

The key to success - playing to your strengths

Many people hold the belief that in order to improve their performance they must spend significant time improving their weaknesses. They reason that as their strengths are innate they need no further improvement and that their weaknesses should be brought up to the same level in order for them to be a fully rounded individual.

“While striving to be the best we can possibly be is great, we need to learn to *manage* our weakness rather than investing a lot of time improving them and instead build our lives around our strengths. A competitive edge can only really be developed in areas where we have natural strengths.” says Gail MacIndoe, executive coach.

“Our strengths are a combination of natural talent, skills, knowledge and passion/enjoyment. Talent, passion and enjoyment are crucial elements because they are the foundation upon which we can easily build our skills and knowledge on.”

A number of polls have found measurable benefits of playing to strengths in business and life in general:

- People who use their strengths at work are six times more engaged in their work and three times happier in general (Gallup 2007)
- Employee performance is on average 36% higher when managers focus appraisals on staff talents and strengths and while when they focus on an employees' weaknesses performance is found to decline by 26.8% (Corporate Leadership Council research on 20,000 employees)
- Teams with line managers who take a strengths approach are 86% more effective than teams that don't (Marcus Buckingham, author and Strengths Guru)
- Analysis of top performers shows they spend over 75% of their time playing to their strengths.

When we use our strengths on a daily basis, the sense of accomplishment and purpose we feel is enormous, which in turn motivates us to go further and achieve more which will only be of benefit both to ourselves and to our organisation. If each person in a team were encouraged to play to their strengths, there wouldn't be a weak link in the chain. Why put yourself under pressure trying to improve a point of weakness when you can team up with someone else who is naturally gifted in that area?

But how do you identify your strengths? Are we saying that you shouldn't bother improving weaknesses at all? What if I really enjoy doing something but I don't excel at it?

For answers to the above questions and more information on how to develop and leverage both your own strengths and those of your team, call Gail MacIndoe on 07919405541 or email gail@macindoe.com