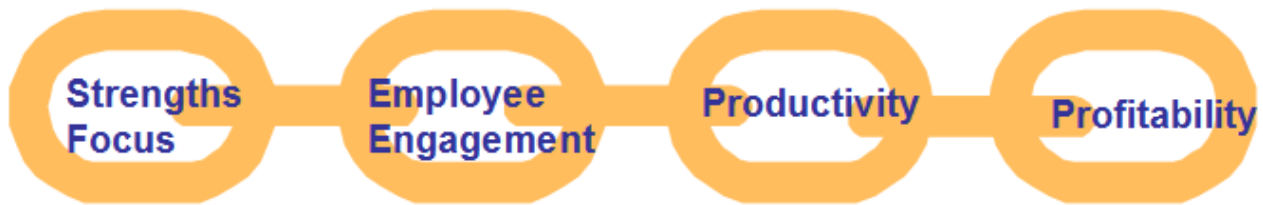




ISN'T IT TIME WE ALL DISCOVERED OUR STRENGTHS?

Whenever we ask people to talk about the managers/leaders who had a positive influence on them one theme is almost guaranteed a mention; that person focused on my **strengths**. When we look at the research on how to get the best performance from people this is no surprise. Time and again the unbreakable link between a focus on individuals' strengths and business success is clear:



So how do you do it? How can you get more out of your team, your organisation and indeed yourself by focusing on strengths? Here are three approaches that we know work:

- **Developing Individuals' Strengths:** this is the simplest way of using Strengths although not without its challenges in a business world often obsessed with fault finding and "fixing". Anybody can do something for themselves in this context. Just get hold of "*StrengthsFinder 2.0*" or "*Strengths Based Leadership*". Complete the questionnaire and you are on your way. Of course organisations that want to encourage this self driven use and development of Strengths provide support, processes and training to increase the chances of success. With the goals of greater engagement and productivity in mind this can be a remarkably cost effective way forward. However, there are existing mindsets to change. We declined to work with a client who proudly told us "we have assessed all our managers and found out their weaknesses. Now we are going to develop those." Good luck with that.
- **Strengths Based Coaching:** much research has shown there is a huge gap between how much coaching individuals would like from their bosses (a lot) versus how much they typically receive (not much). We have found that putting Strengths at the centre of the coaching approach is motivating both for coaches and those being coached. The approach builds on the principles and practices of outstanding coaching and provides somehow a catalyst that makes it easier for people to focus and engage. "*Strengths Based Coaching*" is a good, practical book for coaches.
- **Developing a Strengths Based Culture:** this is of course the potential big prize in terms of business payoff. It is also the most challenging. Like any culture change it has to fit with the rest of the organisation's design. We think that the only way to look at this is an Open Systems intervention – classic Change Management.

We are currently working with a client on a long-term project to embed the Strengths approach as part of their culture. In the next Inklings with their help we will share the key lessons learned so far.

Kevin and Rosanne