

STRENGTHS-BASED ORGANISATIONS

WHY STRENGTHS?

As a Positive Psychologist and strengths-based practitioner, I'm often asked what the benefits are for organisations that are strengths-based and create cultures where values and strengths become the oxygen of the organisation.

My answer is that strengths sit at the heart of individuals, teams and organisations. Strengths are the heart of who we are as human beings and what we do.

In a chaotic, everchanging world, it's reassuring to know that 24 character strengths are the unchanging pathway to what really matters for organisations and the individuals working within them.

This article gives a brief insight into the what, why and how of character strengths, and their benefits within organisations.

WHAT ARE CHARACTER STRENGTHS?

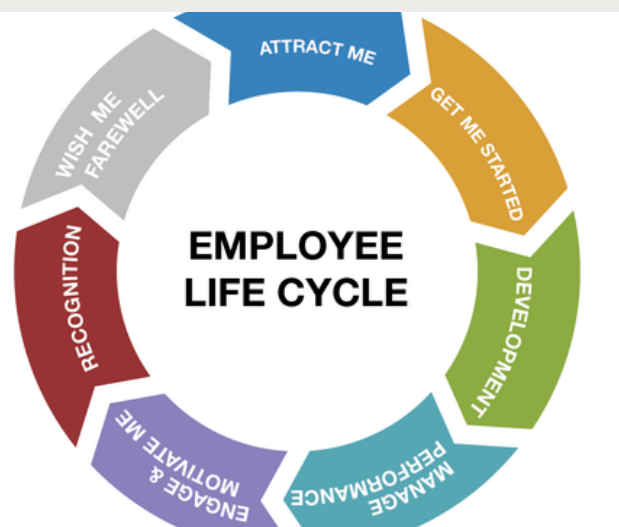
Character strengths are positive personality traits that reflect our basic identity, produce positive outcomes for ourselves and others, and contribute to the collective good. (Niemiec, 2008)

Character strengths are a perfect fit for organisations and are the key to excellence, easily applied throughout the employee life cycle. (See bottom left.)

In a study of 442 employees across 39 departments in 8 organisations, a strengths-based psychological climate was linked with positive affect and work performance.

THE FIVE FUNDAMENTALS OF A STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH.

1. A strengths approach in organisations focuses what is right, what is working and what is strong without ignoring the problems and challenges.
2. Strengths are part of our basic human nature. Every person in the world shares the same 24 strengths and deserves respect for them. 98% of employees with their employer would recognise their strengths.
3. Our areas of greatest potential lie in our strengths, not our weaknesses.
4. We succeed by fixing our weaknesses only when we are making the most of our strengths.
5. Using strengths is the smallest thing we can do to make the biggest difference.



THE BUSINESS CASE FOR STRENGTHS



- Strengths use improves relationships, communication and teamwork.
- People who use their strengths every day are six times more likely to be engaged in their work, meaning they get more satisfaction and feel more committed.
- When leadership fails to focus on individual strengths, the odds of an employee being engaged are 9%, but when they focus on strengths it rises to 73%.
- Engaged employees use their strengths at work around 70% of the time - that's 6.5 hours per day.
- People who use their strengths are 38% more likely to be productive.
- When performance conversations with managers focus on weaknesses, performance can decrease by 26%, but when individuals speak about their strengths it increases by 36%.
- 98% of employees want their employer to recognise their strengths.

A strengths-based approach can be used at individual, team and organisational level. For more information about creating a strengths-based culture, or for training, coaching and interventions, please contact becbland@protonmail.com.