



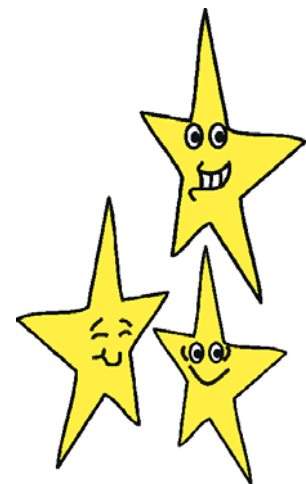
## **Personal Effectiveness (Product Comparison)**

Back in the early 1990's the Harvard Business Review published an article about personal effectiveness that showed nine major traits. Around the same time, the UK Government sponsored the development of a set of Management Standards that formed the benchmark for management competence. After giving both a bit of time to settle down, we offer our product comparison.

### **The Bell Labs Skill Set**

Two researchers, Kelley and Caplan, studied the scientists at Bell Labs to see why some are more effective than others in their performance. They found that the various traits traditionally thought to distinguish stars from average performers such as: IQ; problem solving skills; will to win and so on did not fully explain the differences in performance between the stars and average workers. Instead, the authors found that there are nine major areas where the stars shine brighter (literally) than their average colleagues. These areas are:

1. Ability to Take Initiative - self starter, taking responsibility and volunteering for additional duties
2. Self Management - managing own output, time, learning etc.
3. Team Working - taking on responsibility as a member of a team
4. Leadership - develop and communicate goals, channel colleagues towards stated goals
5. "Followership" - helping the leader as a lieutenant but with initiative of your own
6. Perspective - ability to see yourself in the overall context of the organisation, taking in different viewpoints
7. Networking - gaining information and knowledge beyond your immediate colleagues
8. Show and Tell - ability to market yourself and your ideas
9. Organisational Savvy - understanding the politics and power structures, successfully negotiating conflicting interests



Be a Star!

The authors also felt that to achieve basic effectiveness at their jobs, the scientist had to be Technically Competent as well as having cognitive abilities such as Learning and Reasoning skills.

### **The National Management Standards**

This took a different approach. Following an extensive survey of practising managers, the Management Standards project team designed a set of competences that defined the management role. In the standards, these were split into various Key Roles:

- |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Manage Activities  | 5. Manage Energy   |
| 2. Manage Resource    | 6. Manage Quality  |
| 3. Manage People      | 7. Manage Projects |
| 4. Manage Information |                    |

The Key Roles are then split into Units of Competence and thence into Elements of Competence. The system is designed for collating relevant evidence into portfolios and, if desired, towards National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications.

The Standards were designed to be catholic in that it covers every type of management activities in every type of organisations. It was also designed before the wave of management ideas in the 1990's. The Key Roles can therefore look uncomfortable to some project managers where "project" will encompass just about everything. Companies deploying the Balanced Scorecard will need to search for a Key Role that focuses on customers. Managers in lean operations will need to search for "Added Value". The Energy Key Role was prepared before sustainable development became a hot topic and surely "managing knowledge" is more important than "managing information"?

#### Head to Head

On the surface, it would seem that the National Standards are somewhat outdated and perhaps a bit too pedestrian in their outlook whereas the Bell Labs model seems exciting and dynamic. However, on careful examination, the National Standards are really a set of basic "Technical Skills" in management.

In a structured learning environment, the National Standards provide a valuable check list despite the somewhat tortured (and politically correct) syntax. Every element in the Standards was written such that it can be measured as outcomes.

So instead of:

"run a good meeting with the right agenda, right people and achieve the required objectives"

You will get guidance that recommends:

- "your preparation for the meeting is sufficient to enable you to participate effectively"
- or
- "you give clear, accurate and concise information about decisions made at the meeting, promptly to those who need it"

This pedantic style is not a bad thing, although it can be hard going at times. For newly appointed managers, it is invaluable as it will make sure you cover all necessary points.

The main difference between the two is that the Bell Labs model is ultimately aimed at personal effectiveness - YOUR personal effectiveness, whereas adopting the National Standards will help those around you to achieve a more organised (and perhaps more bureaucratic) workplace as well.

#### Our Recommendations:

Use the National Standards to make sure you cover all the points to achieve competence as a manager, hone your reasoning and learning skills, then use the Bell Lab skill set to turbocharge your career.

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Note: Greenfile Developments' Principal Consultant, Dr Uly Ma, was the project manager responsible for developing the Key Role of Managing Energy. Why not Sustainable Development instead? The short answer was that funding was only available for Managing Energy. The long answer takes a lot longer to describe but the end point was more or less the same.

#### The Article:

"How Bell Labs Creates Star Performers" Robert E. Kelley; Janet Caplan Harvard Business Review July, 1993

The Management Standards website:

<http://www.management-standards.org>