

SMARTS

Are We Hardwired For Success?

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The Web site for this book is at www.smartsthebook.com.

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MAIN IDEA

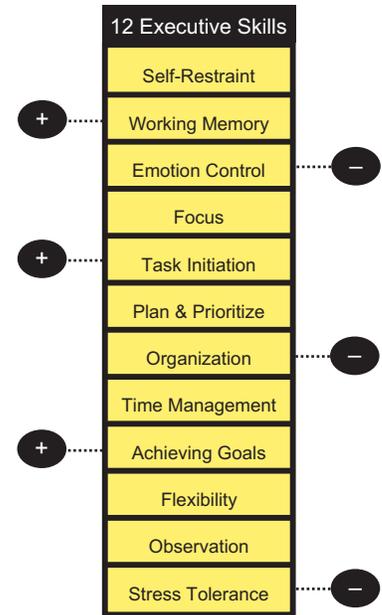
Every person on the planet is hardwired differently and uniquely from a neuroscience point-of-view. In terms of the twelve executive skills – the skills that help you get things done – that means by the time you’re an adult, there are usually two or three areas you are naturally strong in and two or three areas of weakness. With planning and a little luck, you’ll probably move into a career which plays to your strengths while minimizing the impact of your weaknesses.

From an organizational perspective, if you understand the strengths and weaknesses of the others who may be involved, you can build better teams and match the right people to the right jobs. You increase your chances of getting things done by learning how to better leverage the strengths of the people involved.

“The effects of understanding Executive Skill strengths and weaknesses are enormous for individuals and for entire organizations. Aligning your strengths with the jobs, tasks or teams that best use those strengths presents a winning combination. When an organization does this as a matter of course, there are a number of positive benefits across the company:

- *Productivity: The right matches increases the chances of tasks being accomplished fast.*
- *Quality: Matching the right people to the right jobs increases the likelihood of less errors.*
- *Employee Recruitment: Getting the right people in the right job will be easier.*
- *Employee Retention: Employees doing tasks that match their skills are happier.*
- *Training: Can be focused on enabling people to identify and leverage their strengths.*
- *TeamWork: Teams can be properly matched assuring better results and less conflict.*
- *Competitive Edge: Correctly matching people and jobs provides an advantage.*
- *Stress: With people better matched to their jobs, the toll on individuals performing day-to-day activities will be reduced.*
- *Meetings: The right people at the right meetings will increase efficiency and more accurately predict meeting outcomes.*
- *Execution: The ideas or strategies will be developed by the right people who can keep tabs on what can reasonably be done.*
- *Information Management: When people know their strengths, they can align their information flow to support those strengths.”*

– Chuck Martin, Peg Dawson and Richard Guare



Exploration – Find your own profile – and then do the same for those you work with Pages 2 - 3

In order for you to use your executive skills profile to best effect, you first need to carry out some self-assessment. Determine what your profile looks like and then note the strengths and weaknesses of others you interact with routinely. This will ultimately provide you with clues on how best to build your own career and how to work effectively with others.

Application – Strategy #1 – Always play to your strengths and ignore your weaknesses Page 4

Once you know your strongest and weakest skills, you have two choices. You can either leverage your strongest skills to maximum benefit or you can start trying to improve your weakest skills. Experience has shown over and over the best approach is to capitalize on your strengths and leave your weaknesses to take care of themselves.

Application – Strategy #2 – Use these profiles to manage others better. Page 5

Once you know the strengths and weaknesses of the people in your organization in fine detail, not only can you be more realistic about what your organization might be able to accomplish but you can also start working on programs to help people enhance their executive skills. Again, working to polish and enhance areas of strength in others will be more productive than trying to overcome someone’s weaknesses.

Application – Strategy #3 – Always try and match specific tasks with appropriate profiles Page 6

In just the same way as you can develop an executive skills profile for people, you can also develop a profile for a specific project or assignment. Once you do that, you then know what kind of people are most likely to excel at that assignment – people who have comparable personal executive skill profiles themselves.

Application – Strategy #4 – Align your skills with what is valued most in the marketplace Page 7

Most companies have an “official” set of values which correspond to their mission statement and an “unofficial” set of values which actually dictate who gets paid the most. Be aware of these differences and position yourself advantageously. Develop career management strategies which enable you to stay in the ranks of the top earners rather than gradually falling off the pace.

Application – Strategy #5 – Find ways to deal with cognitive bandwidth limitations Page 8

“Cognitive bandwidth” limitations means you’re stressed out and unable to deal with any new information or challenges. You feel overwhelmed and can’t even visualize where to begin. Your weakest executive skills will usually fail first so when you notice this occurring, it’s time to get into action before any real damage is done.

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