Capitalizing on Team Talents™

This Sample Participant Workbook contains selected portions of an Individualized Participant Workbook. An Individualized Participant Workbook is generated from EPIC after the respondent completes the questions of the corresponding learning model.

Prepared exclusively for:

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Understanding and Maximizing
Your Strengths on a Team

Goals

- Understand the natural strengths you bring to a team.
- Recognize the value of these strengths in various team activities and tasks.
- Explore ways to use your strengths more often.

Being part of a team means working together, but sometimes we forget that it doesn't mean we all should contribute in the same way. Just because we are part of the same team doesn't mean we share the same strengths, so we need to figure out what we are best at and focus our energy on maximizing the time that we spend on those activities.

Notes:

Your Strengths

Each role brings its own unique strengths to the team. This page describes the strengths that are typically associated with your role. Highlight or underline specific statements in your description that ring true.

Focus on
POSSIBILITIES

As a Creator, you probably think much like an inventor or scientist. By pulling a seemingly infinite number of ideas out of thin air, you uncover solutions that have never been explored. This strengthens the problem-solving process and often creates new options for the team. You are likely to stay open to new Possibilities and respond well to fresh concepts and challenging tasks. In fact, original ideas tend to be your friends, and you may thrive when you have the freedom to explore alternatives. As a consequence, you probably don't need a lot of structure to get started on a project and can work fairly well with broad, undefined goals.
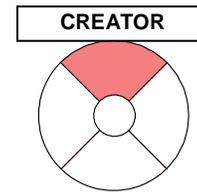
Like other Creators, you probably view brainstorming as a fun way to discover new options and solutions. When you help others knock down their preconceptions and outdated assumptions, you may help the team keep its options open. Reframing problems so you can analyze the issues from every angle allows you to make sure that a potential breakthrough receives full consideration. As such, your main contribution to the team process may be your tendency to create or propel innovative thinking. In fact, many of the highlights of a brainstorming session are likely to come from you. Therefore, you can help team members see the wealth of possibilities that they have in front of them.

Your preference for Analysis may help you to see the big picture or to formulate the master plan. Most likely, you enjoy getting wrapped up in theoretical discussions and brainstorming. Abstract or complex ideas most likely entertain rather than intimidate you. Like other Creators who lean towards Analysis, you may be gifted at creating conceptual frameworks and models. These can help the team organize its ideas and understand the relationship among different parts of the project. In essence, this helps fit the pieces of a plan into the big picture. You may also have a knack for putting words and definition to abstract and unclear ideas. Again, this helps people understand complex ideas in a practical way.

In summary, you may find that many of the following strengths come naturally for you:
- Generating multiple new ideas
- Thinking abstractly
- Envisioning the big picture
- Working independently and finding your own direction
- Building conceptual models
- Researching ideas
- Exploring relationships and patterns among ideas
- Blending theories and logic
- Identifying underlying principles and trends
- Succeeding even with broad, unclear goals

Stranded on an Island

Imagine you've been traveling and have lost your way. You find yourself stranded on a remote island. The journey has taken a lot out of you, and you can only use two of your strengths, represented by the bullets on the previous page.

Which two strengths would you choose, and why would they give you the best chance of surviving?

What is the first strength you chose? Why did you choose it?

What is the second strength you chose? Why did you choose it?

How I Contribute to a Team

Write down the activity or task and how you could contribute.

Activity and My Contribution:

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How Often I Use My Strengths

Review the "Your Strengths" bullets. Consider how often you are able to use each strength on the job. Write each bullet statement in the appropriate column below.

Many of the following strengths come naturally for you:
- Generating multiple new ideas
- Thinking abstractly
- Envisioning the big picture
- Working independently and finding your own direction
- Building conceptual models
- Researching ideas
- Exploring relationships and patterns among ideas
- Blending theories and logic
- Identifying underlying principles and trends
- Succeeding even with broad, unclear goals

Frequently

Occasionally   **Contribution Opportunities**

Seldom   **Contribution Opportunities**

Understanding Your Discomfort Zone

Goals

- Recognize your discomfort zones and the activities that feel unnatural to you.
- Understand that activities that don't come naturally to you may cause stress.
- Discover that everyone has a discomfort zone, although others might be challenged by different activities.

As much as we'd all like to be good at everything, we have probably encountered activities and tasks that make us uncomfortable or that we don't feel that we can do effectively.

Building stronger teams requires that we recognize the kinds of things that don't come naturally to us.

Notes:

Greta's Discomfort Zone

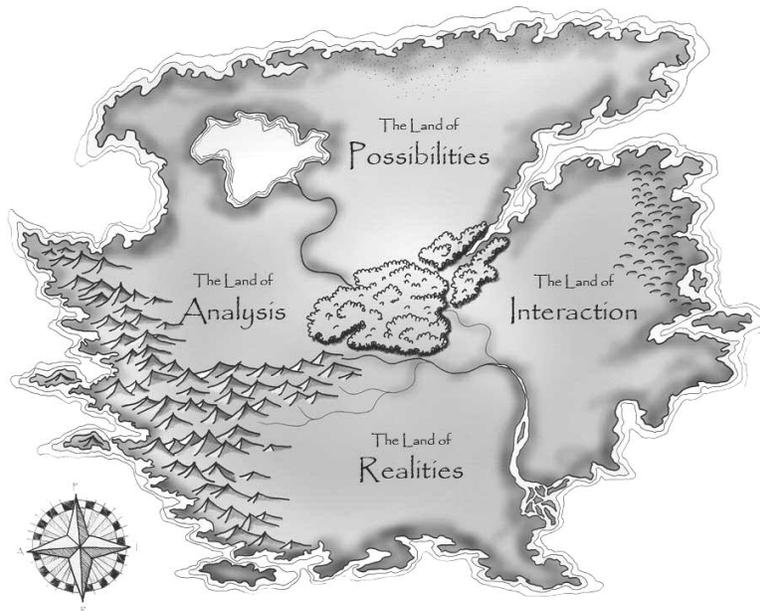Greta's Role: _____

Take notes on the video.

What is Greta being asked to do?

What is involved with doing that?

Where do these tasks fall on the Team Talents™ map?

The Land of Possibilities

The Land of Analysis

The Land of Interaction

The Land of Realities

Heidi's Discomfort Zone

Heidi's Role: _____

Take notes on the video.

What is Heidi being asked to do?

What is involved with doing that?

Where do these tasks fall on the Team Talents™ map?

Ainsley's Discomfort Zone

Ainsley's Role: _____

Take notes on the video.

What is Ainsley being asked to do?

What is involved with doing that?

Where do these tasks fall on the Team Talents™ map?
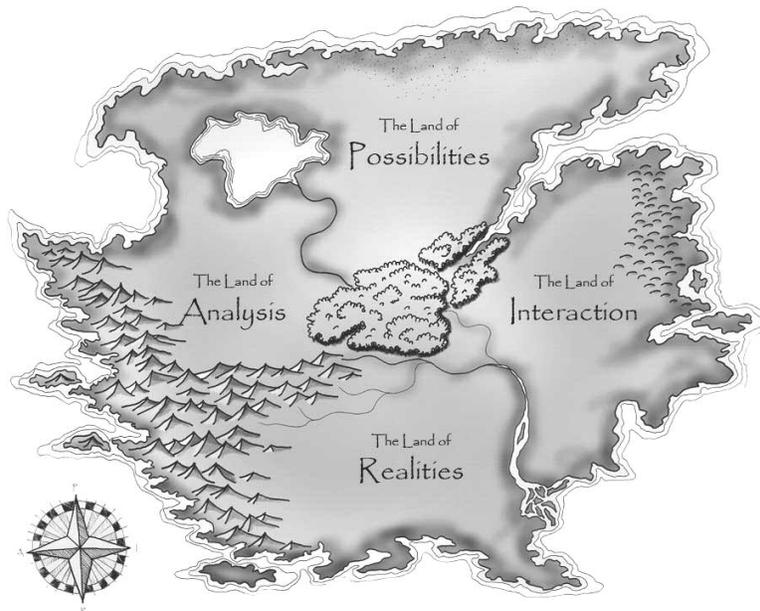
Dan's Discomfort Zone

Dan's Role: _____

Take notes on the video.

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What is Dan being asked to do?

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What is involved with doing that?

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Where do these tasks fall on the Team Talents™ map?

My Discomfort Zone

In all likelihood, you have some opinions about the type of tasks that you like and dislike doing. Knowing what causes you discomfort can help you to make your best contribution to the group effort. While you read the description below, underline the parts that seem to fit for you.

Focus on
POSSIBILITIES

CREATOR
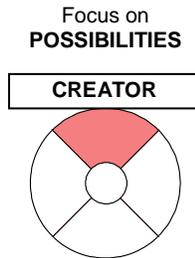
Although your interest in new ideas and possibilities is valuable to the team, this natural curiosity may make you restless at times. You may grow impatient or bored if new challenges or outlets for your creativity do not come quickly. You also may flit from one plan to the other, rather than seeing a project through to its successful conclusion. You may have more interest in coming up with a new idea than doing the detailed follow through necessary to make it a reality. In essence, you may spend so much time embracing the Possibilities and dwelling on theoretical issues that you neglect to push for concrete results. The outcome of this focus could be a wealth of great ideas that go nowhere.

You may find that you prefer the conceptual, abstract world of Possibilities to the more structured, restricted world of Realities. As a result, your drive for creativity may lead to impractical solutions that work well in theory, but fail to take real-world limitations and demands into account. And because you like to keep your options open, you may be reluctant to commit to a specific course of action. You may put things off until the last minute, causing trouble for yourself or others. Remember, even if rushing toward a deadline is exhilarating for you, it can be highly stressful for others.

Like many other Creators, your interest in unstructured activities could cause you to be disorganized or poorly prepared at times. You may find yourself devoting too much time on aspects of a project that are fun, but not terribly practical. In addition, you may have trouble following through on plans in a scheduled, organized way. Not only can this reduce your efficiency and productivity, but it can also frustrate those around you. Those who prefer a more organized approach to work may read this lack of structure as carelessness or disrespect for their priorities.

Because you also lean towards Analysis, you may tend to remove yourself from a situation so you can become truly absorbed in conceptual problem solving. You may be inclined to do this analyzing alone, away from distraction. As a consequence, however, you may get so absorbed in a theoretical, abstract world that you are unaware of the people around you. People who do not work with you on a regular basis may feel that you are a little distant or "hard to get to know." Further, you may find that channels of communication between you and your coworkers are not as open and clear as they could be. Your peers may feel that they are in the dark when it comes to your ideas or progress.

In summary, you probably face challenges in some of the following areas:
- Staying focused on routine work
- Adhering to a strict schedule
- Keeping track of details
- Organizing
- Doing things before the last minute
- Following through on plans
- Sticking to practical options
- Providing a stable structure for yourself and others
- Maintaining open communication with others

My Discomfort Zone is in the land of:

_____

The Tradeoff Between Focus and Flexibility

Goals

- Understand your own level of focus or flexibility with respect to your role on a team.
- Discover the varying levels of focus and flexibility in your group.
- Recognize the tradeoffs inherent in having a more focused area of strength or more flexibility.

Today's working environments often view flexibility as a highly desirable trait. Working with others often does require a certain degree of flexibility. And our level of flexibility is influenced by how strongly we prefer a particular role.

Flexibility, however, has its own tradeoffs, and often comes at the expense of a more focused area of strength.

Notes:

Your Flexibility

Every day we find ourselves in situations that require us to adapt into different roles or work with someone who has different preferences. You may have noticed that some people find this easier than others. Why? One reason is that some people have a stronger preference for their natural roles than other people. For instance, even though all Creators focus on Possibilities, some Creators are completely absorbed in that imaginative, abstract world while others just have slight tendency in that direction. A very strong preference for a role can be a powerful advantage and make a person stand out from the crowd. On the other hand, people who have a really strong role preference often have a difficult time adapting to different roles. Further, they may have a more difficult time understanding the preferences of people in other roles.

How strong is your preference for the Creator role? Based on your responses, your preference is only **Slight.** You can see this for yourself if you look at the circular map below. The farther away your dot is from the center of the circle, the stronger your preference for your role.
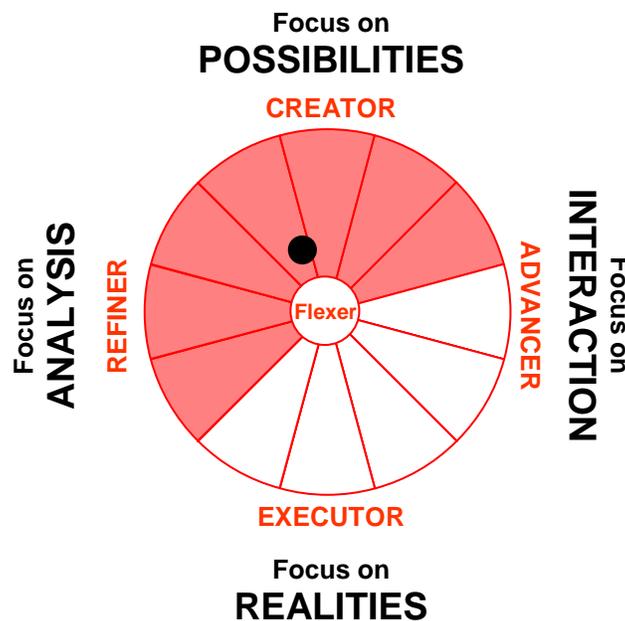

Because your preference for the Creator role is only slight, you probably have a great deal of flexibility in adapting to different roles compared to most people. Consequently, you probably feel comfortable embracing a variety of different tasks, duties, or positions. **Most likely, you will find it easy to adopt roles in the shaded regions of the circle above.** As you move farther away from these shaded areas, you will probably find those roles less comfortable and enjoyable. And although you might be quite competent at them, you may find that they cause you stress. As discussed on the next page, if your primary job responsibilities are outside of these shaded areas, consider if this is, in fact, a source of stress for you.

Levels of Flexibility

The pictures below show the different intensity bands that are used to determine your level of flexibility.

Very Strong Preference:
People with a strong preference often have one or two roles that are extremely natural and comfortable for them. Frequently, they are exceptionally talented in these roles, but may find it very stressful and draining to move to other roles outside this comfort zone.
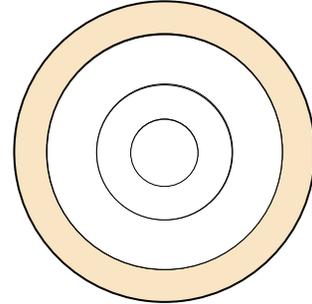
Moderately Strong Preference:
People with a moderately strong preference usually have one or two roles that are clearly most natural and comfortable for them. Although they can take on many other roles when the situation calls for it, it may be somewhat stressful and draining if they have to adapt for long periods of time.
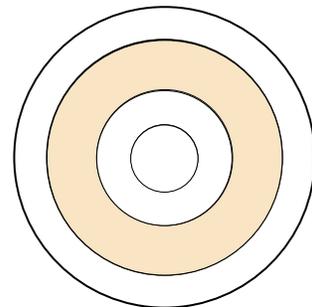
Slight Preference:
People with a slight preference usually have a clear leaning toward one or two roles as their favorites, but find that they are reasonably comfortable in most roles. Compared to most people, they tend to feel natural shifting among a variety of different tasks, duties, or positions.
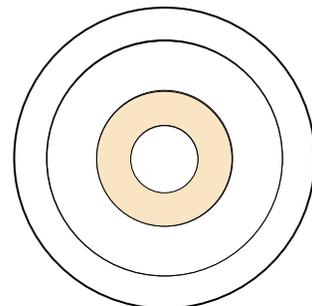
Equal Preferences:
People with an equal preference have a similar leaning toward all roles. Although they may have their favorites, they usually don't have one particular role that stands out as dominant. Therefore, they can usually adapt and meet the changing demands of the situation with less stress and discomfort than most.
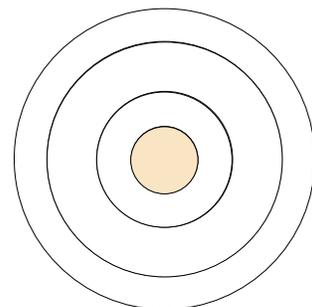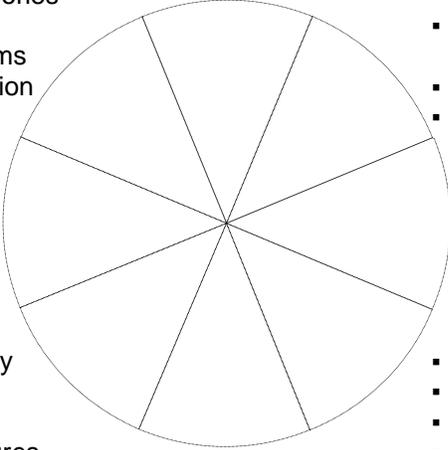
Exploring Your Focus and Flexibility

Color the wedges according to your comfort level.

- Use a **green** marker to color the wedge if you are comfortable doing three or more activities.
- Use a **red** marker if you are very uncomfortable doing three or more activities.
- Use **yellow** to color the wedges of activities you may be willing to do, but would rather not on a regular basis.

- Working with unclear goals
- Developing non-traditional ideas
- Working with little structure
- Using unusual strategies

- Developing and testing theories
- Discussing abstract topics
- Solving conceptual problems
- Designing a big-picture vision

- Performing in front of groups
- Doing things at the last minute
- Motivating others
- Acting on instinct

- Doing research
- Analyzing data
- Working alone
- Performing in-depth evaluations

- Promoting new ideas
- Organizing groups
- Selling
- Mingling with strangers

- Checking facts for accuracy
- Maintaining quality control
- Working systematically
- Following detailed procedures

- Training others
- Planning events
- Listening patiently
- Comforting and supporting

- Keeping track of critical details
- Performing routine work
- Sticking to a strict schedule
- Organizing

Total

Green Wedges | **Red Wedges** | **Yellow Wedges**

Focus and Flexibility Tradeoffs

Take notes from the group discussion.

Flexibility

Benefits   Drawbacks

Focus

Benefits   Drawbacks

"Great managers do not believe that a productive team has camaraderie as its cornerstone and team members who can play all roles equally well. On the contrary, they define a productive team as one where each person knows which role he plays best and where he is cast in that role most of the time."

- Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman, *First, Break All the Rules*