

The Extreme Fundraising Ezine, Vol. II Issue 7

Welcome to the March 30 edition of the Extreme Fundraising Ezine. And a special welcome to all the new subscribers!

Today we're starting a new series on how our natural abilities—our hardwiring—affect our fundraising efforts. I've wanted to write on this for over a year! I'm excited about this series and would love your feedback as we go. Hopefully today's issue will whet your appetite.

I. Introduction to the Abilities

II. Marc's Speaking

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I. Introduction to the Abilities

Have you ever gotten exhausted trying to conform your day to the system a colleague passionately uses? Have you ever wondered how someone in your office could possibly make sense of chaos their office let alone keep their assignments straight? Have you ever bridled under the reporting requests of your supervisor? If so, you may have experienced a clash of abilities.

It should come as no surprise that we all are not created with the same abilities. Some people methodically work through a process to come to a conclusion while others can consistently make accurate snap decisions. Some people seem to have ideas pouring out all the time while others seem to prefer focusing with one idea. Some people seem overly concerned with how a report looks while others seem overly concerned with the actual content of that report. Some donors want to see 3-D models of capital projects while others would prefer to just hear about them. Some expect to be walked through the case statement step-by-step while others want to cut to the chase and get to the ask. All of these can be affected by the unique pattern of our innate abilities.

******WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "ABILITIES"******

The abilities experts at the Highlands Company (<http://www.highlandsco.com>) state that, "Everyone is born with a range of abilities unique to him or her. It's fair to say that these abilities are essentially hard-wired." Obviously, we're more than simply the sum of our abilities. We are a complex interaction of things like skills, values, interests, goals, life stages, and personality, as well as abilities. But abilities point to our baseline approach to the world.

Unlike skills, abilities cannot be learned or acquired. They just are. Being "good with your hands" is an ability. To be a brain surgeon, you must add skills to that ability. When you're doing something within your ability set, it comes easily, quickly, seemingly effortlessly. When you're required to work outside of your natural abilities, the task at best takes much longer to complete, at worst produces incredible stress while you're doing it.

The Highlands Company organizes the abilities into three major categories:

- **PERSONAL STYLE:** Generalist/Specialist; Introvert/Extrovert; Time Frame

- **DRIVING ABILITIES:** Classification; Concept Organization; Idea Productivity; Spatial Relations
- **SPECIALIZED ABILITIES:** Design Memory; Observation; Verbal Memory; Tonal Memory; Rhythm Memory; Pitch Discrimination; Number Memory; Visual Speed & Accuracy

******WHAT ABOUT YOU?******

Wouldn't it be nice to know how a donor, subordinate, or your boss would most naturally expect to receive information? Better yet, wouldn't it be terrific to know how you do? In the following articles, I'll sketch the characteristics of the top abilities and make connections to how they might impact fundraising. Be prepared to more fully enjoy your job!

How can you determine your innate abilities? The best method I've found is the Highlands Ability Battery. The Battery is an incredibly thorough 3 hour assessment. Rather than asking you how you perceive yourself, the Battery measures how you actually perform on a series of 19 work samples. This very accurately and objectively tests your abilities. Individuals and companies like GlaxoSmithKline have been benefiting from this for years. (I was so amazed by the results that I became a certified provider of the Highlands Ability Battery.) More information on the Battery and some sample exercises are available at <http://www.highlandsco.com/>.

I've also been told the book "Now Discover Your Strengths"--the follow up to "First Break All The Rules"--includes an assessment of your abilities. I believe more information is available at <https://www.strengthsfinder.com/>.

II. Marc's Speaking

On April 27, I'll be giving a brand new 3-hour seminar called "How to Handle Objections." If you don't know what to do when you make a solicitation and the donor doesn't say "yes" OR "no," this seminar is created for you! You can find the details at <http://www.cmcc.edu/training/>.

III. A Survey

The Extreme Fundraising subscribers' survey IS on the way. When you see the link, please take a few minutes to fill it out. I designed it to be shorter than 5 minutes. Thank you!

To your extreme fundraising success,

Marc

Marc A. Pitman is an executive coach to nonprofit leaders. An expert in helping people identify their natural abilities, he's committed to providing down-to-earth information that will decrease stress and put the "fun" back into fundraising!

The Extreme Fundraising Ezine is a complimentary newsletter of The Fundraising Coach <http://fundraisingcoach.com>. Feel free to pass it on!

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