



*Performance Enhancement*

# Using Strengths to Meet Performance Expectations

## Article - 10 min read



This article provides a structure we can use to consider the best strategy when reviewing performance talent and the use of a team's strengths to inform development that will meet performance expectations.





## What does that mean?

Identifying an individual or team's strengths is one thing but using them in a meaningful way to strategically contribute to performance outcomes requires careful consideration. Here we provide a simple, yet effective, approach you can adopt to reflect upon individual and team strengths that can be turned into opportunities to develop team members and impact upon performance.

You've conducted a team skills audit to assess their state of performance capability but are finding it a challenge knowing what to do with the information.

Understanding an individual or team's Strengths is a tricky thing: on a good day they will be your greatest asset to achieving outcomes but rely on them too heavily and they can be toxic and actually be your greatest weakness. Confidence can become arrogance, attention to detail can become obsessive perfectionism, ambition becomes greed etc. When faced with an assessment of where strengths lie in your area of responsibility it is important to consider them from many angles. One method some professionals use is called the 4 M's.

It is a simple, 4 stage reflective audit you can conduct to make decisions about how to developmentally work with the strengths in your area of responsibility and guide your performance strategy.

### The 4 M's Look Like this...

**Maximise**  
**Minimise**  
**Emerge**  
**Motivate**

Here is a breakdown of each section of the model, and some areas of reflection to consider within each...

#### PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT





## Maximise

There are possibly some individual strengths that you are under-utilising. It's the age-old adage: "Do I have the right person doing the right job?". Is your best communicator sat behind a desk, bogged down with administrative tasks? Is the individual who is most organised involved in planning and strategy? Is your most creative individual using that creativity?

When reviewing the performance capability in your area of responsibility you may wish to build strategy and development plans to re-orientate skills and knowledge to be more impactful upon performance outcomes.

## Minimise

Some strengths you may be relying on too heavily and, despite their usefulness, may be getting in the way of you growing performance in your area of responsibility. You may also find that a strengths focus in one area is impacting the achievement of other goals and outcomes that are required.

Here you will want to look for developmental opportunities that "dial down" the use of these strengths so they don't become an interrupter to the areas of development required to build critical competence in all performance areas.

There may also be some team strengths that have become toxic and effecting the dynamic and atmosphere within the team. It may be creating an imbalance in work allocation or performance contribution expectations.

Finally: consider carefully whether your strengths are concentrated in a way that creates risk to performance levels in your area of responsibility. Can you seek developmental opportunities in your area that will more evenly distribute skills and over-reliance on particular individuals?





## Emerge

There may be times when the beginning of a new strength is discovered that would benefit performance success in your area.

For strengths of this nature, you will seek development opportunities to practice and grow this strength so it can be moved into the “Maximise” space. As it’s emerging you will need to support the strength’s deployment so that it can be channelled in significant and meaningful ways. The risk is that this strength potential is squandered and atrophies and doesn’t end up contributing to the performance readiness of the individual/team.

## Motivate

There may be times when a team or individual possesses a strength that they lack the confidence or motivation to make use of.

It’s often overlooked, but there are certainly circumstances where you may find that, despite being talented in that area, an individual doesn’t actually like performing the tasks or duties their talent benefits. Are there ways that you can engage and motivate the use of this strength to impact upon performance?

A strengths-based environment can create an engaging, creative workplace for your team and positively impact your performance outputs, but it is important to be mindful of the way in which you work with the strengths of your team.

