

GALLUP®

WHY WORK FRIENDS MATTER:

Unlocking Powerful Partnerships With CliftonStrengths®

A COACHING COMPANION GUIDE



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Coaching for Team Connection and Trust

Work is a social experience. Strong workplace relationships are the foundation of collaboration, trust and productivity.

When people feel safe, they share ideas, ask questions and admit mistakes without fear of judgment.

Trust is more than a coaching competency; it is essential for workplace success. For CliftonStrengths coaches, helping clients understand how they naturally form and sustain trusting relationships is critical to unlocking their potential at work.

Work Friends Matter: Building Connection and Trust With CliftonStrengths

Gallup's research shows that people vary in how they express, interpret and prioritize connection at work. The *Why Work Friends Matter: Unlocking Powerful Partnerships With CliftonStrengths* report uncovers these nuances, revealing that individuals use different approaches to collaborate effectively.

The report explores the intersection of natural talent and workplace relationships — how our strengths shape the way we build connections, offer support and create value with others.

This guide offers information, strategies and questions to help strengths coaches support clients in building workplace relationships. These practical tools enable coaches to tailor their approach so clients can use their natural talents to strengthen connections and work more effectively with others.



What It Means to Have a Best Friend at Work

Are Friendships Really Necessary at Work?

You may hear this question when coaching people about workplace relationships or asking them about their best friend at work. They may have heard stories about employees fraternizing too much on the job or think close relationships at work are messy. But **Gallup's research shows that having a best friend at work is a strong predictor of whether someone is engaged in their job.**

The best predictor of higher wellbeing and engagement at work is not what people are doing — it's whom they are with.

Without a best friend at work, the chances of being engaged in your job are one in 12.

What People Look for in Workplace Friendships

When Gallup asked respondents what it means to have a best friend at work, their answers revealed something simple yet profound: **Trust is the common denominator of meaningful workplace relationships.** But trust can look, feel and develop differently based on how people are wired. From our analysis, four main themes emerged:

- 1 Trust**
Trust is the single most common factor in how people define what it means to have a best friend at work. But trust doesn't always look the same. Some seek out **emotional connection**. Others are drawn to **intellectual partnership, shared wins** or **pragmatic support**.
- 2 Personal Connection**
For some, the role of a best friend at work transcends the office. These relationships **blend personal and professional life** and **endure beyond the workplace**. Friends at work become companions on both personal and professional journeys — celebrating milestones, sharing challenges and socializing outside of work.
- 3 Shared Experience**
Others describe a friend at work as someone who “gets” the unique challenges, stressors and context of their professional environment, often because they live it too. This **shared understanding** allows for a kind of **support and validation** that is difficult to find outside the workplace.
- 4 Mutual Investment and Collaboration**
To some, a friend at work is marked by hands-on help, motivation and professional synergy. They describe their best friends at work as **reliable collaborators** who **actively contribute to both daily success and long-term growth**.

It is important to note that not everyone has — or wants — a best friend at work.

When asked to define what it means to have a best friend at work, about one in 10 respondents opted to share they prefer keeping personal and professional relationships separate, or implied that they don't want to be personally close with coworkers, at all.

Some have experienced emotional fallout from prior work friendships, leading to a more guarded, pragmatic approach. While they may still value trust, collegiality and mutual support, they intentionally draw a line between friendly professionalism and deep personal connection.

Coaches can use these findings to help clients reflect on how they define workplace friendships, and how those preferences shape the way they build trust and collaborate at work.

Key Considerations for Coaches

- Having someone at work who understands the organizational culture and shares both personal and professional challenges can foster success, development and wellbeing.
- Finding the right best friend at work — and knowing when to lean on them or somebody else — is critical to supporting belonging, success and overall enjoyment in the workplace.
- But individuals with different talents see workplace friendships through a different lens and bring different patterns of thinking and behaving to partnerships at work.

Powerful Strengths-Based Coaching Questions

- Do you have complementary partners at work?
- How do the relationships you have at work help you do your job better?
- Who at work helps you be your best self?
- Who at work helps you amplify your strengths?
- Who at work supports your “blind spots”?
- Who do you naturally turn to when you want to share an idea or test out a new direction?
- How do you identify which relationships are most worth investing in at work?
- When did you have the most fun at work during the past few months?
- Who makes work enjoyable for you?
- When have you felt most energized by a workplace partnership? What made that connection valuable?
- Can you think of a time when you depended on a colleague for success?
- How do you help make your work environment positive and productive?
- How do relationships that you have at work help you do your job better?
- Do you feel you have one or more colleagues whom you can trust and depend on?
- Can you think of a time when you depended on someone else from your team for success?
- Whom do you partner with most often? In what ways do you contribute to their success?

The Coach's Mindset

Relationships at work matter. Whether we're collaborating on a project, problem-solving in a pinch or simply sharing a laugh between meetings, our relationships at work shape how we show up and how we succeed.

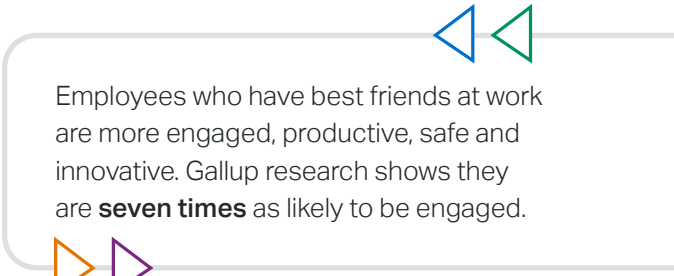
The best leaders don't leave workplace connection to chance. They create conditions where trust grows and friendships, mentorship and collaboration thrive.

There's no universal definition of a best friend at work. Some individuals build trust through personal affinity; others connect through reliability and shared goals.

Coaches can help individuals identify their relational preferences and affirm that trust can take many shapes — each valid, each powerful and each shaped by the lens of talent.

Some individuals are naturally wired to lean on others in moments of personal or professional challenge, but even then, emotional intelligence includes knowing when to share and when to hold space.

Coaches can assist individuals in recognizing the difference between appropriate vulnerability and excessive emotional disclosure, while fostering environments where openness is encouraged within clear boundaries.



Employees who have best friends at work are more engaged, productive, safe and innovative. Gallup research shows they are **seven times** as likely to be engaged.

Strengths Shape Relationships at Work

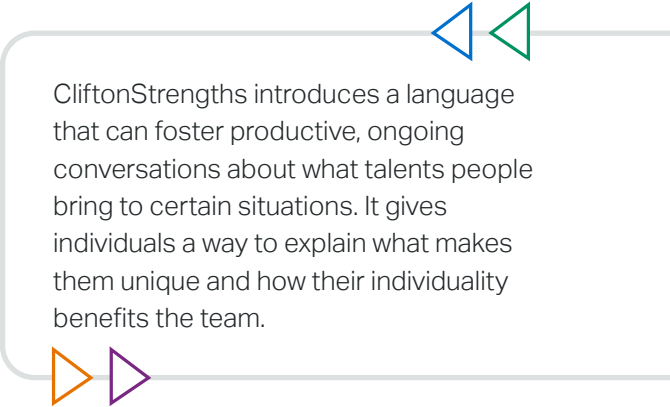
In Gallup's study of workplace friendships, respondents were asked to reflect on key aspects of connection and support in the workplace by indicating their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

- At work, I have a lot of strong personal partnerships.
- I have a friend at work who I share new ideas with.
- My coworkers and I work well together to do great work.
- The people I work with help each other when there is a need.
- I have someone at work I highly trust.
- I have someone at work I talk to about personal challenges.
- I have someone at work I talk to about professional challenges.
- I can always rely on my coworkers.

Strengths can shape how we perceive aspects of our workplace relationships. Someone high in Positivity or Empathy might view their relationships through a naturally optimistic or emotionally attuned lens. On the other hand, someone high in Analytical or Deliberative may approach relationships more cautiously or critically — not because they don't value connection, but because they evaluate it differently.

These nuances reveal the relational fingerprint of each strength, showing that individuals often take very different paths to achieve the same outcome of doing great work with others.

Coaches can help individuals understand, value and navigate how to curate powerful partnerships at work through the lens of their dominant talents.



CliftonStrengths introduces a language that can foster productive, ongoing conversations about what talents people bring to certain situations. It gives individuals a way to explain what makes them unique and how their individuality benefits the team.

Coaching Across Strengths Profiles

The four strengths domains Executing, Influencing, Relationship Building and Strategic Thinking affect the ways individuals interact with colleagues, establish trust and participate in team culture. Each domain brings unique relational strengths — and distinct blind spots — to the workplace. By understanding these tendencies, coaches can individualize their approach and refine their guidance, helping clients grow stronger, more productive connections.

Whether through executing on goals, influencing others, building trust or sparking new ideas, relationships make collaboration and impact possible. Coaching clients' natural patterns of talent allows individuals not only to do what they do best, but to connect more meaningfully and authentically with those around them.

This section offers insights, coaching strategies, reflective questions and potential blind spots for each domain. Use these tools to personalize your coaching, increase client awareness and improve their relational skills.





Helping People Who Lead With the Executing Domain Build Relationships

For people who lead with Executing themes, relationships come alive when work comes first. They thrive in relationships that are anchored in shared work, reliability and getting things done. They are most energized when bonds with colleagues contribute directly to clarity, structure and results. While they may not naturally seek out opportunities for personal sharing, they often become trusted teammates through their consistency and follow-through.

Coaches can help clients who lead with the Executing domain deepen their workplace relationships by balancing their task orientation with intentional trust-building.

How They Form Relationships

- **Work-first connections:** Relationships often emerge through working together on tasks, projects and achieving shared outcomes.
- **Reliability is the foundation for trust:** Trust grows when others are dependable, accountable and follow through on their commitments.
- **Shared objectives unify partnerships:** Their strongest collaborations happen when goals are aligned and results are delivered.
- **Clarity and structure matter:** They value relationships that contribute to establishing structure and sustaining progress toward objectives.
- **Slow to build trust:** Emotional openness develops gradually, often reserved for relationships that have proven useful and enduring over time.

Executing Domain Blind Spots

- **Task over relationship:** They may overlook connections that don't directly contribute to work outcomes.
- **Slow to open:** Their careful approach to emotional openness may restrict opportunities for developing stronger collegial relationships.
- **High expectations for reliability:** They expect reliability and may get frustrated when others are inconsistent.
- **Utility-driven partnerships:** They may focus too much on whether relationships are "useful," overlooking the broader benefits of connection.

Coaching Opportunity

Help clients who lead with Executing themes see that relationships are not only a way to get work done, but also a source of resilience and collaboration. By blending their dependability with a willingness to trust and connect beyond tasks, they can build partnerships that both drive results and sustain them over the long term.

Coaching Strategies

When coaching people who lead with the Executing domain, tailor your approach by:

- **Connecting relationships to performance:** Emphasize how strong partnerships can enhance efficiency, reduce barriers and improve results.
- **Emphasizing the role of trust:** Underscore how dependability and accountability strengthen their credibility.
- **Reinforcing the value of workplace relationships:** Help them recognize that relationships can be valuable even when they aren't tied directly to task outcomes.
- **Building patience for openness:** Acknowledge that trust takes time but encourage small, intentional acts of sharing to deepen bonds.
- **Finding a common mission:** Help them to identify areas of shared mission with potential partners. Without shared purpose, collaboration can feel strained and performance may be limited.

Theme-Specific Coaching Strategies

Achiever: Position friendship as part of a sustainable system to avoid burnout — encourage trusted allies, not distractions.

Arranger: Use their coordination strength to foster functional collaboration that may evolve into trusted friendships.

Belief: Help clients explore values alignment as the foundation of deeper work friendships.

Consistency: Reinforce that relational flexibility doesn't compromise fairness. Model balanced sharing and help them practice asking for support.

Deliberative: Respect their caution but invite low-risk sharing. Remind them that connection grows through presence — not perfection.

Discipline/Responsibility: Reframe friendship as a professional advantage, enhancing accountability and support.

Focus: Reposition connection as a goal-alignment tool. Emotional insight isn't a detour — it's a driver of clarity and team momentum.

Restorative: Help them recognize that support isn't always a solution. Encourage relational presence — even when there's nothing to fix.

Strengths-Based Coaching Questions

- Which colleagues do you depend on most? What makes them reliable?
- How do you decide which relationships to invest in at work?
- How do strong relationships boost your effectiveness and productivity?
- How do you address situations where others demonstrate inconsistency or unreliability?
- What factors could contribute to establishing trust with colleagues in a shorter period, rather than relying solely on prolonged periods of demonstrated reliability?
- Are there relationships you want to build or enhance at work?
- How do you balance your focus on work with opportunities for more personal connection?



Helping People Who Lead With the Influencing Domain Build Relationships

For people who lead with **Influencing themes**, relationships often thrive when there is **energy, momentum, and opportunities to make an impact**. Their relational approach is characterized by conversations aimed at setting direction, building consensus and facilitating progress. Although they place importance on professional partnerships, they may be less inclined to perceive colleagues as consistently dependable or collaborative.

Coaches can help them channel their natural drive to influence deeper, more sustainable workplace connections that encourage trust. Friendship can be seen as an amplification, expression or an exchange of emotional energy.

How They Form Relationships

- **Momentum-driven connections:** Their relationships develop most effectively when tied to shared goals, forward movement and opportunities to create visible impact.
- **Exchange of ideas:** They tend to connect through active dialogue — sharing ideas, discussing challenges and engaging in conversations that shape decisions.
- **Strategic openness:** Vulnerability is more likely to emerge when it reinforces credibility, strengthens influence or supports rallying others around a vision.
- **Preferred partners:** They value trusted colleagues to spar with, brainstorm alongside and navigate challenges together.
- **Selective reciprocity:** They may prioritize alignment with vision or strategy over emotional intimacy or balanced give-and-take in relationships.

Influencing Domain Blind Spots

- **Overemphasis on alignment:** They may overlook relationships that aren't strategically useful, missing out on potential allies.
- **Impatience with dependability:** A perception that others aren't reliable or collaborative can lead to frustration and strained trust.
- **Transactional connections:** Their drive for influence may sometimes make relationships feel one-sided, with intimacy or balance sacrificed for momentum.
- **Credibility-first vulnerability:** They may miss opportunities for deeper trust by only sharing openly when it enhances influence.

Coaching Opportunity

Help clients who lead with **Influencing themes** see that long-term influence grows through trust as much as momentum. By balancing strategic alignment with reciprocity and dependability, they can create relationships that not only amplify impact but also foster enduring collaboration.

Coaching Strategies

When coaching individuals strong in the Influencing domain, tailor your approach by:

- **Framing relational value in terms of impact:** Position relationship-building as essential to achieving influence and amplifying their reach.
- **Encouraging intentional partnerships:** Guide them to identify and nurture a few strong, dependable workplace allies who can act as sounding boards.
- **Highlighting reliability:** Help them recognize how consistency and dependability build trust and long-term influence.
- **Expanding reciprocity:** Even when asking for help, they tend to take charge — a habit that can come across as disrespectful and hinder equal partnerships. Highlight the importance of mutual support and collaboration, even in situations where it may not directly exert influence or contribute to advancing a specific vision.

Theme-Specific Coaching Strategies

Activator/Command: Reframe the inclination to take initiative as an opportunity to assist others. Guide individuals in channeling this proactive tendency constructively, and coach them on how acting as a catalyst can provide valuable support when colleagues are facing obstacles or require motivation to move forward.

Communication: Encourage active engagement in social rituals (e.g., recognition, inside jokes, shared wins).

Competition: Competitive individuals often connect best with peers who match their ambition and are willing to push for exceptional results together. Help them guard against letting their competitive spirit get in the way of their relationships.

Maximizer: Guide them to invest in friendships that inspire improvement, helping them turn good performance into great through collaboration.

Self-Assurance: Help them see connection as reciprocity, not reliance — a way to expand their impact by contributing to and drawing from others' success.

Significance: Connect friendship to legacy, impact and identity; these are friends who recognize and uplift each other.

Woo: Promote participation in social activities such as recognition, inside jokes and shared achievements.

Strengths-Based Coaching Questions

- Who do you naturally turn to when you want to share an idea or test out a new direction?
- How do you identify which relationships are most worth investing in at work?
- How do you like to collaborate?
- Who at work is a great partner for you and why? How do you ensure your influence doesn't come at the expense of collaboration or reciprocity?
- In what ways could reliability and follow-through strengthen your impact with others?
- How do you respond when you notice others are unclear about their responsibilities or take on tasks outside their assigned roles?
- How do you honor those around you who might need to talk things through?
- How do you push back on others while maintaining positive relationships?
- When is it necessary to just listen?
- How do you reflect the potential in others back to them?



Helping People Who Lead With the Relationship Building Domain Build Relationships

For people who lead with Relationship Building themes, workplace connections are anchored in trust, support and emotional openness. They are tuned in to team dynamics and help maintain group cohesion. They thrive when they can rely on others — and be relied upon in return. While they may not prioritize broad networking, they build deep, meaningful relationships.

Coaches can help them maximize their natural ability to strengthen teams by balancing depth with breadth and ensuring their relational energy supports both people and performance.

How They Form Relationships

- **Trust-based bonds:** Building relationships based on trust and reliability is vital, even for people who form relationships quickly and easily.
- **Emotional openness:** They value having colleagues with whom they can share personal challenges and experiences.
- **Support as connection:** Their relationships often focus on providing encouragement, empathy and stability.
- **Selective depth:** They may invest in fewer workplace friendships but nurture those relationships with depth and authenticity.
- **Team cohesion:** They are often the glue that fosters belonging and ensures others feel valued and supported.

Relationship Building Domain Blind Spots

- **Overreliance on a few relationships:** They may limit their influence by investing deeply in only a small number of colleagues.
- **Emotional overextension:** Empathy and openness may result in taking on an excessive amount of others' challenges.
- **Reduced emphasis on professional problem-solving:** They may engage less in work-focused discussions, missing opportunities to shape direction.
- **Boundary blurring:** Their emphasis on personal connection may sometimes make it harder to maintain professional distance. It is important to remember that oversharing makes some people uncomfortable.

Coaching Opportunity

Help clients who lead with the Relationship Building domain see that their gift for fostering trust and belonging is a powerful driver of team success. By combining their depth of connection with intentional efforts to broaden their reach, they can strengthen both individual relationships and the overall fabric of their workplace.

Coaching Strategies

When coaching individuals strong in the Relationship Building domain, tailor your approach by:

- **Validating their relational strengths:** Reinforce how their ability to create trust and support can be central to team health and resilience.
- **Encouraging breadth when needed:** Help them recognize the value of extending relationships beyond a small circle, especially when broader collaboration is required.
- **Linking relationships to outcomes:** Position their natural connection skills to drive engagement, customer centricity, retention and team performance.
- **Balancing emotional investment:** Encourage them to notice when deep connection may blur professional boundaries or create overdependence.

Theme-Specific Coaching Strategies

Adaptability: They generally adapt more effectively to changes. By maintaining composure when others may become distressed, they provide valuable support in challenging situations. Encourage them to be available to others. They can build workplace bonds through personal in-the-moment exchanges.

Connectedness: Encourage them to reach out to others to form partnerships. They will be most engaged when working well with others toward a shared goal.

Developer: Highlight the mutual growth potential in workplace friendships — how mentoring and encouragement go both ways.

Empathy: Encourage open emotional sharing in safe environments; normalize vulnerability in professional contexts.

Harmony: Emphasize that conflict is not inherently detrimental and can lead to enhanced understanding and more robust relationships. Discuss how they can leverage their talents to promote constructive dialogue rather than sidestepping disagreements.

Includer: Assist individuals in adopting a more strategic approach to building relationships and exploring new avenues for connecting with colleagues by facilitating the development of strong interpersonal bonds. Effective connections are established through reliability, collaborative efforts and mutual support.

Individualization: Encourage them to make it a daily goal to learn something new about a colleague and find ways to use this information to enhance their engagement at work.

Positivity: Use enthusiasm to create inclusive, uplifting micro-climates for team connection.

Relator: Help individuals articulate the value of a few deep work friendships, even in high-performing teams.

Strengths-Based Coaching Questions

- Who at work do you rely on most, and why do you trust them?
- How do you decide which relationships to invest deeply in?
- When have you seen your ability to build trust help a team succeed?
- How do you balance personal sharing with maintaining professional boundaries?
- What strategies help you extend connections beyond your closest colleagues?
- How do you support others while also protecting your own energy and wellbeing?
- How do you make connections between individual or team contributions and organizational success?
- How do you make sure to meet others' emotional needs?



Helping People Who Lead With the Strategic Thinking Domain Build Relationships

Individuals who lead with **Strategic Thinking** themes are most energized by workplace relationships that support mutual dependability and thoughtful contribution. They describe work friends as sounding boards and idea partners. They view these relationships as opportunities to discuss ideas or concepts related to work. While they may be less inclined toward personal sharing or openness, they build trust through thoughtful dialogue and demonstrated competence.

Coaching can help them to see the value of emotional presence as well as intellectual trust. Through coaching, they can enhance their relational effectiveness by integrating idea-driven collaboration with deliberate trust-building practices.

How They Form Relationships

- **Concept-centered connections:** Relationships are often formed through discussions that explore ideas, strategies and problem-solving.
- **Professional dialogue over personal sharing:** They are more likely to discuss professional challenges than personal ones.
- **Dependability matters:** They value colleagues who bring consistency, reliability and follow-through to collaborative efforts.
- **Selective openness:** Individuals may disclose personal information judiciously, fostering trust primarily through intellectual compatibility rather than emotional sharing.
- **Trust through competence:** Trust deepens when others demonstrate expertise, thoughtfulness and credibility in their work.

Strategic Thinking Domain Blind Spots

- **Lower emphasis on personal connection:** They may overlook opportunities to bond through shared personal experiences.
- **Over-selectivity:** Their preference for intellectual alignment may narrow their circle of workplace relationships.
- **Competence over warmth:** They may place more value on credibility than on emotional openness, limiting broader trust.
- **Risk of isolation:** A strong focus on analysis, questioning and study may unintentionally distance them from colleagues who prioritize emotional or social bonds.

Coaching Opportunity

Help clients who lead with the **Strategic Thinking** themes see that ideas connect people as much as emotions do. By combining their natural ability to engage others in meaningful dialogue with small but intentional steps toward personal connection, they can build relationships that both fuel innovation and foster trust and connection across their teams.

Coaching Strategies

When coaching individuals strong in the Strategic Thinking domain, tailor your approach by:

- **Positioning relationships as intellectual partnerships:** Present relationships as collaborative partnerships through which they can improve ideas and solve issues.
- **Validating their preference for connection:** Reinforce that deep trust can be built through competence and dialogue, even if emotional openness is limited.
- **Encouraging balance:** Help them see the value of complementing idea-focused bonds with occasional moments of personal connection.
- **Broadening their influence:** Encourage them to share their thinking and curiosity more widely, ensuring their intellectual contributions strengthen team cohesion.

Theme-Specific Coaching Strategies

Analytical/Context: Encourage friendships built around curiosity, shared interests or historical perspectives on challenges.

Futuristic/Strategic: Frame friendships as co-architects of a future vision — mutual thinkers who help forecast and test goals.

Ideation/Intellection/Learner: Position friendships as a space for safe exploration of ideas and complex thought.

Input: Encourage them to be available to others. They can build workplace bonds through personal in-the-moment exchanges.

Strengths-Based Coaching Questions

- Who at work do you turn to when you want to test or refine your ideas?
- How do you decide which colleagues you want to collaborate with more closely?
- Whom do you rely on to help you think through complex issues?
- In what ways has intellectual alignment helped you build trust with others?
- How does your continuous quest for a better solution affect your team?
- How do you ensure your focus on ideas doesn't limit personal connection with colleagues?
- What helps you stay open to perspectives that differ from your own?
- How can you use your thoughtful, intentional approach to strengthen the reliability and cohesion of your team?

Quick Reference for Coaches: Building Connection and Trust With CliftonStrengths®

E Executing **I** Influencing **R** Relationship Building **T** Strategic Thinking

Based on analysis in *Why Work Friends Matter: Unlocking Powerful Partnerships With CliftonStrengths*.

E ACHIEVER®	Coaching Focus: Normalizing emotional connection as part of performance.
Feels supported when they have dependable partners who share the load. May not gravitate toward opening up about professional struggles or relying on collaborative problem-solving.	
I ACTIVATOR®	Coaching Focus: Use energy to motivate others without overwhelming introverted teammates.
Feels supported when they have colleagues who listen and offer support when personal challenges arise. May not gravitate toward building long-term partnerships or ongoing brainstorming sessions.	
R ADAPTABILITY®	Coaching Focus: Encourage them to strengthen relationships through presence and responsiveness in the moment.
Feels supported when they have colleagues who listen and offer support when personal challenges arise. May not gravitate toward building long-term partnerships or ongoing brainstorming sessions.	
T ANALYTICAL®	Coaching Focus: Promote friendships based on curiosity, common interests or lessons from past challenges.
Feels supported when they can rely on coworkers to be dependable and helpful. May not gravitate toward sharing personal struggles that feel unrelated to work or outcomes.	
E ARRANGER®	Coaching Focus: Value relationship-building beyond logistics.
Feels supported when they have trusted collaborators who enjoy exchanging ideas and flexing together toward solutions. May not gravitate toward asking for help or having discussions with coworkers about professional challenges.	
E BELIEF®	Coaching Focus: Emphasize values alignment as the foundation of deeper work friendships.
Feels supported when they can share new ideas and rely on colleagues to help one another. May not gravitate toward relationships centered on exchanging help or troubleshooting professional problems.	

I COMMAND*

Feels supported when they can talk about professional challenges with candor and clarity and share new ideas with coworkers.

May not gravitate toward consistently depending on others or disclosing personal vulnerabilities.

Coaching Focus: Seek opportunities to establish trust by making substantive contributions to achieving desired outcomes.

I COMMUNICATION*

Feels supported when they can build strong partnerships through open conversations about both work and life.

May not gravitate toward defining friendships by deep trust or relying on colleagues for support.

Coaching Focus: Encourage them to leverage their talent for engaging dialogue to build connections and motivate others.

I COMPETITION*

Feels supported when trusted partners share ideas that sharpen performance and fuel excellence.

May not gravitate toward relying on colleagues for support or sharing personal difficulties openly.

Coaching Focus: Seek ambitious peers who strive for great results but check to ensure competition doesn't harm relationships.

R CONNECTEDNESS*

Feels supported when colleagues prove to be a reliable anchor, especially during moments of personal difficulty.

May not gravitate toward defining relationships by whether colleagues pitch in when needs arise.

Coaching Focus: Encourage partnerships that foster collaboration, and support connections that promote professional development and knowledge sharing.

E CONSISTENCY*

Feels supported when teammates collaborate smoothly and step in to help one another fairly.

May not gravitate toward building close partnerships or exchanging ideas.

Coaching Focus: Loosen rules to foster adaptive trust.

T CONTEXT*

Feels supported when they can talk through professional challenges with colleagues who work well together toward solutions.

May not gravitate toward discussing personal challenges with coworkers.

Coaching Focus: Encourage friendships built around curiosity, shared interest or historical perspective on challenges.

E DELIBERATIVE*

Feels supported when they have colleagues they can trust deeply and rely on to be careful and dependable.

May not gravitate toward close-knit partnerships or sharing personal struggles with colleagues.

Coaching Focus: Acknowledge their preference for caution and suggest sharing at a comfortable pace. Note that relationships can develop gradually through consistent interaction rather than flawless communication.

R DEVELOPER*	Coaching Focus: Highlight the mutual growth potential in workplace friendships — how mentoring and encouragement go both ways.
Feels supported when colleagues show care by listening and being present during personal challenges. May not gravitate toward discussing professional challenges with coworkers.	
E DISCIPLINE*	Coaching Focus: Encourage acceptance of imperfection and the importance of connection.
Feels supported when teammates work together in an orderly way and help them think through professional challenges. May not gravitate toward collaborative give-and-take, preferring to stick with their own systems.	
R EMPATHY*	Coaching Focus: Encourage open emotional sharing in safe environments. Normalize vulnerability in professional contexts.
Feels supported when there are opportunities to openly share both personal experiences and professional challenges. May not gravitate toward valuing structured collaboration over authentic understanding.	
E FOCUS*	Coaching Focus: Reposition connection as a goal-alignment tool. Emotional insight isn't a detour — it's a driver of clarity and team momentum.
Feels supported when colleagues help them work through professional challenges and keep the team moving toward shared goals. May not gravitate toward investing energy in vulnerability or assistance that feels unrelated to results.	
T FUTURISTIC*	Coaching Focus: Frame friendships as being co-architects of future vision — mutual thinkers who help forecast and test goals.
Feels supported when teammates are excited to exchange ideas, discuss professional challenges, and form strong, future-oriented partnerships. May not gravitate toward prioritizing mutual support tasks for teammates when their attention is on the future.	
R HARMONY*	Coaching Focus: Promote opportunities for emotional expression in secure settings. Support the acceptance of vulnerability within professional environments.
Feels supported when colleagues work well together, lend a hand when needed and can be relied on to discuss personal challenges with. May not gravitate toward forming deep, exclusive partnerships or spending much time exchanging new ideas.	
T IDEATION*	Coaching Focus: Position friendship as a space for safe exploration of ideas and complex thought.
Feels supported when others are eager to exchange fresh ideas and explore new possibilities together. May not gravitate toward focusing on seamless teamwork or sharing personal struggles with colleagues.	

R INCLUDER*	Feels supported when teammates form strong, dependable partnerships and welcome the exchange of ideas. May not gravitate toward talking through professional challenges with others.	Coaching Focus: Explore new ways to connect with colleagues through reliability, teamwork and mutual support.
R INDIVIDUALIZATION*	Feels supported when strong partnerships create space for deep trust and meaningful idea-sharing. May not gravitate toward depending on others to consistently come through. This could indicate an emphasis on individual contributions as opposed to collective reciprocity.	Coaching Focus: Make it a daily goal to learn something new about a colleague and find ways to use this information to enhance their engagement at work.
T INPUT*	Feels supported when colleagues can be trusted to explore professional challenges together. May not gravitate toward defining support in terms of constant reliability from teammates.	Coaching Focus: Encourage using curiosity and knowledge-sharing as bridges to build stronger connections.
T INTELLECTION*	Feels supported when trusted colleagues engage in deep conversations about professional challenges. May not gravitate toward building strong, enduring partnerships or depending heavily on others.	Coaching Focus: Frame friendship as a setting for deep dialogue, reflection and thoughtful problem-solving.
T LEARNER*	Feels supported when they can rely on trusted colleagues and collaborate smoothly to do great work. May not gravitate toward sharing personal struggles at work.	Coaching Focus: Describe friendship as a space that encourages safe exploration of ideas and perspectives.
I MAXIMIZER*	Feels supported when they can deeply trust colleagues, build strong partnerships and exchange ideas that elevate performance. Maximizers will always aspire to improve a situation, including relationships.*	Coaching Focus: Encourage collaboration that supports mutual growth and improves performance.
R POSITIVITY*	Feels supported when strong partnerships include openness about personal challenges and the freedom to share new ideas. May not gravitate toward focusing on practical help as the foundation of support.	Coaching Focus: Use enthusiasm to create inclusive, uplifting micro-climates for team connection.

* Showed no deviations from the baseline in the study.

R RELATOR*	Coaching Focus: Articulate the value of a few deep work friendships.
Feels supported when coworkers step in to help one another, build deep trust, work smoothly together, and share ideas openly. May not gravitate toward placing heavy emphasis on guaranteed dependability.	
E RESPONSIBILITY*	Coaching Focus: Connect reliability with relational empathy.
Feels supported when teams work together smoothly and trusted relationships reinforce accountability. May not gravitate toward sharing or processing personal challenges at work.	
E RESTORATIVE™	Coaching Focus: Translate problem-solving into relational language.
Feels supported when colleagues are quick to step in and help each other when problems arise. May not gravitate toward prioritizing trust-building or close partnerships over problem-solving.	
I SELF-ASSURANCE*	Coaching Focus: Position asking for help as strength, not weakness.
Feels supported when strong partnerships encourage open idea-sharing. May not gravitate toward engaging in conversations about personal challenges at work.	
I SIGNIFICANCE*	Coaching Focus: Connect friendship to legacy, impact and identity — friends who recognize and uplift each other.
Feels supported when colleagues engage with their ideas and build strong partnerships that amplify their impact. May not gravitate toward relying heavily on others to consistently come through.	
T STRATEGIC*	Coaching Focus: Encourage them to use partnerships as a space to exchange ideas, test options, and map pathways forward.
Feels supported when strong partnerships invite idea-sharing and exploration of possibilities. May not gravitate toward leaning on colleagues for support with life challenges or ongoing dependability.	
I WOO*	Coaching Focus: Promote participation in social activities such as recognition, inside jokes and shared achievements.
Feels supported when colleagues build dependable bonds, show care during personal challenges and welcome new ideas. May not gravitate toward placing high value on dependability, coordinated collaboration or reciprocal help as the basis of connection.	

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