



Strengths@work



Consulting Women

What makes a woman deliver?

Whilst you ponder the enormity of that question, I'll do my best to give you my personal answer to it. I have the advantage of forethought and therefore hindsight, but nonetheless it is a mighty challenging question to be asked.

I trained and qualified with a small provincial firm of Chartered Accountants. I landed in that profession more by luck than judgement but initially it really worked for me. I didn't know then what I know now about why that was the case. Then I just found a natural aptitude and an enjoyment in the work in the early years that meant I delivered, both to my firm and to my clients. We were all happy.

What I know now about those years was that I was working almost entirely to my individual combination of strengths, and that that, in itself, is the most satisfying feeling, which gets good feedback, which breeds more delivery which gets good feedback and so on. I know now that I have a combination of innate strengths, two of which I will mention here, that means that I:

- a) **Love learning**; so I built up a wide portfolio of clients from different industry sectors which fed my need to be learning something new all the time
- b) **Hear the problems that people themselves struggle to articulate**; which means that I really understood my clients business problems and built a level of connection with them personally that helped them to share their concerns with me

My success at delivering to the client and business need helped me to be noticed by senior management when I joined PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). As I climbed the ladder of success to partnership however, I was encouraged and supported to learn new skills (learned strengths), so that I could join senior management. These learned strengths, whilst helpful, focused on my being able to do things more in line with the "way things are done round here". I learnt, inter alia, to navigate politics, how to present myself and my ideas, how to speak in public, how to be assertive not aggressive (well I nearly learned that one!)

With these learned skills I made it to partnership, doing a difficult and stressful job at which I was good, but not excellent. Neither I nor the organisation knew about working with individual strengths. I had no words then to articulate how I could use my innate strengths to do the job differently, but still deliver. Without the insight of knowing how I could deliver "my way", I became absorbed by the need to demonstrate what I thought were the right skills. This often left me feeling disillusioned and unsatisfied.

Getting to know your strengths and how they work in you transforms your confidence, your sense of self-worth, helps you to truly evaluate what makes you want to deliver and is profoundly satisfying. For me, this is what enables a woman to truly deliver.

Learning this about myself led me to want to teach others. Since leaving PwC, a colleague and I have built a business focused on helping other women to discover and remember who they truly are and to move to their "Next Level" with, and from a place of, strength; we would love to meet you there.

Moira Siddons, Co founder of Consulting Women

Moira Siddons is an experienced non-executive director, an executive coach and a facilitator at Board level. Moira spent 30 years with PricewaterhouseCoopers (and its predecessor firms) including 13 years as a partner.

About Consulting Women

Consulting Women work to facilitate women (and now men) who wish to deepen the contribution they make to their business and the world.

We bring the learning and tools we have gathered from around the world and which we know from experience work well for women. Our four day open programmes run throughout the year, the next one beginning on 16th September 2010. In addition we tailor make programmes for organisations with specific needs and provide one to one strengths coaching either before, after or instead of attendance on our open programme. Dates for future programmes are on our website at www.consultingwomen.co.uk or via an email to info@consultingwomen.co.uk