

## Playing to Strengths Improves Performance

### CASE STUDIES

It's been proven that top performers spend over 75% of their time playing to their strengths. However, research by Gallup found that only 17% of UK employees have the opportunity to play to their strengths on a daily basis.

Over the past five years Gail MacIndoe has helped executives to identify, develop and capitalise on their strengths. Focusing on their strengths has resulted in a marked improvement in performance, results and general well being.

Each of the following case studies represents a different strengths-based strategy and demonstrates the tangible results that these clients achieved by focussing on their strengths.

### How increasing the time spent playing to strengths delivers improved results and well being

#### Case Study 1

David Morgan, a commercial director at QinetiQ, achieved a £5m saving by negotiating a better deal for his company with a client. This was achieved by spending more time using his strengths and learning to recognise the areas of strengths in his team members and delegating his weaker skills accordingly.

*“Following my strengths coaching sessions with Gail, I now have a far better understanding of my strengths and how to better deploy them. I now make more use of my teams’ abilities allowing me to undertake activities that suit my strengths and have a better return on investment. For example, spending more time on a particular issue has delivered a £5m saving. This is due to strengths based coaching with Gail.”*

David Morgan, Commercial Director and Board member, DSG, a division of the Ministry of Defence (David was Commercial Director Technology Solutions, QinetiQ at the time of coaching)

#### Case Study 2

Gail helped a top producing head of sales at the RAC become aware of which activities energised and which drained him. They tracked the amount of time he spent on each one and made small changes to focus him more on using his strengths. This approach resulted in additional sales of £250,000.

His line manager said, *“The strengths-based coaching has produced the most significant improvements that I have seen from a candidate on a management development programme.”*

### Case Study 3

Individual coaching for a brilliant PhD executive who was an excellent all-rounder however he felt he should always be good at everything. Consequently he was depriving himself of actually doing what energised him, the things that were his strengths, for a good percentage of his time. At first it was difficult for him to realise the benefits of focussing on his strengths and to stop feeling he had to be all things to all people.

However, once his strengths were accepted and he began to develop them, whilst learning to manage his weaker areas, he started to make marked improvements in his performance.

*“This has had a much longer lasting effect than focusing on my weaknesses and has revealed things that I already knew about my abilities, but lacked the confidence and was probably trying to hide.”*

Director, Head of Fund Management

### How managing to individual strengths results in better employee and team engagement

#### Case Study 4

Gail helped an HR director and his head of HR, at a fund management company, become aware of each other’s strengths. Coaching led to an acknowledgement of differences and an improved relationship. As a result they held on to a key team member and delivered better results by cascading the strengths approach to the rest of the HR team.

*“The strengths based approach encouraged me to think again about what encourages higher performance and motivations in my team. This generated a more open conversation with one member of my team about whether the types of roles she was most suited for were congruent with the role I was asking her to do.”*

HR Director, Morley Fund Management

#### Case Study 5

Gail has run workshops for senior leaders and their teams to identify individual strengths. The work has led to improved employee engagement and productivity in three financial services companies and a defence group. Here is a selection of their comments:

*“Becoming mindful of the activities that inspire or drain me has made me plan my time so that I can be more effective.”*

*“It has allowed me to identify the strengths of my colleagues and helped me work better as a member of the team.”*

*“It has allowed me to identify my next potential career move, based on my strengths.”*

*"I am ensuring strengths are updated in development plans and am exploring individual strengths and energy levels further during 1-1s."*

## **How management of strengths and avoiding over use improves interpersonal relationships**

### **Case Study 6**

A talented actuary in a financial services company was over-using his strengths of expert knowledge and drive for results. This led him to discount his colleagues' opinions, which alienated them and decreased their support and contribution.

By balancing the use of his strengths, his relationships improved. Consequently, he was asked to manage a new project which saved his company £100,000 in consultancy fees.

### **Case Study 7**

An outstanding scientist was frustrated that others weren't as quick to understand matters as he did. Until he had strengths coaching he wasn't aware that his over-use of critical thinking and straight talking was causing a rift with his peers.

By balancing the use of his strengths, his interaction with his stakeholders improved dramatically.

His line manager said of the change, *"This has been one of the most sudden and rewarding changes of approach I've ever seen in business. We now get a very professional, considered and balanced approach. This has resulted in support from the business and has opened up the potential for further career opportunities that behaviourally, he would have been prevented from pursuing previously. I think it will make a massive difference to him, the relationships he has at work, and will help the business immensely."*

**Call me on 07919 405541 or email [gail@macindoe.com](mailto:gail@macindoe.com) to find out more about how strengths based leadership coaching and workshops could help you and your organisation**