

LEADING FROM **YOUR STRENGTHS**

*"How blessed is the one who finds wisdom,
and the one who finds understanding".
Proverbs 3:13*

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Understanding Strengths and Blending Differences

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome! You have just taken a significant step in the process of understanding the unique strengths that God has designed in you. This report will provide insight into your natural strengths and how those strengths are operating in your life. As you learn more about yourself and God's plan for the uniqueness of strengths, you will also begin recognizing and valuing the strengths in others.

There are several sections in this report and each contributes to the knowledge and understanding that will produce the greatest transformation in your relationships. Therefore, please commit yourself to read and explore this report completely.

In I Corinthians 12:12-18 we read that although the body is one, it is made up of many parts. Each part has a vital function and is no less a part of the body because it is different. As you study the passage, it is apparent that God not only intentionally created differences, but He designed them very specifically. God's desire in our relationships is for our differences to unite us not divide us. These Biblical principles establish a foundation for understanding ourselves and our relationships and to see that our differences are strengths when allowed to function as God designed.

The mission of Ministry Insights is to transform relationships worldwide. We believe this transformation takes place as you discover God's plan for your unique strengths and the unique strengths of others. As you learn more about yourself and others it is our prayer that your eyes will be opened to clearly see God's divine design for differences.

Additional supporting resources are available at www.ministryinsights.com.

THE SCALES

Interpreting Your Natural Strength Chart

Let's begin with a look at your natural strengths. Your Natural Strengths Chart presents a visual picture of the predictable ways that you naturally approach or respond to problems, information, change and risk. In each of these four scales, there are two different strengths that you may possess; therefore, there are eight strength possibilities. There is a vertical line in the center of the chart that is referred to as the energy line. Proceeding in each direction from that line is a 10 point scale. The number on the scale indicates the intensity of the strength. There may be situations in which you utilize a strength different from your natural strength, but it will require energy for you to do so. (This will be discussed further in later sections.)

If your score on any scale is within 2 points of the energy line, it is indicated as neutral. This means you can move towards either of the strengths outlined in the scales based on the current situation. As opposed to someone that exhibits a clearly observable strength in an area, it will not require as much energy for you to move from one strength to the other in that area. You will tend to take a neutral position until you understand clearly what strength is required.

These strengths are a part of who you are and will remain relatively consistent over time. Typically only very small changes in your natural strengths are observed throughout your life. It is not often that we see major shifts in someone's natural strengths, but it is possible. Such a shift is normally due to a major life changing event.

The Problem Solving Scale

Your score on this scale indicates whether your natural strength is more reflective or aggressive in the way in which you approach problems. If you plot on the reflective side of the scale, we can predict that you will take a more reflective or calculating approach to solving a problem or challenge. If you plot on the aggressive side of the scale, it is predictable that when a problem or challenge arises you will take a more aggressive or assertive approach to solving that problem. Depending on the problem or issue, each side of the scale can highlight an important strength.

THE SCALES

The Processing Information Scale

Your score on this scale indicates whether your natural strength is to be more optimistic or realistic in the way in which you process information. If you plot on the optimistic side of the scale, it is predictable that when processing new information you will be more trusting and accepting. If you plot on the realistic side of the scale, you will be more skeptical and want to validate information before trusting. Again, each side of the scale represents a strength in processing information.

The Managing Change Scale

Your score on this scale indicates whether your natural strength is to be more dynamic or predictable in the way you manage change. If you are on the dynamic side of this scale, you will tend to be fast-paced. You are comfortable managing many projects simultaneously, and you allow change to drive your plan. If you plot on the predictable side of the scale, you will lean toward a slower pace. You prefer to focus on one project at a time, and you tend to want to plan for change. Managing change effectively requires a combination of these strengths.

The Facing Risk Scale

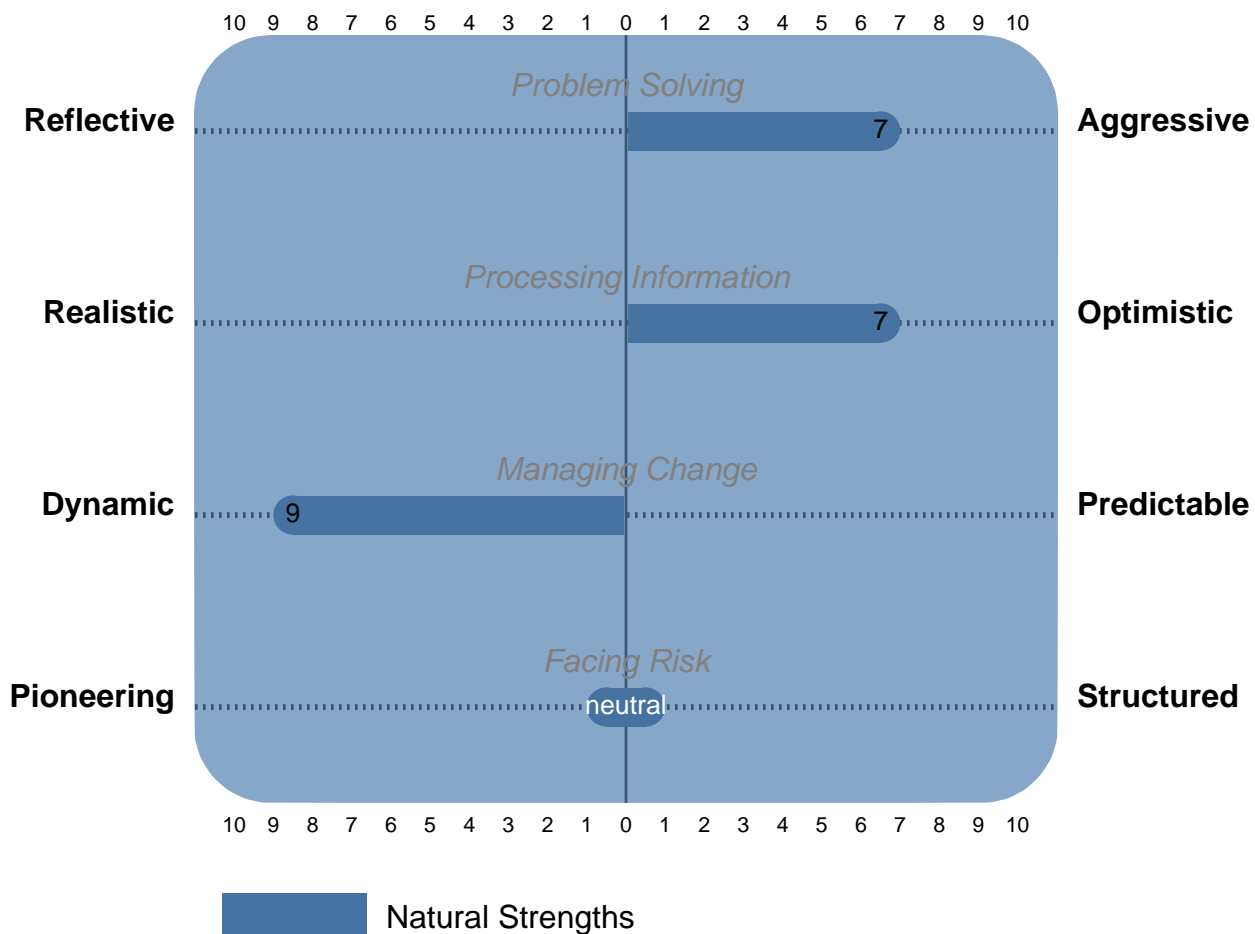
Your score on this scale indicates whether your natural strength is to be more structured or pioneering in the way you face risk. If you are on the structured side of the scale, you will tend to follow the established procedures and rules and see them as a source of protection. Therefore you will tend to be a lower risk taker. If you are on the pioneering side of this scale, you will tend to view rules and established procedures as broad guidelines and tend to push the envelope of risk. You may even view them as obstacles standing in the way of your progress. Each of these strengths is important and needed for balancing the risk scale.

In any relationship – from the team you work with, to your closest friendships, to your marriage, or even your relationship with your children – you'll find that understanding your natural strengths and those of others in these predictable measures is crucial to building trust, closeness, commitment and caring. In fact, by understanding where people differ in these areas, you may even discover a “great secret” – that the differences of others are actually designed to complement your strengths, enabling you to function in that relationship more fully. Living out our strengths and valuing the strengths of others allows us to be more than we can be on our own.

THE SCALES

Here are some last thoughts before you move on to your strengths chart. The order in which the information on the chart is presented is not an indication that one scale is more important than another. Also, you are a combination of strengths, so while each scale is important individually, they are not independent. Your unique combination of strengths will give you a better understanding of who you are. Therefore, the pages of text that follow your Natural Strengths Chart are essential to help you interpret your mix of strengths into a word picture that will give you a comprehensive understanding of your strengths. They will also serve as an objective platform to facilitate discussion with others.

YOUR NATURAL STRENGTHS CHART





GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Based on Jake's responses, the report has selected general statements to provide a broad understanding of his strengths. These statements identify the "Natural" strengths that he brings to the position or relationship. That is, if left on his own, these statements identify how he would choose to carry out his work and relate to others. Use the general characteristics to gain a better understanding of Jake's "Natural" strengths.

Jake is a self-starter who likes new projects and is most comfortable when involved with a wide scope of activities. Many people see him as a self-starter dedicated to achieving results. He may have difficulty dealing with others who are slower in thought and action. He is often frustrated when working with others who do not share the same sense of urgency. Jake is goal-oriented and driven by results. He is the team member who will try to keep the others on task. He is driven toward goals completion and wants to be in a position to set policy that will allow him to meet those goals. He is a goal-oriented individual who believes in pulling in others to help him achieve his goals. He needs people with other strengths on his team. He has the ability to question people's basic assumptions about things. He prides himself on his creativity, incisiveness and cleverness. Jake has high confidence in himself and may be viewed by some as egotistical. He is extremely results-oriented, with a sense of urgency to complete projects quickly.

Jake has the unique ability of tackling tough problems and following them through to a satisfactory conclusion. Sometimes he may be so opinionated about a particular problem that he has difficulty letting others participate in the process. Sometimes he becomes emotionally involved in the decision-making process. He finds it easy to share his opinions on solving work-related problems. Jake has the ability to make high-risk decisions, but sometimes should seek counsel before acting. He is a good problem solver and troubleshooter, always seeking new ways to solve old problems. When faced with a tough decision, he will try to sell you on his ideas. He should realize that at times he needs to think a project through, beginning to end, before starting the project.



GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Jake likes people who present their case effectively. When they do, he can then make a quicker assessment or decision. He likes people who give him options as compared to their opinions. The options may help him make decisions, and he values his own opinion over that of others! He tends to be intolerant of people who seem ambiguous or think too slowly. His creative and active mind may hinder his ability to communicate to others effectively. He may present the information in a form that cannot be easily understood by some people. Jake should exhibit more patience and ask questions to make sure that others have understood what he has said. He tends to influence people by being direct, friendly and results-oriented. He may sometimes mask his feelings in friendly terms. If pressured, Jake's true feelings may emerge. He may lose interest in what others are saying if they ramble or don't speak to the point. His active mind is already moving ahead.

VALUE TO THE TEAM

This section of the report identifies the specific talents and strengths Jake brings to the ministry. By looking at these statements, one can better identify his role. Understanding these strengths can help capitalize on Jake's God-given strengths that make him an integral part of the team.

- Challenges the status quo.
- Spontaneity.
- Few dull moments.
- Deadline conscious.
- Forward-looking and future-oriented.
- Thinks big.
- Self-starter.
- Creative in his approach to solving problems.
- Tenacious.

CHECKLIST FOR COMMUNICATING

Many people find this section to be extremely accurate and important for enhancing communication with Jake. Whether at work, home or in the ministry, understanding how best to communicate with others can be a great relationship asset. This page provides a list of things to DO when communicating with Jake. Review each statement with Jake to identify the statements which are most important to him. We recommend highlighting the most important "DO's" and provide this list to those who communicate with Jake frequently.

Do:

- Be specific and leave nothing to chance.
- Be clear, specific, brief and to the point.
- Use his jargon.
- Understand his sporadic listening skills.
- Motivate and persuade by referring to objectives and results.
- Come prepared with all requirements, objectives and support material in a well-organized "package."
- Read the body language--look for impatience or disapproval.
- Be open, honest and informal.
- Support and maintain an environment where he can be efficient.
- Put projects in writing, with deadlines.
- Verify that the message was heard.
- Stick to business--let him decide if he wants to talk socially.



DON'TS ON COMMUNICATING

This section of the report is a list of things NOT to do while communicating with Jake. Review each statement with Jake and identify those methods of communication that result in frustration or reduced performance. By sharing this information, both parties can negotiate a communication system that is mutually agreeable.

Don't:

- Direct or order.
- Try to build personal relationships.
- Forget or lose things, be disorganized or messy, confuse or distract his mind from important tasks.
- Leave loopholes or cloudy issues if you don't want to be confronted.
- Let disagreement reflect on him personally.
- Ramble on, or waste his time.
- Be redundant.
- Reinforce agreement with "I'm with you."
- Speculate wildly, or offer guarantees and assurances where there is a risk in meeting them.
- Ask rhetorical questions, or useless ones.
- Forget to follow-up.



IDEAL ENVIRONMENT

This section identifies the ideal environment based on Jake's God-given strengths or "Natural" Style. Use this section to identify specific duties and responsibilities that Jake enjoys and also those that may create frustration.

- Freedom from long, detailed reports.
- Evaluation based on results, not the process.
- Nonroutine work with challenge and opportunity.
- Forum to express ideas and viewpoints.
- Support team with sense of urgency.
- Work for a leader who makes quick decisions.
- An innovative and futuristic-oriented environment.

KEYS TO MOTIVATING

Understanding what motivates a person is often found by understanding what it is he wants or values. This section of the report can help understand Jake's wants and desires. Those statements that ring true, but aren't a current part of his ministry, can become goals to reach.

Jake wants:

- To be trusted.
- A leader who practices participative management.
- More time in the day.
- A friendly work environment.
- Outside activities so there is never a dull moment.
- Support system to help with details and follow through.
- Work assignments that provide opportunity for recognition.
- A variety of work activities.
- Flattery, praise, popularity and strokes.
- Rewards to support his dreams.
- Working conditions with freedom to move and to talk to people.

KEYS TO LEADING

In this section are some needs which must be met in order for Jake to perform at an optimum level. Some needs can be met by himself, while leadership must provide for others. It is difficult for a person to enter a motivational environment when that person's basic needs have not been fulfilled. Review the list with Jake and identify 3 or 4 statements that are most important to him. This allows Jake to participate in forming his own personal growth plan.

Jake needs:

- Deadlines for completion of work.
- To negotiate commitment face-to-face.
- An awareness of the parameters or rules in writing.
- A work environment with many activities.
- A program for pacing work and relaxing.
- To display empathy for people who approach life differently than he does.
- To understand his role on the team--either a team player or the leader.
- To adjust his intensity to match the situation.
- To know results expected and to be evaluated on the results.
- Appreciation of slower-moving people.
- Vacations or periods of reduced activity level.



AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

This section lists possible “Natural” limitations or tendencies for Jake. It does not consider life and work experiences or formal education and training that he may have received to overcome these obstacles. Review with Jake and cross out those limitations that do not apply. Highlight one to three statements that are hindering his performance and develop an action plan to eliminate or reduce these tendencies.

Jake has a tendency to:

- Fail to complete what he starts because of adding more and more projects.
- Dislike routine work or routine people--unless he sees the need to further his goals.
- Set standards for himself and others so high that impossibility of the situation is common place.
- Take on too much, too soon, too fast.
- Resist participation as part of the team, unless seen as a leader.
- Be a one-way communicator--doesn't listen to the total story before introducing his opinion.
- Be explosive by nature and lack the patience to negotiate.

PERCEPTIONS

A person's actions and feelings may be quickly telegraphed to others. This section provides additional information on Jake's self-perception and how, under certain conditions, others may perceive his actions. Understanding this section will enable Jake to balance his emotions to be successful in different situations.

"See Yourself As Others See You"

SELF-PERCEPTION

Jake usually sees himself as being:

Pioneering
Competitive
Positive

Assertive
Confident
Winner

OTHERS' PERCEPTION

Under moderate pressure, tension, stress or fatigue, others may see him as being:

Demanding
Egotistical

Nervy
Aggressive

And, under extreme pressure, stress or fatigue, others may see him as being:

Abrasive
Arbitrary

Controlling
Opinionated



STRENGTHS MOVEMENT

During your response to the online questionnaire we were able to identify more than just your natural strengths. We also identified your strengths movement. Strengths movement is a measure of how the current environment impacts your natural strengths. Some environmental issues impact your strengths in a positive way and some negative. The Strengths Movement Chart illustrates this impact on your natural strengths.

As stated earlier, your natural strengths will typically remain stable over time. However, it is common for you to adapt to your current environment based on your perception of whether your strengths are being valued or discounted, or whether they are different than what may be required by your current role.

The Strengths Movement Chart provides a picture of how much you feel you need to "change" or "adapt" your natural strengths to match the needs or requirements of your current environment. You will see the same strength indicators from your natural strengths chart, but an additional indicator is overlaid that displays a measurement of your strengths movement. That movement can be positive or negative, or there may be areas where there is no movement.

Areas without any movement could indicate that your natural strengths are in alignment with your environment. Areas that have positive movement could indicate that the environment may require you to use more of that strength. In both of these scenarios, you will typically feel valued and comfortable.

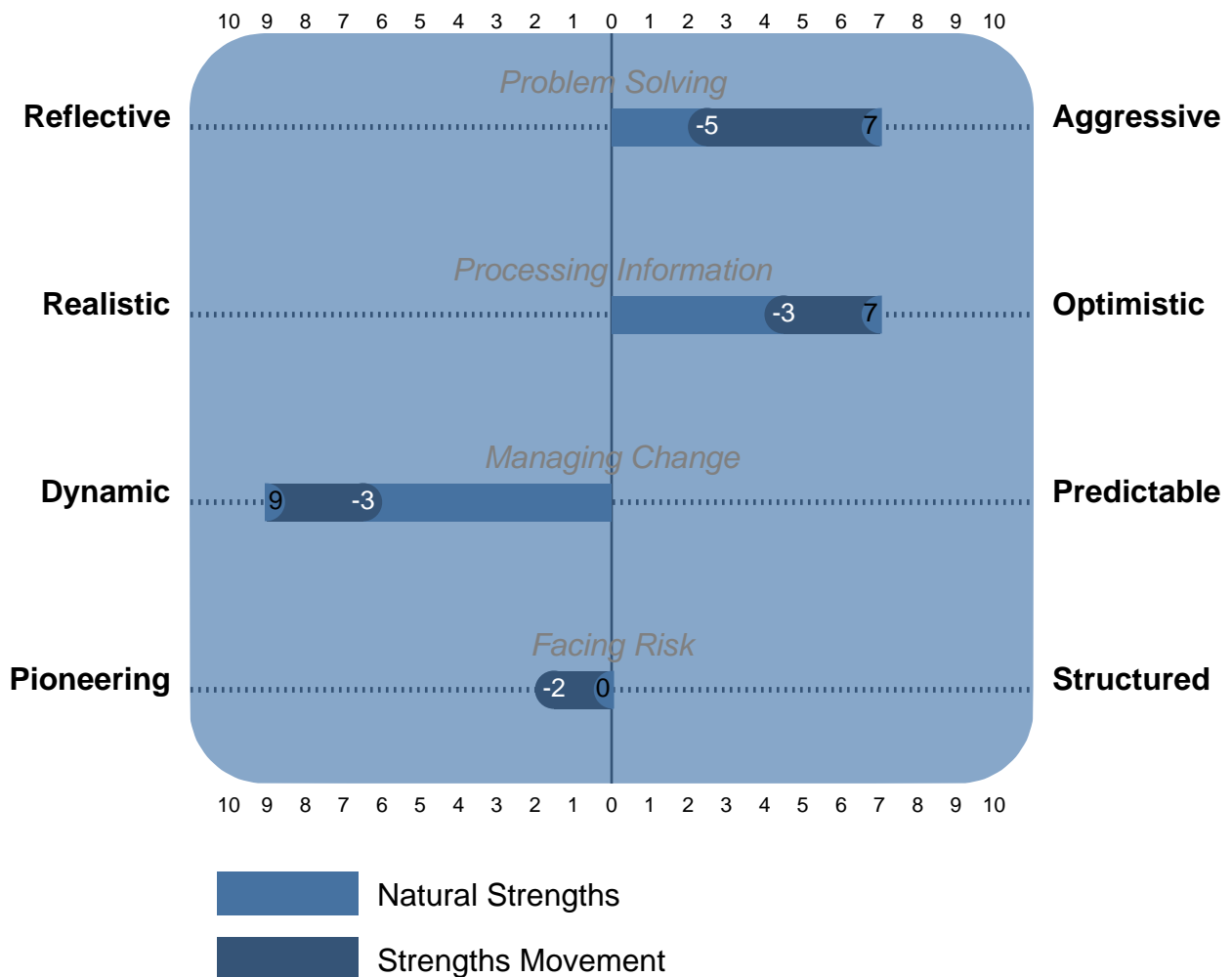
If there is negative movement in a scale, you may feel that your environment requires you to be something other than what you naturally are. You may want to explore these areas further. As you do, keep in mind that some adaptation is good and also necessary. However, long term adaptation consumes energy and can lead to stress and frustration. The greater the degree of movement away from your natural strength, the greater the degree of energy you are expending to adapt.

Changes in your current environment can dramatically impact the movement in your strengths. Therefore, it is our recommendation that you retake this assessment on an annual basis, or sooner, if there are significant changes in your current environment. This will provide an objective point of reference and help you to focus your natural strengths.

Following the Strengths Movement Chart are pages that interpret your strength movement mix into a word picture to help you explore this movement in your strengths. These subsequent text pages and the strengths movement chart can serve as an objective platform to facilitate discussion with others in your current environment.

YOUR STRENGTHS MOVEMENT CHART

As you review this chart, pay special attention to areas where the movement is away from your natural strengths. Negative movement of 5 points or more and especially movement across the center (energy) line are areas that could be costing you energy and should be explored further.





HOW ARE YOU HAVING TO "ADAPT?"

This list of descriptions can give you a picture of the way Jake feels he may need to respond to the current environment to be accepted. If these statements DO NOT sound related, explore the reasons why as a key to understanding Jake's current situation and his need to "adapt" to be accepted.

- Motivating people to take action by using persuasive skills.
- Maintaining an ever-changing, friendly, work environment.
- Meeting deadlines.
- Positive, outgoing, friendly behavior.
- Moving quickly from one activity to another.
- Coping with rapid changes in the work arena.
- Optimistic, future-oriented outlook.
- Working without close supervision.
- Exhibiting an active and creative sense of humor.
- Making tactful decisions.
- Participative decision making.

NATURAL AND ADAPTED STYLE

Jake's "Natural" Style of dealing with problem solving (L), processing information (O), managing change (G) and facing risk (B) may not always fit what the environment needs. This section may provide valuable information related to the stress and pressure Jake may feel when he "Adapts" his style to the environment.

"Natural" Style	PROBLEMS - CHALLENGES	"Adapted" Style
<p>Jake tends to deal with problems and challenges in a demanding, driving and "I'm going to win" manner. He is individualistic in his approach and actively seeks goals. Jake will attack problems and likes a position with authority and work that will constantly challenge him to perform up to his ability.</p>		<p>Jake sees the need to be competitive, results-oriented and a little innovative in his approach to problem solving. He has a tendency to evaluate the risk before rushing into solving a problem.</p>

"Natural" Style	PEOPLE - INFORMATION	"Adapted" Style
<p>Jake's "Natural" style is to use persuasion and emotion to the extreme. He is positive and seeks to influence people by the virtues of his personality and verbal skills. He will convince you that what he is saying is not only right, but is exactly what is needed. He displays enthusiasm for almost any project.</p>		<p>Jake projects a positive and enthusiastic attitude toward influencing others. He sees the need to be trusting and wants to be trusted.</p>

NATURAL AND ADAPTED STYLE

"Natural" Style	PACE - CHANGE	"Adapted" Style
<p>Jake is comfortable in an environment that is constantly changing. He seeks a wide scope of tasks and duties. Even when the environment is frantic, he can still maintain a sense of equilibrium. He is capable of taking inconsistency to a new height and to initiate change at the drop of the hat.</p>		<p>Jake sees his natural activity style to be just what the environment needs. What you see is what you get for activity level and consistency. Sometimes he would like the world to slow down.</p>

"Natural" Style	RULES - RISK	"Adapted" Style
<p>Jake is somewhat open-minded, but aware and sensitive to the implications of not following the rules. He can display balanced judgment in reviewing procedures. Knowing he is doing things well is a key reinforcement for him.</p>		<p>Jake is striving to be independent and somewhat self-willed. He is most comfortable when the constraints can be "loosened" for certain situations.</p>



THE STRENGTHS WHEEL

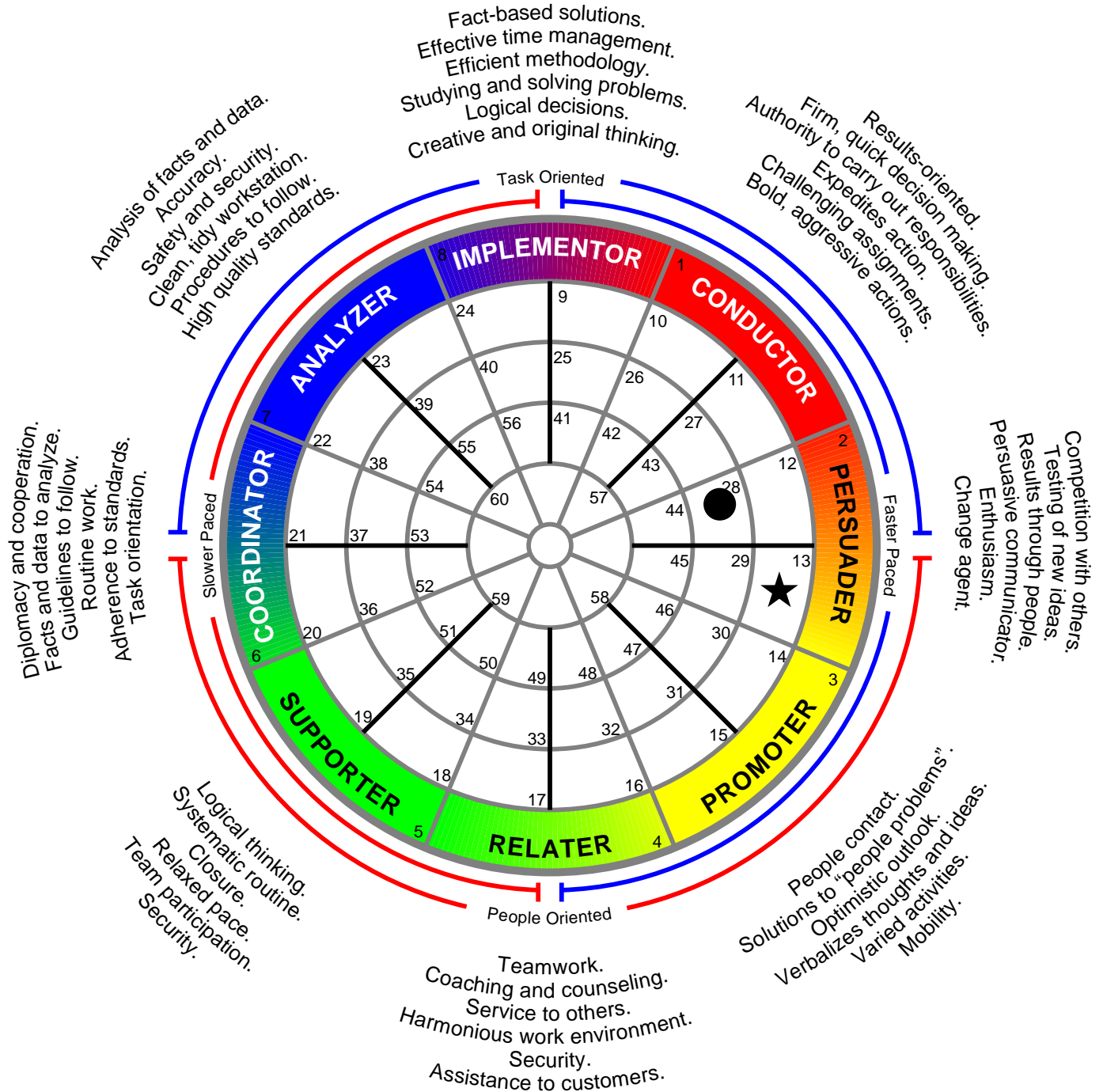
The Strengths Wheel is a powerful visual tool to help you see the natural strengths of a team or group of people. It can also help you understand how the team or group is moving their strengths collectively to meet the demands of their current environment. If you are part of a group or team who also took the assessment, it would be advantageous to use each person's Strengths Wheel to create a master Strengths Wheel that contains each person's "Natural Strengths" and "Strengths Movement". This allows for quick identification of potential issues and alignment.

The circle represents your natural strengths. The star represents your strengths movement. The Strengths Wheel is divided down and across the middle. By looking at the top of the Strengths Wheel you will see that the L and B scales have something in common. They both represent task orientation. At the bottom of the wheel you will see that the G and O scales represent people orientation. Therefore if a team or group clusters in the top of the wheel we can predict the team will be task oriented and vice versa.

Taking another look at the wheel and you will see on the left side the B and G scales have something in common as well. They are slower paced. The opposite side of the wheel you will see that the L and O scales are faster paced. Therefore if the team or group plotted on the left side of the wheel we could predict a slower paced environment and so on.

Putting all the pieces together can give us a powerful picture of a team. It can drive objective discussion about what the natural strengths of the team are and how the team feels it needs to move, as a whole, to succeed in the current environment.

THE STRENGTHS WHEEL



"Adapted" Style: ★ (13) PROMOTING PERSUADER
 "Natural" Style: ● (28) CONDUCTING PERSUADER