Highly Successful Teams, Inspired Leadership, and Improved Personal Productivity

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3 April 2003
Personal Improvement: *How to be a Star at Work*

- Bell Labs – Where the study started…
Bell Labs – 10X employees

• Hired the best and brightest from the most prestigious universities
• Only a few lived up to their apparent potential for brilliance
• Most developed into solid performers of mostly average productivity
• Star performers outproduced and outperformed their peers by a wide margin
Key Questions

• What separates the star from the average performer?
• Are star qualities innate, or can they be learned?
• Could a program be designed to turn average performers to stars?
Dogs that didn’t Bark!

- Star performers are smarter than average performers (have higher IQs, are better problem solvers, or are more creative)
- Star performers are more driven and ambitious than others
- Star performers have more leadership skills than others
- Clean desk people are more likely to be star performers than messy desk people
- Detailed time management and organizational systems are keys to high productivity
- Star performers work longer hours and harder than average performers
- Star performers are successful primarily because they play organizational politics
Study of Productivity

- Original research
  - Bell Laboratories
  - 3M
  - Hewlett Packard

- Follow-on research
  - Analog Devices
  - Fore Systems
  - Air Touch
  - Shell Oil
  - Kimberly Clark

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Measuring Star Quality

• 45 factors organized into four main categories
  – Cognitive factors
    • IQ, logic, reasoning and creativity
  – Personality factors
    • self confidence, ambition, courage, personal control of destiny
  – Social factors
    • interpersonal skills and leadership
  – Work & organization factors
    • worker’s relationship with boss, job satisfaction, and attitudes towards pay and other rewards
Measuring Star Quality

- Surveys, case histories, interviews with employees and hiring managers
- Biographical information and personnel material
Key Findings

• Data showed no appreciable differences between stars and non-stars
  – cognitive, personal, psychological, social, work or organizational
• Most engineers come to the workplace with more than enough potential to be Stars
• Taking initiative and networking are the two most important success factors.