
USING TYPOLOGY TO INCREASE INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS IN HR

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Written for the Spring 2001 edition of CRN: Corporate Relocation News

Recent research and books on the subject tell us that people are more successful when they are using and leveraging their natural strengths, i.e. their natural Type. This is the message presented in the new, best-seller, *Now, Discover Your Strengths*, and in *Thriving In Mind*, written by Dr. Katherine Benziger, speaker at CRN's June Conference in New York.

For centuries we believed people could do anything – if they were bright and had the right education. In the last decade of the 20th century that belief, so fundamental to HR, was challenged by one simple breakthrough in neuroscience. This breakthrough showed that our human brain is split (divided) in a new and different way. It is split into one area that is innately highly efficiency and another area that is innately inefficiency. Moreover, the relative efficiency of these two regions in our brain is such that when we use the in-efficient region to think our brain has to use 100 times the energy. Our own experience of this simple truth confirms what science has shown us. When we use our natural strengths, we feel energized. When we use any other skills, we feel tired and need to consume sugar or caffeine to give us “added energy.”

It is that simple. A person's natural strengths are what they are because they are “super efficient”. To ignore this “efficiency problem” or “energy drain” in our brains does not make sense, when we are reminded daily to maximize efficiency in every way possible.

The implications for HR in general are tremendous. In the past, we expected people to do everything and anything, to get the job done. The result is that fifty to seventy per cent of the population is using skills they have learned “because they had to,” not because they are energizing and meaningful. These people are not using their brains efficiently. They are not using their natural strengths. They are, in Dr. Benziger's words, *Falsifying Type*. Where this is happening, the result is an abundance of problems that affect production deeply: people arriving late, people leaving early, low morale, high turnover, increased incidence of illness and both physical and mental health problems. Life does not have to be this way for the employees or the company. Dr. Benziger's book *Thriving in Mind* provides direct and powerful ways for people to energize themselves by leveraging their natural lead and managing their weaknesses.

What does Dr. Benziger's work have to do with International HR? Actually, more than you might think. Historically, many of those attracted to international jobs were by nature what Carl Jung called *Intuitives* – they were spatial, creative problem solvers who liked trouble-shooting, exploring and high adventure. For these people, a “job abroad” was perfect. Today, however, our global economy is providing many, more diverse opportunities for people to “live and work abroad,” and the natural fit between the international job applicant and the job is less of a given.

As such, Dr. Benziger suggests, it is worth taking time to identify a person's natural Type. Indeed, when sending anyone “abroad” a company would be well-advised to identify that person's natural Type – as well as the natural Type of their spouse – and provide them with a few hours of coaching to help the individual or couple understand how their natural Type(s) will affect their comfort and success in the job they are taking and the country to which they are going.

When sending a couple, if you have an employee who is a natural Intuitive, they themselves are likely to enjoy the experience. However, if they are taking their spouse and their spouse the situation is "more complex." If their spouse is a natural Feeling Type, who needs to connect with others and chat often, they are likely to be unhappy unless and until they have the opportunity to learn the language of the country they are visiting. In this example, it is important to encourage or arrange for intensive language training for the spouse. That will help. They will still miss their home, friends, family and community and generally will not want their spouse to take an assignment that is longer than 6-12 months. But, if they have the ability to converse in the language of the country they are visiting, they will make some of their own "new friends" and be happier while abroad. If on the other hand, the spouse is a natural Sensing Type they are likely to generally uncomfortable with anything new and different.

