

ASTD 2011 Orlando Florida
Knowledge harvest 1
“Stand out”
Presented by Marcus Buckingham

Marcus is the world’s thought leader on “Strengths”. He wrote a number of books that include “First break all the rules and “Now discover your strengths”. He launched his new book “Stand-out” at the STD 2011 conference!
Some thoughts for the session...

There are three (no four) seductive mindsets that lure companies into focussing on their people’s weaknesses rather than strengths.

1 Companies are afraid that hiring a weakness without addressing it would **lead to negative/bad consequences**. These might be legitimate concerns but the problem is that companies that focus on it aren’t managing to win, they are managing not to fail!

2.It is just **easier to belief that people can be changed**. Rather than acknowledging that people are enduringly different, it is a lot simpler to just assume that all sales people, for instance, can be taught to sell in exactly the same way. Even though it’s not true!

3. Call it a belief in the perfectibility of man. Since everyone can be perfected, but you are not perfect, we will mold you into perfection. If you are not strategic we will identify the components and teach them to you. We genuinely (and wrongly) **believe that people can be perfected**

4. Managers want to **feel that they are expected to help people improve**, inadvertently ending up on the one thing guaranteed to drag people down: Weaknesses!

Buckingham believes that strengths have three direct impacts on performance

1. First, they are an **accelerant** “we learn faster in our areas of strengths”
2. They are a **multiplier** “You are most creative in you areas of strength, more collaborative more innovative and more insightful”
3. Strengths are a **reinforce** “if you experience a set back or poor performance in an area of strength, you bounce back faster because in that area you feel your highest level of self-confidence and self-efficacy”

Acceleration, multiplication and reinforcement. What these three qualities combine to create is an exponential improvement in performance. When you fix weaknesses (which sometimes has to be done), you get incremental improvement in performance

Buckingham’s core message is: The future of learning and all people development will begin with the question “who are you?” in the past the question was “what do you struggle with, what should we teach you?”

Over time the most successful companies will be the ones who develop the most accurate and intelligent ways to answer the question “Who are you?” before trying to teach anyone anything”

Buckingham’ states that all individuals possess certain strength roles

Advisor	they ask “ What is the best thing to do?”
Connector	they ask “Whom can I connect?”
Creator	they ask “What do I understand?”
Equalizer	they ask “What are the right thing to do?”
Influencers	they ask “How can I move you to act?”
Pioneer	they ask “What’s new?”
Provider	they ask “Is everyone OK?”
Stimulator	they ask “How can I raise the energy?”
Teacher	they ask “What can he learn from this?”

states that developing these strengths rather than weaknesses allows for the greatest growth. Authentic innovation emerges not by mimicking the innovative approaches of others, but by identifying ones own most prominent strength roles

This Knowledge Harvest was prepared by Niel Steinmann for PDD
Acknowledgment to Marcus Buckingham