

Discover, Explore, and Uncover your Strengths: New Staff Orientation

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“Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.”

~Martin Luther King, Jr.

Abstract

Take a new approach to your job by discovering, exploring, and uncovering your strengths. Identify the ways in which you most ***naturally*** think, feel, and behave and then build upon those talents to find a connection in your institution that offers meaning and challenge. In today’s society, individuals are seeking essential competencies that can be an added value to the workplace. One of the challenges in assisting a new employee is aligning their ***natural*** job talents to their professional goals, so they can align their roles and responsibilities that best suits their potential.

Introduction

New staff orientation can sometimes appear to take on a robotic approach and one can wonder or guess will the information be retained in a few years provided I’m still at this institution. What is the importance of being able to identify natural talents and abilities while continuously learning your new role. Using individual strengths is another component that plays a huge role in a new environment and understanding how people have unique styles in which they can possibly recognize a potential partnership opportunity across campus-disciplines based upon their unique gifts.

Employee onboarding is a crucial practice. The first day is the most important aspect of a new hire’s journey as an employee to the organization. According to Michael Watkins (2003), he states “that beginning a new job is much like the first day of school with the potential to embarrass yourself.” Changing the focus and beginning with what do you well and how can we maximize those talents in order build upon your success with an organization, gives an individual a chance to relax and bring in positive energy at the start.

The idea around discovering and exploring strengths gives an encouraging charge and establishes a positive culture for the individual and the organization while laying the foundation for future success.

In the book, Watkins makes this statement, “Transitions are periods of opportunity, a chance to start afresh and to make needed changes in an organization. But they are also periods of acute vulnerability, because you lack established working relationships and a detailed understanding of your new role.”

Opening Activity (*individual brainstorming activity*)

In this opening activity there are three questions that are answered individually in order to begin to validate what you want to accomplish and learn during this workshop. Starting with your plan, gives you accountability and clarity to what your expectation is around new staff orientation, onboarding, and strengths. It will also assist with how you can implement and execute your learning objectives from this workshop session.

Purpose-Why did you choose to work for this institution?

Vision-How can knowing your strengths support for role?

Goal-What is your greatest expectation from today?

Purpose

This workshop will introduce you to a new way of adapting to your new career by applying your natural strengths. You will identify your strengths through self-assessment activities. You may even discover a new or re-fined career partnership opportunity by unveiling your *natural* talents and abilities.

Objectives and Impact

Each participant will be able to:

- Understand the advantages of focusing on strengths
- Identify complementary partnerships
- Understand how to engage new employees
- Explore new partnerships across disciplines

The impact of this workshop will assist you by identifying your strengths in order to transition on your campus as a new employee that will best utilize your potential. It will aid with selecting a direction in order to have the opportunity for you to do what you do best on a daily basis.

Discussion and Reflection

Discussions of what potential balconies and basements could arise as a new hire.

The activity requires groups of 2-4 individuals (this number will vary) to identify what are two ways to explore partnerships across campus. This activity gives participants a way to understand other departments across campus that they may not have otherwise thought to partner together.

Questions to consider for New Staff Orientation (*brainstorming activity*)

- *Who else do I need to know on campus?*
- *How do you get people within your team to consider partnering with faculty, administration, etc...?*
- *What are a few potential blind spots that you can be aware of next time push back happens with the idea of a partnership with another department?*
- *How can you create an environment is open and honest to share practices?*
- *Why is partnering within departments/disciplines your colleagues so important?*
- *Who else could assist you with identifying your team's strengths to maximize your role?*

About the Facilitator

Nerita is the Director of Professional Training & Development at North Hennepin Community College in Brooklyn Park, MN. She has a variety of expertise from Sales Management to Higher Education displaying exceptional leadership, organizational development, time management skills, enhanced knowledge of implementing and identifying training needs, and succession planning.

She has acquired knowledge in the areas of training & staff development, leadership development and other multi-faceted activities in the business realm. She has a special interest in ***Strengths-based development***, where she assists individuals with leveraging and maximizing their innate talents in order to develop their strengths. To contact her for further information, you can reach her via email nhughes@nhcc.edu or directly (763) 488-0272.

Reference Materials

Rath, Tom; Conchie, Barry (2008). Strengths-based Leadership

Bohm, David (1996). On Dialogue

Watkins, Michael (2003). The First 90 Days: Critical Success Strategies for New Leaders at All Levels