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Want to bring out the best in your team? Whenever possible, manage to strengths.

The human character is phenomenally adaptable and creative. Each person naturally has something unique to offer. All too often in organizations, we actually get in the way of natural tendencies.

How can you 'get out of the way' and let people make their contribution?

1. Help people discover and honour their strengths – the ways they naturally add value. Self-awareness pays dividends to the individual and the organization.
2. Be clear about the outcome you need, and then, within reasonable parameters, let each person find his or her own way to do it. Resist temptation to control or make everyone fit a mould.
3. As much as possible, put people in roles that require them to do what they would do anyway. For example, if Jan's a detail person, don't ask her to create a big picture vision. She'll shine when it comes to making sure that vision is realized.

Essential Tools for clarifying strengths:

- The Managing for Success, Employee-Manager report is designed to raise self-awareness by identifying the strengths and tendencies of an individual in a work-place setting. Employees appreciate this evidence of attention from the organization. Managers find it a useful tool for motivating, delegating and communicating.
- The Personal Interests, Attitudes and Values report will further increase self-awareness by honing in on those values that matter most to a person and the world-view they hold that motivates them to action.

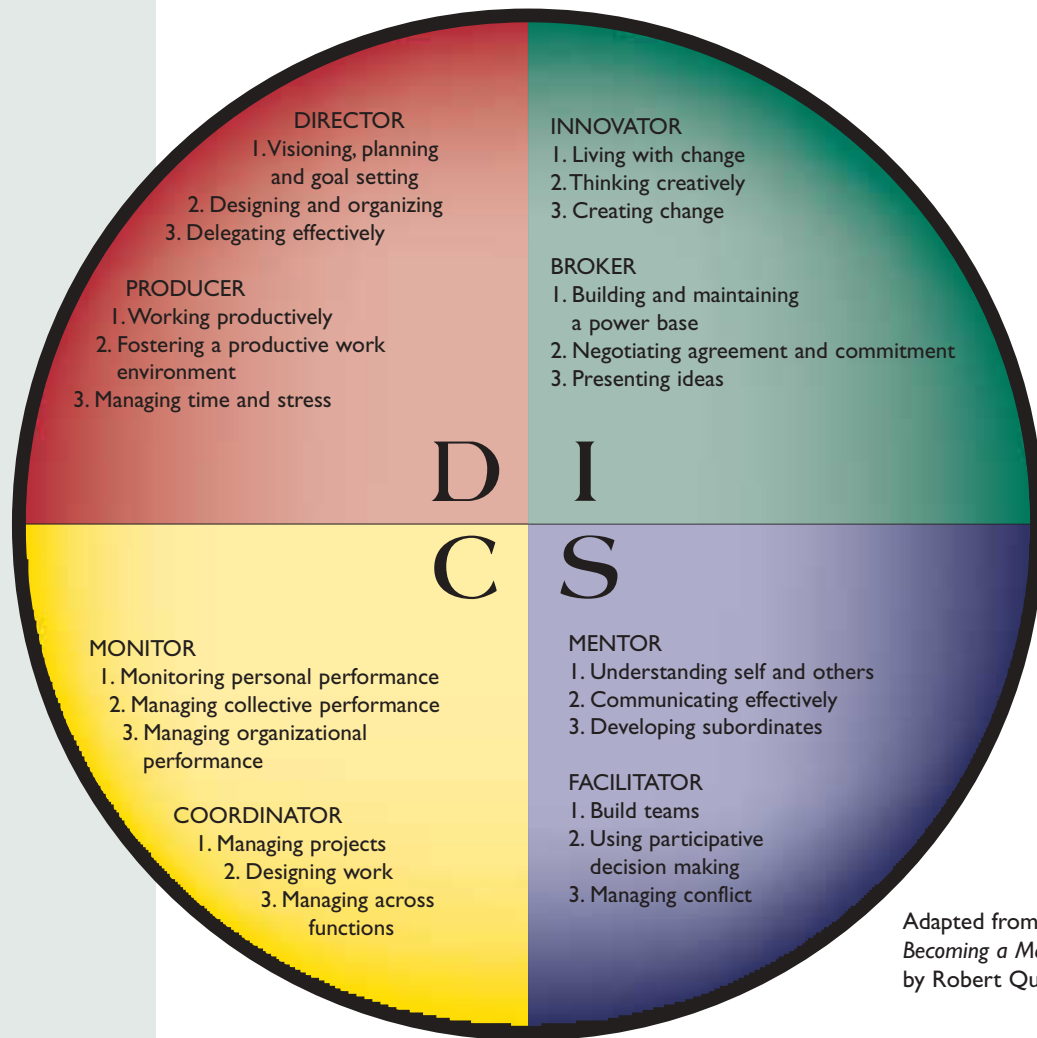
To help people be clear about their unique strengths, ask them to consider the following questions:

- What do you do well?
- What do you do better than most?
- What do you do so naturally you can't help but do it?
- What is easy for you?
- What do you like to do?
- What do others say about your special strengths?
- What should I ask you to do because you're good at it?
- What do you do love to do that you're not paid to do?

As a manager, where are YOUR strengths?

According to your behavioural style, you will be stronger in certain roles. The following table is designed to highlight the roles that present areas of strength for people with that factor as their core.

For example, people whose core factor is D often excel at directing and producing. People with a core C-factor are great at monitoring and coordinating. In both cases, the roles are more task-focused, which is consistent with both the D and C core styles.



On the other hand, people with a core I-factor or a core S-factor are particularly skilled when it comes to the people side of managing. Core I styles are often recognized for their strengths in change management and brokering agreements. The core S style generally performs extremely well in management roles of mentoring and facilitating.

Of course, we are more than our core! Most people blend the strengths of more than one factor, resulting in a unique combination of strengths.

“Adaptability, vitality, passion and the willingness to go the extra mile, they all stem from our sense of belonging and self-worth.”

– Mike Jay,
Coach 2 The Bottom Line

“The way in which a person loses their true goodness is just like the way that trees are destroyed by the axe. Cut down day after day, how can the mind, anymore than the tree, retain its beauty or continue to live?”

– Mencius, 4th Century b.c

Beliefs influence actions!

Do you believe that people:

- Are trustworthy?
- Seek responsibility and accountability?
- Seek meaning in their work?
- Naturally want to learn?
- Don't resist change but resist being changed?
- Prefer work to being idle?

Douglas McGregor (*The Human Side of Enterprise*) asked these questions in researching work motivation more than 40 years ago. They're still worth asking today because our answers fundamentally influence how we motivate people. Managers who for the most part answer "Yes", tend to influence the environment of their workers rather than micro-manage them. They use their energy to create conditions in which individual contribution will surface naturally.

They remove obstacles and barriers getting in the way of people's ability to perform. They accept and value diversity, granting each individual as much latitude as possible to achieve organizational results via his or her own unique expression of strengths.



Helpful Resources:

→ Adult Education Web Guide:

<http://adulthood.about.com/mlibrary.htm>

This site includes training practitioner Kimeiko Hotta Dover's carefully chosen information resources in many areas of Adult Education. The guide includes sections on icebreakers, technology-based learning, associations, adult learning theory and more. She also has links to Statistics and Studies including several Canadian sources. Adult learners and educators can meet to exchange information and opinions in the adjacent chat room.

**Would you like to recommend a book or resource?
Please just send a review and why you like it and we'll post your recommendation!**