

ThermoFisher SCIENTIFIC

CAPABILITY BUILDING – “GROWING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH”

CLIENT PROFILE

Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc. is a global leader in supplying equipment and services to the scientific community. They employ more than 30,000 staff worldwide with annual revenues of \$10 billion, serving over 350,000 customers within pharmaceutical and biotech companies, hospitals and clinical diagnostic labs, universities, research institutions and government agencies, as well as environmental and industrial process control settings.

OUR APPROACH

Thermo Fisher Scientific approached us to run a pilot Strengthscope™ programme for HR practitioners. This involved exposing 20 UK-based HR professionals from Thermo Fisher's businesses to strengths-focused thinking as part of a “Growing from Strength to Strength” HR capability building programme initiated by the HR Director, Vanessa Mallett. The idea of building on strengths to leverage individual and team capabilities fitted well with Thermo Fisher's approach to performance management and development, as well as their competency framework and values.

OUTCOMES

As a result of this workshop, Strengthscope™ and the underlying strengths assumptions have been incorporated into the management development programme for Fisher Clinical Services, one of Thermo Fisher's key businesses.

The incorporation of strengths assumptions has positively impacted engagement in a number of ways including:

Positive, appreciative feedback from managers invited to rate management development participants as part of Strengthscope™'s multi-rater feedback process:

- Enhanced self-esteem, optimism and sense of ownership for development among participants
- Improved teamwork built around complementary strengths partnering, where people with different strengths and talents work closely together to leverage their combined capabilities
- Creative exploration of development opportunities which play to strengths outside participants' current roles
- Consideration of the unintended performance consequences of overplayed strengths or strengths in overdrive.

This project has not been without challenges and critics. As with most clients, there was some initial resistance to the strengths-focused approach. Several felt that it was too positive and optimistic, preferring instead a weaknesses-based development approach which more closely matched their upbringing and personal experience. Others found it difficult to talk about their strengths, fearing coming across as complacent, superior or arrogant. However,



CASE STUDY – THERMO FISHER SCIENTIFIC

our experience suggests that this type of inertia can be overcome through piloting the strengths-focused approach in 'early-adopting' business units, using line manager 'champions' to build support for the approach and broadcasting successes achieved through pilot initiatives.

TESTIMONIAL

"It is an excellent developmental process - it starts with the positives of 'now' and can then be used to focus on future development, using present strengths to help this development. It has also allowed employees to look outside their present role and consider future roles in relation to their strength profile. Everyone left the sessions feeling very positive about themselves and their ability to develop further. They have also openly stated how useful it has been."

Mike Yellow, learning and development manager for Fisher Clinical Services

