

## **The DNA of Optimal Productivity**

### **The Question of a Lifetime**

Is it possible to determine where you will be optimally productive during the entire course of your lifetime? Can we identify your sustainable competitive and economic advantage? Can we determine in advance where you will enjoy the greatest economic premium and the most personal fulfillment at the same time? In other words, can we have clarity and specificity about where you will make the most contribution and most difference to the world over a lifetime of endeavor? Is it now possible to determine the place where work is right for you and good for the world at the same time?

Our research and analysis produces an unqualified "Yes". The answers to these related questions are not found in categorized personality profiles or psychometric propensities. In spite of their continued use and popularity, psychometric tests provide only a snapshot of the real you. They are part of the wrong normal; the tendency to fit you to the job rather than fitting the job to you. But there is another way. Specific and definitive lifetime optimal productivity can be revealed, targeted and understood. Furthermore, we have discovered that there are innate 'absolutes' that define where the individual will be most productive. Engaging these 'absolutes' has direct, positive benefits and consequences for career or vocation decisions. Knowing how you are wired let's you work according to your passion code.

These innate 'absolutes' are verifiable and demonstrable. While education, training, experience, culture, family upbringing, ethnic background and opportunity can enhance these absolutes, they nevertheless remain consistent and endure during the lifetime of an individual. They are embedded in the person, not merely added to the person. They are your optimal productivity DNA.

The productive contribution of an individual during a lifetime is a direct function of how much he or she gives expression to these innately embedded specific absolutes. These absolutes represent the built-in capacity to function and contribute at the highest level. This capacity is the source of inexhaustible energy and effectiveness embedded in each individual. It is the *single most important causal factor* of optimal productivity and sustained satisfaction achieved by any individual.

This phenomenon underscores the reality of how each individual life can be optimized by uncovering, developing and deploying the specific absolutes that are innately embedded in the person. A career or vocation built on the bedrock of these innate absolutes will enable the individual to deliver results, exceed expectations and ensure excellence because it engages what is 'hard-wired' in the individual.

### **The Mechanics of this Phenomenon:**

The Optimal Productive Function of an individual can be uncovered and defined through a phenomenological diagnosis of the prior ‘productive’ engagements of the individual. This is not a multiple choice, fill in the circle method. It is an interactive and reflective process that carefully examines the uniqueness of the individual, not the common categories of multiple individuals or groups. Embedded absolutes can be uncovered by using a diagnostic methodology that interactively investigates the collected evidence where the individual has consistently demonstrated optimal effectiveness. The diagnostic procedure begins by asking the candidate to relate a few activities and engagements in the past where he or she made a significant contribution in value and benefit *to others*. The focus of the diagnostic method is not on the personal results to the individual but rather on the external consequences to others.

The diagnosis continues by examining these data points in a one-on-one session with the person. The analysis is validated by collating data secured from several key individuals who have significantly interfaced with the participant.

The absolutes that emerge through this interactive diagnosis are compiled and presented in the form of a Productivity Compass. This compass points to the ‘definitive range’ where the individual is innately equipped and best fitted to contribute and function.

Our research reveals the presence of two key absolutes embedded in any individual. These two innate absolutes are foundational and pivotal to sustained productivity.

### **Absolute No: 1 – Natural Productive Zone:**

The first innate absolute embedded in any individual is defined best as the person’s Natural Productive Zone (or simply Natural Zone). This absolute defines where the individual is driven to function optimally and what kind of activities or engagements energizes him or her the most. There are *seven* distinct natural zones. Our research demonstrates that each individual will function optimally in only *one* of these seven zones during his or her lifetime.

Each zone is distinct, definitive and deterministic. It provides the individual with a specific scope or range of engagements where he or she will thrive, cutting across a variety of careers, vocations and jobs. It does not define the best-suited job or profession as much as it determines the best-suited kind of engagements, outcomes and results.

For example, one of the seven zones is the dynamic range of “teach-impart-explain”. Those innately endowed with this zone will thrive in engagements that require the final outcome or result to focus on teaching, transferring or imparting some knowledge, understanding or skill to others. Similarly, those innately endowed with

the zone “build-marshall-establish” will be energized and gravitate toward roles and responsibilities where the outcome or result requires leadership, management of personnel and the demand for decisive planning and action.

Each of these seven distinct zones represents productive roles, engagements and activities that the individual is innately best fitted and equipped to do. The zone defines the outcomes and results that the individual will gravitate toward in order to find fulfillment and meaning in life. The more the individual engages in activities that are in alignment with the natural zone, the more he or she experiences an effectiveness and proficiency that is exceptional and sustaining. Attempts to function in a zone that is not innate, native and natural to the individual will result in sub-optimal performance, stress, discouragement and burnout.

Like the definitive nature of blood types where every individual belongs to either blood group A, B, O or AB, the natural zone of an individual is definitive and unchangeable. There is no evidence to support the suggestion that the definitive zone can be altered or fundamentally changed as a result of education, socialization, specialized training or any other extrinsic factor. While individuals can develop and enhance capabilities within the area of the natural zone, they cannot substitute or replace their definitive natural zone with another zone of their choice or preference.

### **Absolute No: 2 – Key Aptitude:**

The second innate absolute embedded in each individual is best defined as the Key Aptitude (or Key Driver). An aptitude defines a natural capacity for effectiveness, expressed as an action, abstraction or emotion. It is what the individual is naturally ‘fitted with’, ‘suitable for’, ‘constituted with’, ‘appropriate for’ or ‘created for’. It is not an acquired skill or competence. It is much more like a key driver behind the person’s ability to successfully accomplish tasks. It’s a person’s default operating method.

The innate Key Aptitude embedded in each individual represents the most uncanny and potent ‘tool’ or ‘weapon’ of the individual. It is the ‘sharpest knife’ in the individual’s arsenal, allowing him to optimally function in the natural zone. The expression of this innate aptitude allows the individual to demonstrate exceptional prowess and acumen. It is the default methodology that the individual falls back on when required to handle or accomplish any critical task or mission. The more an individual gives expression to the Key Aptitude, the more the individual demonstrates a vigor and vitality that is continuously renewed and replenished. This becomes a perennial source of inexhaustible energy. Understanding and engaging the Key Aptitude within the Natural Zone allows an individual to become a self-renewing source of energy and production. This is the experience often described with words like “I could do this for hours and never get tired.”

Any individual may demonstrate a range of productive capabilities, but the Key Aptitude is by far the most critical and potent. Defining the individual’s Key Aptitude is pivotal to determining the person’s competitive edge. It helps define what he or

she is exceptionally good at doing. The engagement of the individual's Key Aptitude allows the individual an edge and effectiveness that is unique, specific and exclusive to the individual. The combination of Key Aptitude and Natural Zone provide an individual with *significant economic leverage and advantage*. In other words, when a person understands and employs the Key Aptitude and Natural Zone combination, he or she will stand above others, exhibit significantly higher productivity and be able to command a higher premium in economic return while, *at the same time*, find fulfillment in being a benefit to others.

Similar to the Natural Zone, the Key Aptitude innately embedded in the individual remains fundamentally unchanged during a lifetime, essentially consistent and not altered by external factors or environmental changes.

An individual's Key Aptitude falls into one of these three major categories – Action, Abstraction or Emotion. For example, the innate aptitude to organize and classify resources or assets can be categorized as an action-aptitude. The innate aptitude to conceptualize or mentally process data or facts will fall under the abstraction-aptitude. The innate aptitude to compel, empathize or induce is in the emotion-aptitude category.

Each aptitude has a productive and contributive value. An individual will be optimally productive in any given task or endeavor if the activity substantially engages and requires the expression of the individual's Key Aptitude as a critical need or requirement to discharge that responsibility. Therefore, deploying individuals in roles that demand optimal engagement of their Key Aptitude is an essential pre-requisite for personal optimized productivity. Furthermore, engaging people in roles aligned with their Natural Zones and Key Aptitudes provides the greatest source of productivity for the company, organization or society. If you want maximum performance, you must discover and use the Natural Zone and Key Aptitude of your people. Unless you consciously take this step, you will inhibit potential productivity, discourage maximum effort and reduce results.

### **Empirical Validity:**

This phenomenon is consistent, demonstrable and can be validated through the productive life-engagements of any individual. Through an on-going process of 'Productivity Tracking', research shows that the optimal productive engagements of any individual will be within the scope and specifics of the Productivity Compass.

Similar to time-lapsed photography, 'Productivity Tracking' entails systematically documenting the 'peak productive performance' engagements and expressions of an individual over a finite period of time. Collating the data secured from several of these engagements provides the hard evidence revealing the consistency of the Natural Zone and the specific Key Aptitude. Research also demonstrates that the individual will be able to sustain satisfaction and fulfillment in any work, career or vocation only when he or she is engaged in roles and responsibilities that require

consistent and substantive expression of his or her innate Natural Zone and Key Aptitude. Our tracking of 'peak productive performance' in the life of an individual reveals that as long as the critical deliverables in the job or role give expression and engage the innate 'absolutes' (Natural Zone and Key Aptitude), the individual is able to sustain optimal productive performance. Whenever the role is changed and the individual is required to deliver critical results that do not engage or give expression to innate absolutes, the performance of the individual becomes sub-optimal at its best and, more often than not, results in unresolved frustration, fatigue and burnout.

### **What Does This Discovery Mean for Human Resources?**

Given the definitive and enduring nature of the data that the Natural Zone and the Key Aptitude provide, there are several benefits that an individual and the organization will be able to secure when the individual's Productivity Compass has been well defined.

**Career Pathing:** The Productivity Compass provides the person with inputs that are both foundational and pivotal for career pathing. It enables individuals to chart a course and navigate the twists and turns in a career with specificity and certainty by recognizing where their "edge" and effectiveness will be maximized, guaranteed and sustained during their lifetime.

**Optimal Productivity:** Individuals equipped with a Productivity Compass analysis will be able to focus on those specific roles and engagements that provide optimal expression within their 'absolutes'. This eliminates the needless trial and error process for discovering where the individual will make the most contribution. The Productivity Compass enables them to sift the variety of opportunities that present themselves in a job or career and be selective to be effective.

**Sustaining Career Satisfaction:** By using the Productivity Compass, individuals are able to define where they can attain and sustain career satisfaction. The Productivity Compass provides them with both the direction and the range of engagements that will tap into their innately endowed advantages. Individuals who enjoy consistent career satisfaction are able to demonstrate confidence, emotional well-being and get the job done with finesse and excellence.

**Energy and Effectiveness:** The Productivity Compass helps individuals identify where they will be able to demonstrate an uncanny edge and effectiveness in a job, career or mission. It provides definitive data about where the person will be able to tap into an inexhaustible source of intrinsic energy that will sustain passion and guarantee satisfaction. The individual's 'center of gravity' will be maximized when the person consistently engages the Natural Zone and Key Aptitude, resulting in clarity, confidence and passion in handling and executing the given responsibility.

**Educational Growth & Development:** An individual's educational growth and development will yield optimal results *only* when the education (or any specialized

training) acquired builds on the bedrock of innately endowed absolutes. The Productivity Compass will equip the individual with clarity about the kind of training and education that will enhance innate capabilities and broaden the scope and productive contribution in an organization or societal context. Training without regard to the Productivity Compass is pointless. It treats all individuals as if they were clones. Effective training is stretching the individual in the area of their innate talent and potential.

**Effective Team Work:** Finding one's niche on a team is critical to the success of any collective effort. Rather than take on a role or responsibility based on a situational need, the individual who operates on the basis of the Productivity Compass will be able to be specific about where he or she can contribute optimally. This avoids any unrealistic team expectations that can lead to needless frustration and low morale. The Productivity Compass enables the individual to be clear and specific about where they can contribute best on a team.

**Economic Value:** An individual's optimal economic value is a direct function of how much he or she has developed and deployed the innate absolutes. An individual's economic value represents the economic premium of an individual in a market economy. It defines where the individual's contribution will be most sought after and where he or she can excel, sustain passion and be effective in delivery. Developing and deploying these innate absolutes insures their economic value is recognized and rewarded.

**Return on Investment (ROI):** The organization will secure its maximum ROI on human capital only when the individuals are deployed in roles that will give optimal expression to their Natural Zone and Key Aptitude. The Productivity Compass becomes a dynamic tool in the hands of HR managers and the supervisor, allowing deployment of personnel in ways that will engage the individual and also achieve corporate objectives. It also helps the supervisor to have clarity about who will perform best in a critical task or mission.

**Data for Deployment:** Whenever the organization needs to deploy personnel to achieve a critical mission, data relating to the innate absolutes in an individual becomes critical. More than any acquired experience or training, the individual's innate absolutes play a pivotal role in determining sustained success or effectiveness. On the other hand, deploying people when their innate absolutes are not compatible to the task at hand will lead to burnout, emotional fatigue and sub-optimal results.

**Data for Development:** The Productivity Compass will yield valuable insights for individual development. It provides inputs and direction to HR for the kind of specialized training and skills that will enable the individual to become most proficient and capable.

## **A few consequences of not defining the Productivity Compass of an individual:**

**Sub-optimal Performance:** When individuals engage in roles that do not completely give expression to their innate absolutes, our research shows that despite best effort, determination or intent, the outcomes and results will be mediocre and sub-optimal. We have observed this when individuals are moved from a job where they were peak performers to a different role outside of their Natural Zone. Despite their best efforts, they proved to be under-performers. The phenomenon of "The Peter Principle" demonstrates the efficacy of this insight. People will not perform optimally merely because they are promoted, trained or otherwise equipped for the job. The job must engage their Natural Zone and Key Aptitude to sustain passion and effectiveness.

**Burn out:** When an individual is forced to engage in roles and responsibilities that do not give expression to their Natural Zone and Key Aptitude, research shows that over a period of time the individual will experience observable symptoms of burnout. This is more marked with those in mid-career than with those who are starting out in their careers. Symptoms of burn out include physical fatigue, inertia, minimal motivation, lack of focus and little or no stamina to complete the task.

**Depression:** When an individual is denied expression of the innate absolutes on a long-term basis, the risk and probability in succumbing to depression is relatively high. We have observed that individuals demonstrate a lack of focus and disinterest in handling their role or executing their responsibility despite incentives and inducements to perform whenever the Natural Zone and Key Aptitude are not substantially engaged. Technically, depression is defined as a psychoneurotic or psychotic disorder marked especially by sadness, inactivity, difficulty in concentration, feelings of dejection, hopelessness and sometimes suicidal tendencies. Many of these symptoms are observable when the individual's innate absolutes are not given expression for an extended period of time.

**Terminal Illness:** Current research suggests that when the individual pursues a job, career or vocation that is not in line with the innate absolutes for an extended period of time, there is increased risk of cancer, Alzheimer's and other kinds of terminal illness. While the evidence is still anecdotal, it is increasingly clear that such an occurrence should not be surprising given the severity and the intensity with which individuals push themselves to be successful. When such pursuits span several years, the physical immunity of the human body is reduced. While there may be several factors including diet, environment and genetic endowment that play a role in these kinds of physical impairments, we have observed that the lack of engagement of the individual's Natural Zone and Key Aptitude for an substantial period of time during one's working life may be one of the primary causal factors for the onset of terminal illness.

## **Conclusions:**

Uncovering the innate Natural Zone and Key Aptitude (which constitutes the Productivity Compass) of an individual is the most important information to define and develop the productive and contributive value of the individual during a lifetime.

This Optimal Productive Function embedded in an individual is a naturally occurring phenomenon that can be harnessed to enable each person to make a positive, useful and economically viable contribution to a nation, society or organization. It is a win-win option that affirms the intrinsic productive capabilities of an individual and also provides the society or organization with unique contributions that will enrich and enhance its social, intellectual and economic worth and value.

If the reality of this phenomenon becomes evident to those engaged in the deployment and development of human capital, it will significantly alter the way we educate, hire, assign, promote, train, appraise, manage and invest in people. But if this reality is ignored, neglected or even denied, the consequential impact on any knowledge-based economy will be both damaging and far-reaching. Stifling innate talent is tantamount to emasculating the specific productive function embedded in any individual. It is damage to the heart and soul of human progress and development.

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