An overview of the Strength Deployment Inventory (SDI)

The SDI is based on Relationship Awareness Theory and is a tool that enables individuals to increase their self-awareness and the awareness of others in how they relate to each other by effectively understand the motives behind behaviour. The Theory (and the psychometric test SDI) was developed by psychologist, clinical therapist, educator, and author Elias H. Porter.

Using the SDI gives teams and individuals the awareness and skills they need to build more effective personal and professional relationships. It helps them to sustain those relationships through understanding the underlying Motivational Value Systems™ of themselves and others under two conditions:

1.   When things are going well

2.   During conflict

It is a powerful way of looking at human relationships that helps build communication, trust, empathy, and effective, productive relationships.

The theory itself is founded on four premises:

1.   Behaviour is driven by the motivation to achieve self-worth.

2.   Motivation tends to change in conflict

3.   Strengths, when overdone or misapplied, can be perceived as weaknesses

4.   We tend to judge others' behaviours based on our own motivations and values

Motivational Value Systems™

Relationship Awareness Theory identifies seven general themes or clusters of motives known as Motivational Value Systems (MVS). Relationship Awareness describes them in terms of positive strivings for self-worth by adults in relationships.

Altruistic–Nurturing (Blue): Concern for the protection, growth, and welfare of others

Assertive–Directing (Red): Concern for task accomplishment and concern for organization of people, time, money and any other resources to achieve desired results

Analytic–Autonomizing (Green): Concern for assurance that things have been properly thought out and concern for meaningful order being established and maintained

Flexible–Cohering (Hub): Concern for flexibility… concern for the welfare of the group… concern for the members of the group and for belonging in the group

Assertive–Nurturing (Red-Blue Blend): Concern for the protection, growth, and welfare of others through task accomplishment and leadership
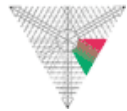
Judicious–Competing (Red-Green Blend): Concern for intelligent assertiveness, justice, leadership, order, and fairness in competition

Cautious–Supporting (Blue-Green Blend): Concern for affirming and developing self-sufficiency in self and others… concern for thoughtful helpfulness with regard for justice

SDI and Conflict

The SDI also helps us see what's happening when things aren't going so well. People gain clarity about:

- Potential conflict triggers

- How they approach conflict

- What's really important to them when in conflict

- Individual approaches that others can take to de-escalate conflict

This means that conflict can be more easily understood, controlled, prevented and resolved. SDI brings a common sense reality to the saying "try to see it from the other person's point of view".

Beyond Behaviour

Relationship Awareness Theory is a Motivational Theory which addresses the motives that are behind every-day behaviour when we are relating to others. It assumes that there is meaning behind all behaviour. By shifting our focus from only looking at behaviour to looking at the motive behind the behaviour, we can gain a clearer understanding of ourselves and others.