

How to...utilise an individual's strengths with Wave®

Positive psychology and strengths-based approaches have been hot topics in the world of HR for a while now. Wave has many inbuilt features that help identify individual's strengths and explore how these can be best used.

Here are six tips to help you utilise an individual's strengths with Wave:

1. Recruit well and maximise your talent pool
2. Onboard well and maximise job fit
3. Save some strengths for special occasions
4. Look for strengths being overused
5. Consider overplayed strengths
6. Use strengths to tackle development needs

1. Recruit well and maximise your talent pool

Within any organisation there may be a number of recruitment campaigns running in parallel and it is possible that within each candidate pool there may be candidates more suited to a different role in another part of the organisation. How do you ensure these individuals aren't overlooked and don't find themselves in your competitors' talent pools?

To maximise talent pools, recruiters need to efficiently measure how suitable candidates are for the role. Wave competencies allow sophisticated and highly valid job fit equations to be developed and applied to applicant data, providing a job fit score that illustrates how suitable an individual might be for the role. Unsuitable candidates can be sifted out quickly without the need for laborious hours spent manually processing CVs and application forms.

Where job streaming is used, a number of job fit scores can be calculated for each individual, regardless of the role to which they have applied. Job fit scores are passed back to the client organisation through an integrated system so that recruiters can quickly and easily see, firstly, whether they are right for the role to which they have applied and, secondly, whether they are more suited to one of the other roles available. This benefits candidates, as they can be headhunted from one recruitment campaign to another, and allows clients to maximise their talent pool and ensure potential talent is not missed.



2. Onboard well and maximise job fit

Strengths research suggests that we should mould the job around the person, rather than force the person to fit the job (to an extent, obviously). Whether you are having onboarding discussions with a new recruit or discussing development with current team members, Wave provides useful insights.

The Environment Fit Report provides a quick overview of aspects of the job and culture that are likely to enhance an individual's success. Take a look at this and see what you can do to create an environment in which they are likely to thrive.

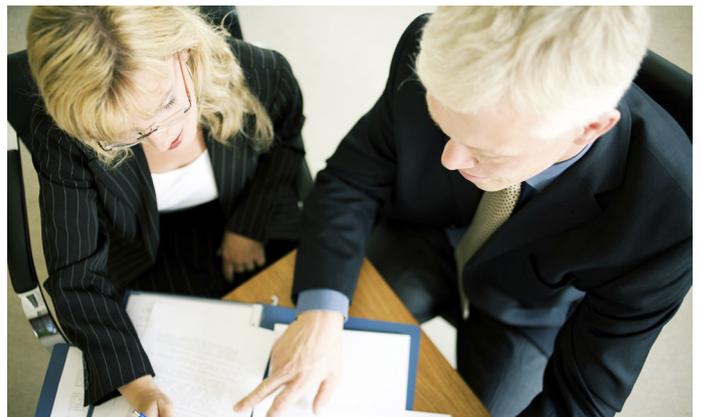
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If they are lively, talkative and enjoy the company of others, you may think twice about putting them in a corner of the office on their own. If they place importance on regularly receiving honest feedback you may think about how you can ensure this happens.

Motive-talent splits on the Wave profile can signpost a potential desire to improve at or do more of something. An individual who enjoys motivating, encouraging and inspiring others but doesn't believe they are particularly effective at it may feel that they don't get the opportunity in their current role to adopt and practice these behaviours. As a manager, you may want to find ways to help them do this.

3. Save some strengths for special occasions

While it makes good sense to focus on strengths, it is also true to say that just because someone is good at something doesn't necessarily mean they enjoy doing it. Take, for example, someone with a motive-talent split on 'Sociable'. They feel that they are very effective at being sociable; in fact you know they are highly effective in this area - your clients love them. They are not, however, particularly motivated by being so and find socialising with clients tiresome. How do you think they would feel if constantly called upon to socialise and interact with your clients? What impact would this have on client relationships? Treat such strengths as aces up your sleeve and pull them out only when absolutely necessary - when it really matters.



4. Look for strengths being overused

Motive-talent splits highlighting where talent is higher than motive may also indicate areas where an individual's strength has been overused. Although a person may feel that they are an effective analyst, the enjoyment that they get from being analytical could be relatively low because they have had to adopt this behaviour so frequently that it is no longer enjoyable; it has become overused. Have a conversation about the impact that this might have. What might you be able to do to help? Have a look at other parts of the profile - are there signs of aspirations to bigger things?

5. Consider overplayed strengths

With all the current industry excitement about strengths and positive psychology, it can be easy to forget that you can get too much of a good thing. Strengths can easily go into overdrive with detrimental effects, especially as you move up the career ladder, where you might find that the attributes that got you there turn full circle and suddenly aren't your strengths anymore (think leadership derailment).

Look for extreme high scores on the Wave profile and explore both the pros and the cons of this particular style. Question when such strengths might go into overdrive and discuss strategies to manage this. The Wave Development Report has sections on possible overplayed strengths and suggestions to help with personal development planning.

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6. Use strengths to tackle development needs

One of the biggest strengths of strengths can often be their ability to help someone tackle challenge areas.

Take, for example, someone who does not feel they are particularly convincing but has a strong motive to develop in this area. If in addition, they are incredibly data driven, logical and can get to grips with complex issues, these important strengths can be used to help them develop their powers of persuasion. These strengths could help them to identify circumstances where a barrage of opinion without a factual basis would not make a strong argument. They might gain confidence by explaining their views in instances when they are considered expert, or where the facts really matter.

Summary

Saville Consulting Wave adds insight to any strengths-based approach to recruitment or development. The highly valid competency potential scores enable 'job fit' scores to match applicants to roles and the environment fit report encourages managers to think about the culture an individual is most likely to thrive in. Strengths are highlighted in a straightforward manner and the extremely powerful motive-talent split data encourages the exploration of where talents may be over and/or underutilised at work.

About the Author

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Hannah Mullaney joined Saville Consulting in 2011 to focus primarily on product development. She now also consults on a wide range of global client projects, regularly trains on Occupational Test User courses, authors academic papers and news articles and facilitates and presents at events and conferences.

Hannah is currently Dean of the Association of Business Psychologists Annual Conference in 2014.