



people  
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difference

## People Make The Difference whitepaper

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### **Avoid performance partiality: are you over-utilising your top performers?**

It's natural to want to get a job done well the first time - but this can be dangerous if you end up always focusing on those in your team whom you know will always deliver. Acting on this sort of performance partiality may help you look good as a leader - after all, you can bask in their reflected achievements! - but leadership is also about giving stretch to those in your team who may need more motivation.

#### **What is performance partiality?**

Jane is an excellent employee – she does what she's asked and she does it well every single time. Joe, on the other hand, doesn't feel challenged at work, so he only half-heartedly completes the tasks he's given.

As a result, Jane's manager keeps asking Jane to take on more responsibility and spends time with her, discussing development and opportunities. Gradually, her manager gives Jane most of Joe's tasks and stops spending time supporting Joe in his career, leaving him to spend his time on Facebook. After a month or two, Jane is now doing the tasks meant for Joe, as well as her own and she barely has time to take bathroom breaks or lunch breaks. She's so exhausted that she becomes burnt out and needs to take some time off.

With Jane gone, Joe gets his old tasks back, but the manager now needs him to take responsibility for Jane's tasks. Joe is overwhelmed with his sudden increase in workload and he doesn't have the proper training to complete the tasks to the manager's standards. Joe quits and leaves their manager with looming deadlines and two holes to fill in the organisation – a hole they might just fill with another star employee.

## **How do we stop the cycle?**

This example may be extreme, but it's not an unknown concept to many organisations. So how do we combat performance partiality and the productivity vacuum it can leave in its wake? Focus on strengths, rather than weaknesses!

Research from the Gallup Organisation study found that when employees were made aware of their strengths, they became 7.8% more productive – not only that, but the likelihood of the individual being more engaged at work also increased.

Hopefully, your organisation is full of people who are different from one another. If that's the case, then you have the perfect environment for creating a culture in which people feel motivated to do their very best, because their talents are varied. Spend some time considering each of your employees, their strengths and weaknesses and start finding ways to challenge them and help them grow.

Take the time to develop and utilise all your team members – as always, it's a balancing act and it's difficult to get right, but it can be done.

*If you're keen get the most out of your team, People Make The Difference can help you with training workshops, one-on-one coaching and Coach On Call services. To find out more, call us on 0412 333 415 or visit [peplemakethedifference.com.au](http://peplemakethedifference.com.au).*