

Workforce Effectiveness

Industry

Education

Organization

Carnegie Mellon University

Business Need/DDI Solution

When knowledge workers at Carnegie Mellon University, one of the nation’s top private research and learning institutions, needed to increase their productivity, the institution’s leadership took action. Two factors precipitated the need for change. The University reorganized its Enrollment Services Group (ESG), which handles admissions, registration, housing, and other aspects of student life, into a team-based, customer-focused environment. In addition, the Development Group (DG) simultaneously launched a major capital campaign.

To ensure the success of both initiatives, employees would have to work together in new ways, with new roles and highly challenging objectives. The department leaders contacted the university’s Human Resources Department for assistance in preparing employees to be effective in the new work environment. These leaders wanted help in developing their employees to achieve the highest levels of productivity as quickly as possible.

Working together, DDI and CMU selected **Breakthrough: High-Performance Strategies for Knowledge WorkersSM** as the solution to address these needs. Because of its organizationally specific activities, team-building initiatives, one-on-one interviews, behavioral checklists, and other activities, Breakthrough was determined to be the best way to challenge and develop these two groups of knowledge workers.

Research

Participants

A total of 13 employees from ESG and DG participated. Breakthrough was implemented in 6 sessions following a half-day orientation. Data were collected, via survey, during a Training Impact Assessment conducted approximately 9 months after completion of the program.

Behavioral measures

Participants were presented with a list of 21 specific behaviors sampled from the Breakthrough sessions. Participants rated themselves on each specific behavior along a six-point scale in two ways:

- How effectively they performed each behavior **before** the Breakthrough program.
- How effectively they performed each behavior **after** participating in Breakthrough.

(6 = Extremely Effectively; 1 = Not at all Effectively)

To learn more, call your local DDI office or contact:

The Americas412.257.0600	Southeast Asia65.339.5255	France33.1.41.96.86.86	United Kingdom44.1628.810800
Toll-free Canada800.668.7971	Australia.....61.2.9466.0300	Germany.....49.2159.91680	E-mailinfo@ddiworld.com
Toll-free U.S.800.933.4463	Greater China852.2526.1188	New Zealand64.9.377.6742	Web.....www.ddiworld.com

Participants also indicated the strategic areas in which they had experienced increased opportunities to use high-performance strategies from Breakthrough.

Motivation and Work Environment Measures

Participants also indicated their degree of agreement with each of eight statements describing:

- Motivation to use skills learned in Breakthrough.
- Support from managers, peers, and the university.
- Confidence in their ability to use Breakthrough.
- Access to resources and information.
- Balancing work/personal development.

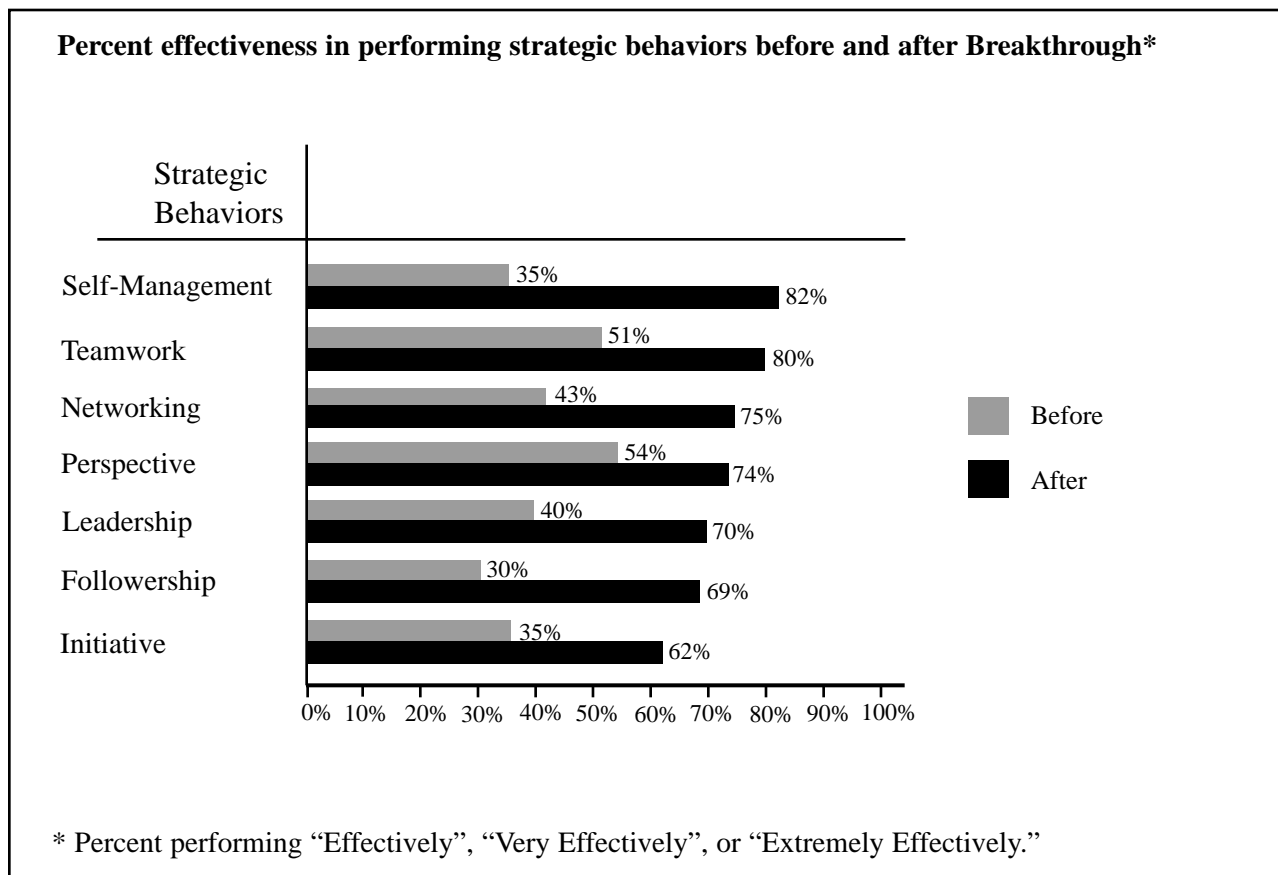
(7 = Strongly Agree; 1 = Strongly Disagree)

Results

Effective performance increased an average of 32% after Breakthrough.

As shown in Figure 1, participants are performing specific behaviors associated with Breakthrough’s high-performance strategies much more effectively than they were before the program. Increases as high as 47% were reported (for Self-management). The number of participants performing these behaviors effectively rose by at least 25% for all but one of the behavior areas (Perspective - 20%). Clearly, effective performance of the behaviors targeted in the program increased dramatically.

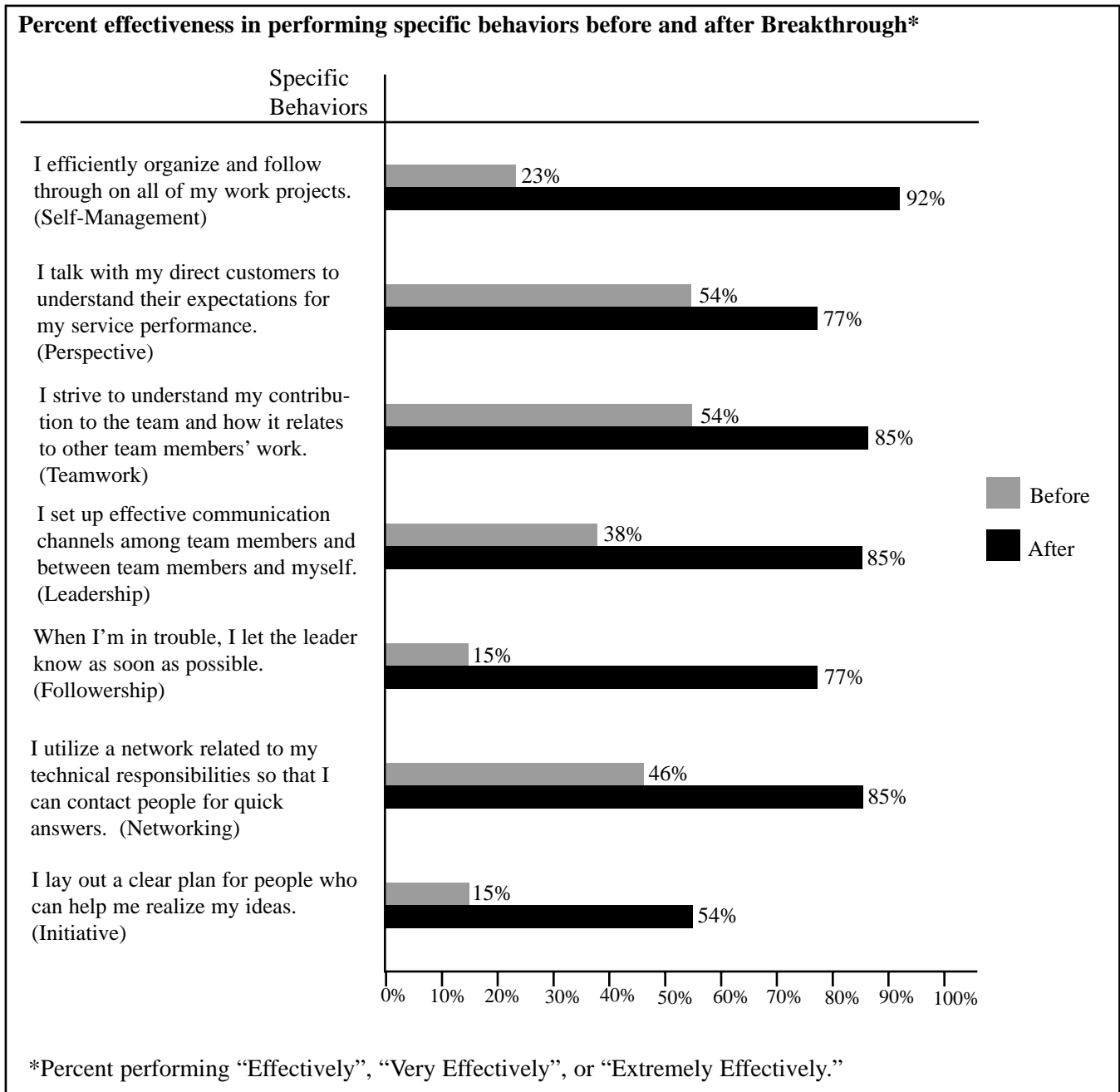
Figure 1.



To further illustrate the resulting performance improvements in each area, Figure 2 presents the specific behaviors, from each strategic area, in

which the greatest improvements were seen. These are behavioral statements drawn from the survey described in the Research section.

Figure 2.



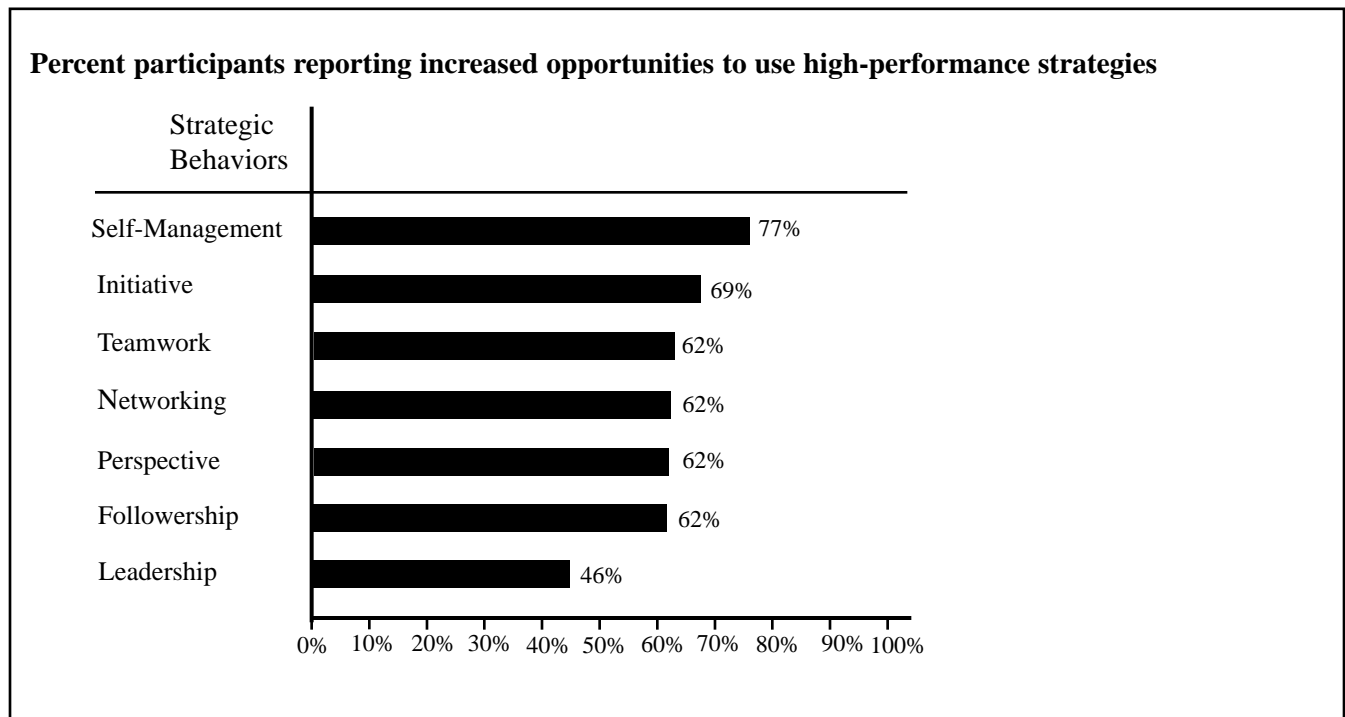
Opportunities to use high-performance strategies increased as a result of Breakthrough.

As shown in Figure 3, participants indicated those areas targeted by the program in which they had experienced increased opportunities to use high-performance behaviors, regardless of how effectively they handled the opportunity. One of the goals of the Breakthrough program is to enable participants to more readily recognize opportunities to apply these strategic behaviors. Increases were reported for each of the seven strategies, particularly Self-Management.

CMU’s work environment encourages and supports individual development and the use of high-performance behaviors.

Participants were asked to indicate their agreement with a small number of statements describing their motivation and the qualities of their work environment. As shown in Figure 4, a high percentage of the participants agreed that they are motivated to actively use the skills learned in Breakthrough. An equal number of these participants are very confident in their ability to apply these skills on the job. In fact, participants reporting the greatest increases in behavioral effectiveness also reported the highest levels of both motivation and confidence in their abilities to use Breakthrough on the job.

Figure 3.



A high percentage of participants also perceive a supportive development environment at CMU. These participants reported that both their manager/supervisor and the university as a whole encourage and support individual learning and development. This support is also reported specifically with regard to the Breakthrough program.

Successfully Applying Breakthrough: An Example

During the Training Impact Assessment, participants were encouraged to share examples of how they had applied Breakthrough since completing the program. One participant, a Financial Aid Program Administrator, described how she applied strategic skills learned in the Initiative session by automating the student employment approval process. Numerous cross-checks were required to determine whether a student met the

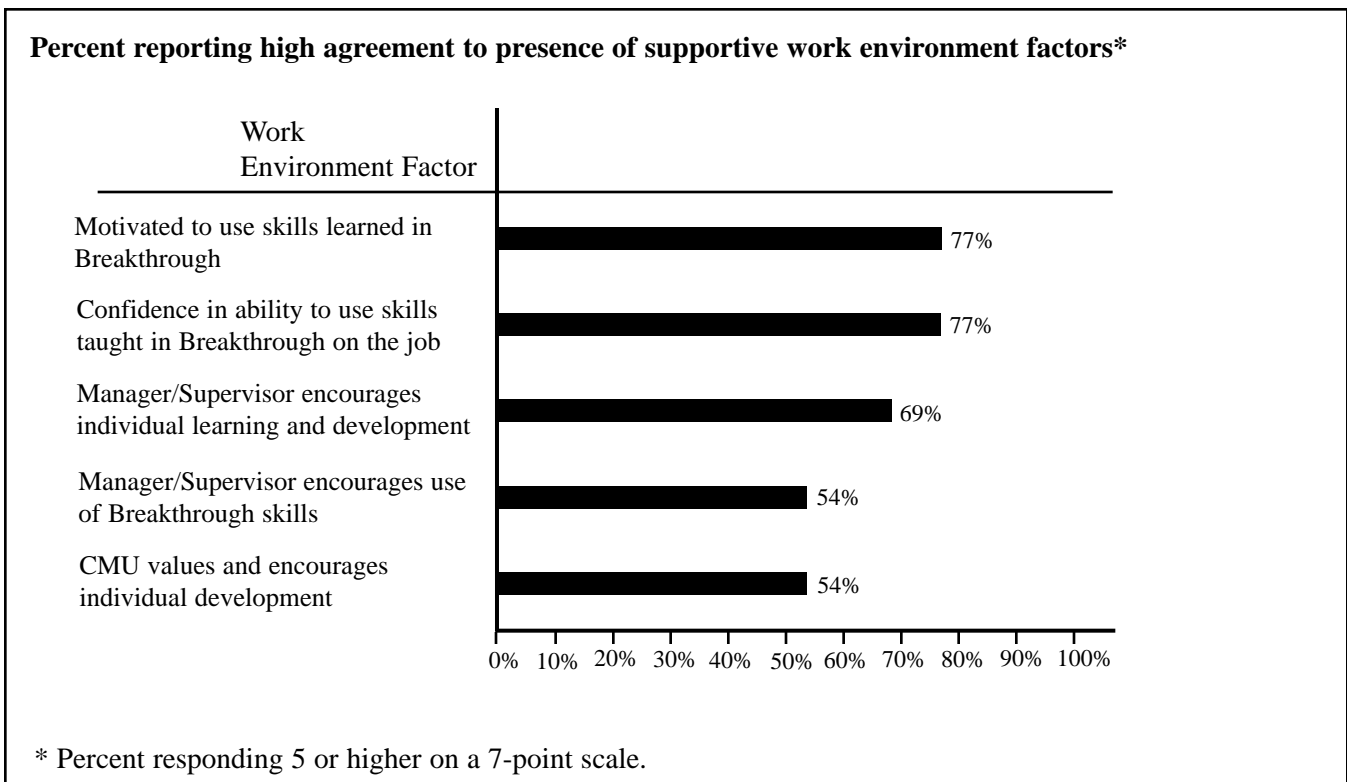
eligibility requirements for employment. Before this process was automated, six associates and approximately 80,000 pieces of paper were needed to approve the hiring of 750 students. This administrator reported “that this has saved us an enormous amount of time. We now have to review just a few records instead of hundreds.”

Successfully Applying Breakthrough: Comments from Participants

Participants also provided comments on the survey sheets that describe their successes with Breakthrough:

- “I am verbalizing my ideas more effectively and more often...Result: I am getting more of what I want and [what] the team needs and [I] am effecting positive change. There is a ‘team’ spirit building and a collaborative focus increasing.”

Figure 4.



- “Identified a problem in my area. Sought appropriate help...corrected the problem...great results because of the correction.”
- “Finding problems; recognizing the scope of issues/problems; setting priorities for goals and plans; taking a leadership role; constant communication of needs and problems.”
- “Teamwork and Initiative—working as part of a team that will look into the changing of computer systems...”

Conclusions

Clearly, the knowledge workers in ESG and DG are exhibiting high-performance behaviors much more effectively after participating in Breakthrough. The

increased effectiveness is especially impressive in light of the recent changes occurring within these groups. This increase is apparent not only at the strategic level but also at the level of specific behaviors that are targeted by the program.

Participants also reported a significant number of increased opportunities to use high-performance strategies as a direct result of participating in Breakthrough. The ESG and DG knowledge workers can now more readily recognize and develop opportunities to apply these strategic skills in their jobs. These workers are also highly motivated and confident in their abilities to use these strategic skills on the job.

Finally, CMU’s work environment supports the use of Breakthrough on the job. Participants feel that their managers and the University as a whole encourage their individual learning and development.

