 15–24, 26, 30–36, 39–44, 53, 54, 61–88, 102–106, 111–119, 126, 131–155, 165–171, and 174–177.)

8. *Enlarged “global” awareness*

Isolationism, seen in silos and stovepipes, is not allowed on a core team operating within a business life investment model. No one stands alone in a working cluster that works together. Integrated mixtures of people who provide solutions enjoy opportunities of combining strengths in open atmospheres of creative innovation. Rugged individualism is not sacrificed in these engagements; it is honored and promoted as persons are encouraged to be their best in cooperation with, and promotion of, the rest of the team. No one hides or hibernates on a producing core team. Within vitalized atmospheres of production exists a growing recognition of the importance of individual contributions in relation to the whole. Core teams appreciate the added value of each person and honor what each member brings to the group. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 13–20, 38–41, 44–50, 52–59, 61–72, 74–79, 81–86, 89, 90, 93–100, 103, 104, 107–114, 120–135, 137, 138, 141–150, 153, 154, and 160–169; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 19–21, 23, 25–43, 48–57, 60–64, 73–80, 82–98, 102–108, 117–143, 145–148, 154–167, 171–176, 185–195, 201–204, and 206–212; *Core Teams Work*, pages 25, 28–31, 42–44, 47–62, 73–76, 80–85, 96–98, 103, 107–123, 128, 129, 137–142, 147–157, and 174–179.)

9. *Evaluation methods*

Consistent and appropriate evaluation is germane to the activities of a team that wants success from the beginning of a task through its conclusion. As the prospect for any undertaking is considered, it is thoroughly surveyed as part of strategic planning, to assure that moving forward is the right decision. While procedures are ongoing, mid-course evaluations are often necessary. When projects are completed, the degrees of their success or failure are weighed. Measurements tell the team what to keep, what to discard, what to accent, and what to diminish. Also a work group's relational behaviors are appraised, and this activity is welcomed by the members who want to live and contribute in an environment of truth. Functional goals accomplished in cooperation with expanding relational strength call for evaluations that inform the team members that their people are growing simultaneously with their output. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 30, 41, 52, 77, 84, 86, 88–102, 173–175, and 182; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 37, 109, 126–144, 148, 175, 190, 194, and 211; *Core Teams Work*, pages 32–44, 47–58, 64, 67, 68, 78, 92–94, 118, 119, 132–135, and 154–159.)

10. *Excellence in personal and team task completion, doing jobs right, and finishing well*

One of the proven examples that a core team is vibrant is that its members want to measure individual and team progress in specified timelines. Time sensitive evaluations that clearly demonstrate excellence, or the lack of it, are welcomed. Excellence for a team rises from desires to succeed on the parts of its individuals. Excellence and mediocrity have no allegiance to each other and cannot coexist. Excellence is demonstrated not only in completing tasks, but finishing well, as explained in

Leadership Is—, where leaders teach followers to do even greater works than the leaders have done. Excellence is not automatic. Achieving it takes consistency, dedication, and hard work. Great core teams produce excellence and build enduring legacies because they desire to fulfill their values, vision, mission, and message. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 15, 22, 46–49, 55, 65, 73, 81, 94–96, 101, 103, 104, 106, 125, 131, 134, 135, 142–144, 149–153, 157–169, 175, 177, 182, and 183; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 14, 15, 17, 27, 44–47, 64–67, 77, 79, 82–95, 101, 103, 105, 106, 113–117, 120, 123, 127, 137–142, 147, 162, 164, 168, 170–174, 186, 187, 197–201, 209, and 210; *Core Teams Work*, pages 18, 19, 35, 42–44, 50–54, 60–71, 77, 78, 85, 97, 98, 101–105, 122, 127, 131–145, 152, 153, 171, 177, and 179.)

11. *Expanded service population numbers*

A solid core team wants more. They desire increased maturity, potential, production, and profit. “Expanded service population numbers” is simply another expression for additional customers, heightened sales, increased business, and augmented bottom line figures. A team’s proving ground of success begins, and then resides, in the intangible decisions they make. The team’s tangible results, their living proofs of quality decisions, are seen in the numbers they achieve. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 13, 16, 22–25, 27, 30, 33, 40, 45–49, 52–54, 58, 66–71, 77, 78, 122–124, 128, 154, 159, and 185; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 20, 30, 57, 70, 71, 75, 78, 88–95, 103–111, 113–117, 123, 129–143, 156, 166, 170, 185, 193–202, and 211; *Core Teams Work*, pages 26, 31, 32, 39–44, 54, 70, 71, 99, 107, 138, 139, 143–157, 161, 170–173, and 177.)

12. *Healthy relationships*

Decisions about someone else’s success foster healthy

relational foundations. Decisions that promote another person's failure are also seeds of relationships, although undesirable ones. If a team desires healthy relationships, it will consistently remind its people that great decisions come first and best actions follow. Disease-free relationships originate from positive decisions; sick ones originate from decisions to tear other persons down. A work environment is one of many obvious places where relationships are integrated into the day-to-day experiences of each contributor. These decisions bear lasting fruits, good or bad. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 29, 39, 44, 45, 50, 51, 57–59, 62–66, 71, 75–78, 80, 82, 83, 89, 90, 94, 96, 98, 99, 106, 109–122, 126–129, 131–137, 143, 144, 146, 153, 168, and 175; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 18, 23, 27, 28, 30–36, 48–57, 60–68, 70–87, 95–98, 100, 102–112, 118, 127–143, 148–182, 186–188, 192, 195, 200–204, 210 and 211; *Core Teams Work*, pages 19, 25, 26, 36, 50–70, 77–80, 90–94, 107–123, 128–130, 136, 144, 145, 154, 155, 158–171, and 173–179.)

13. *Increased productivity*

Productivity can be measured, it is goal-oriented, it must be evaluated, and it is time sensitive. Increasing it is part of the insatiable desire to look for, and operate in, better ways. Great core teams do not settle for complacency nor dwell in laziness. They don't remain on plateaus—they reach for higher vistas. Gathering and evaluating production goals and numbers reveal marked and tangible results from the efforts a hard working team expends. Their efforts produce lasting rewards. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 14–17, 22–31, 34, 46–49, 58, 78–81, 90–92, 94, 103–105, 109, 114–122, 128, 134, 144, 145, 148, 150–154, 159–162, 169, and 182; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 14–22, 26–38, 59, 62–68, 71–95, 99, 100, 106–108, 112, 118–143, 153, 156,

158, 162, 167–170, 180, 181, 192–211, and 226; *Core Teams Work*, pages 19, 21, 25, 30–44, 50–61, 69–72, 93, 95–106, 108–123, 131, and 145–157.)

14. *Increased profits*

The core team model illustrated in *Core Teams Work*, defined in *Industrial Strength Solutions*, and described in the leader-follower relationships in *Leadership Is—*, is one that embraces financial responsibility. Part of a core team commitment to fiscal well-being is the acquisition of profit, defined as an amount in excess of the cost of doing business that can be used for expansion, investment, gifting, and contingency. Profits are not optional if a team is going to succeed. A great core team looks for the most value-driven methods to achieve and receive all the legitimate profits it can. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 40, 41, 81, 90–92, 122–124, 150–153, 161, 162, and 166; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 20, 21, 84, 86, 142, 170, and 196; *Core Teams Work*, pages 30–44, 70, 71, 107, 118, 140–142, 146, 147, 155, 163, 170, and 177.)

15. *Modeling*

In the “Twelve Laws of Understanding,” Law #3 states, “Model what I want.” The practice of modeling is closely related to accountability. It stems from the truth that a leader will exercise accountability *to* the follower before requiring accountability *from* the follower. Core teams understand that required behavior begins with desired behavior based on agreed and shared core values. The people of the team endeavor to erase distances between their relationships and the functions that prove them. Modeling is an illustration of the cooperation between the two. It is central, not to achieving a goal of perfection, but to making progress on a path of perseverance toward

what is truly desired. A model, as described in *Leadership Is—*, “...is a living entity, whom in character and condition illustrates the cause and actualization of relationships; where participants willingly decide and adopt principles and corroborating actions in environments they create, that foster consistency, thrive on integrity, earnestly seek excellence, and duplicate their effectiveness over time by investing in others of like passion, so that the product of the original is greater than the original itself.” The act of modeling is the pathway to duplication and the creation of legacies that endure. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 9–11, 17, 20, 29–31, 36–38, 40, 41, 44, 45, 54–59, 63–74, 88, 90–92, 94–96, 103–135, 146–149, 152, 160, 164–168, 175–177, 186, and 187; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 18–23, 44–48, 55, 77, 78, 80, 86, 98, 100, 108–111, 121, 136, 176–180, 187–195, 201, 206–208, and 224–226; *Core Teams Work*, pages 19, 24, 26, 35, 36, 59–94, 106, 126, 137–160, 164, 172, and 176.)

16. Performance

The bottom line will always be a marker of success or failure. It should be. Performance is all about obtaining verifiable results. To achieve best-deliverables a team must plan and perform well. Excluding excuses and eliminating mediocrity, a performance-dedicated team contributes from relational strengths as well as functional competencies. Team members are active, engaged, and productive because they want to contribute in these ways, building each other up as performance processes unfold. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 8, 14, 26, 29, 103–136, 142–149, and 167; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 33, 36, 63–67, 82–86, 88–148, 169, 197–201, and 209–211; *Core Teams Work*, pages 20, 24, 28, 30–44, 47, 50–55, 65–71, 76–85, 92–96, 102–106, 108, 114, 118, 119, 124–127, 130, 137–161, and 167–179.)

17. *Problem solving and solution-based thinking*

Industrial Strength Solutions points up the unique differences between whining and winning, indecision and initiative, circumstances and character, imbalance and balance. People who are problem solvers think and act from positions of strength because they are committed to improvement. You know you have a greatness-empowered core team when the members see challenges as opportunities and confront negatives with positives. Productive problem-solving begins with attitude. Solution-based thinking originates from strong character committed to overcoming obstacles and learning through difficulty. Start with a can-do attitude and best-practices follow. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 18, 52–87, 89, 103–136, and 182; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 18, 20, 28, 31–34, 44–98, 106, 111, 149–204; *Core Teams Work*, pages 20, 22–24, 50–53, 58, 90–92, 102, 103, 112–114, 126, 127, 155, 160, 165–171, 173, 174, and 178.)

18. *Reward systems*

Systems of payments align with a team's action and the wealth it produces. Tangible rewards do not exclude intangible expressions of appreciation; rather, they validate each other and are given cooperatively. The principle is this: When a team succeeds, its successes are shared. Commensurate reward systems are true reflections of task fulfillment, proceeding from relational commitment. The design or redesign of any system of reward reflects the true context and content of the group's composition and output. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 9, 22, 30, 33, 40, 41, 45, 50, 53, 54, 58, 76–79, 81–102, 123, 124, 128, 134, 159, and 185; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 56, 70–76, 78, 82, 102–108, 124–144, 148, 166, 182, 193–195, 197, 200–202, 211, and 212; *Core Teams Work*, pages 20,

30–44, 51, 70, 71, 118, 119, 128, 134, 135, 140–142, 146, 147, 161, and 179.)

19. *Strength and solidarity in crises*

When tough times come—and they always will—it is then that a core team’s true character is seen. Crises don’t produce strength; instead, they reveal it. Endless numbers of stories abound of people who, in a moment of time and responding to immediate need, rise to meet a challenge and accomplish great feats. They are labeled as heroes for doing so. Heroism does not form in turmoil; it is revealed in trying moments because character has already been honed, perhaps prepared “for such a time as this.” A work group that is made up of people unreservedly committed to core principles, withstands trials, temptations, tests, and torments of challenging business environments. A values-driven operational team grows stronger through misadventure, maturing for coming rounds of opportunity, contributing out of solid character, regardless. (*Leadership Is —*, pages 26, 27, 49, 59, 63, 64, 84, 99, 110, 114–120, 125, 127, 129, 137, 141–148, 163–169, 175, and 176; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 17–23, 26, 29–37, 42–68, 72, 74, 76, 80, 84, 87, 89, 90, 103, 107, 110–143, 148–168, 173, 180, 185, 187, 190–193, 200, 202, 208–212, and 224–226; *Core Teams Work*, pages 15, 17, 19, 20, 22–26, 50, 51, 77–80, 87, 89–93, 95–106, 127, 136, 137, 147–154, 158–161, 165–167, 170, and 171.)

20. *Transfer of ownership*

A highly functional core team demonstrates dedication and cooperation as roles are embraced and fulfilled. When a person accepts the opportunity of an engagement, agrees to provide a solution to a problematic issue, or decides to become the follower into whom a leader can

invest, then that person acquires the responsibility for completion of the transaction. Transferred ownership originates from shared decisions about each other's success. It is concluded when assignments are framed by adherence to values, formed through assent to duty, and finished by accomplishing tasks. A maturing core team understands that when ownership of any operation is transferred, the one who accepts and completes the job has made a great decision about the success of the team and the person who assigned the role. Transfer of ownership recurs consistently on core teams that strive to grow their people, help them produce excellence, and see them finish well. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 26–31, 39, 41, 43–50, 52–102, 106–121, 124–126, 130–135, 138–150, 157–169, 175, 176, 181, and 187; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 14, 27, 30–38, 48, 51–57, 73–76, 78, 80, 82–86, 95–98, 101, 109, 120–143, 149–167, and 183–207; *Core Teams Work*, pages 47, 55–58, 61, 63–71, 139, 140, 143–157, and 165–177.)

21. Trust

Trust is the “T” of Core Team. Trust is unearned and granted when a relationship begins, and it is earned and proven as that relationship extends. Earned trust proves the validity of the relationships from which it comes and to which it contributes. A team exists in balance of good decisions and accompanying functional contributions when trust is present and active. It can't be bought or sold, but it is the foundation of all transactions which compose buying and selling. It is at the heart of a great business core team and a central core value. (*Leadership Is—*, pages 10, 16, 20, 30, 36, 44, 58, 62, 68, 76–81, 108, 114–127, 146, 160, 163, and 176; *Industrial Strength Solutions*, pages 20, 54, 58, 63, 73–75, 77–80, 86, 88, 111, 133–138, 152,

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205, and 225; *Core Teams Work*, pages 16, 17, 20, 22–24, 36, 40, 41, 47, 62–67, 71, 77–86, 90–92, 136–142, 145, 168–171, and 175–177.)

Questions for your team: Which of these issues are those your team addresses most often and why? Which of the 21 issues are problem areas that need to be openly and positively confronted by your core team? What are the values displayed when issues are handled well? What values are violated when they are not addressed or handled poorly?