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Components of the Interactive Insights to Success:

1. A full consultative report containing personalized information on General Characteristics, Unique Talents, Ideal Environment, Do's and Don'ts on Communicating, Communicating Tips, Perceptions, Time-Wasters, Adapted Style, Natural and Adapted Style, Keys to Motivating, Keys to Managing, Strengths and Weaknesses
2. A personalized action plan in the form of a Blueprint for Success containing the personalized responses to the online self-development plan questions, accessible for updates for a period of 12 months.

Call 519 886-8876 or email rshortt@shorwood.com today and we'll send you a sample!

DISCussing Performance

A manager's role is to help employees meet specific performance requirements. Ideally, discussions about achieving performance expectations happen naturally and frequently as a consequence of working together and talking about what's needed and how well we're doing. Increasingly, corporate leaders are recognizing this critical link between individual employee performance and organizational success. They need every manager to have regular performance discussions with their direct reports. That is why more and more organizations require their managers to comply with a formal performance management program.

Yet some managers resist. Why?

Creating, implementing and maintaining updated individual performance plans can seem daunting to a manager unaccustomed to performance management discussions - especially if he or she is already strapped for time. The manager may fear damaging the relationship with his or her people and may lack the skill set to openly and objectively raise the subject of a person's weaknesses or blind spots. Managers' resistance may take the form of reducing the "annual performance review" to a meaningless ritual of filling out a form, with little appreciable added value.

Here's a NEW tool to save time and kick-start the performance plan.

The Interactive Insights to Success' will:

- Guide your employee through an easy 3-step process to create an action plan
- Engage your employee in an on-line dialogue about their unique talents, time wasters, strengths and weaknesses
- Spark communication between employee and manager that is helpful to both
- Allow the employee and manager to update the plan as goals are reached or changed throughout the year
- Free up more of your time



Build a Foundation of Trust

When you sit down with an employee to talk about performance, it helps if you've built a foundation of trust. Managing for Success' reports are especially helpful in building that trust because they increase awareness of different individual strengths, motivators, communication needs and potential blind spots.

Understanding style differences reduces misinterpretations and increases respectful communication. Imagine if you were asked to become Canada's Ambassador to a foreign country and pave the way for increased trade. Likely one of the first things you would do in order to perform your role would be to learn as much as possible about how people do things in that country – how they do business, eat, say please and thank-you, etc. And then, you would most likely show respect by following their lead. Your willingness to adapt to their needs and customs would increase the effectiveness of your communications with them. They would be more willing to hear what you have to say because you are "talking their language". The old adage "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" still applies today.



Know Yourself

Knowing your own style, strengths and limitations will also help you prepare for an effective discussion. Think about these questions:

- Are you a good listener, able to extract salient points without making notes all the time?
- Are you satisfied with your own ability to coach and counsel?
- When were you last appraised? What went well? What went badly?
- Are you clear on objectives for your staff and the support they may need in achieving them?

This is exactly how learning a person's core behavioural style can help you increase your communications with other people at work. Some people need you to get right to the point while others need to go through some social niceties before getting down to business. Some people will vigorously defend their actions and you will need to listen to them vent before you can go forward. People with other styles may resist quite differently – they quickly agree that you're right and promise to improve. With these people you must maintain focus and get details around the improvement plan.

Reading an individual's "Communication Do's and Don'ts" from their report before having a performance discussion can quickly remind you of what that person needs from you in order to hear what you're saying. And you may also find that the report identifies the person's performance issue as a limitation of the style, providing objective support that this is an opportunity for improvement, and some strategies for changing the behaviour.

“Coaching is increasingly recognized as a methodology for creating more effective conversations, for assessing and reformulating values and goals, and reaching solutions. Coaching is also evolving as a natural form of leadership.”

Perry Zeus

Polish Your Coaching Skills

In theory, the performance discussion should be an honest, open conversation in which an employee's work is discussed, reviewed and appraised by another using an agreed and understood framework. It focuses on behaviours and outcomes, not personality; on issues and problems, not subjective gripes; on constructive development to improve motivation and on the employee's growth and performance. In practice, this does not always happen. Try to:

- Encourage self-assessment
- Help, not lead, the diagnosis of problems
- Maintain and build the employee's self-esteem
- Offer help and suggestions but let the employee arrive at solutions independently
- Concentrate on job performance, not personalities
- Discuss specific examples, not generalities
- Summarize at critical or agreed action points
- Guide and agree on goals and plans

If you'd like to learn how to do this AND practice and improve specific coaching skills, ask about our Coaching for Performance Workshops. You'll develop your skills in:

Listening – with a deliberate goal to understand a message from the speaker's viewpoint.

Questioning – asking the right questions at the appropriate time is a core skill of a successful coach.

Handling resistance – learn to identify the different forms resistance takes, acknowledge it and overcome it.

Gaining commitment – to a realistic action plan

Helpful Resources:

- Willingham, Ron. *The People Principle: A Revolutionary Redefinition of Leadership*. 1997. St. Martin's Griffin. ISBN 0-312-24490-8

This book offers practical advice on how to develop your team's potential. According to Willingham, “people are 85% emotional beings and 15% logical beings. So with most management strategies today, organizations are getting a fraction of the potential of people depending on the insight and people skills of managers.”

Willingham offers strategies that will create the proper environment to help people tap into their vast potential and enjoy their work while increasing their productivity.

**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!**