Getting to know your Workplace Thinking Style

Different people have different thinking styles? CEO of Verztec Consulting Pte Ltd, Nicholas Goh, offers a tip sheet on how understanding different thinking styles can help one a lot at work.

Singapore, Singapore (PRWEB) October 06, 2016 -- Different people have different thinking styles? Nothing new about this. Yet in recent years, there continues to be research about how thinking styles can impact your business, because when forming a team, you need the right mix of people with different thinking styles to best achieve workplace goals.

In this article, CEO of Verztec Consulting Pte Ltd, Nicholas Goh, offers a tip sheet on how understanding different thinking styles can help one a lot at work.

According to Harvard Business Review (What kind of thinker are you? November 23, 2015), today’s success is not about out-producing the competition but about how to out-think the competition.

Most companies run their business teams based on role-play, meaning in a team one may need a project manager, an analyst, an IT expert, and so forth. Says Verztec CEO Mr Goh: “What if we not only knew their speciality but also their thinking roles? What if we could align and synergise their thinking styles?

1. Know Oneself

Whether one is a boss or an employee, knowing one’s thinking style can be invaluable. the Harvard Business Review lists down three simple steps in discovering one’s thinking style —

The first step: Ask – where’s the thinking focus? On the idea, the process, the action, or relationships? The second step: Where does the thinking orientate?

The big picture or small details? The third step: Combine the two dimensions in step one and two and harness the thinking style at work in each setting.

For example, on the big picture or macro orientation:

- Explorer thinking is about giving birth to creative ideas.
- Planner thinking is about designing effective systems.
- Energizer thinking is about getting people to act.
- Connector thinking is about building and nurturing relationships.

Across the micro or detail orientation:

- Expert thinking is about achieving objectivity and insight.
- Optimizer thinking is about improving productivity.
- Producer thinking is about achieving completion.
- Coach thinking is about cultivating people and their potential.
A leader in a company who did the thinking identification exercise benefited from the process. She realised that she had always worked in idea-rich contexts such as consulting and marketing.

After identifying her thinking style, she realised that she was more energised by relationships than ideas. She was more of a Connector rather than an Explorer. She used ideas to nurture relationships, rather than relationships to nurture ideas.

The exercise made her shift her work towards account management and business development, helping her become a more effective member of the management team.

Apart from the Harvard Business Review, other research by Nobel laureate winner, Roger Sperry and other researchers notably Ned Hermann and Kobus Neethling, who built on Sperry’s work, identified that the brain has four thinking styles. The thinking styles are labelled by the quadrant of the brain that controls the thinking style.

The Left cerebral quadrant thinking style is characterised by a liking for working with facts and looking at problems in a logical way. Right cerebral quadrant thinking style is characterised by seeing the big picture and not details, and enjoying working on different things at the same time.

Left limbic quadrant thinking style is characterised by liking facts to be orderly, and preferring security to risk-taking. Right limbic quadrant thinking style is characterised by experiencing facts in an emotional way, and feeling empathy towards others.

2. Know One's Leader, Know One's Team

Adjusting what one say and how one say it to fit the thinking style of the listener improves the ability to work with others.

For example, if the CEO has a right cerebral dominant thinking style (big picture, holistic, intuitive), do not give him proposals with many details. Instead, use a classic one pager with visual slides.

“At the team level, knowing each member’s thinking style could help the leader quickly see a gap or even a strength in the way the team works,” explains Mr Goh. “If the team can share and respect each other’s thinking style, it can lead to better communication and productivity.”

One may find out people’s thinking styles by using a number of web-based tools widely available today with proper interpretation. The aim however is not about deciphering personality types but about thinking styles. Knowing how a team member focuses and processes information can create opportunities to tap on their potential.

“The landscape of business is changing rapidly, and we have to find new and better ways to connect and communicate,” says Mark Bonchek and Elisa Steele, authors of the Harvard Business Review article. “We all aspire to work better together; the challenge is actually making it happen. Understanding collaboration through the lens of thinking rather than doing is a practical and powerful step forward.” Now that’s something for all of us to think about.

About the AUTHOR
Nicholas Goh is the CEO of Verztec Consulting Pte Ltd, a leading global content consulting company. Verztec assists companies around the world to design, develop, localize and publish their global communication messages in over 100 languages across various channels.

For more information, please visit http://www.verztec.com.
Contact Information
Nicholas Goh
Verztec Consulting Pte Ltd
http://www.verztec.com
+65 65774660

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