

"The Right Tools For The Job – Part III of III"

By: Obi Abuchi

"Formal education will make you a living;
self-education will make you a fortune."

– **Jim Rohn, American Speaker and Author.**

In Parts I and II of this article series, we looked at two tools that people need to execute a job well. Actually, by saying 'well', I really mean 'exceptionally well'.

As a reminder, the first of the three tools we looked at was "**talent**" a.k.a. your natural ability.

Some of the most successful people alive will tell you that whatever vocation you choose in life or whatever role you are in, you will be most successful, indeed most fulfilled, if it is built around your greatest natural abilities i.e. your talents. Therefore, it's really important to know what they are.

The second tool was "**skill**." (The right skill)

A habit that even the most talented of people have mastered in order to achieve success and discover their sphere of excellence is this: the habit of learning new skills, the right skills, and **honing those skills in line with their talents**. Examples abound, such as Tiger Woods honing his swing, Warren Buffett honing his investment skills, Tony Blair honing his public speaking and presentation skills, and so on. You see, having a natural aptitude for something is merely the beginning. You need to develop the right skills to enhance your talents.

Now we'll look at the third and final tool for the job, which when combined with the first two tools truly creates a "Strength". (A "Strength", as Authors Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton put it, is consistent near perfect performance in an activity)

But before we do that I'll tell you about a conversation I had during a recent research interview that highlights this third tool perfectly. The interview was with the Head of UK Equities in an Investment Bank. He described how the odds were against him in getting to where he is today, particularly in that he was not born and bred in the UK, he faced language and culture barriers, and he was trying to break into the Finance Sector with limited experience of the UK market.

One of the key attributes he singled out that set him apart from his peers (including the many Oxbridge candidates he was competing against) during his quest to get into the Finance Sector was this: his ability to acquire the 'right' knowledge to give himself a competitive advantage. He said, "Acquiring my CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst) qualifications enhanced my reputation and made it easier for my current employer to assess my ability."

When you realise that the CFA Charter is considered the designation of excellence in the international investment community and is one of the hardest of the financial analyst exams, you begin to appreciate the achievement.

That brings me onto the third tool, which is "**knowledge**". Common sense? Well, you know what they say about that, don't you?

The interesting thing is that though you often hear, "knowledge is power", not all knowledge is useful for your sphere of excellence and for building a track record. On the other hand, the right knowledge can create great opportunities and catapult you to higher levels of performance & reward. Of course, the type of knowledge you need depends on your aspirations and career vision.

As you know, we all gain knowledge in one of two ways - education or experience. For the purpose of this article series we'll focus on **education**. Webster's Dictionary defines **education** as, "instruction or training by which people learn to develop and use their mental, moral and physical powers." Wow! That certainly puts a different spin on the whole School, College, and University experience.

The difficult bit, however, is that many people are not truly strategic in how they gain knowledge and then apply it. Education for the sake of amassing accolades will only get you so far, but when it is well-thought out and part of a strategic plan to enhance your strengths, it can take you to heights that you never thought possible, as was the case for the Head of UK Equities mentioned earlier.



Motivatem Limited

Registered in England and Wales with company number 6080914

www.motivatem.co.uk



Like many successful people he realised the importance of capitalising on the 'training and instruction' you have gained towards creating value for yourself and your business/organisation. And that's where self-education comes in - it's a proactive approach to acquiring knowledge and developing your ability to discern & apply the 'right' knowledge at the 'right' time.

The best of the best always remain students - students of life, students of people, students of themselves, students in their vocational field, and students in their sphere of excellence.

What is your self-education strategy? What skills are you currently developing? Do you know what knowledge you need to gain in order to enhance your natural talents?

The difference this all makes is that when you enhance a talent by adding the right skills and right knowledge, you are on your way to creating a strength. And it's when you discover your strengths and play to them that you can actually become the best *YOU* that you can be.

So, to bring this series to a close, don't forget:

1. Whatever vocation you choose in life or whatever role you are in, you will be most successful, indeed most fulfilled, if it is built around your greatest natural abilities i.e. your talents.
2. There's a habit that even the most talented of people have mastered in order to achieve success and discover their sphere of excellence – it's the habit of learning new skills, the right skills, and honing those skills in line with their talents.
3. When you enhance a talent by adding the right skills and right knowledge, you are on your way to creating a strength.

By the way, if you were given the opportunity to discover and play to your strengths what could you accomplish? Would you like to explore the notion of discovering, developing and deploying your greatest strengths? If so, then send an email to yoursphereofexcellence@motivatem.co.uk with your contact details and "Strengths Discovery" in the 'Subject Line'.

Finally, check out this ingenious ad by BT Business Solutions featuring Gordon Ramsay. Rather humourously, it vividly depicts what it looks like when you're not playing to your strengths: [BT Video](#).

To Your True Potential!

Obi

*This article includes excerpts taken from the Motivatem Booklet "8 Steps to Discover Your Sphere of Excellence".

Obi Abuchi is the Founding Director of Motivatem and is passionate about helping young professionals and young people develop personally and professionally.

You can find out more about Motivatem's services and resources at www.motivatem.co.uk.

© Motivatem, Ltd. 2008. Copying and distribution of this article without modification is permitted in any medium without royalty, provided that the copyright notice and this notice are preserved.