



# LEADING FROM YOUR STRENGTHS

Understanding Strengths and Blending Differences

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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](http://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 Scales

### 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 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 Scales

### The Facing Risk Scale

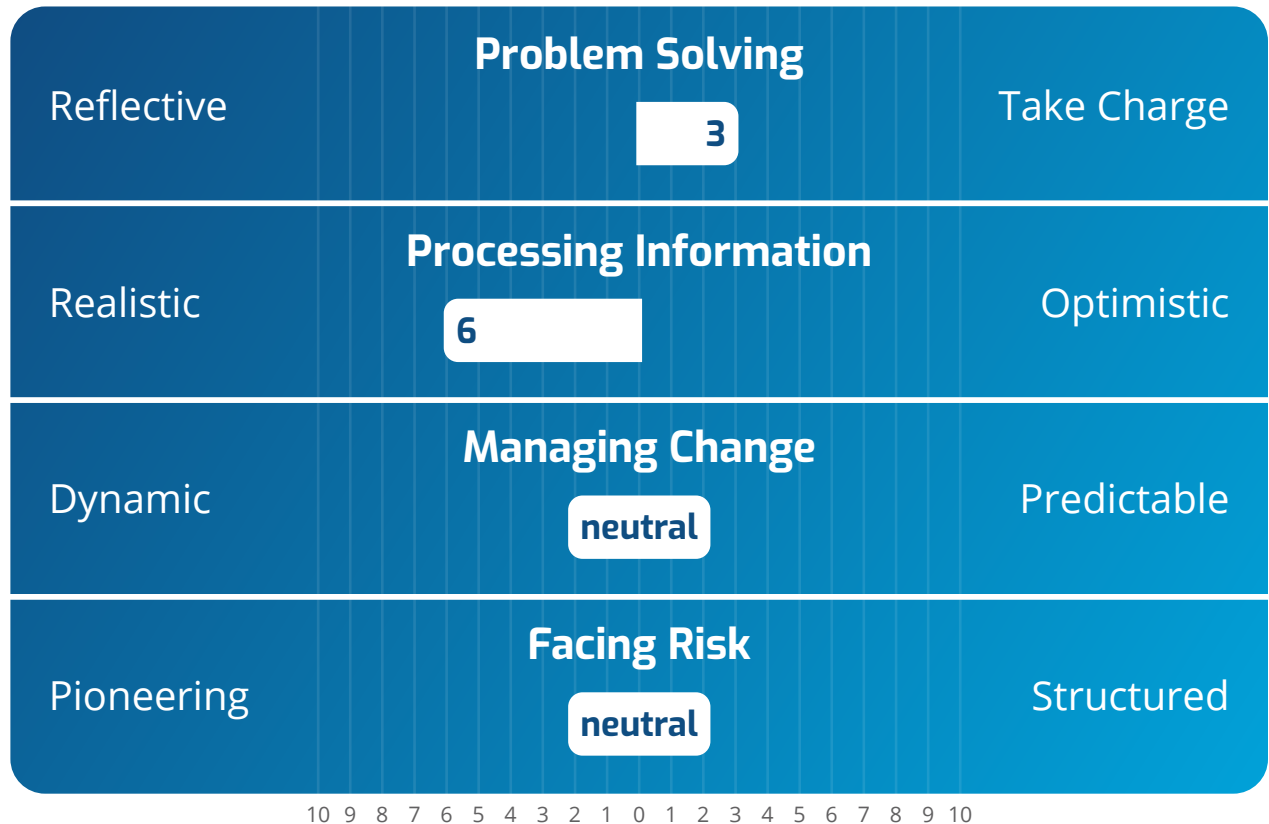
Your score on this scale indicates whether your natural strength is to be more structured or pioneering in the way you face risk. If you are on the structured side of the scale, you will tend to follow the established procedures and rules and see them as a source of protection. Therefore you will tend 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.

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 Jimmy'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 Jimmy's "Natural" strengths.*

Jimmy likes to be forceful and direct when dealing with others. His desire for results is readily apparent to the people with whom he works. He appreciates others who are team players and will reward those who are loyal. He can be incisive, analytical and argumentative at times. He embraces visions not always seen by others. Jimmy's creative mind allows him to see the "big picture." Jimmy may lose interest in a project once the challenge ceases. He may then be ready for another challenging project. He is forward-looking, aggressive and competitive. His vision for results is one of his positive strengths. Some may view him as being stubborn and opinionated. He views it as the price you must pay for success. He may try to "explain" his unyielding persistence in positive terms. He establishes many standards for himself and others. His high degree of confidence in himself demands that his standards will be met. Jimmy will work hard at achieving his goals. He loves to succeed and hates to fail. He can be successful at many things, not because of versatility but rather because of his determination to succeed.

Jimmy 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. He finds it easy to share his opinions on solving work-related problems. He is a good problem solver and troubleshooter, always seeking new ways to solve old problems. Jimmy can be direct in his approach to discovering the facts and data. He maintains his focus on results. He is logical, incisive and critical in his problem-solving activities. He refrains from getting emotionally involved in decision making. This allows him to make objective decisions. He should realize that at times he needs to think a project through, beginning to end, before starting the project.



## General Characteristics

Jimmy is not influenced by people who are overly enthusiastic. They rarely get his attention. He has the ability to ask the right questions and dismiss a shallow idea. Some people may feel these questions are a personal attack upon their integrity; however, this is just his way of getting the appropriate facts. He could improve his communication with others by being more flexible and showing a sincere interest in what they are saying. When communicating with others, Jimmy must carefully avoid being excessively critical or pushy. He tries to get on with the subject, while others may be trying to work through the details. Jimmy likes people who communicate with him in a clear, precise and brief conversation. 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 may display a lack of empathy for others who cannot achieve his standards. He is influenced by people who communicate with a logical presentation of the facts, impressed by the apparent efficiency involved.





## Value to the Team

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

- ▶ Always looking for logical solutions.
- ▶ Suspicious of people with shallow ideas.
- ▶ Places high value on time.
- ▶ Self-starter.
- ▶ Excellent troubleshooter.
- ▶ Innovative.
- ▶ Tough-minded.



## Checklist for Communicating

*Many people find this section to be extremely accurate and important for enhancing communication with Jimmy. Whether at work or home, 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 Jimmy. Review each statement with Jimmy 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 Jimmy frequently.*

Do:

- Keep at least three feet away from him.
- Be prepared with the facts and figures.
- Give pros and cons on ideas.
- Stick to business--let him decide if he wants to talk socially.
- Motivate and persuade by referring to objectives and results.
- Support and maintain an environment where he can be efficient.
- Use the proper buzz words that are appropriate to his expertise.
- Listen to him.
- Provide details in writing.
- Be patient and persistent.
- Read the body language--look for impatience or disapproval.



## Don'ts on Communicating

*This section of the report is a list of things NOT to do while communicating with Jimmy. Review each statement with Jimmy 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:

- Leave loopholes or cloudy issues if you don't want to be confronted.
- Ask rhetorical questions, or useless ones.
- Let disagreement reflect on him personally.
- Leave things open to interpretation.
- Come with a ready-made decision, or make it for him.
- Be superficial.
- Forget or lose things, be disorganized or messy, confuse or distract his mind from important tasks.
- Direct or order.
- Use inappropriate buzz words.
- Pretend to be an expert, if you are not.
- Touch him when talking.



## Ideal Environment

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

- Evaluation based on results, not the process.
- Data to analyze.
- Projects that produce tangible results.
- An innovative and futuristic-oriented environment.
- Private place to work.
- Forum to express ideas and viewpoints.
- Nonroutine work with challenge and opportunity.



## 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 Jimmy's wants and desires. Those statements that ring true, but aren't a current part of his role, can become goals to reach.*

Jimmy wants:

- ▶ Control of his own future.
- ▶ More time in the day.
- ▶ Generalized work with few, lengthy and detailed projects or reports.
- ▶ Prestige, position and titles so he can control the future of others.
- ▶ Power and authority to take the risks to achieve results.
- ▶ A wide scope of activities.
- ▶ Support system to help with details and follow through.
- ▶ A variety of work activities.
- ▶ Changing environments in which to work/play.
- ▶ New challenges and problems to solve.
- ▶ Freedom from routine work.



## Keys to Leading

*In this section are some needs which must be met in order for Jimmy 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 Jimmy and identify 3 or 4 statements that are most important to him. This allows Jimmy to participate in forming his own personal growth plan.*

Jimmy needs:

- To display empathy for people who approach life differently than he does.
- Logical answers in logical order.
- To know results expected and to be evaluated on the results.
- To soften the edge and not be so blunt.
- To understand his role on the team--either a team player or the leader.
- The opportunity to ask questions to clarify or determine why.
- To sell his ideas--not just tell them.
- To negotiate commitment face-to-face.
- Time to warm up to people.
- Time to gather the facts and data.
- Sincere feedback from others.
- Skills to come across warm and close, when appropriate.
- Sincerity from people with whom he works.



## Areas for Improvement

*This section lists possible "Natural" limitations or tendencies for Jimmy. It does not consider life and work experiences or formal education and training that he may have received to overcome these obstacles. Review with Jimmy 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.*

Jimmy has a tendency to:

- Dislike routine work or routine people--unless he sees the need to further his goals.
- Be argumentative--argues the opposite position to no end--wears down the opposition.
- Set standards for himself and others so high that impossibility of the situation is common place.
- Push and pull rather than motivate in directing people--motivates as if everyone has the same strengths that he has.
- Make "off the cuff" remarks that are often seen as personal prods.
- Overuse fear as a motivator by being overly demanding.
- Blame, deny and defend his position--even if it is not needed.



## Perceptions

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

### SELF-PERCEPTION

**Jimmy usually sees himself as being:**

|             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| Pioneering  | Assertive |
| Competitive | Confident |
| Positive    | Winner    |

### OTHERS' PERCEPTION

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

|             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| Demanding   | Nervy      |
| Egotistical | Aggressive |

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

|           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| Abrasive  | Controlling |
| Arbitrary | 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.



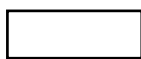
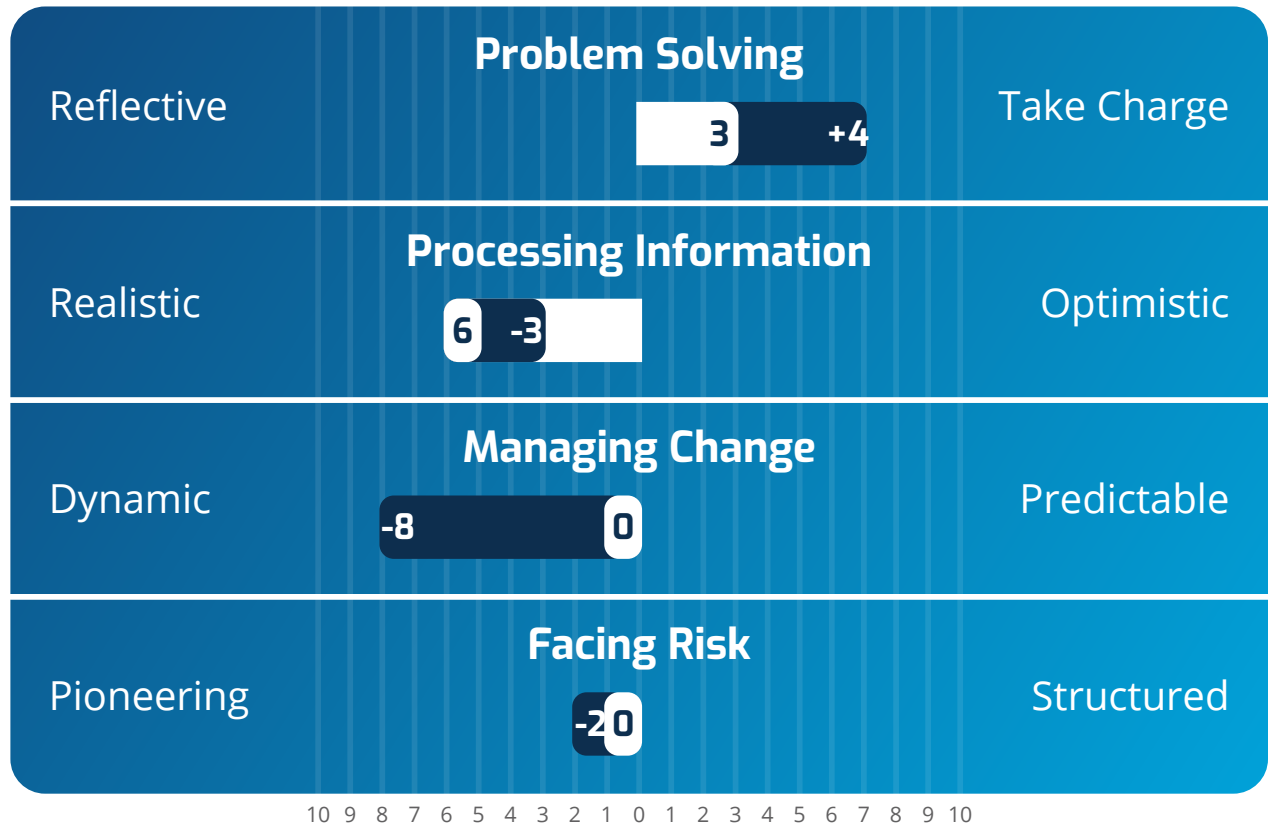
## Strengths Movement

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



Natural Strengths



Strengths Movement



## How Are You Having to "Adapt?"

*This list of descriptions can give you a picture of the way Jimmy 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 Jimmy's current situation and his need to "adapt" to be accepted.*

- ▶ Meeting deadlines.
- ▶ Moving quickly from one activity to another.
- ▶ Acting without precedent, and able to respond to change in daily work.
- ▶ Dealing with a wide variety of activities.
- ▶ Using a flexibility of style, especially with those of different work styles.
- ▶ Working without close supervision.
- ▶ Having the ability to see the "big picture" as well as the small pieces of the puzzle.
- ▶ Quickly responding to crisis and change, with a strong desire for immediate results.
- ▶ Questioning the status quo, and seeking more effective ways of accomplishment.
- ▶ A good support team to handle paperwork.
- ▶ Handling a variety of activities.
- ▶ Anticipating and solving problems.
- ▶ Persistence in task completion.



## Natural & Adapted Style

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

### Problems - Challenges

#### Natural Style

Jimmy is ambitious in his approach to problem solving, displaying a strong will and a need to remove all obstacles. Jimmy has a tendency to make decisions with little or no hesitation.

#### Adapted Style

Jimmy sees a need to be more aggressive in his approach to dealing with problems and challenges. This is illustrated by a demanding approach to solving problems. He is seeking authority equal to the challenge.

### People - Information

#### Natural Style

Jimmy is undemonstrative in his approach to influencing others and likes to let facts and figures stand for themselves. He feels persuasion needs to be objective and straightforward. His trust level is based on each interaction--the past is the past. He presents facts without embellishments.

#### Adapted Style

Jimmy sees no need to change his approach to influencing others to his way of thinking. He sees his "Natural" Style to be what the environment is calling for.



## Natural & Adapted Style

### Pace - Change

#### Natural Style

Jimmy is deliberate and steady. He is willing to change, if the new direction is meaningful and consistent with the past. He will resist change for change's sake.

#### Adapted Style

Jimmy seeks a wide scope of activities in an environment that is constantly changing. Timetables, deadlines and schedules can be constantly shuffled without obvious consternation. Even electronic communication may not move fast enough for him.

### Rules - Risk

#### Natural Style

Jimmy 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.

#### Adapted Style

Jimmy is striving to be independent and somewhat self-willed. He is most comfortable when the constraints can be "loosened" for certain situations.



## 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.

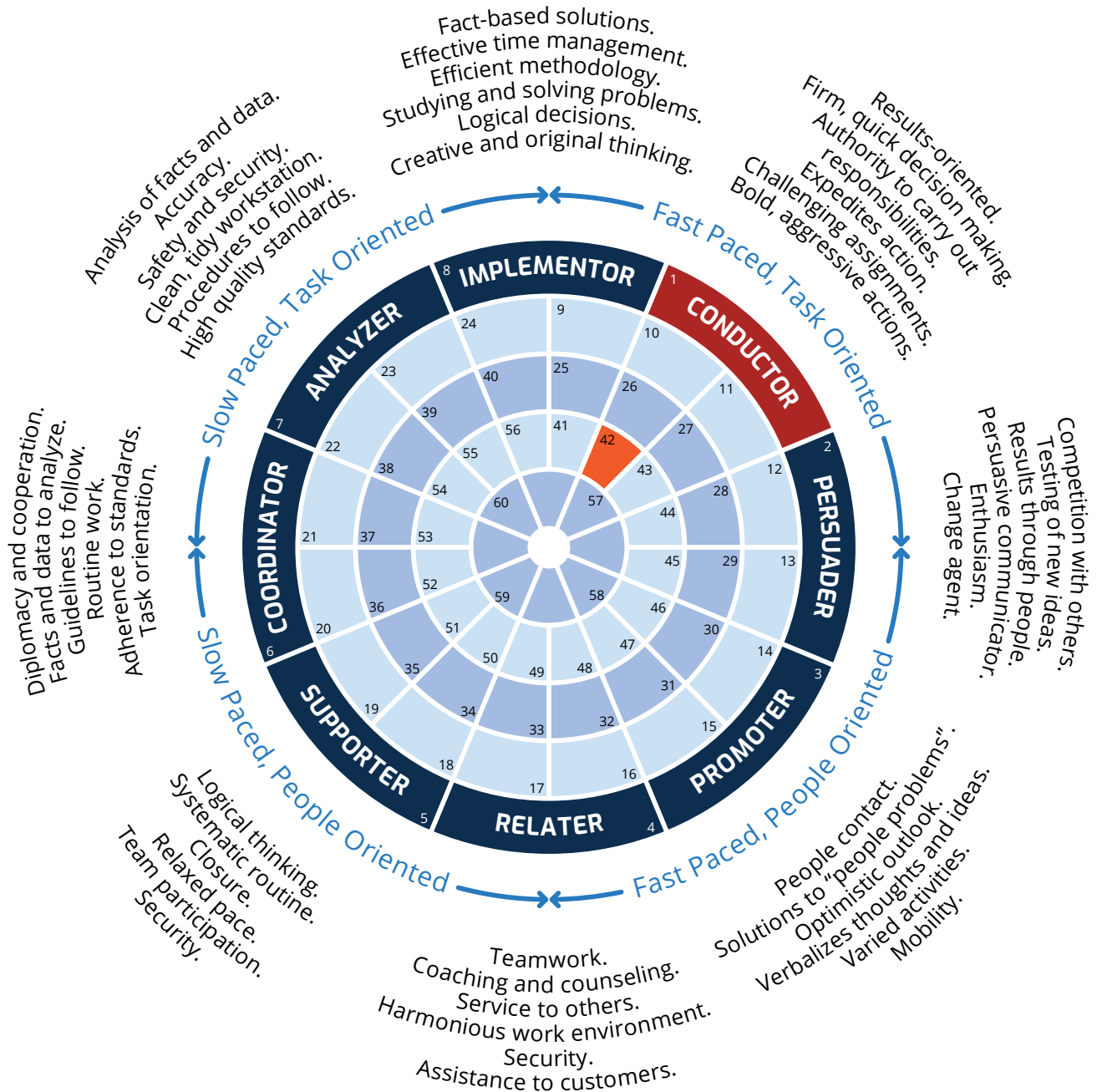
One color represents your natural strengths. The other represents your strengths movement. The Strengths Wheel is divided down and across the middle. By looking at the top of the Strengths Wheel you will see that these scales have something in common. They both represent task orientation. At the bottom of the wheel you will see that these scales represent people orientation.

Taking another look at the wheel and you will see on the left side scales have something in common as well. They are slower paced. The opposite side of the wheel you will see that these scales are faster paced.

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



**NATURAL STYLE**

Implementing Conductor (across)

**ADAPTED STYLE**

Conductor

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