

THE HIGHLANDS COMPANY

Improving the Bottom Line by Enhancing Worker Performance

The Highlands Company was founded upon two basic principles:

1. that every individual is distinct from every other; and
2. that every individual is the product of many factors. The most important of these factors are: natural abilities, interests, values, family background, goals, personal style, skills, and the individual's current position in the career development cycle.

We call these eight factors the Personal Vision Factors.

The unique contribution of the Highlands Company is to define an individual's natural abilities and to relate them to the other seven Vision Factors. It accomplishes this by administering the Highlands Ability Battery, a hands-on online measurement of nineteen different natural abilities. When employees know their abilities (i.e., their strengths) they can build on them in ways that increase productivity and job satisfaction.

The goal of the Highlands Company is to develop self-awareness and an understanding of other people. It accomplishes this by means of a one-on-one feedback during which a certified Highlands Affiliate interprets the individual's results on the Battery and relates them to the other seven Vision Factors. When employees understand the personalities, personal styles and strengths of the people they work with – their supervisors, colleagues, staff members, and clients – they are able to interact and communicate with them better.

The purpose of the Highlands Company is to enable individuals to recognize and work from their strengths and to adjust for their weaknesses. This helps people to make effective contributions to the workplace and to their families and friends. Since 1995, Highlands has offered programs conducted by Highlands Affiliates. When employees are encouraged to make contributions to the health of the businesses they work for, they are more satisfied and effective.

The Highlands programs enable individuals to improve their performance, to understand and work more effectively with others, and to improve their communication skills.

By tapping into Highlands' resources, employers can build programs in personal and professional development, self-improvement, career options, team building, key-employee retention, leadership development, mentoring, employee motivation, increasing productivity, integrating the HR function, and many other compelling corporate goals.

This booklet traces Highlands' contributions to some of America's leading companies.



The Highlands Company helps individuals to maximize the potential within them. An understanding of individual natural abilities fosters increased and effective communication and problem-solving and provides a valuable tool for self-management. The employee who knows his or her most effective personal style can ask for and take on more responsibility and work more efficiently and productively, with greater creativity and satisfaction. Because employee turnover is extremely costly for companies, effective individual self-management has the bottom-line effect of creating a more stable workforce staffed by employees who work more effectively and also feel more loyalty to the company. Many businesses have used Highlands to promote company-wide benefits through personal and professional development.

Building Self-Awareness



Since the year 2000, The Highlands Company has been a prime provider of programs to the GSK myLearning Community. The programs build employee self-awareness and satisfaction.

Highlands conducts programs for GSK in Raleigh/Durham, the Philadelphia area and in the UK. Programs are held regularly throughout the year. Participation in the programs is voluntary. It is a testament to the popularity and success of the Highlands programs that after many years, the rate of participation remains constant at twelve-fifteen participants per month.

The Highlands programs consist of four separate elements:

- Each participant completes the Highlands Ability Battery, gold standard among assessment tools.
- Each participant reviews a comprehensive 35-page report analyzing the individual's results on the Battery.
- Each participant gets a 2-hour feedback from a Highlands Affiliate, an in-depth analysis focusing on the individual's learning, communication and problem-solving styles.
- Each participant attends a full-day workshop of 10-15 GSK employees in which a Highlands Facilitator relates the individual's abilities and personal work style to the seven other factors which influence employee performance and interpersonal working relationships.

We use Highlands as a main focus in the GSK core curriculum because we believe that the right person performing in the right role benefits the individual, the larger GSK organization and our clients. The role of innate talents in performance is powerful. The Highlands Ability Battery remains a uniquely powerful self-management tool....

Nancy King, Global Operations Manger, The Learning Link, GlaxoSmithKline

The Highlands programs at GSK are received enthusiastically and get very high marks:

“This should be a required course for all employees.”

“Gave me many ideas for future areas to explore – personal and professional – for more satisfaction.”

“Really enjoyed the class – will be able to use the information for future plans and goals.”

Creating a Coaching Model

Printpack is the largest privately held flexible-packaging converter in the US. It has about 4,000 employees in 18 domestic plants, and about \$1 billion in revenue. The Director of Organizational Development was interested in creating a coaching model for the development of front-line leaders so that workers would be taken off the manufacturing floor as little as possible. The company wanted to enable the growth of a learning organization at the very lowest worker level. The model would depend on the ability of people who were trained as coaches. Printpack called the program the Frontline Leadership Development Program.



Printpack used Highlands as a foundation for its coaching program, terming it “Leadership from Within.” The process helped the Company to answer these vital learning issues: How does this person learn? How does he or she solve problems?

By understanding individual differences in learning and problem-solving, coaches can go out to the plant floor and communicate with the workers on their own ground. They can work from a viewpoint that centers on the individual’s work. According to the Director:

Highlands helped the coaches become the delivery mechanism for development to our production supervisors. It provided a gymnastic-like floor mat—a platform from which to take off and land.

...most of us, even those of us with modest endowments, will have to learn to manage ourselves. We will have to learn to develop ourselves. We will have to place ourselves where we can make the greatest contribution.

Peter F. Drucker

Team Building



The business workplace is geared toward working in teams – executive teams, project teams, leadership teams, and strategic planning teams. A team is made up of district individuals, each working towards a common goal. Highlands recognizes the importance of each individual’s contribution to the team. We help all individuals, whatever their level within the organization, to utilize the abilities that make them most productive, effective and satisfied. This self knowledge can lead to greater utilization of the unique contributions each individual can make, an appreciation for the diversity among team members, and increased communication and interpersonal understanding. All of these results enhance the cohesiveness of a team. The following examples illustrate how businesses have utilized Highlands team programs to further their goals.

Maximizing Team Potential

Highlands is a prime provider of programs in the GSK myLearning Community.

Highlands worked with the Director of Corporate Learning and Development at Glaxo Wellcome, a predecessor to the present GSK. The program was designed to help the members of the Director’s team gain a better understanding and appreciation of one another, improve the manner in which they communicated, and adjust job activities to take full advantage of each individual’s talents.

The program included individual ability testing and feedback, followed by a group program enabling the members to work more effectively as a group. Two team members redesigned their roles within the team. They had performed adequately before, but their new roles allowed them to show the team spirit and creativity their manager wanted. One member of the team suggested a change which eliminated a functional redundancy and saved the company a lot of money. The other team members were not utilizing their abilities to the maximum and were able to take on wider responsibilities.

Post-program analysis showed that the productivity of individuals on the team had improved an average of 8%. The overall productivity of the team had improved 7%. And the job satisfaction of individuals on the team had improved an average of 17%. In these calculations, changes attributable to the team’s participation in the Highlands seminar were isolated from changes attributable to other influences.



Team programs built on an understanding of natural abilities can enhance the satisfaction and productivity of the team, and create winning and cost-saving outcomes for the business.

Three Steps to Success **MATRIX**

Matrix Resources is a fast-growing IT placement firm in Atlanta. It has been on the **Inc.**-500 list of fastest-growing companies for several years in a row — a difficult achievement. The Vice President of Corporate Services engaged Highlands to help his management team of seven corporate directors to get a better understanding of themselves and each other. **“We were pretty tight before we began to work with Highlands.”**

The seminar conducted by Highlands resulted in three “significant steps of growth” for the team.

Step one was The Highlands Ability Battery. “It made a huge impact almost immediately.” Team members noticed a new level of self-awareness and a new level of self-confidence based on



objective knowledge of their individual areas of strength — and also areas of natural challenge. Team members learned that some activities could be more effectively handled by others on the team.

“...people could see that they were not well matched for some things in terms of natural talent. What a relief to know that you don’t have to pretend that you’re great at everything.”

Step two was a sharing of individual Ability Profiles. Ordinarily, all Highlands data is treated as confidential to the individual participant. But the Matrix Directors chose to share their individual results as a springboard for opening communication among them. Highlands became a common language for discussing how individual team members could work more effectively and communicate their processes to others. **“Communications opened up and we reached a level of support and acceptance that we had never reached before.”**

Step three took place in the Highlands seminar that followed. The team did a number of modeling exercises and ended by creating a one-page Vision Statement for the members. The Statement contained eleven principles that would be their vision for leadership within the company. The directors would use these principles in building teams within the company. The vision that emerged from the seminar became the basis of a Statement of Principles that still drives the entire company.

Focus and Cohesion **Marriott**

The Alliance Accounts Organization at Marriott International is responsible for strategic accounts management. Their clients are the top 31 global corporate customers of Marriott, and they are responsible for over \$700 million in sales.

As a leading member of the Alliance Accounts Team described his work with Highlands:

The Highlands Program seemed different from the many other options that Marriott offers. It seemed far more complete. It also seemed more powerful because it was self-discovery, not some expert telling me about myself. My thought was that our group has been together for three years. It is a very close and well-functioning team. If we could go through an experience like this together, it seemed to me that we could have a better chance of

staying together as a team and have less chance of people moving off into a different career path just to do something different. I took the idea to my boss.

The “boss” — a Marriott Vice President — had a team of 15 effective leaders who had worked together for three years, though they were spread throughout the world. He brought Highlands in “to see how we could be a more effective team, raise the overall level of performance, and revitalize the group.” He wanted the members of the group to know each other individually and to draw on each other’s strengths.

The members met together in a Highlands seminar. Their experience with the program was intense and open. They began to understand each other at a core level. As a result, they became more focused and energized. They began to look at the team’s contribution to the overall goals of the organization and how to keep themselves focused on these goals.

The Vice President concluded:

With the war for talent out there, people can always go out and make more money. But maybe that’s not the most important thing. One person on the team, as a result of the seminar, realized that she could not find a fit with her career and life goals at Marriott. The other members of the team understood her position and were supportive of changes she wanted to make. All the other members of the team felt more clearly and positively aligned with Marriott and with the team. I felt this was an exceptional use of time that exceeded my expectations.

Development of a New Team **IBM**

The North American Human Resources Group of senior-level executives wanted to develop trust and honest dialogue among its newly formed team in order to boost team performance.

The Vice President of Human Resources Operations was responsible for a team of 20 people, all of whom were leaders and managers of other teams. He contacted The Highlands Company because 70 percent of the team members were new to their jobs. He wanted to do something that would bring them together as a team. The Highlands Ability Battery and feedbacks helped them deal with their own talents as individuals. More importantly, it helped them see, appreciate, and value their differences.



When the Highlands Program was over, the IBM officer commented:

“Diversity did not have to pull us apart. By valuing our differences and the differences we saw in others, our diversity gave us more strength.”

To find out what one is fitted to do,
and secure an opportunity to do it,
is the key to happiness.

John Dewey

Leadership Development

Succession Planning

Senior management at what was then BellSouth Cellular Corporation wanted to help their high-potential young executives to plan career direction in both “functional and cross-functional” terms. They felt it was important to identify their future leaders.

A valuable key for the young people who would be leading the company was to learn what things they could do easily and well, and what things they would have a hard time with. The program implemented by Highlands achieved that goal and also helped them know how people differ from one another. They learned to observe how other people work. **“We had noticed that our most talented young people go about things differently. Partly this is a difference in generations, but an important difference is simply how they are uniquely wired.”**

According to the Vice President of Human Resources:

The participants in the program have been uniform in their appreciation. One interesting sidelight was that they all felt more responsibility for their own development after the program. One person realized why her current assignment was particularly frustrating for her. With the knowledge gained from The Highlands Program, she could talk to her boss clearly about what was frustrating and what kinds of assignments would be more in her line. For several others, you could tell that the light bulbs went off when they started to understand why they worked the way they worked. I felt that this was extremely valuable knowledge for these young people to have in their development as leaders.



responsibility for their own development after the program. One person realized why her current assignment was particularly frustrating for her. With the knowledge gained from The Highlands Program, she could talk to her boss clearly about what was frustrating and what kinds of assignments would be more in her line. For several others, you could tell that the light bulbs went off when they started to understand why they worked the way they worked. I felt that this was extremely valuable knowledge for these young people to have in their development as leaders.

responsibility for their own development after the program. One person realized why her current assignment was particularly frustrating for her. With the knowledge gained from The Highlands Program, she could talk to her boss clearly about what was frustrating and what kinds of assignments would be more in her line. For several others, you could tell that the light bulbs went off when they started to understand why they worked the way they worked. I felt that this was extremely valuable knowledge for these young people to have in their development as leaders.

Employee Retention



Senior HR managers at Cisco Systems were concerned about retaining key employees, motivating people to grow and develop, and helping employees to find the right fit for their talents. They saw Highlands as an effective ally in meeting all of these goals, and created an open enrollment programs for all their employees.

A Director who had been at Cisco for ten years — making her one of an elite group of early employees — describes her experience:

When I started at Cisco, it had \$28 million in revenue. It's now 60 times as large and growing. It's always going at a crazy, hectic pace. Two years ago, I was tired and frustrated all the time. I never felt like myself. I started thinking that I should do something else.” But she didn't want to quit. “I wanted to go in a positive direction to something else that made sense. That's when I heard about The Highlands Program.

What she found out was that she was really in the right place doing the right thing. She was just tired. She learned what her natural strengths were and how to channel them to reduce stress at work while retaining those elements of her work that she loved.

It's scary now that I think about it...Without this information, I would have made some choices that were entirely wrong.

I discovered that I really was in a good job. I just needed to pay attention to some different parts of myself. I needed to get involved in some other activities. I am now on the Board of Directors of our local Food Bank. I'm also a fire commissioner for our county. I take better care of my health, and I am in a relationship that is very important to me.

This Director learned that her abilities were right for her job and that she should remain in her position. Highlands also helped her to learn how to achieve the balance that would enhance her life while maintaining her career at Cisco.

Mentoring



JPMorganChase Bank has long been renowned for its work in Diversity. The Bank has been recognized by leading commentators, including Fortune Magazine, as among the elite in this important effort to encourage employment of minorities.

The Vice President of one of the Bank's Diversity Groups used The Highlands Program as the foundational piece in its year-long Leadership Mentoring Program.

As a part of the bank's diversity strategy, our aim is to attract, nurture, challenge and reward people who have a wide range of talents, experiences and perspectives. Vigorous and effective career development is integral to that goal, so our employees have access to an extra-



ordinary array of development tools and resources. The Highlands assessment instrument and discovery process appeared to offer something unique. Highlands provided a missing link, one that would enable employees to clarify and articulate their natural talents and interests and then match them to the organization's mission and goals.

Until talented potential leaders can create and envision their own direction in the bank, they can not achieve the success inherent in their abilities, nor can JPMChase benefit fully from their talents. The Highlands Program – conducted as part the bank's mentoring program – helped them create those visions based on practical and realistic information about themselves.

Mentoring protégés have commented that the program was a life-changing experience. After six months, their stories are even more powerful. The Bank has benefited from their enhanced loyalty, productivity, communication skills and satisfaction, and it is considering additional ways to offer the program in conjunction with succession planning, top talent development and intact team initiatives. **“By helping individuals know themselves better and clarify and communicate their vision, we have helped them connect with Chase, and this will result in tremendous long-term benefit to the organization.”** Following the initial mentoring program, several of the Protégés- turned-Leaders have brought Highlands in to work with their own teams.