

## The Power of Understanding Intrinsic Values in Team Management

By Bob Hill, Ntrinsx Founder and Managing Partner



The most effective leaders are those who understand their teams on a deep, intrinsic level. Successful management is not just about assigning tasks or hitting KPIs; it's about tapping into what truly drives each individual to contribute their best to the organization. By understanding the intrinsic values that define each team member, managers can unlock higher levels of productivity, improve workplace culture, foster collaboration, and ultimately drive the business toward success. But what does understanding intrinsic values really mean, and how does this translate into practical management strategies?

### What Are Intrinsic Values?

Intrinsic values refer to the fundamental beliefs and motivators that drive people's behaviors, decisions, and interactions with others. Unlike extrinsic motivators such as money, promotions, or recognition, intrinsic values are internal. They reflect a person's temperament, passions, and priorities in life, impacting how they relate to work and their colleagues.

At Ntrinsx, we categorize these intrinsic values into four primary colors: Gold, Orange, Green, and Blue. Each of these colors represents a different set of core values:

- **Gold** individuals value structure, organization, and responsibility.
- **Orange** individuals are driven by flexibility, action, and results.
- **Green** individuals prioritize analytical thinking, logic, and strategic problem-solving.
- **Blue** individuals value empathy, relationships, and collaboration.

By understanding which values resonate most with each team member, managers can make more informed decisions on how to approach leadership, communication, and problem-solving within their teams.

## **Benefits of Understanding Intrinsic Values in Management**

### **1. Improved Communication and Collaboration**

One of the most immediate benefits of understanding a team's intrinsic values is improved communication. Everyone has different communication preferences, shaped largely by their core values. A manager who knows, for example, that one team member is primarily driven by Green (analytical and logic-based thinking) can adjust their communication style to be more data-driven and focused on the facts when addressing that individual. On the other hand, if another team member is driven by Blue (empathy and relationships), the same manager might choose a more personal, supportive approach.

When communication is tailored to match the core values of each team member, it fosters mutual respect and understanding, minimizing misunderstandings or conflict. Over time, this improved communication leads to better collaboration, as team members learn to appreciate and leverage each other's strengths and differences.

### **2. Enhanced Employee Engagement and Retention**

Employees who feel that their intrinsic values are acknowledged and supported are far more likely to be engaged at work. Engagement comes from feeling valued, having one's efforts recognized, and seeing how personal contributions align with the organization's goals. When a manager understands the driving values behind a team member's work, they can assign tasks, offer feedback, and recognize achievements in ways that resonate more deeply with the individual.

For instance, a manager who recognizes that a Gold team member thrives on structure and responsibility can assign them to projects that require detailed planning and consistent follow-through. Similarly, an Orange-driven team member might perform best when given the freedom to take initiative and deliver results without being micromanaged.

Employees who feel understood and appreciated on this deeper level are more likely to stay with the organization longer, reducing turnover and the associated costs of recruiting and training new talent.

### **3. Tailored Motivation and Performance Enhancement**

Different team members are motivated by different things. While extrinsic rewards like bonuses or promotions may work for some, intrinsic motivators such as personal growth, autonomy, or meaningful work are much more sustainable in the long term. A manager who understands the intrinsic values of their team can better tailor their motivational strategies.

For example, Green individuals may be more motivated by challenging projects that allow them to apply critical thinking and explore new ideas, while Blue individuals might be more driven by the opportunity to work on collaborative teams or in roles where they can help others. By aligning work tasks with what intrinsically motivates each team member, managers can boost individual and overall team performance.

#### **4. Better Conflict Resolution**

Conflict in teams is inevitable, but it can be much easier to manage when a leader understands the intrinsic values at play. Often, conflict arises because team members have different perspectives, priorities, or communication styles. By recognizing that a disagreement between a Gold team member (who values structure and predictability) and an Orange team member (who values spontaneity and flexibility) is rooted in intrinsic values, a manager can facilitate more empathetic conversations.

A manager who understands these underlying differences can help team members see things from each other's perspective, guiding them toward compromise or a more collaborative solution. In this way, intrinsic values serve as a roadmap for resolving conflict in a way that respects individual differences while maintaining team cohesion.

#### **5. Building a Stronger, More Resilient Team Culture**

Understanding the intrinsic values of your team members allows you to build a more cohesive and resilient team culture. Every team member brings a unique set of strengths, priorities, and values to the table. By recognizing and appreciating these differences, a manager can create an environment where everyone feels they belong and can contribute meaningfully to the team's success.

For example, a manager who knows they have a mix of Gold, Orange, Green, and Blue individuals on their team can ensure that meetings, project planning, and decision-making processes incorporate a balance of structure, flexibility, innovation, and collaboration. This creates a more dynamic, adaptable, and inclusive team culture where everyone's values are recognized and leveraged for the greater good.

A well-balanced team where intrinsic values are understood and appreciated is more likely to be resilient in the face of challenges. When team members feel valued and respected for who they are, they're more likely to pull together in difficult times and support one another in finding solutions.

#### **6. Effective Delegation and Team Development**

Delegating tasks effectively requires more than just an understanding of skills and experience. It requires an understanding of what drives each team member to excel. When a manager is aware of their team's intrinsic values, they can delegate tasks that align with those values, increasing the likelihood of success.

For example, a Green team member might thrive when asked to develop a data-driven strategy for a new initiative, while a Blue team member might excel in roles that require fostering relationships with clients or mentoring new employees. Similarly, Orange individuals can be tasked with projects that require swift action and adaptability, while Gold individuals can manage long-term projects that demand consistent attention to detail.

By aligning tasks with intrinsic values, managers not only increase the likelihood of success for individual tasks but also contribute to the long-term development and growth of each team member.



## Conclusion

The most successful managers today are those who lead not just from a position of authority, but from a place of empathy, understanding, and respect for their team members' intrinsic values. By recognizing and leveraging these values, managers can improve communication, enhance engagement, resolve conflicts, and foster a positive, resilient team culture. Understanding intrinsic values allows leaders to unlock the true potential of their teams, leading to higher performance, greater satisfaction, and more sustainable success.

As the workplace continues to evolve, the ability to manage with a deeper understanding of what drives people will be a key differentiator for leaders who want to succeed in the long term. Embracing this approach will not only benefit individual team members but also contribute to the overall growth and success of the organization.

*Bob Hill is the Founder and Managing Partner of Ntrinsx, a company that specializes in providing online assessments, training, and leadership tools designed to help individuals and teams understand and leverage intrinsic values to improve communication, collaboration, and workplace culture. Bob is the chief architect of the Ntrinsx Social Intelligence system. Under his leadership, Ntrinsx focuses on innovation in social intelligence and microlearning, supporting over 100 languages and offering tools for both corporate and family settings.*

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