

# Employer's Advantage

**From Jim Sirbasku:**

*Q. When Are Assumptions Good?*

*A. Never, When Options Exist*

**18 Ways to Motivate Different People in Your Workplace**

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**From Jim Sirbasku's Desk**

*Q. When Are Assumptions Good?*

*A. Never, When Options Exist*

Even employers with the best of intentions are guilty of assuming too much. As they see workers of different ages, genders and racial makeup working side-by-side, they might think that this one fits in a group that wants to multitask at a fast pace because she is young, while her counterpart from another generation is interested in slowing down.

As we learn from experience, assumptions are often wrong. That young person may prefer devoting her attention to one workplace issue at a time, while her older co-worker is the multi-tasker. Many things, including life stages, could affect each of them. And if a leader changes work assignments based on erroneous assumptions, he could end up with disgruntled or absent employees, high turnover and unfinished projects.

The only truly effective method of managing diverse employees is to look at each one as an individual and to understand what motivates them. Then, coach them regularly to get the behavior you want.

Last month we stressed the importance of coaching and how effective coaches connect with individual employee needs. Supporting our goal of knowing what it takes to engage our workers and coaching

them regularly to higher performance levels is research we conducted with The Concours Group and Age Wave. The findings, published in the manual *WHY We Work*, helpfully define six different segments of employees working in our organizations. This research found that different groups of people need different things to remain engaged on the job. This finding is widely relevant because most organizations, especially large ones, contain some of each group.

Briefly, the six worker segments include:

1. **Fair and Square Traditionalists**, who make up the largest part of the workforce at 20 percent. They are loyal and traditional, as their name implies, and want their work to provide stability and a secure future.
2. **Stalled Survivors**, who represent 19 percent of the workforce. These workers see their jobs as a necessity. It is not the most satisfying part of their lives. These are often a firm's younger workers.
3. **Accomplished Contributors**, about 17 percent of the workforce. These loyal players often go above and beyond. They place a high value on teamwork.
4. **Demanding Disconnects**, 15 percent of our workers. As their name suggests, they are the least satisfied with work and the least committed to it.
5. **Maverick Morphers**, also about 15 percent of the workplace. These workers are generally young, like excitement, and do not fear taking risks.
6. **Self-Empowered Innovators**, about 14 percent. These employees make up the most engaged segment of the workplace and derive personal satisfaction from the job.

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**Assumptions are the termites of relationships.**

-- Henry Winkler, actor, producer, director, author

As Baby Boomers retire in larger and larger numbers, the workforce will contract. That means you will have a smaller pool of potential employees to choose from, and they will reflect all of the differences you see in our changing society. To succeed at coaching and managing, employers will have to study their workforce more intently than they did before and learn what makes them tick.

You are likely seeing these different segments in your workforce now, and perhaps did not fully understand the transformation taking place or realize how widespread the changes were. Now that you know, why not take the time to find out what your employees want on the job?

Assessments can aid you in identifying job fit and worker satisfaction, which can lead you to the best segment makeup for your organization. They can tell you which employees are well suited to their positions and which ones might benefit from a change. Once you know your employees, you will know which ones work most productively together and the combinations that could lead to disaster. And as your organization delves more deeply into coaching, your leaders will thank you for charting the territory in advance.



Jim Sirbasku, CEO  
Profiles International

**Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable.** -- Kenyan Proverb

## BOOK REVIEW: Take Six Giant Steps to Excelling at Work

Author Marcus Buckingham is still breaking the rules of the workday, and his readers like it. The best-selling author of *First, Break All the Rules* and *Now, Discover Your Strengths*, has issued another "strength" book, *GO PUT YOUR STRENGTHS TO WORK: 6 Powerful Steps to Achieve Outstanding Performance*.

On Amazon, the book is accompanied by a compelling two-minute video featuring Buckingham. Less than two of 10 people get to play to their strengths most of the time at work, he says. He asks, "Are you one of the two? If you aren't, how do you get to be?"

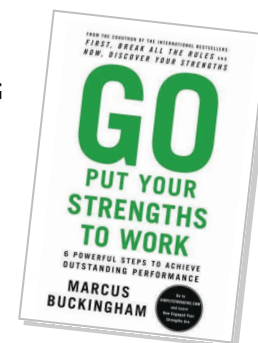
He notes that adults have lost something on the path to being a grownup. Kids instinctively know what their strengths are. The film shows clips of children peering with excitement from the windows of a bus, playing musical instruments, running to explore new things. Adults are not trapped by the externals – such as our jobs – but by "what we believe," Buckingham concludes.

Readers who buy into the author's approach of emphasizing strengths instead of trying to shore up weaknesses will likely approve of his six-step plan to discover those strengths. This process of reading, self-discovery and metamorphosis is meant to last for six weeks, not just one or a few sittings. Just as in previous Buckingham works, the latest book comes with optional tools to help readers, including online questions and downloadable videos.

This British-born Gallup Organization researcher also wrote *Now, Discover Your Strengths* with fellow researcher Donald O. Clifton. In that work, they introduced the idea of enhancing strengths instead of trying to eliminate weaknesses. The earlier book examines the pair's 34 positive personality themes, including Achiever, Developer, Learner, and Maximizer, and explains how to build organizations using those good traits already present in an organization.

For that book, Buckingham and Clifton analyzed results of Gallup interviews of more than 1.7 million employees from 101 companies in 63 countries. Only 20 percent of these employees stated that they were using their strengths daily.

**ABOUT THE BOOK:**  
THE HEART OF COACHING: USING  
TRANSFORMATIONAL COACHING  
TO CREATE A HIGH-  
PERFORMANCE COACHING  
CULTURE  
240 pages  
Publisher: F T A Press  
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## STRATEGIES FOR WINNING: What Goes Around\*

### See Your Managers' Strengths from Every Angle

A senior manager announces his decision to move to a competitor and the senior management team convenes a crisis-management meeting to figure how the organization will survive. Meanwhile, for the rest of the team, it's party time! The champagne is flowing; everyone's wearing funny hats, blowing noisemakers, and toasting their good fortune. The topic *du jour* is "With that clown gone, maybe now we can get on with business." Here is an interesting approach to the subject of goal setting. We present these ideas so you can use them to drive the car of your dreams and obtain all of the other goals important to you, too.

What happened? How can someone so valued by senior management work so badly with the troops on the ground? The reality is most senior managers have no awareness of how they or their fellow managers perceive them throughout their organizations – even at a time when so much is spoken about achievement of corporate goals through team-based efforts. No wonder that more than 30 percent of all people changing jobs are doing so to get away from their bosses. They're not leaving their jobs – they're leaving their managers!

This sort of disaster can happen only in an environment where the performance of management is appraised using traditional boss-down appraisals, with performance of managers assessed only by their direct bosses. This traditional approach means that the views of those who most directly experience the effectiveness (or otherwise) of a manager's performance – peers and direct reports – are never tapped. If your success depends to any extent upon your team, that's just not acceptable any more.

**The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime.**

-- Babe Ruth,  
baseball great

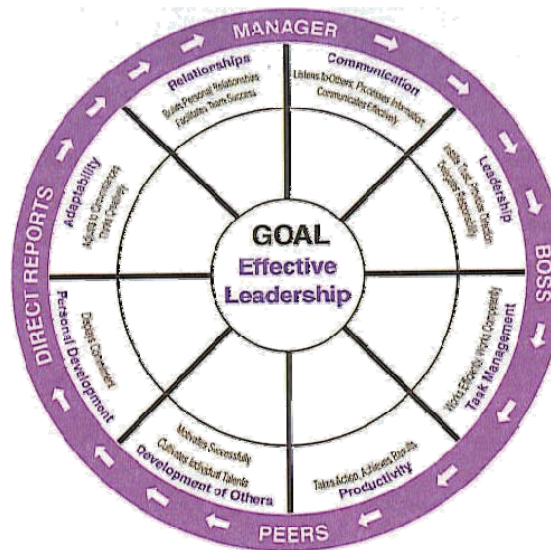
### Multi-Rater Feedback

Modern business has rendered the traditional boss-down appraisal extinct, and a more appropriate approach to assessing management competencies and performance has emerged. That new approach is *Multi-Rater Feedback*, and *Profiles Checkpoint* is an excellent example of this new model.

Every year, more than 250,000 managers worldwide use the *Profiles Checkpoint Multi-Rater Feedback System* – a system that provides managers and leaders with an opportunity to receive an evaluation of their job performance from the people around

them – their boss, their peers (fellow managers), and their direct reports (the people whose work they supervise). From this feedback, managers can compare the opinions of others with their own perceptions, positively identify their strengths, and pinpoint the areas of their job performance that need improvement.

The Profiles Checkpoint process is concerned with a manager's job performance in eight universal leadership and management competencies, and 18 skill sets:



#### Communication

- Listens to others
- Processes information
- Communicates effectively

#### Adaptability

- Adjusts to circumstances
- Thinks creatively

#### Task Management

- Works efficiently
- Works competently

#### Development of Others

- Cultivates individual talents
- Motivates successfully

#### Leadership

- Instills trust
- Provides direction
- Delegates responsibility

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## Relationships

- Builds personal relationships
- Facilitates team success

## Production

- Takes action
- Achieves results

## Personal Development

- Displays commitment
- Seeks improvement

## How Does it Work?

Each participant completes an evaluation – a process that takes about 15 minutes. Participants are guaranteed anonymity (except for the boss) and urged to be honest and objective in their responses. Participants complete their feedback via the Internet, or on paper if desired, and results from all participants are compiled in a report that is returned to the manager.

*Checkpoint* reports have colorful graphs and useful charts, as well as narrative descriptions of the results, to help the manager to read, understand and effectively use the data for self-development. The report has a special personal-growth section that coaches the manager and helps improve performance in development areas.

The *Checkpoint* report also encourages managers to link directly into an online system called *Checkpoint SkillBuilder*, which takes them through the step-by-step process of developing a comprehensive and personalized development plan. You can read more about the checkpoint system on the Web at [www.personnelinsights.com/mgmt\\_development.htm](http://www.personnelinsights.com/mgmt_development.htm)

## Round and Round...

The upshot is a more detailed and objective assessment of a manager's strengths, and of any areas where additional development might be required. This assessment then forms the basis of a development plan between managers and their bosses – whereas the managers are fully aware of the dynamics of their relationships with the people around them, they are also effectively locked into the organization by the commitment of the organization to their ongoing skill development.

After a period of six or 12 months, the process is run again; the effectiveness of the development plan is assessed; and new development goals are set for the following period.

## Multi-Rater Feedback vs. Boss-Down Appraisals

There are several reasons managers at all levels are eagerly embracing this approach to performance appraisal.

### Equitable

For the manager being appraised, *Multi-Rater* appraisals differ from boss-down appraisals in the same way that judge and jury courts differ from "hanging-judge" courts. Managers benefit from a wide variety of feedback upon their actual job performance, and, to be deemed top-performing managers, are no longer solely dependent upon the extent to which they have developed a good rapport with their direct boss.

### Proven Effectiveness

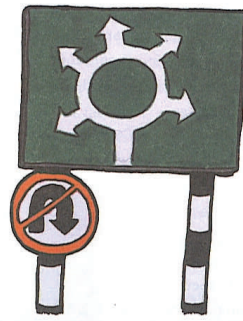
For the appraising boss, a positive change is more likely when an appraisal draws upon multiple sources trusted by the manager. *Multi-Rater* appraisals have been shown to be more effective than boss-down appraisals in driving a manager to make necessary behavioral changes or to improve management skills. If your boss says you need some improvement in some particular area, you may think, "What would she know?" or explain it away as a personality thing. If, however, 11 different people of your choosing – people with whom you work closely and whose views you trust and value – send you the same message, you really have to listen.

### Team Motivation

Multi-Rater Feedback systems also have a positive team-building effect. Research has proven the motivating value of the exercise for those involved as reviewers. Your people are sent a clear message that their opinions are valued, and they can help effect positive change in the management where required. Traditional reviews have given way to this much more effective tool for management development, as Fortune 500 organizations are mandating their use.

Used regularly as an integral part of a strategic development plan, 360-degree appraisals can lead to more consistent management development, better alignment of corporate goals with personal-development objectives, more open communication, and better team balance.

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**Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning.**

-- Bill Gates, Microsoft chairman



## PRODUCT FOCUS: Putting the Puzzle Pieces Where They Fit

If your workforce resembles that of most organizations, many different kinds of people are toiling under one roof. In one area, you have a person striving for better pay and benefits working next to someone for whom the pay is secondary to the job duties. Nearby, an employee struggles to balance work and home life. And yet another worker on the same team is looking for a new position because he thrives on change and is seeing the same old tasks every day.

Unless you know your workers' differences, the music they make together may sound more like a cacophony than a symphony.

Profiles Performance Indicator™ (PPI) to the rescue. This key assessment measures the behavior of individuals and the impact of their actions on your organization's success. The PPI helps you understand each person's attributes, which allows you to motivate and manage more efficiently. Furthermore, it can help you reduce conflicts in personality and style that get in the way of problem solving.

PPI tells you:

- Whether the employee is self-motivated or requires external cues
- How he or she is likely to perform in job-related competencies

- How he/she responds to job stress, frustration and conflict

Two reports come with PPI – one for the manager and one for the employee. The manager's report contains essential information about productivity, quality of work, initiative, teamwork, problem solving, adapting to change, response to stress and conflict, work motivation and motivational energy. It offers the manager a way to coach and motivate better, and provides specific, individualized suggestions for working more productively with each person.

The employee report provides feedback – information about performance and ideas for professional growth. It helps the worker understand his on-the-job attitudes and behaviors. The report also offers a guide to better communication and cooperation with coworkers.

Leading the organizations of today and tomorrow requires knowledge that yesterday's leaders did not need. Think of managing today as trying to put together a jigsaw puzzle with millions of tiny pieces. You cannot force the pieces together; you must examine each one to see where each fits in the picture. Your goal is not to finish the puzzle, because it is ever-changing; your goal is to keep putting the pieces where they fit.

### 18 Ways to Motivate Different People in Your Workplace

Research conducted in 2004 found six different segments in the American workplace. All workplaces, especially large ones, will likely employ some of each type of worker. The list includes:

**1. Fair and Square Traditionalists**, who want their work to provide stability and a secure future. Motivate them by:

- Asking for and giving them feedback
- Talking to them frankly
- Discussing the mission and their role in making it happen

**2. Accomplished Contributors**, who prize teamwork. Motivate them by:

- Nudging them toward team leadership roles
- Giving them specific measurements of their success and growth
- Asking them what they want to do next

**3. Stalled Survivors**, who see work as work, not life. Motivate them by:

- Focusing on work-life balance and what to do when one is out of kilter
- Putting them on teams that provide support, empathy and role models

- Helping them plan for their career future

**4. Demanding Disconnects**, your least satisfied workers. Motivate them by:

- Giving them non-routine tasks
- Discovering their strengths to use on the job
- Paying attention to their ideas

**5. Maverick Morphers** are enthusiastic and like trying new things. Motivate them by:

- Providing a congenial work environment
- Letting them know what's going on
- Discussing their progress

**6. Self-Empowered Innovators** like work for the sake of work. Motivate them by:

- Giving them responsibilities that allow for learning and growth
- Ridding their path of obstacles
- Allowing them to stretch the company's vision

## CASE STUDY: ProfileXT® Helps Financial Firm Match Bankers to Job

Companies suffering from low worker productivity need to investigate how well their employees match their job duties. One financial services organization in the Southeast, facing a productivity problem, conducted a study to examine the relationship between employee performance and job match to the ProfileXT®. What they learned has armed them to better select productive employees.

### Participants

The company used 36 mortgage bankers to help examine the problem of low productivity on the job. Leaders evaluated each banker's performance, using a sales goal ratio and a supervisor's performance rating. Supervisors gave top performers a 1, average performers a 2 and marginal performers a 3. Of the 36, the company rated 11 as top performers. The average top performer met 97.2 percent of his/her sales goal.

Nine bankers ranked in the 2, or average, position, and 16 ranked as marginal. The average marginal performer met 32.7 percent of his/her goal.

### Job Match

With the help of ProfileXT, the company developed a job match pattern for the position of mortgage banker that described the attributes of top performers. ProfileXT scores of the top performing employees helped create the pattern. Next, leaders matched all 36 bankers to this pattern. After reviewing employee ProfileXT job match percentages, they selected of 87 percent as the benchmark to best identify top performing employees.

### Results

Seven of the 11 mortgage bankers that the company ranked in the top performer category were correctly identified as such by the pattern. Only four of the 16 marginal performers were incorrectly identified as top performers by the pattern.

That means that of the 11 ranking as top performers, seven met or exceeded the 87 percent benchmark. Of the remaining 25 average and marginal performers, only five met or exceeded the 87 percent benchmark. Thus, the ProfileXT efficiently helped identify top performers.

**We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.**

-- Epictetus, Greek philosopher

Company leaders believe their hiring practices have become more consistent after using the ProfileXT. They face their hiring decisions with more confidence because they know the PXT offers them an objective evaluation of employee attributes. Clearly, using the ProfileXT Job Match Pattern can help improve selection practices.

Furthermore:

- The average sales goal ratio for those who met or exceeded the job match percentage benchmark was 76.1 percent.
- The average sales goal ratio for those who did not meet or exceed the job match percentage benchmark was 48.9 percent.

### Summary

Although this organization's top performers made up less than one third of the total sample of mortgage bankers, more top performers (seven) who were matched were able to meet or exceed the job match percentage benchmark than both the average marginal performers combined (five).

By selecting candidates based on the overall match of the ProfileXT, organizations such as this one are better able to increase productivity by identifying those likely to succeed. The company now uses 87 percent as the benchmark to predict performance in the mortgage banker position.

***Profile Strategies***

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