Valuing Individuals and Performance

Team Tool: Part 1

A Strength Based Team Exercise

**Exercise duration***: 1- 1.5 hours*

**Recommended Frequency:** *Annually*

**Outcomes:**

Part 1 of this exercise encourages recognition amongst team members. At the end of the session team members will be able to identify and value the personal strengths and qualities of all team members, including themselves.

1. Provide each member of the team with a piece of A4 paper and a Strengths feedback sheet (as below). Ask them to put their name on each sheet of paper.
2. On the blank sheet of paper ask the team members to take a couple of minutes to list what they feel are their key strengths. Individuals should think of things they excel in or naturally enjoy doing. They should think about their **knowledge, skills, personal attributes** and **styles**. Fold this paper over and set aside.
3. Next, ask the team to hand their Strengths feedback sheet to the person sitting to their left.
4. Everyone should now have a feedback sheet with a team member’s name on it. Write down the key strengths they think this person brings to the team.
5. Team members should fold over their responses and pass this on to the next colleague on their left.

The rules:

* Think about the person’s **knowledge, skills, personal** **attributes** and **styles** that are particularly valuable to the **performance** of the team.
* Focus **only** on their areas of **strength** and **natural talent**. These should be areas the individual excels in or really enjoys. Avoid any areas of personal development. Aim for around 3 strengths (more or less is fine).
* Aim for short descriptions like “communication skills”, “team work” etc. rather than longer explanations.
* Strengths don’t always need to be something that the person does frequently. E.g. if the last time someone did a presentation was 6 months ago but you remember it to be particularly good, engaging and clear- the person has a natural talent in this area.
* This exercise should be undertaken quickly so allow between 30 seconds (larger teams) and 2 minutes to provide feedback per feedback.

1. Keep rotating the pieces of paper until all individuals receive their original piece of paper back.

**REFLECTION**

1. Allow the team time to open, read and acknowledge their feedback from their team mates.

**These are the strengths they are known for.**

1. Now time for some personal reflection:
   1. Everyone should refer to their first piece of paper and compare their self-assessment against the feedback from the team.
   2. Think, “*How do I perceive my strengths against how others perceive me*?”

**CONFIRMED STRENGTHS-** these are the strengths that are recognised by the individual and their team mates. They are likely to be the individual’s strongest and most confident areas.

* *Take time to think about how you can maximise the use of these strengths.*
* *How can you stretch these skills to develop further?*
* *Would mentoring, coaching or supporting others in this area support the overall performance of the team?*

**BLIND SPOTS –** We often undersell our own abilities or feel cautious about identifying what we are good at. These are the areas of strength that the individual didn’t initially recognise in themselves, but that team members have recognised in them.

* *Take time to reflect on why you didn’t naturally recognise this strength in yourself.*
* *What actions would improve your confidence in this ability?*
* *Following this feedback has your self- awareness improved and can you now confidently add to your original list of strengths?*

**HIDDEN STRENGTHS** – these are the strengths that the individual recognised in themselves but either no-one else or very few people recognised in the individual.

* *Take time to reflect on why this may be.*
* *Do you need more opportunities to showcase your talents in this area?*
* *How can you cultivate these strengths so that you are known for them in the future?*
* *Where do these strengths work well, where do they work less well?*

**ASPIRATIONAL STRENGTHS**- Are there any strengths missing from either your list, or your feedback that you think are relevant to your role?

* *Take time to think about what these are*
* *How can I develop these areas further?*
* *Who has strengths in these areas that I can learn from?*

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