

The Flame Inside



Instinctive Performance Guide
by Gus Griffin

an Instinx® publication

Part of the *Screening for Employment & Promotion* module – see blog.instinx.com

The Flame Inside

by
Gus Griffin

Just the other day, I asked a successful businessperson: *What do you need in your business right now more than anything else?*

Without hesitation, he answered: *More good people.*

It's a common answer, because it costs so much to find them—not only in all the expenses involved in recruiting, but also in the distractions and losses that so often accompany this process. Every time an employer tries out someone new, he or she puts their enterprise at risk. The more senior the position, the greater the risk.

Personnel mistakes reduce efficiency, cut revenue and can set back plans for years. And sometimes it *takes* years to recognise a mistake.

One of the most wasteful practices in modern society is the way we still have to find “good people” for senior positions through trial and error. This applies in Sport and Entertainment just as much as it does in business. Who should we invest in? It can take a long time to determine just how much “good” someone has got inside of them.

But now a genuine breakthrough has been made in predicting human performance. It is a method of measuring a person's ability that tells you in advance how good they can become at any particular job you might be considering them for.

From janitor to space shuttle pilot, from waitress to head of state, this new measure will give you a clear idea beforehand of how successful the person is likely to be: compared to other candidates for that role. And it is a simple metric which doesn't force you to try to choose between apples and oranges—it clearly places all people measured within an accurate hierarchy of greater or lesser effectiveness.

Impact

This is one of those fundamental advances in measurement that will “change everything” eventually, like the compass ... or money. But, like the compass, it is also something you need to use in action to truly appreciate its power.

Sailing from place to place used to be a lot more difficult before the compass was discovered—especially the very necessary part about getting home again. And, of course, businesses were much harder to grow before money began greasing the wheels of industry. Now I invite you to imagine a workaday world:

- where the best person for the job is always the one who gets it;
- where a person of lesser ability is never again put in charge of more able subordinates. Or, to put it more positively, where the boss is always somebody who can lift his or her team members to play above their usual level;
- where people can be placed in positions with the same confidence of an engineer placing girders in a bridge or struts in the Space Station;
- where your investment in people always pays off: it becomes so easy to spot the real under-utilised “diamonds in the rough” and unerringly fast track them into key positions;
- where you never again have to risk promoting people beyond their capacity in order to find out if he or she can handle it (no more Peter Principle losses);

- where it's easy to be sure when a job is growing beyond someone's ability to handle it effectively;
- where office politics virtually disappear because of the equity in work assignments that becomes routine;
- where standards of team performance increase by orders of magnitude because it is much easier to see how each human "gear" really can mesh with others.
- And the list goes on ... impressively increasing your payroll ROI in dozens of different ways.

Sounds utopian, doesn't it? And perhaps it triggers your skepticism. But surely it's no more unlikely than a little piece of iron floating in a bowl of water enabling an earlier age to explore and conquer an entire world.

Functional Precision

In materials science, the strength of a material is "its ability to withstand an applied stress without failure" (Wikipedia). It is only because modern science can measure this so accurately that we're able to build the sophisticated structures, vehicles and machines that we do today.

Originally, the first "standard" measurements for building materials were the length of a forearm, hand or finger. That seems impractical to us today because we know how widely the dimensions of human bodies can vary. But a nanotechnologist could also point out how sloppy modern building measurements are compared to more precise branches of engineering.

It all depends upon what we find to be functional. If you lack any more precise frame of reference—if those body parts were in fact your functional *definition of precision*, regardless of how much they vary—then you make things work as best you can within that range of "sloppiness".

Measuring by body parts would be impossibly sloppy by today's building standards, but that is the point. They only seem sloppy to us

now because we have discovered much more precise and functional ways of testing and measuring such materials.

Managers of people and thus builders of organisations may not realise it, but they are grappling with a similar problem today. Yes, organisational psychologists have devised a multitude of different ways to predict how well suited a person might be for a job, but none of these yardsticks actually measure the *inborn instinctive strength of the individual*: his or her ability to “withstand an applied stress without failure.” Thus, so far, modern personnel profiling instruments have had only incremental impacts on how people are managed in the modern workplace.

Nowadays, enlightened employers say they “hire on attitude first”: meaning they place more importance on a person’s attributes of character and disposition than on his or her education, experience and skills. The assumption is that it is easier to teach the right skills to someone who already has the right attitude, rather than vice versa.

And yes, if tempered by common sense, this is a step in the right direction, as evidenced by the improved performance this policy usually produces. However, it is far from foolproof. A large proportion of candidates who “do a good interview” still prove to be less than willing or capable of doing a good job.

This is because a person’s so-called “intangibles” (the thought, emotion & behavior patterns measured in such attitudinal screening) are not the actual *source* of a person’s inner strength, only *consequences* of it. Just as listening to the sound of a motor might give you a rough idea of its power, it is not nearly the same as actually measuring its horsepower directly. Now that we can do just that with people in the workforce, brace yourself for a true revolution in the science of teambuilding and enhancing human performance.

The Discovery

The importance of this breakthrough lies in its application in the workaday world and the improved performance this generates, which is described in the following section. But before we get down to

those brass tacks, a few more words spent on sharing the science behind this new approach will make it easier for you to see how and why it works so well.

Neuroscientists and psychologists talk about a mental faculty they refer to as “executive function”. This is basically the part of our brain which is in charge. It directs all other activities *through placing attention* on what seems most likely to aid survival.

This is a complex multi-focus activity: in any given moment, your brain is apportioning a certain amount of available attention to dozens of different things that are going on inside and outside of your head ... and changing how much attention is given to each factor as seems appropriate from moment to moment. (This is so obviously what’s happening in anyone’s head that it requires no further description here.)

It turns out that this central brain activity—the way a person’s brain instinctively places his or her attention, the way it automatically attends to life’s events throughout every second of every day—is what determines *inner strength*.

To be crystal clear, this is not the same thing as deliberately concentrating on something. That would be a *conscious* choice to focus ... and, to some degree, a person can improve their ability to intentionally concentrate through training, meditation exercises and that sort of thing. But the way our brain *unconsciously* attends to the wide variety of life’s events all of the time is something more basic, more automatic and instinctive.

To give an analogy, a flame provides illumination and enables us to do things we couldn’t do in the dark. When a flame burns brighter, it illuminates a larger space or more detail within a space, and thus enables us to do more or be more effective in how we go about things.

So you could say that some people “burn brighter” than others. In other words, this central attention-placing ability varies from person to person.

A brain that is better than average at attending to life’s events provides more “illumination” for all other mental faculties to work with—thus making it easier to respond to situations in appropriate

and effective ways. Whereas, a brain with “dimmer” attention-placing ability makes it more difficult for all other mental faculties to do their natural job.

To extend this analogy, when a person *deliberately* concentrates, that would be akin to moving the flame closer to the object of your interest: which you can learn to do better and better. But it doesn't actually cause the flame itself to burn brighter.

So, in the same way, it has been discovered that every individual instinctively places their attention with a constant overall intensity: much like the way stars in the sky burn with a constant intensity.

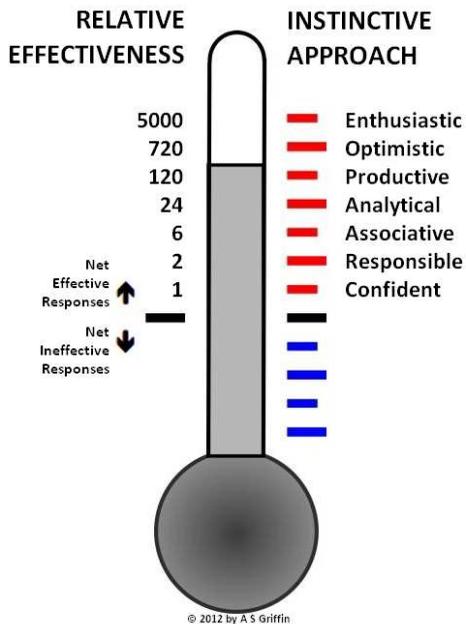
(In an emergency, when a person brings more of his or her attention to bear on a specific survival factor, it may feel like we're placing attention more intensely, but in fact this is a *gathering* of available attention, not an overall increase of it.)

To know what a person's inner strength really is, you have to find out how intensely their attention is instinctively illuminating life's events overall. This is what is measured by this new approach.

And just as every flame has a visible colour signature (from red to orange to yellow to white, etc)—which has disclosed a huge wealth of information about the inner composition of stars and planets to physicists and astronomers—so also there are outwardly observable signs of how a person thinks, feels and acts that make it possible to measure their inborn *attentional intensity* precisely.

Instinctive Performance Guide

Almost a hundred years after personnel screening pioneer, Walter Dill Scott, pointed out in 1917 that—*mental attitude is more important than mental capacity*—finally we have a way to quantify precisely what he was referring to. We have learned there are exactly *seven* meaningful levels of attentional intensity which determine how effectively a person routinely performs work or study:



The seven instinctive approaches to work and life listed above are profiled in the following chapters. (As the blue lines above indicate, overall there is more than seven instinctive approaches/attentional intensities, but only the ones that enable a person to work or study effectively under normal conditions are covered here.)

Every person capable of holding down a job in the workaday world is attending to life's events—thinking and feeling and acting toward life's events—in one of the seven modes described. Different situations trigger different responses, but the overall effectiveness of these responses will be consistent with one of these seven distinct patterns of behavior.¹

It is this instinctive *modus operandi* that governs how well the person gets their job done in approximate proportion to the figures given above. As you can see, the spread is very broad. If anything, these values given for Relative Effectiveness are conservative.

That's right: over a wide range of activities, one individual blessed with the attentional intensity which results in the *enthusiastic* pattern will accomplish at least 5,000 times as much value for an enterprise as someone coping with the much lower intensity level driving the *confident* pattern.

To avoid confusion, I should stress here that a person's intelligence is not necessarily an indicator of their strength. The conscious ability to solve problems is a valuable one, but often is not the critical factor that determines success or failure. For example, *willpower* usually influences the bottom line more than intellectual or emotional intelligence.

We humans tend to think of ourselves as *reasoning beings* much more than *instinctive animals*, but the truth is that our conscious mind hides our instinctive nature from us. It rationalizes and justifies why we think,

¹ *The attitudinal labels used here are not intended to indicate the relative importance of any particular attitude. They are simply names that indicate a certain attitudinal style or flavor that arises out of the pattern of cognitive, affective and behavioural phenomena generated by the level of attentional intensity designated. There are more precise ways to describe the inner workings of 'executive function', but this booklet is intended for use by managers, not psychologists, so our research findings here are expressed in terms that will be useful in the workplace.*

feel and act as we do and so weaves a story we invest in as to why things work out the way they do.

In fact, our conscious mind is more like a passenger in a taxi who has some say about *what* is done, but almost none about *how* it is done. Human instincts account for more than 90% of responses to life's events *before* we are even conscious of anything happening!

Hence, you will find it difficult, if not impossible, to identify your own pattern in the chapters that follow. Without professional guidance, you will almost certainly get that wrong. However, you will recognize many of your colleagues and friends as you read on.

(Sometimes we are too close to our loved ones to see their pattern accurately, so please think twice before sharing any opinion you might form about your spouse's instinctive approach to life!)

Also, If a picture is truly worth a thousand words, then you will find *INSTINX: Attitude X-ray Illustrated* a helpful aid. Available free at:
www.gusgriffin.net/blog/state-of-the-art-personnel-screening

THE INSTINCTIVE ENTHUSIAST

Starting at the top of the list, here we have the most naturally gifted men and women in the world, most likely to succeed in any human endeavor, regardless of what that might be. They usually “rise to the top” and become the alpha leader within their sphere of influence—exerting a positive influence throughout the process—more effectively than any others.²

They approach life with an attitude more or less like this:

*I create and re-create the game I am playing.
I pour energy into my ideas and they light up for others too.
Whatever I do I go for it, wing it as necessary, and get there.*

However, *trying* to think or act like this is not the same as naturally responding to life in this way. Only genuine *instinctive* enthusiasm—supported by the most laser-like ability to direct attention that Nature can endow in a human being—will result in the ability to conduct oneself consistently in this way:

I actively create the happy life I want for myself and others giving myself permission to define the rules of my game as I see fit. I am creative and expressive in that creativity. I am inventive and an effective innovator.

I know I can almost always handle things when they come up, so I'm willing to jump in and get going on something without worrying too much about making mistakes. I see what realities can work. I fit in with others only as I decide is necessary, not because it's 'the done thing'.

² In tribal times, when human institutions numbered their members in hundreds rather than thousands, instinctively enthusiastic individuals almost always wound up exerting more influence than anyone else, no matter what political or religious structures prevailed. However, in modern times, with its much larger organisations, such natural leaders have often found it necessary to move outside existing power structures in order to create the innovations they envision.

I don't hold back, I pour energy into my ideas and work to create new realities wholeheartedly. My happy sense of freedom and belief in my own ideas attracts others to jump onto my 'bandwagon' too.

If your life has been touched by such a person, you will know it. *Instinctive enthusiasts* are the paragons and role models of our race. They are not infallible, but they *are* the men and women who most inspire us, and whom we most aspire to be like.

If you want to give your enterprise every possible chance of success, then do whatever it takes to attract to your top jobs men and women wielding this attentional intensity.

THE INSTINCTIVE OPTIMIST

In the absence of an instinctive enthusiast, the man or woman next most suited to fill the alpha position in any group is *instinctively optimistic*.

Though not quite as likely to change the course of history, these natural leaders do usually manage to move us closer to the promised land. They steer their group forward to cooperatively achieve constructive visions and see to it that conditions steadily improve for all concerned, while displaying this kind of *optimistic* attitude most of the time:

*I expect things can turn out well for myself and others.
I look forward to the positive future I see is possible, then
develop and integrate available resources to bring that about.*

Once again, this is not merely a matter of learning how to "present a positive face" to the world. The genuine *instinctive optimist* has the attentional horsepower (intensity) to bounce back quickly from setbacks and not only get everyone to "see the silver lining" in the situation, but also exploit it to real advantage. From the inside looking out, this is how he or she goes about it:

*I am creating the positive future I want for myself and others.
This envisioned good future draws me to make it come true. My
good expectation leads me to see how things can be handled
positively, and thus I persuasively attract others to that better
future too; or at least I can usually get people to cooperate with
my positive intentions.*

*Having future clarity on why I'm doing things also allows me
to be flexible on how to get there: I gain a broad view of how
things can go, and how to turn around current difficulties, and
thus usually make things come out well for all concerned.*

On average, people prosper under such a leader; but not always. Sometimes he or she allows external influences to interfere and slow things

down in ways that really could have been avoided. Their lesser capacity for adaptation (compared to the instinctive enthusiast) does limit their effectiveness in specific, predictable ways. From the inside, this is how that limitation feels:

I feel constrained to try to fit in with the restrictions of my environment to some degree, instead of fully giving myself permission to play my own game now. I give my power away at times—or fail to exercise it as fully as I could.

I hold back more than is necessary, because I really don't like making mistakes, and there may be consequences I haven't foreseen.

I'll work to get things more precisely right than the situation actually calls for, though I may only recognise this in hindsight. I don't feel free enough to go for it and be as experimental as I know I could be. Focusing on the future as I do, sometimes I unwittingly put off creating the happy present for myself and others as well as I really could.

Nevertheless, as long as the role does not require a true game-changer, then you are onto a good thing whenever you can recruit onto your management team someone exercising this level of attentional intensity.

THE INSTINCTIVE PRODUCER

Because of its outward show of strength, this next attentional mode has misled many behavioural scientists into mis-identifying it as the typical human alpha type (perhaps drawing too close a parallel with our primate cousins). In actual practice, *instinctively productive* leaders are much less effective than optimistic and enthusiastic ones. They display this kind of attitude most of the time:

*I do know how things are and this is what needs to be done.
And whatever it takes, it's going to get done. Make it happen!*

But this is not just someone who is industrious and forthright in their views (behaviours which lesser attentional intensities may also produce). The genuine *instinctive producer* does have the personal capacity to lead, to exert his or her will over others—really impinge on them and transmit energy to them—thus tackling life and work in this way:

*I am usually strongly forging my way ahead in life, and involving others with me when it's practical to do so. I am action-oriented: I see what can be done and get straight into doing it, or get others into doing it, without wondering whether I should go to the effort or not. I normally feel on top of the effort or strength or resolution required in most situations—it can feel like a chore at times, but a chore I **will** meet.*

I'm usually certain in my views and ready to demonstrate why they are right. If others are involved, I naturally tend to lead or control the situation so that progress is being made by myself and by them. I usually want more progress and look to see what further resources I can harness to get it.

In their usually ambitious (but not always scrupulous) climb toward the top, such people definitely do get things done—personally and through controlling others—but they often overlook the intangible

costs involved. The limitations of their attentional capacity result in inefficiencies of this kind:

I'm not as good at predicting outcomes or consequences as I could be. I am ready to deal with whatever I have to, but that approach doesn't always get the best results: being strong in case I need to be strong means I prepare for difficulty whether it's necessary or not. This "non-optimism" causes me to expend unnecessary energy and exert unnecessary force at times.

I'm not always as flexible about the way forward as I could be. I hold onto my track too much at times, which can lead to conflict, or simply cause me to miss alternative and more positive solutions.

I tend to forcibly push my way ahead, driving to make progress, which may cause me to lose sight of the big picture and also get too serious about it all. I tend to burn people out because they can't keep up. I admit that a broader, more flexible view – and a lighter, more persuasive energy – would sometimes be more effective: but I am what I am and I do make decisions and get things done!

In the absence of an instinctively *enthusiastic* or *optimistic* boss who can rein in the instinctive producer when needed, leaders of this type may demand their followers take matters well beyond what truly benefits the group and its stakeholders, not to mention the rest of the human race.

(In other words, this level of attentional intensity tends to promote bullying behavior. More human conflicts are precipitated by “productive” impatience than by any other psychological cause.)

The bottom line, however, is that every enterprise needs someone at the helm who can, at the very least, take charge and *make* things happen—and that's what you'll get with this level.

THE INSTINCTIVE ANALYST

Here we have the performance level of the pseudo-alpha: someone who is able to *appear* like he or she has the answers and skills you'd need in a leader, but who lacks the force of personality to actually keep things working during difficult times and keep difficult people on track.

Their mastery of knowledge, rather than people, enables the *instinctively analytical* man or woman to *advise* and *guide* staff in their jobs, but not necessarily lead them. They display this kind of attitude most of the time:

I'm a clear thinker. I estimate situations well with the info I've got. I can usually see what is needed for myself and others and endeavour to guide or get that happening somehow.

This is more than merely having expertise about something, it is being able to influence and guide others effectively with that expertise. A man or woman governed by this approach relies on their own judgment, seeks their own counsel and comes up with their own answers.

Instinctive *analytical* intensity enables a person to observe and evaluate what's going on with sufficient clarity to find a workable path ahead, for oneself and for others, thus processing life's events something like this:

I can usually see clearly what should be done – or if I can't see the answer, then I know clearly I have insufficient data and will seek a way of getting it. I have precision of thinking and belief in my answers, not only for myself but also as they apply to other people.

I can usually see where situations should be taken and am willing to try to steer things along that clearly computed path of achievement, or at least put forward what I think is right. Consequently, where others are involved, I'll give good guidance if they are willing to listen.

However, the key limitation of this instinctive approach is its over-reliance on *answers* to do the actual work. He or she tends to forget that the map is not the territory. Not possessing the attentional horsepower that would enable them to manage force effectively and take over control when necessary, such people seek to proceed along the "line of least resistance". When it is difficult to calculate such a path forward (when the only way ahead is to force your way through), they become frustrated and exhausted, experiencing difficulties like this:

I don't always immediately commit to implementing what I see to be right. I work with answers, but don't automatically convert them into actions now. I sometimes wish I didn't have to or otherwise feel like acting is too much effort.

I can be too thought-oriented, do too much analyzing, at times. And I don't automatically back my answers with certainty and commitment, sometimes "wimping out" from controlling difficult situations.

I will guide others, but I won't exert control to lead them, unless something urgent or inspiring happens to lift me into doing so temporarily. At times I put people offside by asserting my "rightness" a little too much.

No matter how many answers he or she has, no matter how smart and qualified they may appear, it is a mistake to put such a person in charge of too large a group, or a critical part of the enterprise that must not fail—and this will usually become evident within months, if not weeks. (Another look at the thermometer diagram on page 7 will show you the cutoff line for key leadership positions.)

However, if you need to fill an executive position that is not all that demanding—if it only requires a "fair weather sailor" at the helm—then you will find it sufficient to appoint a person capable of this level of attentional intensity.

THE INSTINCTIVE TEAM PLAYER

Well out of range of aspiring to alpha status (except in their private dreams), next we have the *instinctively associative* individual.

His or her natural appreciation of synergy—how we are better off working together than apart—enables such a man or woman to be a useful supporter in just about any kind of human endeavor. They display this kind of attitude most of the time:

*Let's get together on this. We can help each other.
Let's focus on the positives and make things even better.*

Once again, this is not merely a matter of trying to be positive. In most situations, a positive, friendly manner comes easily to such a person, but he or she is also capable of perceiving the value to be gained from any given connection and reach out for that. Their attentional horsepower also enables them to recognise helpful resources that others might miss, resulting in this kind of open approach to life:

I focus on the things and people around me I can work with to create more of what we want. I'm very "we" conscious and look for sources of support as well as how I can support.

I am naturally open and want to get closer to the positives I see in people and things. I come across as friendly, ready to focus on their good points, and ready to see how we can improve things together. I make a good team member.

This all sounds like good stuff, doesn't it? The sort of thing they teach you to foster as a manager. However, behaving this way and being able to get others to behave this way are two very different kettles of fish.

What prevents men and women limited to this *instinctively associative* approach from stably commanding alpha status within a group, or even beta (second rank status), is their inability to switch their open-

ness and positivity off. As a result, they hamper themselves in ways like this:

My general solution of "getting closer" doesn't always work: I can be too open, leaving myself vulnerable to negativity, or just puzzled about what to do about it. Being too general at times, my thinking can feel fuzzy – an "I don't know" feeling – when more specific answers to situations are needed.

Being overly democratic and "we" oriented, I can have difficulty in guiding people and taking the lead. I may offer my viewpoint, but I won't actively seek to get across what I think should happen, because it's hard for me to know things that clearly and precisely, or feel sure enough that my answer is worth pushing.

I often find disagreement intimidating. My loyal nature can lead me into persisting with a relationship that has actually become dysfunctional and codependent. So sometimes I do get taken advantage of, but I try to guard myself against that.

These guys can be great to have on your team. With reinforcement from above, he or she can even do fairly well in charge of some relatively straightforward activity. But don't expect them to handle independent command with any consistency—except as an unavoidable and temporary stopgap.

He or she will be willing to try for you: they will often continue to support you even at cost to their own well-being. Perhaps they won't make things any worse, but they definitely won't be able to stop things going from bad to worse, if that's what is already happening. For that, you need to find someone with greater attentional capacity.

THE INSTINCTIVE WATCHDOG

This next rung down in this attentional pecking order is well out of the leadership stakes and also unlikely to enjoy much informal support within a group. Individuals governed by an instinctively *responsible* approach may also fail to measure up in subordinate roles, especially where his or her ability to form cooperative relationships is essential to success.

Such men and women are self-appointed experts on the empty half of the glass. They display this kind of attitude most of the time:

*I tell it like it is, which includes criticism if it's called for.
If something is wrong it shouldn't be ignored and should
be corrected, for everyone's benefit.*

In their defense, they are almost always reliable when performing appropriately limited roles. His or her orientation to identify what's wrong—what needs fixing or correcting—and do something about it, can be made useful to almost any enterprise. (In keeping records “free from error”, in security roles, etc.) Their instinctive sense of personal accountability and alertness to error or threat enables them to not overlook but deal with what is necessary in these ways:

I take a straight look at what's needed and usually do it, and that means do it well, whether it's enjoyable or not. I keep tabs on what is going on around me – how others affect my activities and how I affect theirs – and I'm usually willing to do whatever is necessary to improve things.

My focus "out there" gives me a fairly good recognition of the truth of things: I can see it and thus tell it like it is. With this awareness I experience some concern for other people's welfare as well as my own.

Their conception of "truth", however, is relative to the penetration of their perception, which is not deep. Often oblivious to the redeeming features of a person or situation, the *instinctively responsible* team

member will seriously impede production and effectiveness by addressing wrongness *at the expense of rightness*—if not prevented from doing so by their superiors.

Their unrelenting glass-half-empty orientation can also seriously undermine team morale and their superiors won't know that is going on, because normally they don't feel as free to criticise the boss as they do others. (Though you will probably know what the sharp edge of their tongue feels like, because sometimes they just can't help themselves.)

This natural “pruning” ability can produce a short-lived vigor in some new activity he or she takes over—causing him or her to look more effective than they actually are. However, their inability to lead others will soon make itself obvious. Even when made aware of the damage he or she is doing, it is not something they can easily control:

In actual practice, to me “improving things” usually means correcting what's wrong. While this is better than ignoring things, too much of a focus on wrongnesses tends to make me feel burdened with more and more things that need correcting.

My orientation to protecting the situation from people's negatives can make me appear aloof and cause me to isolate myself. So I don't realise I'm making it difficult for others to support me, until it's brought to my attention. And people don't respond well to having their negatives pointed out and corrected. I have to keep reminding myself that attention placed on enhancing positives would attract more cooperation.

I can also be too self-critical—not enough of a friend to myself as well as others—which does take me to a dark place and shake my confidence at times.

To place such a person in charge of others—or in any position where they can grant or deny an application—is begging for trouble. To give him or her a role which affects goodwill is equally foolhardy—unless you have some special reason for wanting to run your enterprise into the ground.

Yes, he or she can be grooved in to perform some essential “clean-up” or security service, but tread carefully when employing someone with this limited capacity for attentional intensity.

THE INSTINCTIVE EGOIST

Here we reach the lower limit of instinctive approaches which can profitably be employed in a normal role in the workaday world, but, in this case, only if you keep the *instinctively confident* individual on a very short leash. That is the only way you can make their contribution outweigh the trouble they will otherwise cause you and especially your team.

A person limited to this *confident* level of attentional intensity can't help themselves, because their perception doesn't extend to an effective appreciation of *consequences*. He or she will break rules, morals, even laws, out of pure selfishness. No matter how much you try to help them, they will still bitch and tell lies about you behind your back just because they feel like it. Though oblivious to the undermining effect he or she is having on others, they will still expect everyone to interrupt what they're doing and applaud whenever they do something right, and will pout if they don't.

Now why, you may well ask, would you ever want to include someone like that in your team? Well, sometimes the overweening *instinctive confidence* of such an individual enables him or her to excel at some solo activity that the rest of us mere mortals fall short on. Where "star quality" is required—but ability to cooperate with others is not a necessity—they might just fit the bill. This is the kind of attitude they display most of the time:

I am confident I'm going to get the result I go for. I enjoy my competence and my comforts. I do trust my judgment.

Even in this case, the confidence here is more than a wishful affirmation. The attentional horsepower of this person *can* enable them to excel at a particular talent, as long as that doesn't require an interest in other people's needs (except when it will get them what they want, as in the case of a self-serving salesperson appearing to care about the "mark").

This kind of outlook, which can be quite effective in a limited scope, feels like this on the inside:

I really notice and appreciate how I am doing things well now and what is giving me pleasure now. I expect to win at what I do and I expect to enjoy things – so I see to it that I do.

Normally I feel strong self-reinforcement which makes me feel good about myself and enhances my ability to perform well. I tend to select pursuits on the basis of what I know I can do well, thus building up my performance and my career on a succession of wins. I cater to my own needs.

If you lived on a planet where all of one's needs were automatically taken care of and there was no-one else around—then this would be the ideal attitude. You are your own best company. However, when the actions and needs of others intrude into the picture—as they always do—these are the issues you find yourself struggling with:

There's a comfort zone I'd rather not move out of if possible. As long as negative circumstances don't stop me, it often seems best to ignore them. This can be unwise, as it allows situations to get worse than they would have if I'd faced them squarely, but usually I can't be bothered.

Having to deal with negatives I "shouldn't have to" tends to exasperate me. I'd probably feel less put upon if I just dealt with the bad stuff when I had to, but I prefer to find more enjoyable things to do instead.

Attention centred on how well I am doing can cause me to miss what's really going on "out there" with others: I forget to "check in" with them. I suppose I tend to blame other people for things more than I should, but they really can be annoying at times. And yeah, while I'm being honest, I might as well admit that I'm selfish too.

The only effective way to harness this *instinctively confident* rascal is to define his or her role as narrowly as possible and then confine them rigidly to it. If the value of their contribution does not justify the level of supervision necessary to do that, then their irresponsible behavior will always end up outweighing their usefulness.

As a footnote, it is surprising how often the instinctively *responsible* or *confident* individual manages to wheedle, alarm or beguile their way into positions of “borrowed” influence. Incapable of genuine leadership, instead he or she whispers in the ear of the real seat of power, which always spells serious trouble for the enterprise.

So, if you do employ them, remember to keep a weather eye out for trouble stemming from the mischief that people with these limited levels of attentional intensity inevitably stir up.*

* **A small caveat:** I advise you to get expert confirmation before basing irreversible personnel decisions on anything you read here. It’s important to make a distinction between primary and secondary instinctive influences. A person may exhibit some of the attitudes and behaviours described herein without that necessarily indicating the exact strength of their innate attention-placing ability.

For example, a *prima donna* in the performing arts (or in any field, for that matter) could seem like they are coming from the overly-confident headspace described above. However, that could be overlooking the ultimate *positive effect* he or she is having on the enterprise as a whole and their ability to function in concert with others.

True professionals might exhibit selfishness—they know what support they require to do a great job and make damn sure they get it—which leads amateurs who don’t “get it” to mislabel them as “difficult”. But a real pro is not incapable of team action.

It is easy to see in the body of work of certain actors how they draw upon particular instincts to create their fictional portrayals. Clint Eastwood’s Dirty Harry, for example, is a classic example of the *responsible* instinct given full rein. While Goldie Hawn has made an art form out of portraying *associative* characters—and Tom Cruise’s portrayal of the self-absorbed Charlie Babbitt in *Rain Man* brings alive this description of the *confident* pattern.

But make no mistake about it, these are not the attitudes which govern the life conduct of such successful performers, merely secondary instinctive influences they find they can access in order to portray a role called for. There are attitudinal “places” we can all “go to” if we think it necessary, but these are not the overall inescapable attitudinal style that is generated by the level of one’s attentional intensity.

THE INSTINCTIVE PECKING ORDER

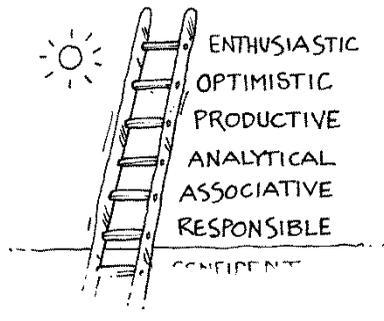
From what you have read so far, it will be obvious that team morale, cooperation and productivity will usually be excellent under the leadership of an *instinctive enthusiast*; not quite so exciting but still good under an *instinctive optimist*; disaffection and staff turnover begins to become an issue under an *instinctive producer*—and so on.

What isn't so obvious is the damage that results when an employer ignores these attitudinal dynamics which are at play within their organisation, especially in the "chain of command".

We like to think that "cream naturally rises to the top" and perhaps it did back in the Stone Age days of tribal living, when our distinctively human instincts evolved. But ever since agriculture made more complex human institutions possible, we seem to have lost the leadership plot. Every system humans have devised so far for selecting a leader has failed at least as often as it has succeeded.

(The two superpowers of the 20th century—USA & USSR—both elevated only three *instinctive enthusiasts* to the top job within that 100-year period. Teddy Roosevelt, Franklin D Roosevelt and John F Kennedy in the West; Vladimir Lenin, Nikita Khrushchev and Mikhail Gorbachev in the East.)

There will always be office politics going on out of sight from those "above", but this only seriously interferes with performance when you appoint someone in violation of the instinctive pecking order evident in these profiles. In other words, the rule is: never put someone lower on this instinctive ladder in charge



of someone higher. That's when morale really begins to suffer and team synergy goes out the window.

This is probably the most common blunder that employers make. It is certainly one of the most expensive.

It doesn't matter how many letters your favourite can string after his or her name, nor how many people sing their praises, nor even how many runs they already have on the board. He or she will not know how to get the best out of those subordinates who possess greater instinctive ability. Instead, they will unwittingly and inevitably circumvent and dissipate the value you are paying for. (The only exception to this being when they know they are grooming someone to take over.)

Conversely, when your organisation chart *is* congruent with the realities of the human horsepower pulling this way and that within your enterprise, ever-increasing teamwork and productivity is the result. No matter how many egos such an adjustment might bruise, forces within your enterprise *will* gradually and spontaneously come into alignment.

That is why, at **Instinx.com**, whenever possible we compile a **Team Attitude Map** first before giving any advice to clients on management and human resources issues. In the same way that the X-ray transformed medicine a century ago, this map now magically reveals the internal causes of health and dis-ease within any organization ... simply by measuring each team member's inner strength as generated by their *attentional intensity*.

IMPLEMENTATION

If “our people are our greatest asset”—as most business leaders declare—then this booklet you are reading right now contains your most important and profitable asset management system. Here finally is the tool that will enable you to manage that asset to get the most possible valuable from it.

The first step in this process is to start with yourself. Once you have positively identified your own inner strength level, this makes it so much easier to manage your own career (and life) effectively.

It will clarify how much of your instinctive horsepower (inner strength) is truly being utilised in your current position and how easy or difficult it will be for you to keep on “climbing the ladder.” (Whether your career progresses through being promoted or headhunted to more senior positions, or through growing the enterprise and sphere of influence which you command, makes no difference—the same principles apply.) Equally, it will clarify how to create the *personal* relationships you want as well.

It will also make clear exactly how an **Instinx® Performance Coach** can help you to permanently increase your inner strength and thus raise your natural career trajectory.

Most importantly, knowing your own operating level gives a personal point of reference that will bring this whole subject alive. Suddenly, so many puzzling things about your own personality and relationships with others will now make sense. The true path to realising your full potential will stretch out ahead, beckoning you onwards and upwards.

Then, as you add the knowledge of your colleagues' and employees' instinctive horsepower to that of your own, gradually building up an ATTITUDE X-RAY of the relationships existing in your enterprise, more and more will be revealed about the real causes of things. Life and achievement becomes so much easier because the truth about why things do or don't get accomplished has been brought into plain view.

And this is as far as I can take you in this **Instinctive Performance Guide**. What I have shared so far in this booklet has possibly raised more questions for you than it has answers. However, more words will not give you more understanding.

To truly appreciate this new way of measuring people's performance—to test its truth and usefulness in your life and career—now you must act. Now you have to pick up the phone and arrange for your own **Instinx Instinctive Performance Assessment**.

It will be one of the most important and beneficial things you ever do ... not only for yourself, but also for your colleagues and loved ones. You have my word on that.

Gus Griffin

Mornington Peninsula

March 2014

'Instinx' is a registered trademark and service mark of A S Griffin to be used only as authorised in writing.