

## ISACA Now Blog

### Are Your Talents Undermining Your Ability to Influence?

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It happens slowly. In the past, you were asked early into the change processes but now it seems the invites are coming reluctantly. When you do show up, no one seems thrilled to see you. Or perhaps you got ready to deliver the reasons for the needed compliance steps in a meeting and you can see in the others' body language and eyes that they are gearing up to counter with all the reasons they cannot do something.

What is with these people? Can't they see you are just trying to help, to do your job, to make the company safe?

Perhaps it is not entirely their issue. Often, our greatest strengths as a professional are also our greatest weaknesses to influencing others. Here are two to consider:

#### 1. Brilliant Critical Evaluator:

**Strength:** You are wicked smart at being able to break down a system to see where the potential problems could arise. Your mind easily processes the system implications and potential outcomes to each potential problem.

**Unintended Consequences:** Your gift gets misinterpreted as finding faults in both programs and their owners. Others could view you as being a pessimist. When they see you, they think doom and gloom.

**How to Improve:** Start by pointing out what is right with the proposal or plan. Limit your criticisms. Consider buckeling smaller criticisms under one main problem area, so it does not seem overwhelming to the person you are trying to influence. Do not worry about giving them the full analysis; just give them one or two points so they understand the concern. Recognize you are just trying to get them to agree that there is an issue; not buy into the whole correction plan yet.

#### 2. Passionate Expert:

**Strength:** You strongly identify with your role and you know you can help the company improve its security and results. You feel it is your mission to keep others from unintentionally or intentionally going astray for the betterment of the organization.

**Unintended Consequences:** Your passion gets misinterpreted as intensity in stating your ideas. Others could view you as pushing too hard on your ideas. Their natural tendency when feeling pushed is to push back and this is unintentionally engaged.

**How to Improve:** Recognize that others cannot hear your great suggestions when you are overly passionate. Remind yourself that you are not the sole owner to the success or failure. Recognize that when you are running head first to break down a wall only your head is the one getting bloody. Ask yourself if it is absolutely true that everything you are proposing be done tomorrow. Slow down and calmly enlist others in your quest. A first step is better than no step in the right direction.

Use these two examples to find what may be keeping you from being more effective. Ask yourself what your one or two key strengths are. Then look for the shadow of these gifts.

- What are my greatest strengths?
- What happens when these abilities become too strong?
- How can I temper this gift to keep it from getting away from me?

Picture yourself as the fictional character the Incredible Hulk whose gift can be used for good but whose gift when not controlled becomes unintentionally destructive. Flex your muscles with forethought.

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Carlann Fergusson and Sandy Fadale will present three different ways to increase your change influence in their session, "Change, It's Not Logical" at North America Computer Audit, Control and Security (CACCS) conference 2015 in Orlando, Florida, USA, 16-18 March 2015. For information and to register, visit [www.isaca.org/northamericacacs2015](http://www.isaca.org/northamericacacs2015).