

***Fire Up! Your Employees and Smoke your Competition;
How to Invite, Incite, and Ignite Employee Performance***

By Jay Forte



Section 1: INVITE Performance

***Millennial managers INVITE performance when they create strong employee-focused cultures, understand talents, and hire the right employees.
This connects employees intellectually to their work.***

Chapter 2: How You Spark – Understand the Role of Talents and Strengths in Performance

“Man is only truly great when he acts from his passions.”

Benjamin Disraeli

Note: Before starting this chapter, go to www.FireUpYourEmployees.com, click on “Beyond the Book” and print the supporting exercises and worksheets for chapter 2. This text includes the information you need; the website gives you access to the exercises, worksheets, and activities that will help you more fully complete this chapter and advance your learning through practice.

In chapter 1, I focused on the least common denominator of all performance – a powerful employee-focused culture. Organizations with strong cultures that are employee-focused, INVITE the best candidates. Once those great candidates are hired into a strong employee-focused culture, they remain longer, contribute more dynamically, and perform more successfully.

The power of a positive culture cannot be underestimated in today’s intellectual workplace. Since we need employees to volunteer their effort and participation, our policies and procedures (culture) must make them want to perform at their best. If the policies exist but are not followed, then great employees do not stay. And when they

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leave (because of the pervasiveness of the social networks that exist – Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn), comments about your workplace brand make it through the ether at the speed of the *click*. Because of this connective power, you must work to ensure the workplace brand that is transmitted across the airwaves and ether is positive and correctly highlights the employee-focused atmosphere the organization lives by.

The greatest success of a powerful employee-based culture is the ability to create a supply of quality candidates for your organization. This enables your organization to use a sound hiring process that looks to hire the right employees based on proper fit and talents. Without a powerful culture, the number of candidates (potential employees who would consider working with you) is significantly reduced, making the process of selecting the right employee more difficult. As you will see, it is critical to hire the right employee in the right role. The right employee will be critical to success in an intellectual age.

People have talents; these talents are the natural “sparking” or thinking (otherwise known as the intrinsic abilities) of an employee. All of us have a unique combination of talents; no two of us are exactly alike. Talents are derived in the unique combination of brain connections that evolved early in our physiological development. Talents are innate, and as such, they will always be the source of our greatest performance.

Talents direct the way we think and act; we have no specific control over them. We can’t learn a talent because it is already part of our hardwiring – the way our unique brain processes information. Though we can’t create talents, (based on your belief system, attribute it to either divine inspiration or genetic evolution), we can develop these natural strengths. This is why I stated we must “hire for talent” (core to who we are – it is just how we think) and “train for skill” (skills can be learned – more on this shortly). But, as is well presented by work done by the Gallup Organization with Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman in their book, *First Break All the Rules*, we can only maximize what exists; we cannot add what does not exist and do it well. Or another way to say it is, if something is not our talent area, the best we may become is *good*.

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To be successful today, you must be able to become *great* – and that can only happen when you use, develop, and focus on your strengths and talents. As you can see, you will need to fully understand the talents that exist in a team, and the talents that are required in each role, for the team and the employee to be successful. Any missing critical talents will affect performance and must be considered in the future hiring process.

As Marcus Buckingham and Donald Clifton say in their book, *Now, Discover Your Strengths*, “If you want to reveal your talents, monitor your *spontaneous, top-of-mind reactions* to situations you encounter. These top-of-mind reactions provide the best trace of your talents; they reveal the locations of strong mental connections.” Talents are intrinsic to us; they are the way we respond and view the world, so unless we stop and think about them, they frequently go undetected or unnoticed. Many times we will actually learn more about our talents from the comments of others, by an evaluation, or assessment.

Studies have shown that in the course of a day, we make twenty thousand three-second decisions. Each of these decisions happens using in our spontaneous, top-of-mind reactions. As such, when we are hired into roles that match our thinking with the thinking required by the role, then most of our twenty thousand three-second decisions will be effective. The more we choose well, the more competent we feel, and the more we are noticed for performing well.

The reverse is true. When we are poorly hired (placed in the wrong role), then most of our twenty thousand three-second decision are not correct. The role needs us to think in a particular way – and we don’t think in that way. We do not feel capable or competent. We also strain the employee/manager relationship, as our manager will be consistently disappointed or unimpressed with our performance. The only way to ensure we maximize performance is to first understand that talents drive performance and talents are intrinsic to our thinking. This is why it is critical to hire for talent.

Here is an example: Let’s say I am working in a retail store and my natural talents are more social (I like people) than analytical or empirical (I like details). When a customer

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comes into the store, I naturally go and greet the customers (it is a top-of-mind reaction – one of the twenty thousand three-second responses). I don't formally think about it; I just respond. And since the goal is to connect to customers, I am perceived as social, personable, and friendly. It seems this is a reasonable job for the way I “spark.”

Now, let's say I am working in the retail store, but my natural talents are more analytical than social. I am busy reviewing a merchandizing report behind the register when a customer comes in. I look up and look right back down at my work (it is a top-of-mind reaction – one of the twenty thousand three-second responses). It is not because I am mean, callous, or disinterested – it is because it doesn't occur to me to leave my work (analyst) and become social; I don't “spark” that way.

The result of casting an employee into the wrong role is the employee now consistently chooses poorly in the responses to the job. This aggravates both the manager and the customer and the critical fault is that an employee who thinks in one way was cast into a role that requires thinking in a very different way. And, as others will state, the general result of this miscasting of employees is that employee becomes disappointed with the job and leaves or the manager because upset with his/her performance and fires him/her. The problem is the employee thinks in one way, and the role requires thinking in another. I will develop this in the next several chapters. This focus on intrinsic strengths (talents) is core to the Fire Up! ProcessSM approach to extraordinary employee performance.

Talents are also revealed by *passionate interest or yearnings – things you love to do*. Again from Buckingham and Clifton, “Our strongest [brain] connections [or “sparkings”] are irresistible. They exert a magnetic influence, drawing you back time and again. You feel their pull, so you yearn.” Yearning for precision in the role of an accountant is a powerful force and a force equal to the yearnings to be social by a salesman. Both actively pull those who have these talents. Imagine how each would feel if their roles were reversed. There would be no pull; there would be no yearning and ultimately this disconnection would affect performance. In today's intellectual and innovative workplace, it is important employees love what they do. The more connected they are to what they do, the more they are in their talent areas and the better they perform.

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Another way to detect a talent is by *rapid learning*. When you have the ability of learning something quickly or understanding it naturally, you generally have located a talent. It may be an employee who can speak publicly with little coaching or training. It may be an employee who has a natural ability to negotiate successfully and read customer body language without any formal training. Notice how many times you can read the first paragraph of something written about one of your talent areas and already know the content of the remainder of the article. The thinking is natural to you; you *get it* without being told. Talented people seem to just know because it is natural to the way they think.

A final way to detect a talent is to look at the things that *satisfy* you. Since talents are based on the strongest brain connections, when you are involved in doing something that matches these connections, you feel satisfied and competent. You enjoy them; you find time for them. These activities affect your motivation level and your attitude. The greater the level of satisfaction you have, the stronger the talent you possess.

These definitions of talents tell you one more very important thing. Because you now know that talents are the top-of-mind events, the first responses that candidates provide in interviews (when asked new *talent-based* questions) will offer the best information as to whether a required talent exists or not. This will be critical to your ability to INVITE the best employees.

As you can see, talents are fundamental to all performance. Each of us has specific talents, which means not all employees are a good fit for all jobs. Because we are now in a service or intellectual workplace, success is in the way we think and ultimately invent responses in our work. In the past, it was not as critical to properly match an employee to a job – in the industrial age, there was less independent and customer thinking required of all employees. The workplace was built more on recurring rote procedures that could be learned through training and practice. Today, each employee must think through individual service situations as they occur; very few encounters are the same. That means each employee must be actively thinking and engaged in order to assess and respond in a way that connects each customer to the organization. To be actively thinking and

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engaged, the employee must like the role, feel *intellectually* connected to it, and be capable of making the right decisions in the role the greatest amount of time. If not, the employee disengages, service suffers, and the business is negatively affected. All performance success starts with understanding talents.

A Lesson in Physiology and Development

To better understand that you, as the manager, have no control over the talents of your employees (which is the reason to understand the talents or thinking that each of our roles requires and then work to hire people who naturally have this required thinking), let's review briefly how brains develop. My goal is to show you that your talents are a product of your development and that, as such, you get what you get. Your goal is to understand your talents to learn how to maximize them, not to determine how to change them. For the paraphrased review that follows, I use the guidance and perspectives found in *First Break All the Rules* by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman:

At forty-two days after conception, your brain goes through an explosion of growth. This growth continues for approximately one hundred twenty days at which time your brain creates nearly one hundred billion neurons or brain cells. Starting from approximately sixty days before you are born, these neurons start to make connections with other neurons. These connections or synapses create threads (axons) that link the neurons together; each neuron creates nearly fifteen thousand connections that happen from sixty days before birth to approximately three years old. This is the period where the brain is absorbing all that it can about the world, but with so many connections being made, the brain has minimal ability to create great context or understanding of these connections. So with the complexity and wisdom of life, between the ages of three and sixteen, the weaker synaptic connections start to wither until you are left with approximately half of the original connections. If the brain did not allow some of these connections to wither, you would remain as a child in sensory overload.

Again, from Buckingham and Clifton, "We would never forget – past and present events and would be drowned in particulars, unable to form ideas or to think. We would be unable to feel, build relationships, or make decisions of any kind. We

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would lack personality, preference, judgment, and passion.” The brain is actually more effective with fewer strong connections than with more weak connections.

What remains, once the weaker connections wither, is a pattern of responses that are unique to each of us; *no other person has your combination of recurring pattern responses or mental pathways*. These mental pathways create your regular and non-intellectual response to the stimuli you receive at every moment during the day. These stimuli (I stated that studies identify them as approximately twenty thousand in a day) are reviewed and assessed by your mental framework. Though you have the ability to stop and formally think in many cases, the greatest portion of your responses will be automatic; these will be done based on the way you are hardwired, and how you process information about your world. This is why some people can do math easily in their heads and others cannot. This is why some people can handle many things at once and others can only handle one or two things at a time. This is why some people are assertive and others are timid. Each of us has a unique set of connections that create who we are, how we think, and what we do. These stronger connections, the ones that remain, create our personality, strengths, passions, and talents.

This discussion of connections also shows your thinking is natural to you and you must be matched to the thinking in your role to contribute your best performance. This concept is core to the Fire Up! ProcessSM where your focus as a manager, is to get to know employees well enough to know how to connect them to the right roles. Remember back to the story of Michelangelo and his sculptor role of knowing the stone to know how to release what was in it. Now that you know this, consider the effect of putting the accountant in the salesman’s role or vice versa. Each of them “spark” in a particular way and for them to be effective, their role must allow them to use the way they “spark.” Managers who consistently hire employees into roles that do not use their talents, unintentionally disengage employees and negatively affect performance.

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To move on, we must be able to assess the talents or thinking styles of our employees. In today's intellectual workplace, all employees' performance approach can be summarized in the combination of items below:

1. A thinking (rational more than emotional decision-making) approach to performance, or
2. A feeling (emotional more than rational decision-making) approach to performance.

And

3. A directing (self-oriented) approach to performance, or,
4. A supporting (working through others) approach to performance.

Most people possess a blend of 1 or 2, and 3 or 4 which becomes evident in their talents. To be great in some roles requires a rational approach and more thinking; other roles rely more on feelings and emotions. To be great in some roles requires a more directing approach; other roles require a more supporting and engaging approach to achieve performance. These four attributes will form my Talents and Thinking Style grid to help define core thinking and, ultimately, talents (see Figure 1).

Additionally, it can be said that since talents represent our intrinsic thinking, and our personality and communication styles are also intrinsic to the way we think and process information, then there must be a direct correlation between our talents and our personalities/communication styles. You will see that each quadrant of the Talents and Thinking Style grid will represent core thinking, personality, and communication style. This will be used as the basis from which to define the sixteen core performance talents that are a critical component of the Fire Up! ProcessSM.

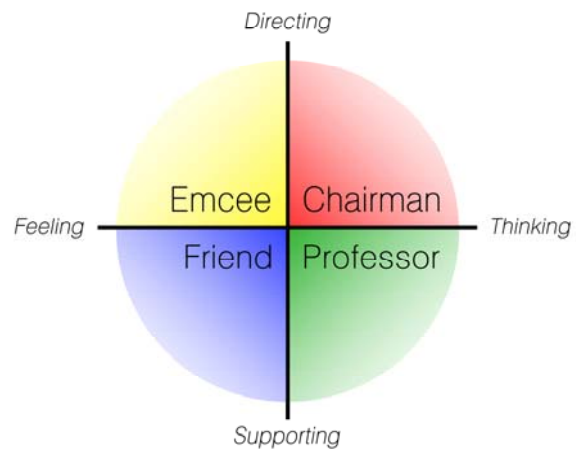


Figure 1

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Refer again to Figure 1. The initial grid is created by a horizontal axis indicating performance through thinking (rational) on the right and through feelings (emotional) on the left. To that is added a vertical axis that represents performance through a directing approach on the top, and a supporting or engaging approach to performance on the bottom. This creates four distinct quadrants that represent core thinking, behavior, and communication style. As such, each quadrant has been named to identify the core personality of that quadrant, Emcee, Chairman, Professor, and Friend. Each will be reviewed in greater detail as I also introduce the four corresponding talents that define each quadrant's perspective on performance.

Consider this. Each of us has two intrinsic performance drivers – either we approach performance using our heads (in a rational and structured way – thinking) or using our hearts (in an emotional and less structured way – feelings), *and* we approach performance by directing ourselves and others, or by supporting and engaging others. This combination will now generate sixteen distinct talents, four in each quadrant. This will define the sixteen core performance talents. The clearer you can define the talents needed in each role, the greater opportunity you will have of sourcing and hiring the right employee.

As I introduce the talents by quadrant, refer to Figure 2. The top right quadrant, indicated by the label *Chairman*, represents the dominant thinking and directing employee. In this quadrant, I introduce the talents of Leader, Connector, Driver, and Bottom-liner. These employees are known for their ability to move quickly, decisively and with purpose. Their performance happens in a rational and thinking approach, quick decision-making, comfort in taking charge, and in a personal focus on driving results. This is an empirical results-oriented quadrant, where performance is measured and empirical, and the talents and personalities exhibited in this

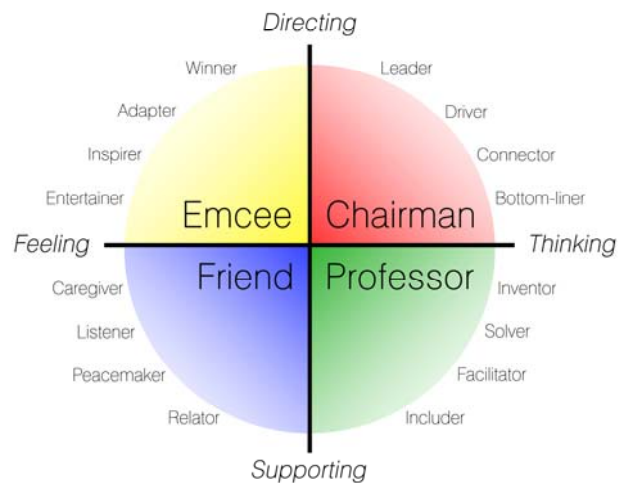


Figure 2

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quadrant take responsibility for actions, performance, and results. Roles that are well matched to talents that are exhibited in the Chairman quadrant include all roles of leadership, industrial age management, politician, law enforcement, facilities managers, entrepreneurs, administrators, and other take-charge roles.

Employees who test strongly in this quadrant are also intrinsically strong, direct and assertive communicators; they do not avoid confrontation. They appreciate brevity in details and exhibit a language that is more performance- than emotionally-based. They move and speak quickly, have more formal body language (handshake instead of hug), base responses and actions on fact (thinking), and are more independent and self-reliant.

Employees in this quadrant exhibit performance behaviors inspired by a more *thinking* approach on one extreme and a more *directing* approach on the other, though always a blend of the two attributes. The talents represented by this quadrant are presented in Figure 2 and are:

- **Leader** – Ability to envision and articulate the future; takes control; able to connect actions to results; strategic thinker; unites, directs, and leads others; intellectual, logical, and focused. Quadrant: Chairman – Directing/Thinking.
- **Driver** – Focuses on doing and getting things done; acts with purpose and direction; establishes order; processes many variables concurrently; organizes and delegates; competitive and focused. Quadrant: Chairman – Directing/Thinking.
- **Connector** – Problem-solving and systemic fact-based focus; connects facts and performance; defines, performs, and lives by goals and objectives; focused and empirical; methodical, logical, and careful. Quadrant: Chairman – Thinking/Directing.
- **Bottom-liner** – Focuses on significant performance – exponential instead of incremental; acts with intent; productive and disciplined; thinks carefully and strategically; always results-oriented. Quadrant: Chairman – Thinking/Directing.

Leader and Connector are more defined by their thinking than directing; Driver and Bottom-liner are more defined by their directing and achieving than by their thinking. All

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four represent the thinking, empirical, directing, and more solo approach to performance, though each highlights a very particular aspect of these attributes.

The bottom right quadrant, indicated by the label *Professor*, represents the dominant thinking and supporting (working with others) employee. In this quadrant, I introduce the talents of Inventor, Solver, Facilitator, and Includer. Employees in this quadrant are inventive, though pragmatic and focused on details. They are natural learners, teachers and advance performance by working in a thoughtful way with others. Performance is accomplished through their focus on details, guiding and supporting others, and clearly defining and holding a standard of excellence. This is an inventive and relationship-oriented quadrant, where performance is based on thinking, learning, and achieving with, and through others. Roles that are well matched to talents that are exhibited in the Professor quadrant include educators, instructors, intellectual age managers, engineers, architects, scientists, accountants, IT, journalists, bloggers, and others who focus on details, analysis, and shared information.

Employees who test strongly in this quadrant are logical, detail-oriented, though indirect communicators; they are openly aware of the feelings, perspectives, and attitudes of others. They exhibit supportive and encouraging language; they ask more than tell. They can be readily identified for their language of, and preoccupation with details, precision, organization, and completeness. They exhibit a more formal body language and more distance in proximity (handshake, greater distance with personal space). Relationships are important for employees in the Professor quadrant and they use these relationships to share and use what they know more than to connect emotionally with others.

Employees in this quadrant exhibit performance behaviors inspired by a more thinking approach on one extreme and a more supporting and working-with-others approach on the other, though always a blend of the two attributes. The talents represented by this quadrant are presented in Figure 2 and are:

- Inventor – Independent, creative, and an on-demand thinker; comfortable inventing, imagining, and innovating; considers the non-conventional; easily sees

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- potential, options, and opportunities; interested in new ideas. Quadrant: Professor – Thinking/Supporting.
- Solver – Approaches performance and relationships logically; methodical and analytical; addresses performance through fact and information; advances skills to be productive; disciplined approach to work and life; perfectionist mentality. Quadrant: Professor – Thinking/Supporting.
 - Facilitator – Focuses on learning and teaching others; shares information; advances performance of self and others; detail-oriented; interested in opinions, discussions, and new information; practical thinker. Quadrant: Professor – Supporting/Thinking.
 - Includer – Focuses on belonging, contributing, and being part of something important; looks to be understood and appreciated for work and effort; feels connected and helps others feel connected; makes a difference; shares and creates personal contacts; approachable, receptive, sensitive, and loyal. Quadrant: Professor – Supporting/Thinking.

Inventor and Solver are more defined by their thinking than their supporting, relationship-oriented perspective; Facilitator and Includer are more defined by their supporting, relationship-oriented perspective than their thinking. All four represent a thinking and more supportive team and relationship approach to performance, though each highlights a very particular aspect of these attributes.

The bottom left quadrant, indicated by the caption *Friend*, represents the dominant emotional decision-makers and supporting (relationship-oriented) employee. In this quadrant, I introduce the talents of Relator, Peacemaker, Listener, and Caregiver. Employees in this quadrant are caring, sensitive, and connected to others. They are natural relationship builders, read and understand others well, and are intrinsically good listeners and communicators. Their decisions are made many times by intuition; they are comfortable with emotions and feelings in the workplace. Roles that are well matched to talents that are exhibited in the Friend quadrant include service, retail, healthcare, mentoring, human resources, teachers (elementary), and support roles.

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Employees who test strongly in this quadrant are thoughtful, caring, and empathic. As indirect communicators, they are openly aware of, and receptive to, the feelings, thoughts, and emotions of others. They regularly use supportive and encouraging language; they ask more than tell. They can be readily identified by their language of feelings and emotions, a more informal and close proximity body language (hug, touch), and a more reserved, kind, and quiet demeanor. They develop strong relationships and use these relationships to perform.

Employees in this quadrant exhibit performance behaviors inspired by building supportive relationships, to those who are more inclined to make intuitive or emotional decisions, though always a blend of the two attributes. The talents represented by this quadrant are presented in Figure 2 and are:

- Relator – Builds relationships and personal contact; cares about the feelings, lives, and facts of others; enjoys meeting new people and sharing personal experiences; appreciates uniqueness and diversity of people; relaxed, accepting, and supportive. Quadrant: Friend – Supporting/Feeling.
- Peacemaker – Gets along with others; avoids confrontation; appreciates feelings, emotions, and differences in people; looks to bring and keep people together; looks for commonalities and agreement; value is in personal contact and relationships; open, kind, and genuine. Quadrant: Friend – Supporting/Feeling.
- Listener – Communicates clearly and effectively; takes great care to understand and to be understood; understands emotions and feelings; values personal interactions; patient, tolerant, and non-judgmental. Quadrant: Friend – Feeling/Supporting.
- Caregiver – Focuses on emotions and feelings; aware of feelings in self and in others; selfless in service; appreciates and understands individuality; strong sense of belonging, family, and team; openly cares for and supports others; considerate, empathetic, caring, and compassionate. Quadrant: Friend – Feeling/Supporting.

Relator and Peacemaker are more defined by their supporting, relationship-oriented perspective; Listener and Caregiver are more defined by their intuition and emotions. All

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four represent a more emotional and supportive team approach to performance, though each highlights a very particular aspect of these attributes.

The top left quadrant, indicated by the caption *Emcee*, represents the dominant emotional decision-makers whose approach to performance is more directing (self) than team-based. In this quadrant, I introduce the talents of Entertainer, Inspirer, Adapter, and Winner. Employees in this quadrant are upbeat, warm, emotional, and optimistic. They connect well with others, but maintain a clear focus on achieving, primarily as a solo effort. Center stage is a comfortable place for all of the four talents presented in the Emcee quadrant. Their decisions are made many times by intuition and feelings instead of by empirical thinking; they are comfortable with their emotions and feelings. Roles that are well matched to talents that are exhibited in the Emcee quadrant include sales, retail, performance artists, travel and leisure roles, and support roles that involve a variety of people and are fun.

Employees who test strongly in this quadrant are thoughtful, open, and honest with their feelings and emotions. As direct communicators, they comfortably say what they think. They exhibit upbeat, positive, and encouraging communication; they focus on fun, entertainment, and having a good time. They can be readily identified by their emotional, optimistic, and playful language, and close and engaging body language. They are strong personalities that can easily take charge and direct others. Though they can be successful with others, they are more solo performer who achieving by connecting emotionally with others.

Employees in this quadrant exhibit performance behavior inspired by making more emotional (than strictly rational) decisions and are more interested in solo performance over team performance, though they always show a blend of the two attributes. The talents represented by this quadrant are presented in Figure 2 and are:

- Entertainer – Focuses on fun, feelings, and getting along; upbeat; entertaining and candid; connects with all personalities; spontaneous; conversational, social, and happy; confident and dynamic. Quadrant: Emcee –Feeling/ Directing.

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- Inspirer –Brings out the best in others; able to activate, motivate, and inspire others; influential; unites and includes others; visibly present; charismatic and non-judgmental. Quadrant: Emcee – Feeling/Directing.
- Adapter – Is resilient and flexible; easy going and comfortable with change; accommodating and adaptable, accepting; handles many variables at once; focuses on the short term; resilient, responsive, and reactive. Quadrant: Emcee – Directing/Feeling.
- Winner – Needs to win, achieve, and be noticed; pride in great personal achievements; exploits opportunities; inspired by feelings of fame and success; upbeat and optimistic; confident, focused, and engaged. Quadrant: Emcee – Directing/Feeling.

Entertainer and Inspirer are more defined by their feelings and emotions; Adapter and Winner are more defined by their directing (self-oriented) attitude. All four represent an emotional (compared to rational), but more soloist approach to performance, though each highlights a very particular aspect of these attributes.

Below is an alphabetical listing of all sixteen talent topics:

- Adapter – Is resilient and flexible; easy going and comfortable with change; accommodating and adaptable, accepting; handles many variables at once; focuses on the short term; resilient, responsive, and reactive. Quadrant: Emcee – Directing/Feeling.
- Bottom-liner – Focuses on significant performance – exponential instead of incremental; acts with intent; productive and disciplined; thinks carefully and strategically; always results-oriented. Quadrant: Chairman – Thinking/Directing.
- Caregiver – Focuses on emotions and feelings; aware of feelings in self and in others; selfless in service; appreciates and understands individuality; strong sense of belonging, family, and team; openly cares for and supports others; considerate, empathetic, caring, and compassionate. Quadrant: Friend – Feeling/Supporting.
- Connector – Problem-solving and systemic fact-based focus; connects facts and performance; defines, performs, and lives by goals and objectives; focused and

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- empirical; methodical, logical, and careful. Quadrant: Chairman – Thinking/Directing.
- Driver – Focuses on doing and getting things done; acts with purpose and direction; establishes order; processes many variables concurrently; organizes and delegates; competitive and focused. Quadrant: Chairman – Directing/Thinking.
 - Entertainer – Focuses on fun, feelings, and getting along; upbeat; entertaining and candid; connects with all personalities; spontaneous; conversational, social, and happy; confident and dynamic. Quadrant: Emcee – Feeling/ Directing.
 - Facilitator – Focuses on learning and teaching others; shares information; advances performance of self and others; detail-oriented; interested in opinions, discussions, and new information; practical thinker. Quadrant: Professor – Supporting/Thinking.
 - Includer – Focuses on belonging, contributing, and being part of something important; looks to be understood and appreciated for work and effort; feels connected and helps others feel connected; makes a difference; shares and creates personal contacts; approachable, receptive, sensitive, and loyal. Quadrant: Professor – Supporting/Thinking.
 - Inspirer – Brings out the best in others; able to activate, motivate, and inspire others; influential; unites and includes others; visibly present; charismatic and non-judgmental. Quadrant: Emcee – Feeling/Directing.
 - Inventor – Independent, creative, and an on-demand thinker; comfortable inventing, imagining, and innovating; considers the non-conventional; easily sees potential, options, and opportunities; interested in new ideas. Quadrant: Professor – Thinking/Supporting.
 - Leader – Ability to envision and articulate the future; takes control; able to connect actions to results; strategic thinker; unites, directs, and leads others; intellectual, logical, and focused. Quadrant: Chairman – Directing/Thinking.
 - Listener – Communicates clearly and effectively; takes great care to understand and to be understood; understands emotions and feelings; values personal interactions; patient, tolerant, and non-judgmental. Quadrant: Friend – Feeling/Supporting.

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- Peacemaker – Gets along with others; avoids confrontation; appreciates feelings, emotions, and differences in people; looks to bring and keep people together; looks for commonalities and agreement; value is in personal contact and relationships; open, kind, and genuine. Quadrant: Friend – Supporting/Feeling.
- Relator – Builds relationships and personal contact; cares about the feelings, lives, and facts of others; enjoys meeting new people and sharing personal experiences; appreciates uniqueness and diversity of people; relaxed, accepting, and supportive. Quadrant: Friend – Supporting/Feeling.
- Solver – Approaches performance and relationships logically; methodical and analytical; addresses performance through fact and information; advances skills to be productive; disciplined approach to work and life; perfectionist mentality. Quadrant: Professor – Thinking/Supporting.
- Winner – Needs to win, achieve, and be noticed; pride in great personal achievements; exploits opportunities; inspired by feelings of fame and success; upbeat and optimistic; confident, focused, and engaged. Quadrant: Emcee – Directing/Feeling.

Now that a language of talents has been presented, it is important to learn how to assess talents and to start using the talent terms in the hiring process to assure that the correct attributes for each role are sourced. When you are clear about the talents required to be successful in each role, you significantly improve the ability to hire an employee who thinks in the way the role requires; this is a critical approach to drive successful intellectual-age performance.

This introduction to talents is presented to create an efficient and reasonable process to define talents; this will then allow your organization to clearly define the thinking and talents need by role. Once defined, you can use the information to source candidates who exhibit the specific talents needed to be successful in each role in the organization. This is the key to Inviting the right employee. The next step is to learn how to assess talents. For that, I introduce the Talent and Thinking Style Assessment™.

The Talent and Thinking Style Assessment™

Fire Up Your Employees and Smoke Your Competition

It is important to help candidates and employees learn how to define their core talents. This process involves the Talent and Thinking Style Assessment™ that is included with the worksheets printed directly from the website at the beginning of this chapter. This assessment will provide you with a list of attributes. Following the directions, you will assess each line of attributes with a 4 (most like you), to a 1 (least like you). Each line should include a scoring of 4, 3, 2, and 1. Once all rows are scored, add the columns down to calculate a score by column. These scores will indicate which quadrant(s) most represents the way you think. In some cases, your score will indicate that you are solidly in one quadrant. In other cases, you will find that you exhibit high scores in two quadrants. This may indicate that one of the axes is a more powerful description of you than a quadrant is. Refer to Figure 3. If you score high on both the Chairman and Professor (the vertical line), you are more of a thinker. If you score high on both the Professor and Friend (the horizontal line), you perform best through supporting relationships and engaging others. Similarly, if you score high on both the Friend and Emcee, you perform best through an emotional or intuitive approach. If you score high on both the Emcee and Chairman, you are more comfortable directing or solo performing.

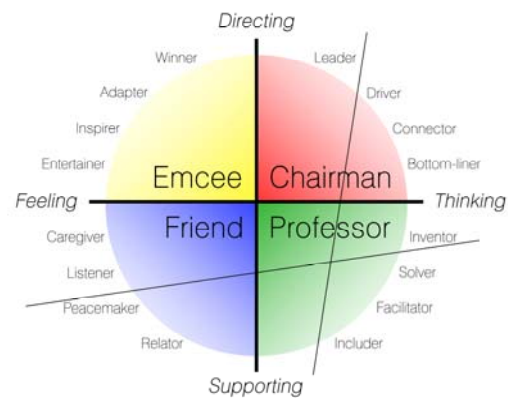


Figure 3

Once you locate your highest, or two highest quadrants, assess the talents listed in each.

Review the definitions for each of the Fire

Up! Talents and determine the four that most represent your natural thinking. To help you define your four primary talents, use the Primary Quadrant and Four Major Talents worksheet you printed from the website at the beginning of this chapter. On this worksheet, notice it asks for your quadrant(s), and then leaves room for you to assess which four of the sixteen talents are most like you. To better assess your talents, two additional columns are provided. Many times our talents go unnoticed to us; they are simply and naturally the way we think. In this exercise, you must solicit input from two others who know you well. Share your primary quadrant or axis information, and allow two others to define what they feel to be your talents. Record these in the columns

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indicated by #2 and #3 Assessment. Then, review your summary along with the input of others; circle those talents that you feel to be your four primary talents and record them in the final column on the worksheet.

You have now been introduced to the language of talents. Since talents drive performance in an intellectual workplace, you must be clear about employees' talent areas and the talents required by each role. The closer these two are matched, the more intellectually connected the employee is to his/her work which will influence his/her engagement level as well.

Time for Practice

From the worksheets you printed for this chapter from the website, access the Talent and Thinking Style Assessment™. Complete this according to the instructions provided on the Assessment. Next, complete Your Quadrant and Four Primary Talents worksheet. This will better introduce you to the language of talents and to your primary four talents. Complete these exercises before moving on.

Fan the embers – A summary and review

1. Thinking powers today's economy. Your strongest thinking is referred to as your talents.
2. Talents are unique to each of us; we have a unique combination of talents that are inspired in our early brain development.
3. You can no more control your talents than you can control your gender, race, or other natural development; they are part of your natural brain development. The goal is then to discover them and maximize them. Success will never happen in trying to add talents that do not exist.
4. Hire for talent; train for skill.
5. Once you discover your talents – your natural learning, yearnings, and interests – you can be better placed in roles that match these to the demands of the role. This encourages an employee's intellectual connection to his/her work.
6. All talents can be summarized by a combination of a *thinking or feeling* approach to performance, and a *directing or supporting* approach to performance. Use the Talent and Thinking Style Assessment™ to define your natural thinking and grid

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quadrant (Chairman, Professor, Friend, or Emcee). Use the quadrants to direct you to the specific talents. Rank those talents that are most like you. Enlist the help of two others who know you well to assist. Define your top four primary talents.

Your talents are the same in all aspects of your life – home, work, and leisure. Determining them for the workplace also prepares you to maximize them in life.