

Facilitation Notes: Activity 4.1: One Key Question

Learning Outcome:

- Describe the concept of person-environment fit/calling as it pertains to career planning.

🕒 Approximately 25 minutes

Activity Description:

A strengths-based approach to career planning and development starts with self-knowledge and awareness. This means understanding what we do best and what we want most in the place where we work.

Part One: What I Do Best

Ask students to go through the list of “What I do best” items on the worksheet. Ask them to identify the five statements that would best describe the tasks they would like to spend most of their time doing in a job or a career.

Tip

You may want to suggest that students start by selecting 10, and then narrow their choice to five. To expand on this activity, you may want to facilitate a discussion about how students narrowed their choices from 10 to five.

Part Two: What I Want Most

When developing a career plan, it is not only important to consider talent alignment to role and tasks, but it is also important for students to consider how their natural talents and strengths align to the culture or an organization or manager. Important considerations might include questions such as:

- How do they measure success?
- How do they attempt to solve problems?
- What are their business strategies?
- What are their people strategies?
- How do employees gain executive sponsorship?
- Do the answers to these questions align well with your natural talents?

This activity is continued ...

One Key Question

Part One: What I Do Best

Read through the following list of “What I Do Best” tasks or activities, and identify five statements that would best describe the tasks or activities you would like to spend most of your time doing in a job or career.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> volunteer for causes I believe in | <input type="checkbox"/> inspire people about what could be |
| <input type="checkbox"/> collect and archive all kinds of information | <input type="checkbox"/> examine the unique qualities of each person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> talk with those going through difficult situations | <input type="checkbox"/> be in the “public eye” |
| <input type="checkbox"/> establish routines and processes | <input type="checkbox"/> feel connected with all of life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> think and study | <input type="checkbox"/> compare my performance to others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> create order and safety in my life | <input type="checkbox"/> act according to my beliefs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> control my life | <input type="checkbox"/> include people who feel left out |
| <input type="checkbox"/> check people out carefully before revealing confidential information | <input type="checkbox"/> let others know, without words, that I know how they feel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> associate with people who appreciate my strengths | <input type="checkbox"/> coach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> work hard | <input type="checkbox"/> discuss history and its lessons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> do things right | <input type="checkbox"/> help others explain their thoughts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> live for the present | <input type="checkbox"/> meet new people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> help people solve their problems | <input type="checkbox"/> use history to explain my position |
| <input type="checkbox"/> be busy all the time | <input type="checkbox"/> treat all people the same |
| <input type="checkbox"/> find a new way to do things | <input type="checkbox"/> concentrate until the job gets done |
| <input type="checkbox"/> learn as much as I can about the people I meet | <input type="checkbox"/> do what is expected of me each day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> follow up on the details | <input type="checkbox"/> discover patterns of data |
| <input type="checkbox"/> take on challenges | <input type="checkbox"/> be persuasive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> follow through on my commitments | <input type="checkbox"/> keep track of several things at one time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> participate in intellectual and philosophical discussions | <input type="checkbox"/> figure out how different people can work together productively |
| <input type="checkbox"/> give praise | <input type="checkbox"/> plan new programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> have clear rules that everyone follows | <input type="checkbox"/> discover new information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> prove myself successful | <input type="checkbox"/> create future pictures and plans |
| <input type="checkbox"/> overcome obstacles | <input type="checkbox"/> take on significant goals and challenges |
| <input type="checkbox"/> win the approval of others | <input type="checkbox"/> search for the reasons and causes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> strive to know more | <input type="checkbox"/> tell stories |
| <input type="checkbox"/> envision the things I want and desire | <input type="checkbox"/> push things to action |
| <input type="checkbox"/> selectively distribute praise and recognition | <input type="checkbox"/> accept people as they are |
| <input type="checkbox"/> organize a big event or celebration | <input type="checkbox"/> teach people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> join brainstorming sessions | <input type="checkbox"/> find experts to help |
| <input type="checkbox"/> get people committed | <input type="checkbox"/> stay in contact with my friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> help others see their strengths | <input type="checkbox"/> choose the best alternatives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> make work fun | <input type="checkbox"/> build bridges between people of different cultures or experience |

Activity 4.1: One Key Question: Part 1

Facilitation Notes: Activity 4.1: One Key Question (Continued)

Ask your students to read through the list of workplace attributes, and identify five statements that best describe the attributes that they would like to find in a workplace. Tell students that they can add additional attributes to the list if there are additional considerations that may be important to them when considering a place of employment.

Then, ask your students to rank their choices in order of importance.

Debrief this activity by asking students to share their responses with a small group. As with so many others, the positive effect of this activity can be enhanced by having students discuss their work in small groups and/or report to the entire class.

Gallup's research has identified 12 items that measure employee engagement and link powerfully to relevant business outcomes, including retention, productivity, profitability, customer engagement, shrinkage, absenteeism, and safety. These items — the Q¹² — measure dimensions that leaders, managers, and employees can influence.

Gallup set out to identify factors that were common to higher-performing units or workgroups. To identify these common factors, Gallup posed thousands of different questions to more than 1 million people.

The third element, “At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day,” emerged from the ability of a straightforward statement to predict the performance of a given worker and entire teams: With a front-row seat on their own thoughts and feelings, workers have no trouble assessing this element in their own work lives. But the simplicity of the statement belies the complexity within it. The reasons why this element is so powerful go to the heart of the most recent discoveries about human nature and touch on debates about individuality that stretch back for centuries.

What makes someone succeed where others fail? Is it something innate, something she learned, or is she just trying harder? Can excellence in a certain role be learned? How fast and how much can people change? Can a job candidate be molded to fit the needs of the position, or is what you see during that first interview what you get?

To get the most from her job or career, each employee should mold his job around the way he works most naturally, maximizing the frequency of optimal experiences in which he loses himself in the work, is internally motivated, and finds himself naturally gifted. Acknowledging one's greatest natural talents and weaknesses does not mean accepting a narrow set of career possibilities. Rather, it means each employee will succeed in a relatively unique way, applying his own style to the accomplishment. What is important is identifying organizations where those opportunities exist.

One Key Question (Continued)

Part Two: What I Want Most

Now, read through the following list of “What I Want Most in the Place I Work” needs or attributes, and identify five statements that would best describe the attributes that you would like to find in the place you work. Feel free to add additional attributes that may be important to you when considering a place of employment.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> step-by-step training at work | <input type="checkbox"/> family-friendly environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> work either on virtual teams or with few people | <input type="checkbox"/> have strong work relationships |
| <input type="checkbox"/> have a supervisor or manager who cares about me | <input type="checkbox"/> working in a company with a large number of people I deal with each day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> recognized for work I do well | <input type="checkbox"/> clear career path within the organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> have a set schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> there is someone always guiding my work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> flexible environment that allows me some freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> have the opportunity to always be working with people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> be my own boss | <input type="checkbox"/> work alone most of the time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> my opinion counts | <input type="checkbox"/> on-call position |
| <input type="checkbox"/> have to figure out things on my own | <input type="checkbox"/> have a place where I believe in the mission of the company |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Now, rank your choices in order of importance, starting with the most important and continuing to the least important.

What I Do Best

What I Want Most in a Place I Work

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____