



THE KEY TO

Building Social Capital





Social capital is typically seen as a networking construct.

Something that certain types of people chase after if they want to climb the ladder or if they're looking for an advantage.

But when we take a deeper look at the concept, it can actually be described as the “glue” or the “wheels” that move us forward through work and life.

People need people, and it's often our network that connects us with the right doctor, helps us complete a project quickly, gets us an interview, or gives us important advice.





Social capital is about building trust, belonging, connection, and collaboration. It encourages the development of shared values and norms. And, yes, it's used for the purpose of mutual progress and reciprocity.

So, what happens when people undervalue social capital? What happens to your team and workplace when nobody really cares to build it?







Here are a few individual and collective downfalls to undervaluing social capital:

Low social capital for individuals means:

-  Less favorable opportunities
-  Less influence over the direction of your life
-  Less meaningful relationships
-  Lower productivity due to lack of favorable relationships

Low social capital for teams and organizations means:

-  Less trust between employees
-  Fewer referrals for other talented workers
-  Weaker relationships with vendors and clients
-  Lower productivity due to lack of collaboration

Unfortunately, with the workplace shift to fewer in-person interactions, there's now a greater lack of ease and effort in building social capital. Now, we're often left without the daily water cooler and weather chats—but we also don't really want to be on Zoom long enough to replicate them.

Turns out, we didn't value those surface interactions that much. Even if those moments did help build some rapport, they're clearly not the way we'd all prefer to make connections.



Seemingly, we've lost our medium or motivation to build social capital—but, we've seen the list of what that affects.

To keep our teams moving forward, the solution is to get to the root of—and re-imagine—how we build social capital.

So, you want to build social capital? Here's the number one place to start.

Traditional advice will tell you to “be prosocial” or “talk to more people” or “pay it forward” to gain social capital.

The deeper truth is that we need to develop more effective interpersonal relationships. And we need to make a conscious effort to expand our ability to engage a diverse group of people.








Yet, it's still not “that” simple. Even those who are naturally interested in doing these things, might not know how to do them very well. And managers and leaders might not know how to motivate their teams to see the value and to take action.

After decades of experience in studying human nature, we've found that the number one way to garner traction around social capital is to understand, speak to, and operate out of an understanding of our motives as well as the motives of the person we are connecting with as we build social capital.

Basic components of motivation

How do you find out what motivates yourself or another person to build mutually beneficial rapport?

While people have a wide range of needs for social capital — for example, to gain a promotion, to find a favorable partner, to uncover useful information, or to simply feel seen — you can boil their motivation down to three primary drivers, according to [Core Strength research](#)¹:

-  Concern for **people**
-  Concern for **performance**
-  Concern for **process**

When you take the [SDI 2.0 assessment](#)², you'll get a full portrait of how all three blend in your personality, but even if you haven't taken the assessment yet, keep reading. You'll probably recognize yourself primarily in one of the three colors.

1 <https://www.corestrengths.com/>

2 <https://www.corestrengths.com/products/assessment/>



Motivational components of building social capital

If you understand your own motivation and that of others, your efforts to build social capital will be more productive.

The key is listening for cues that hint at a person's primary motivation—and to utilize your understanding of your own motives to drive productive interactions. People have a blend of primary motives, but often they favor one or two.



Top 3 Strengths
Supportive, Persevering, Cautious

COMPARE



People motives

- They value the protection, growth, and welfare of others
- Helps others to make a difference in their lives
- Sincere, trusting, encouraging, fun-loving
- Talks about feelings and benefits for others

How to help an individual with **People** motives to build social capital:

An individual with high People motives is more likely to be the “natural networker” but that doesn’t mean they do it in a purposeful or productive way.

It’s easy for them to forget that not everyone’s focus (on people) is the same or as intense. They might be ready to jump in and protect or give help to others, despite that not being what the other person wants.

Help them remember to listen to find out what’s important to others—and that processes and performance are great avenues to helping people.

Lastly, these people should use their strength in encouragement as much as they can. A little bit of positive support can go a long way with others. Encouragement could be as simple as a “like” on a social media post or a quick “I see your hard work.”



Laura

Motives
BLUE

Conflict
G-B-R

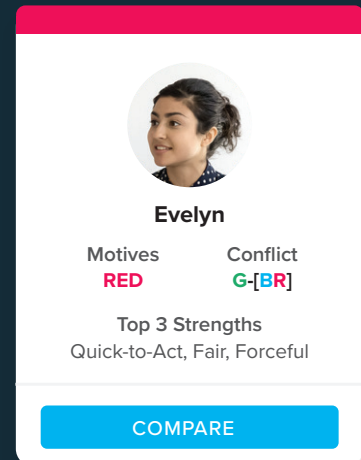
Top 3 Strengths
Supportive, Tolerant, Devoted

COMPARE



If you're hoping to win over someone with People motives or to simply build a more mutual working relationship, listen closely for who the people are that they care about. It could be their boss, their teammate, their child's teacher, or a friend. Be willing to assist them if needed, however, just as important is expressing appreciation for their willingness to help others.

Remember, their actions and words are made based on the welfare of others. Ask them questions about their feelings or others' feelings. Acknowledge that growth and empathy are important, and how admirable it is that they put others first.

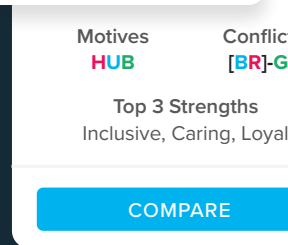


Evelyn

Motives **RED** Conflict **G-[BR]**

Top 3 Strengths
Quick-to-Act, Fair, Forceful

COMPARE



Motives **HUB** Conflict **[BR]-G**

Top 3 Strengths
Inclusive, Caring, Loyal

COMPARE

Performance motives

- They value task accomplishment and achieving results
- Purposeful, clear, and direct in their communication with others
- Confident in most situations, not afraid to challenge
- Makes quick decisions

How to help an individual with Performance motives to build social capital:

An individual with high-Performance motives is driven by a need to “get things done.” They should turn this focus to achieving more through social capital—they need to see

Top 3 Strengths
Devoted, Adaptable, Fair

COMPARE



the time spent building rapport as key to productivity and excellence down the line.

Help them connect the idea that social capital is about influence, and influence can lead to achievement. It is also important to remind them that not all people are results motivated, but that does not mean they do not care about excellence. Excellence is an outcome, it is evidence. When we connect that outcome to evidence of helping others, or of being well planned, those who have a people or process motive are more likely to want to connect.

Have them create a goal around their social capital. What could they tangibly improve or achieve through stronger relationships? Since people who prioritize performance are goal-oriented, adding simple relationship-building tasks (reaching out to someone new, phoning an old friend, volunteering, sending a customer a thank you note) can give them a sense of achievement, even if the “final results” are not in sight.



Jason

Motives
GREEN

Conflict
G-[BR]

Top 3 Strengths
Methodical, Tolerant, Cautious

COMPARE

Process motives

- They value practical analysis and establishing order
- Systematic, reserved, organized and concerned with procedure
- Objective and logical with an emphasis on fairness
- Prefers time to consider decisions, observe surroundings, and collect information



How to help an individual with **Process motives to build social capital:**

An individual with Process motives may need more nudging than others to build social capital. They may not see the benefit or the authentic need for it since social capital is something intangible and not systematic in nature.

Help them see that input from other people can help them optimize systems and processes. They can help themselves and others bring order to chaos.

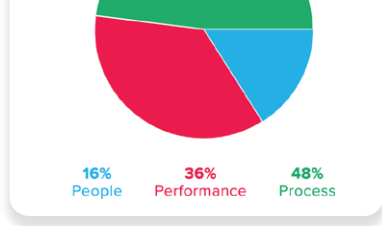
Encourage them to create their own system or process that optimizes their networking time. They might decide to do five LinkedIn introductions a week using a templated email—because setting daily and weekly habits can often appeal to a person who prioritizes process as they are likely to appreciate a methodical approach.

Most importantly, when they understand their motives of logic, order, and systems, they can more readily see the value they bring to others and may be more willing to reach out knowing they have something valuable to offer to others.

How to build social capital with people with Process motives:

People with Process motives might need more space than others. If you propose an idea to them, give them more time to consider it before responding. Let them know they can take their time.

Ask them to analyze a process for you and what they would do differently. Pull them into projects that feel out of control. For example, if you're working on a non-profit gala event that inevitably ends with last-minute changes and not enough seating, get them involved from the start to come up with a new system.



Four benefits of focusing on motives to build social capital

It no longer feels inauthentic or purely transactional.

When you connect with people based on their motives and values—you form relationships at a more meaningful level. This enhances the mutual benefits of that relationship based on what you both value.

You get to trade the chit-chat in for value-based connection.

It lowers judgment, so you're open to connecting with diverse people.

"I don't like that man. I must get to know him better."

– Abe Lincoln

We all fall into the trap of writing people off before we get to know them, especially those who don't seem like us. When we start to think in terms of "not everyone engages the world the same way I do, and that is a good thing," we can hold space for everyone's values and be more open to connecting on the other person's level. We can positively integrate both perspectives for a more enriched and potentially innovative way forward.

How I React to Conflict

► [B]G]-R

David wants to maintain peace and caution regarding the person. If that does not work, they may assert themselves, possibly in a manner.

Stages
1 & 2



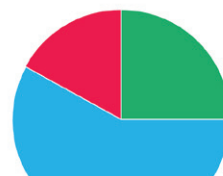
Stages
3



What Motivates Me

● BLUE

David is motivated by the protection, growth, and welfare of others. They have a strong desire to help others who can genuinely benefit.





It gives more clarity to your efforts.

We often give up on our efforts to connect with people because we don't know our own "why." If you understand what your own, genuine motives are, and what you have to offer, you become naturally more motivated to create opportunities to put effort into relationships.

It makes your efforts more purposeful and successful.

The more you listen for someone's motivation and affirm what's important to them, the more trust will grow. The more trust you build, the more likely you are to give to those around you—and to receive what you need to move your project or life forward.

A trusted shortcut to building better social capital at work.

Typically, it takes more time than a lot of us have to learn about others, especially when we want to understand something as complex as motives and values. And having fewer in-person interactions doesn't help.

While it's necessary to put the work in (spending time with people and listening), you can also equip your teams and leaders with insights about one another.



Motivated by **Performance**

Effective Style (When Things Are Going Well)

✓ Hear them out fully.



Motivated by **Process**

Conversations (In Conflict)

✗ Don't mistake quiet for disinterest.



The **Core Strengths assessment** can give you deeper insight into your own and your colleagues' primary motivations. These insights will help you understand why people say what they say, change the way you engage with one another, and ensure you're creating productive relationships.

The workplace doesn't move forward without employees who collaborate effectively. When we build social capital based on motives, we create true connection and belonging, and the best conditions for progress.

Get in touch

The screenshot displays two user profiles. The top profile is for Jason, an IT Director, with a green header. His motives are listed as GREEN (Process) and his conflict style is G-[BR] (Analyze-[Accommodate-Assert]). The bottom profile is for Evelyn, a Customer Support representative, with a red header. Her motives are RED (Performance) and her conflict style is R-G-B (Assert-Analyze-Accommodate). Both profiles include a 'Change' button, a profile picture, and a 'Demo' label. Evelyn's profile also features a 'Communication Tips' section with a slider for 'How are things in this relationship?' (set to 'Going Well') and a list of tips. Jason's profile includes a 'Motives' diagram and a 'What Motivates Me' section.

Jason
IT Director

Motives: GREEN (Process)
Conflict: G-[BR] (Analyze-[Accommodate-Assert])

Evelyn
Customer Support

Motives: RED (Performance)
Conflict: R-G-B (Assert-Analyze-Accommodate)

Communication Tips
How are things in this relationship?
Going Well | Conflict

What kind of communication tips do you need?
Messages

Quick Tips

- Be brief, clear, and focus on action or results

Example Subject Lines

- Quick update on ...
- Need a response by ...
- Action needed ...

Content That Connects

- Put the "bottom line" up front--especially if action is required.
- Be direct and positive.
- Clearly state what you need and when you need it.

Motives

PERFORMANCE
PROCESS

What Motivates Me

motivated by meaningful order and things through. They have a strong pursue independent interests, to be and to be fair.