



STRIVE HIGH PERFORMANCE MODEL

Deepen Your Organization's Bench Strength:

By revolutionizing your approach to developing employee potential.

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White Paper

The path to performance.



The business case for revolutionizing an organization's approach to developing employee potential

An overwhelming majority of organizations focus as much as 80 percent of their time, energy, and resources on approximately 20% of the employee population. In many larger organizations, the top 20 percent of the organization's workforce has typically been identified as future leaders or high potential performers. High potentials demonstrate traits such as: they are driven, go-getters, self-starters, can work independently, quick learners, and are highly motivated to achieve.

Personalized development plans created for high potentials include cross-functional training, mentoring, leadership development training, and specific competency training. This already ambitious subset of employees consume much of the available resources for employee development. Oftentimes, leaving the remaining employee population feeling left-out, undervalued, underdeveloped, and underutilized. As a result, as much as 80 percent of the employee population is more than likely underperforming. Leaders, managers, internal coaches, and members of the learning and development community need to ask:

- Is this segment of employees motivated to do their best . . . if not, why not?
- How much is the organization falling short due to underdeveloped, unmotivated, and underperforming employees? And, what is the cost?
- What if the remaining 80% of the employee population had more drive and were intrinsically motivated to strive for higher performance?
- What would the impact be to the organization's performance if 100% of the workforce was hitting on all cylinders?

If you want to increase performance across the organization, and deepen your organization's bench strength, it will be necessary for the influencers to value the latent potential that is waiting to be awakened throughout the workforce. This white paper introduces a model that will revolutionize how your organization approaches employee development across the organization, thus maximizing potential performance. Understanding the strategy for developing high potentials is critical to the business, it is also essential to recognize that each employee has potential to grow. The key is to be able to create a self-directed, learning driven mindset throughout the organization. The model provided within this paper will offer insights into how to create an environment that unlocks the inner drive and intrinsic motivation that lies within each employee.

However, first, we must explore:

- The psychology behind what makes each of us tick
- What neuroscience tells us about our ability to learn and develop
- What personality and brain physiology have to do with learning and development
- As coaches and members of the learning and development community, what we can do to help a person awaken their inner motivation to learn

The Psychology behind what makes each of us tick

As a child, we are fascinated with the world. We are naturally curious about our environment. We want to touch, push, pull and poke things that are within our reach. All of our senses are in a constant state of stimulation with the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings that we are experiencing as our world gets larger. We ask over and over again, why . . . why is the sky blue; why do dogs have four legs and I only have two?

It is this natural curiosity of the inner learner that resides within each of us that causes us to grow, explore, and learn. Where does that curiosity come from, and more thought-provoking, where does it go, for some of us, as we become adults? How can we awaken that inner learner that resides within? This is an important question, especially for the learning and development community.

In psychology, personality refers to consistencies in a person's behavior across various situations over time, and the ways in which a person generally tends to respond. Due to the many interacting forces and influences on human behavior, understanding exact causes of behavior can become quite complex, but also helpful, as we try to understand the learning aspect of human nature. Some of the core causes of behavior lie in the genetic blueprint that is passed on from our parents. However, much of our behavior is influenced by our personal experiences, such as how we were raised, cultural and social group influences, and of course, what is instinctual, as defined by human nature. The exciting take-away is that, although we recognize that each person is unique in their genetic make-up, the field of psychology has established that our environment has a significant influence on our behavior, and the way we think.

What Neuroscience tells us about our ability to learn and develop?

The brain is complicated. It consists of intricately woven tissue composed of highly specialized cells. With the advancement of neuroscience, scientists and researchers now understand the human mind as never before. This understanding has advanced our knowledge of how learning occurs.

The basic building blocks of learning consists of neurons, dendrites, axons, and information substances. Keeping the explanation of this process fairly simple, what is important to know is how learning occurs from a physiological perspective. In simple terms, the brain has over 100 billion brain cells called neurons. These neurons are making billions of connections and organizing themselves, which results in real, measurable physiological growth of the brain. Such growth and multiple branching of dendrites and axons is the brain's way of creating new neural pathways in response to new information introduced to the brain.

Another important concept that we need to understand as facilitators of learning is neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity explores how, and in which ways, the brain changes throughout life. Neuroplasticity is widely recognized as the brain's capacity to create new neural pathways. Thus, allowing the brain to grow and change itself throughout life. This is how the brain has the ability to create and sustain new habits.

From clinical neuroscience studies, we have learned that you can rewire your brain. The rewiring of your brain is a process of creating new neural pathways for thoughts and information. This is the opportunity to take a neurotransmission highway and either turn it into a quiet country lane where that experience is stored forever, or possibly, for later retrieval, or, turn it into a major freeway. The country lane leads to a remote memory bank, whereas the major freeway is a change in the way a person thinks, behaves, or views the world. The more the highway is used, and the thought is reinforced, the stronger the neural network becomes. As a result, a new habit is internalized, and there is no longer a need for conscious thought.

What does personality and brain physiology have to do with learning and developing?

The answer is mindset.

We now understand why people think and behave differently. We know that they have distinctive personalities due to unique genetic endowments. In addition, people are influenced by their individual experiences within their environments. We also realize that through building new neural networks the brain works to form habits and ways of thinking that shape the way we learn, behave, and view the world. All of these factors lay the foundation for our personal view of ourselves, and the world.

We set in our minds certain things about ourselves such as, I am the type of person who likes to set and achieve goals, or, I am the type of person who just takes life as it comes. The question for the learning and development community then becomes, is our mindset a predisposed genetic factor, or, can we use what we know about the brain's ability to change to create a different mindset; thus, changing our habits. So, let's explore this concept, and how it relates to learning.



World-renowned Stanford University psychologist, Carol Dweck, through decades of research on achievement and success, has discovered a truly groundbreaking idea. She proposes that not only is mindset a powerful factor in achieving success, but also that we are capable of changing our mindset. Dweck explains why it is not just our abilities and talent that bring us success, but whether we approach our goals with a fixed or a growth mindset. Based on Dweck's research and findings, the theory of having a fixed mindset or a growth mindset can hold true for how a person approaches learning. Let's unpack the concept of a fixed mindset versus a growth mindset.

Mindset is a perspective on how we think. Dweck describes her theory on fixed versus growth mindset as two distinctly different approaches to how a person views the world and how they fit into the world. In a fixed mindset, people believe that their intelligence, talents, and abilities are fixed traits. Due to this belief, they limit their efforts and willingness to try harder, or do something different. They believe that talent is what differentiates those who experience significant success in comparison to those who experience moderate to low success.

In a growth mindset, people are open to new ideas. They ask themselves questions like: what can I learn from this experience, or, what should I do differently next time? This mindset creates a desire for learning and resilience that is essential to growth. Additionally, this mindset invites the opportunity to learn and grow from an experience. For example, ask yourself, are you in a fixed mindset or growth mindset? Answer this question: Do you feel people are judging you, or, are they helping you develop? A fixed mindset would suggest that people are judging, whereas, a growth mindset suggests that they are helping.

A learner's state of mind may be the key variable to how a person decides to approach a learning and development opportunity. What is more important is that science suggests that we have control over how we think, and, thus, our mindset. Hence, in theory, a learner can shift from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. For adult learners who may have lost their natural curiosity that causes them to grow, explore, and learn, shifting their mindset may be how we unlock the secret to awakening their inner motivation for learning.

As coaches and members of the learning and development community, what can we do to help a person awaken their inner motivation to learn and develop?

- First, we accept and respect the fact that each person is unique and different.
- Second, we accept the theory that we can shift how we think, by changing our mindset, and as a result, create new mental habits.
- Third, we create a learning environment that inspires and reinforces learning habits.



For example, in a corporate environment, the process of creating a learning environment should be a co-creation. The learning and development department is often tasked with identifying, designing, implementing, and evaluating learning programs. However, for the learning environment to be inspirational and effective, there needs to be a partnership between the employee, the manager, and the learning and development (L & D) specialist.

Creating a learning environment that inspires, stimulates, and nurtures learning is a collaborative effort. The employee/learner is central to the process. Each employee in the organization creates their own personalized development plan based on their aspirations for personal and professional development.

Supervisors, managers, and other leaders are key contributors to the employee's on-going motivation. When this circle of influencers encourages, supports, and reinforces the employee's efforts, the employee continues to grow their potential; but, more importantly, the employee feels valued. Although, there are many ways to motivate a person, research tells us that when a person feels acknowledged and valued, there is an increase in loyalty, performance, and intrinsic motivation.

Learning and development specialists guide the process to ensure the employee has access to the necessary resources. The L & D specialists also act as coaches and subject matter experts with whom the employee can rely on to manage the process.

The STRIVE HIGH PERFORMANCE MODEL[®] serves as a tool to assist in the process.

S TRETCH	Stretch comfort zone with SMART goals
T RANSFORM	Transform current skills into high performance skills
R EWIRE	Rewire mindset, attitude and habits
I NTEGRATE	Integrate learning into performance
V ISUALIZE	Visualize the possibilities
E NERGIZE	Energize self through intrinsic motivation

Keeping in mind the 70:20:10 rule for learning and development (learning and development is 70 percent experiential, 20 percent coaching and mentoring, and 10 percent coursework training), much of the learning and development happens in the day-to-day operations of an employee's job. This is perfect for the employee to have more control and ownership over their plan.



With the support and guidance from the employee's immediate supervisor and L&D specialist, the employee will determine SMART (specific, measureable, attainable, relevant and time-bound) goals. These goals should be around developing skills, behavior, and habits. As part of the plan, there should be narrative on how those developing skills, behaviors, and habits will be applied to improving performance. To reinforce a growth mindset and new habits, the employee learns to reflect on key questions by using a self-coaching approach: What went well? What did I learn from the situation? What can I do differently next time? How can I advance what I have learned to help others?

The employee should meet with their circle of influencers periodically to discuss progress, adjust the plan if necessary, and celebrate successes. This is a coaching opportunity to determine what behaviors and activities to start, stop, and continue, to ensure the employee is moving in the best possible direction.

Conclusion

There are limited resources in the organization to develop employees. Typically, as much as 80 percent of the focus for development is on the critical top 20 percent of the employee population. Therefore, cultivating the remaining 80 percent of the employee population to be self-directed learners is an effective and efficient approach to developing the workforce in its entirety.

Personally, I am always ready to learn, although I don't like to be taught.

-Winston Churchill

Through a collaborative effort of involving the supervisor, L & D specialists, and the employee, the employee is not only empowered, but, more importantly, owns both their personal and professional development plan.

Research tells us that, although we are born with certain genetic endowments, much of who we are and the way we think is influenced by our environment. In addition, neuroscience has determined that our brains are continuously learning and growing. Therefore, by creating the right learning and development environment, the potential to shift our mindset from a fixed perspective to a growth perspective is achievable. Think of the possibilities, to not only deepen the organization's bench strength, but also, to have an engaged and empowered workforce that is intrinsically motivated to grow their own capabilities. Investing in the entire workforce will create a significant return on investment overtime.

For more details, or inquire about coaching, or schedule a workshop contact:

STRIVE PERFORMANCE COACHING www.striveperformancecoaching.com



Ann Holland: your professional performance coach at
STRIVE PERFORMANCE COACHING.

Ann has spent a lifetime mentoring, teaching, and developing people, who are at all levels of their careers, to achieve the success that they desire. It is Ann's belief that we each have our own inner desires to grow and realize our purpose and potential in work, relationships, and life. Ann's professional training includes being formally trained and certified as a life coach at IPEC (Institute for Professional Excellence in Coaching), a certified ICF (International Coaching Federation) school for professional coaching. Ann earned a BA in Business Management, MA in Organizational Management, and is currently a doctoral student studying Human and Organizational Development at Fielding Graduate University. Additionally, Ann has spent her 30 year career devoted to developing and mentoring leaders, managers, and individuals who aspire to move forward in their careers.

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