

STRENGTHS · PROFILE

CASE STUDY

Action Hampshire is a small local infrastructure charity in Hampshire. Their mission is to strengthen and connect voluntary/community/social enterprise leaders, organisations and networks; to promote and support community-led and place-based action and to champion diversity, challenge inequity and disadvantage.

The organisation is 72 years old and they have been going through significant changes over the past year, as they implement a new strategy to try and get to a point of financial sustainability amidst a landscape of funding cuts and increasing needs.

Background

During their December 2022 staff survey which fed into their strategy development, we asked staff members a list of questions about psychological safety, employee engagement, stress and wellbeing. The survey identified that only 4/23 'strongly agree' and 2/23 'disagree' that they spend most of their time doing what they are best at and 3/23 feel their unique skills and talents are not valued and utilised at Action Hampshire.

The staff team participated in a workshop in January 2023 and identified this as one of the results they wanted to improve upon as part of their new strategy. As a result of this, their CEO explored options for a strengths assessment tool to introduce this to the organisation, recognising that in order to get people doing more of their strengths, and feeling their strengths were valued, the first step would be establishing a common language about strengths and a tool to help with strength self-awareness.

After testing out a couple of the available tools, Strengths Profile was selected because it appeared to have the strongest evidence base, the widest set of strengths, and was the only tool that focused on energy, which resonated with the CEO, who chose the tool.

Outcomes

In April 2023, their CEO undertook a Level 2 Strengths Profile Accreditation course in order to support the roll-out of Strengths Profiles across the organisation. Individual profiles and debriefs were done with a subset of employees in May and the remaining staff team between July-October.

Each staff member had their own Expert Profile and a 60 minute 1-1 session with the Accredited Practitioner. A 2-hour workshop was facilitated for managers in the team to help them understand how to support others with their ongoing strengths development and understanding. In November, they focused 60% of their away day on team activities, having compiled a Team Profile of their current team as of November.

They carried out a survey of team members, which highlighted the significant difference Strengths Profiles have already made in the team:

- *How well did you understand your strengths BEFORE doing the strengths profile assessment/debrief?* **3.75 average rating**
- *How well do you now understand your strengths AFTER having done the strengths profile assessment/debrief?* **5.06 average rating**
- *How well did you understand your colleagues' strengths BEFORE doing the strengths activities at the away day?* **2.93 average rating**
- *How well do you now understand your colleagues' strengths AFTER doing the strengths activities at the away day?* **4.00 average rating**

Outcomes continued

Positive feedback included:

- Feeling empowered, positive, refreshing, supporting personal development and self-awareness
- Helpful for managers and colleagues to understand each other
- Helpful for team planning, team effectiveness
- Provided new insights about energy, made me think outside of the box

And highlighted the following queries which support further roll-out of Strengths Profile:

- An ongoing need to help people apply the tool practically to their work
- More support to understand how one's Strengths Profile could vary over time/could be impacted by a bad day
- An ongoing desire to focus on developing weaknesses suggesting more support is needed to understand how to work around weaknesses instead
- More work needed to ensure team members know what each others' strengths are

They will be doing focused sessions with smaller teams within the organisation where there'll be space to use more of the team strength exercises, and on the suggestion of some colleagues, thinking about how to recruit to address strength gaps in the team moving forwards.