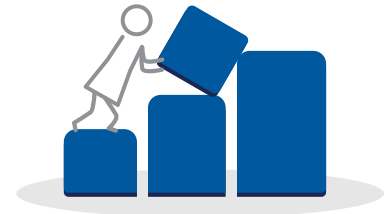


StandOut Performance

Powered by ADP



What Is This Position?

This Position captures StandOut's approach to performance, which views performance management as two distinct elements: measurement and acceleration. This approach allows organizations to modernize their treatment of performance as strengths-based and co-owned by employee, team leader, and organization.

I. INTRODUCTION

What Does Performance Management Look Like Today?

When you examine the current approach to performance management at organizations around the world, you discover that there is broad consensus — not on how to go about managing performance, but on how well current systems are succeeding. In short, they aren't.

According to the Gartner® "Effectiveness of Performance Management at Achieving Its Primary Objective," the percentage of HR Leaders selecting "Not Effective" was 82% (Gartner, "Performance Management that Delivers," 2025). We can find some clues as to why this phenomenon is occurring when we zoom into where organizational focus meets the human individuals who are doing the performing. ADP has found that 87% of employers agree they have a responsibility to ensure employees' mental well-being (ADP, 2026). But Gartner research indicates that "Only one in two employees currently says that their managers treat them with empathy and fairness" (Gartner, 2025). There is clearly a divergence between organizational intent and organizational effect.

Perhaps one reason performance management systems struggle to meet their primary objectives is that those objectives have grown to include a vast number of things. Often, an organization's system is asked to help accelerate performance; inform compensation, promotion, and succession

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planning decisions; align individual efforts to organizational cascading goals; provide insights for workforce planning; help engage, retain and motivate team members; help each individual develop a meaningful career path; create a high-performance culture; and, of course, evaluate people's performance.

It's an exhausting list just to read, let alone to achieve. It only adds to the degree of difficulty when the system is treated as an annual event rather than as a need to be addressed consistently throughout the year. The outcomes are all worthwhile, but the thought of tackling them is daunting — both for the organization, and for the team leaders who are often on the front lines of expectations to do something about all this.

Ideally, team members should experience all of these things related to their own performance as one interconnected reality, centered on their day-to-day relationship with their team leader and their relationship to their own work. But because performance management tends to involve numerous separate processes and technologies, team members often perceive them as “HR Box Checks,” as opposed to practices that help them improve their performance — not only to achieve organizational outcomes, but to contribute to their own sense of growth, development, and contribution.

The good news is that performance management doesn't have to be as complex as it looks.

StandOut's position is that performance management should take a **human-centered and strengths-based approach**, actively including individuals as co-owners, addressing performance positively and frequently in the ongoing interactions of the team member and team leader.

II. WHAT IS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT?

To define what we mean by performance management, we should first establish a working definition of performance. StandOut defines performance as **“the contribution made by an individual to the achievement of an organization's objectives.”**

The concept of contribution is a relevant and useful one for performance, because it connects the work of the individual to the purpose of the larger organization. StandOut's own purpose statement reflects this same understanding: “StandOut exists to help people maximize their unique contributions at work, and the unique contributions of those around them.”

When we frame performance in this way, it becomes possible to streamline our understanding of what performance management is meant to do. Where many approaches risk treating performance management as a catch-all with ever-multiplying desired outcomes, StandOut's approach breaks things down simply into two component parts: **performance measurement** and **performance acceleration**.

Performance Measurement

How do we reveal performance that has already happened?

This element addresses the question “How do we reveal the performance that has already happened, so we can recognize it, reward it, and use the information to inform our workforce and succession planning?” By definition, performance measurement looks to the **past** — you cannot measure performance that has not yet occurred.

Performance Acceleration

How do we create more of the things that drive performance?

This element addresses the question “How do we effectively create more of the positive behaviors and outcomes that drive high performance, so we can get more of it?” By definition, performance acceleration looks to the **future** — you cannot affect performance that has already occurred.

With this straightforward categorization, we can see how the many complex outcomes actually align to these two components.

Measure	Accelerate
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate Performance• Inform Compensation Decisions (Pay for Performance)• Succession Planning and Promotion• Insights for Workforce Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organization Goal Alignment• Career• Development• Engage, Retain, & Motivate• High-Performance Culture

Including these two components, one backward-looking and one future-facing, performance management is always a kind of pivot point linking past performance to future performance. One reason annual performance reviews present such a challenge to almost every organization is that they attempt to create this linkage infrequently. Attempting to review past performance over a whole year (or half-year, or quarter) to apply the learning to the future is difficult, if not impossible, to do.

Instead, StandOut’s approach emphasizes addressing performance as it happens, allowing team members and team leaders to align, learn, and co-own performance, by focusing on a foundational set of principles. Importantly, this approach can shift the very meaning of the word “performance” in an organization — beyond simply representing a measurement or a euphemism for needing remedial training. Instead, performance is viewed as the positive expression of how each individual’s unique talents contribute to the organization’s mission, day by day, week by week.

Performance is viewed as the positive expression of how each individual’s unique talents contribute to the organization’s mission, day by day, week by week.

III. STANDOUT PRINCIPLES OF PERFORMANCE

While *measurement* is often top of mind for those exploring their approach to performance management, StandOut's unique approach is ultimately focused on how to produce higher performance. So let's start by looking at the principles of how to *accelerate* performance, then turn to how to measure the performance that has occurred.

Performance Acceleration

Principle 1: Performance is built daily, not annually.

One reason annual performance reviews don't resonate with team members (or team leaders) is that people instinctively know that performance is a movie, not a snapshot. It is built day by day and week by week, not in a one-time cycle of goals and year-end assessments of how someone performed. Year-end touchpoints about ratings are less useful in moving performance than in-the-moment conversations about performance that's happening now and what's needed next. The reason is that organizations themselves are also creating their performance daily and weekly, not just in annual planning cycles. Shifting priorities, changing constraints, new opportunities, real-world tradeoffs — none of these is accounted for by an annual intervention. Effective performance acceleration conversations are about doing great work in the future, not a backward-looking review. And while this does not mean that longer-range conversations are unproductive, annual reflections, when needed, should feel like a culmination — not a surprise.

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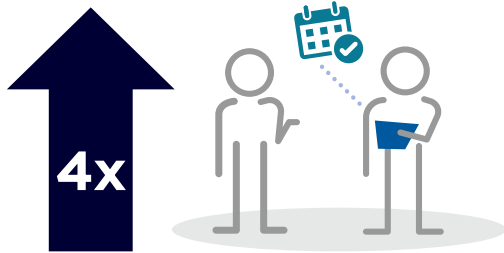
Principle 2: Performance acceleration is relational and co-owned.

Responsibility for growing team members' performance does not lie solely with either the team leader or the individual. Instead, performance is most effectively accelerated by the partnership between team leader and team member. Performance thrives on trust, attention, coaching, and clarity. In every performance management system, the team leader will be on the front line. Rather than asking the team leader to provide judgement from a distance, StandOut acknowledges that team leaders' proper role is to turn talent into performance, by knowing their people, understanding the work they do, and aligning people and work through regular attention. This attention isn't simply course correction, although it can be that. It's coaching attention — providing the feedback, positive or corrective, that people say they need to grow (Chumney, 2025). What this coaching approach means is that performance is co-owned, a product of ongoing, mutual investment between an individual and team leader — and the organization that explicitly commits to creating the conditions that help people maximize their unique contributions at work.

Principle 3: Strengths are a powerful performance accelerator.

People do their best work when they are able to play to their strengths. Strengths, in the StandOut Approach, are not merely those areas in which individual people excel, but the things they both excel at and love doing. By definition, therefore, a strength is energizing. And performance is

fueled by energy. When people spend more time in that intersection of competence and energy, they become more productive, creative, focused, generous, and resilient — and their contribution becomes more sustainable. For this reason, performance conversations will be most effective



when they include consideration of an individual's strengths. And the data bears this out: team members who strongly agree that “my team leader focuses on my strengths” are **four times more likely** to consider the quality of their Check-Ins as “very high” (Chumney, 2021) Empowering team members to leverage personal strengths is a key part of enabling their co-ownership of performance.

Principle 4: Engagement is an emotional precursor to performance.

In StandOut's approach, engagement is more than an HR metric. It is a practical leading indicator of performance. When people feel clear, supported, seen, and able to do what they do best, performance follows more reliably — because the conditions that generate contribution are present. Team member engagement has been shown to have a statistical relationship with higher levels of performance (e.g., Harter et al., 2002; Saks, 2006; Rich, LePine & Crawford, 2010). Years of StandOut research shows that engagement is driven higher when team members are able to have regular strengths-based performance conversations — Check-Ins — with their team leaders.

Performance Measurement

Principle 5: Performance measurement is measurement — not acceleration.

Measuring performance is necessary for informing decisions about compensation, promotion, and succession planning. Where StandOut differentiates its approach is in the rigorous insistence that measurement must be kept distinct from attempts to accelerate performance. If the two functions are combined, overtly or inadvertently, they will cross-contaminate each other and render the system ineffective. While measuring things can inform decisions, the old saying that “what gets measured improves” is not quite accurate. Taking one's temperature, for instance, does not automatically reduce a fever. It provides input that can inform action.

There are many examples of the risks of this cross-contamination in business. Goals can fall into this trap. They may be introduced based on the sensible belief that when people have clear goals, they'll achieve greater performance. But if the temptation emerges to begin evaluating people on what percentage of their goals they've achieved, people may, equally sensibly, try to manage risk and ensure they aren't stretching too far and causing their ranking on goal achievement to go down.

Taking one's temperature does not automatically reduce a fever. It provides input that can inform action.

To ensure that performance acceleration and performance measurement efforts are both able to be effective, it is important to keep them distinct from each other.

Principle 6: Subjectivity is inevitable; lean into it the right way.

It is understandable that performance management systems strive to provide quantitative data about people's performance. In some areas, such as sales or production line work, individual performance can be quantified in clear metrics, such as a salesperson's meeting a quota. But when it comes to performance ratings, research has consistently found the existence of what is called the "Idiosyncratic Rater Effect" — the phenomenon that one person's rating of another person reveals more about the rater than the person being rated. This means that each of us is a disturbingly unreliable rater of other people's skills and performance (Hoffman et al. 2010; Mount et al. 1998; Ng et al. 2011). And since the data produced by ratings is not reliable, simply asking more people to rate someone, as in a 360, doesn't automatically produce good data. It often just produces more of the same — and more complexity. In addition, some systems require managers to distribute ratings in ways that feel, both to the raters and those being rated, disconnected from actual work and results.

StandOut proposes a simple response to this phenomenon. Since we will never be able to make people reliable raters of other people, we should stop trying. Instead, we should strive to measure, reliably and frequently, what each team leader intends to do with each team member. This can be achieved by asking team leaders to respond to statements such as "I always go to this team member when I need extraordinary results" for each individual.

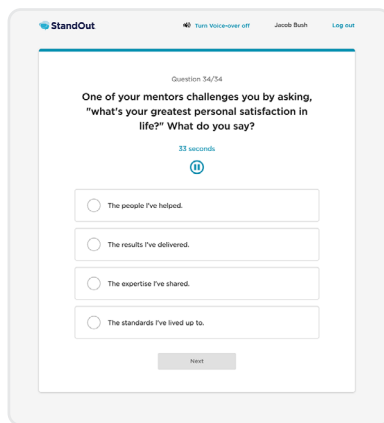
This approach does not claim to produce objective data. But because we are reliable predictors of our own intentions, it does produce a subjective but *reliable* measure of team member performance.

The "Idiosyncratic Rater Effect" indicates that one person's rating of another person reveals more about the rater than the person being rated.



IV. HOW STANDOUT PRODUCTS & SERVICES DRIVE PERFORMANCE

The StandOut Platform

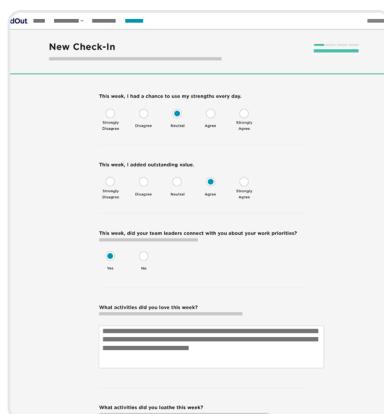


The screenshot shows the StandOut Assessment interface. At the top, it says "StandOut" and "Turn Voice-over off". Below that, it says "Question 34/54". The question is: "One of your mentors challenges you by asking, 'what's your greatest personal satisfaction in life?' What do you say?". There is a timer showing "33 seconds". Below the question are four radio button options: "The people I've helped.", "The results I've delivered.", "The expertise I've shared.", and "The standards I've lived up to.". At the bottom is a "Next" button.

The StandOut Assessment

The StandOut Assessment is the doorway to StandOut’s entire strengths-based performance system. The Assessment is a 15-minute situational judgment test that measures people against 9 “Strength Roles” and identifies their Top 2. These Roles are based on a talent inventory administered to hundreds of thousands of participants to uncover the most reliable talents found to predict job performance and capture the profiles of top performers.

The Roles are a helpful starting point for those who want to explore personal strengths and maximize their unique contributions at work. They provide a common language to name, own, and share with others what each individual uniquely contributes — a shortcut to seeing the best of what people have to offer. Being able to see oneself (and others) through the lens of strengths is one of the keys to cultivating high performance.

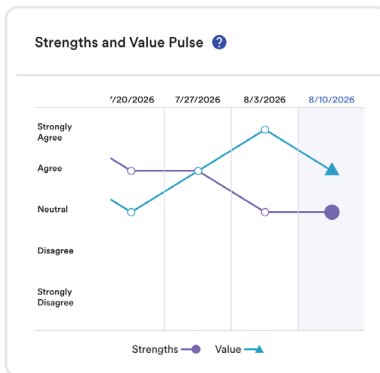


The screenshot shows the StandOut Check-Ins interface. At the top, it says "New Check-In". Below that are several questions with radio button options: "This week, I had a chance to use my strengths every day." (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree), "This week, I added outstanding value." (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree), and "This week, did your team leaders connect with you about your work priorities?" (Yes, No). At the bottom, there are two text areas: "What activities did you love this week?" and "What activities did you loathe this week?".

Check-Ins

The Check-Ins tool guides team members and team leaders to have frequent 1:1 strengths-based conversations to align strengths to work. It allows for ongoing performance conversations that help to identify priorities, discuss what’s working well (or not so well), and explore coaching tips customized to a team member’s StandOut Roles. The regular rhythm matters because it keeps performance conversations future-focused, and keeps performance management embedded in real work rather than detached from it. Frequent connection leaves team members feeling more engaged in their work (as StandOut data continues to demonstrate). Check-Ins also prompt individuals to share priorities and reflect on the work they’ll be doing each week.

Each of StandOut's **six main Check-In questions** relates to an aspect of performance:



1. Strengths Pulse

Giving people a chance to indicate how often they've been able to use their strengths at work in a given week, this provides a visible record of strengths — a leading indicator of performance.

2. Value Pulse

This is a weekly opportunity to calibrate on individuals' sense of the level at which they've been able to add value. It openly and regularly ties people's ongoing work to the outcomes the organization wants to achieve, while providing an opportunity for team leaders to reinforce a team member's value and course correct as needed, in the regular flow of work rather than only at review checkpoints.

Together, the two pulses create visibility into how team members' strengths are aligning to the work they need to get done.

The "Last Week" form includes sections for "Loves" (The energy at our Ventura kick-off meeting!), "Loathes" (Going through budget projections line by line), "Last Week's Priorities" (listing completed tasks like "Review budget & revenue plan with David"), "Needs" (Can you weigh in on key action items for the Project Ventura?), and "Priorities" (checkboxes for "Analyze first round of Ventura project data" and "Facilitate next steps meeting with project team").

3. Loves

On the opposite side of the strengths equation, this question provides space for team members to share the drains and obstacles to their performance, so that team leaders can work with them to neutralize blockers.

4. Loathes

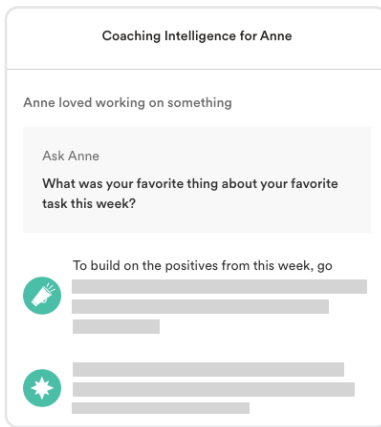
What someone loves doing at work is the most important clue to strengths. This question builds awareness of one of the most crucial accelerants of performance for any individual.

5. Priorities

Giving team members space to share their top focus items every week provides a regular opportunity to create alignment on outcomes. Exploring priorities side-by-side with strengths encourages team members and team leaders to find the accelerants to performance regularly, in the flow of the work as it's happening.

6. Needs

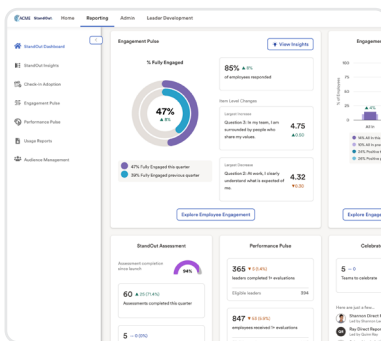
This question allows team leaders and team members to explore how a team leader can remove obstacles or provide assistance.



Coaching Intelligence

Coaching intelligence provides situational open-ended questions and performance tips that promote a strengths-based approach to work based on specific data users provide in the StandOut Platform (in Check-Ins, the Assessment, or other features).

Available to both team leaders and team members in each weekly Check-In, coaching intelligence is based on the team member's Top 2 Roles and responds to what was recorded in the Check-In itself. It provides insights that can help guide rich conversations that touch on performance regularly.



Engagement Pulse

Engagement Pulse is a survey constructed to measure the conditions that matter most for creating engagement on a team. Because engagement is the emotional precursor to performance, StandOut enables team leaders to see how their team is experiencing the work — not as a quarterly surprise, but as regular insight. Engagement Pulse supports the team leader in noticing patterns (in team members' relation to the team's purpose, pursuit of excellence, support, and future focus) that affect contribution long before those patterns show up in lagging outcomes. StandOut also provides support for team leaders to walk through survey results and debrief the team's experience in a team meeting, providing further input to help address performance as it happens.

Performance Pulse

Performance Pulse is a subjective measure of team member performance that helps reduce rater bias by asking team leaders not to rate team members, but to indicate what they intend to do with each team member. Performance Pulse makes measuring performance both simpler and more reliable by focusing on the critical few things an organization needs to know to support pay, promotion, and talent decisions.

Performance Pulse is intentionally light touch, which represents both a benefit and a tradeoff. It is designed to place a low burden on organizations and team leaders while still generating reliable data, focusing on a small set of judgments that are most useful in talent decisions. It does not claim to completely capture all of an individual's performance, nor to measure objective data. Where objective outcome metrics exist for certain roles, they can be used

alongside Performance Pulse. But where such objective measures are lacking, it provides a consistent way to ground talent decisions in team leader judgment captured repeatedly over time.

Performance Pulse addresses key performance factors with simple questions that allow team leaders to record their insights about team members quarterly:

- ***I always go to this team member when I need extraordinary results.***

This question measures the team leader's judgment of the team member's productivity.

- ***I choose to work with this team member as much as I possibly can.***

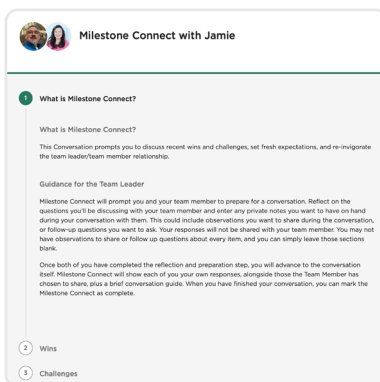
This question measures the team leader's judgment of the team member's teamwork.

- ***I would promote this team member today if I could.***

This question captures the team leader's judgment of the team member's potential.

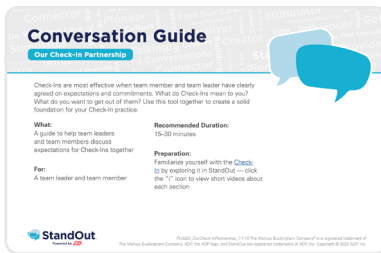
- ***I think this team member has a performance problem that needs to be addressed immediately.***

This question allows the team leader to indicate whether there are any "derailers."



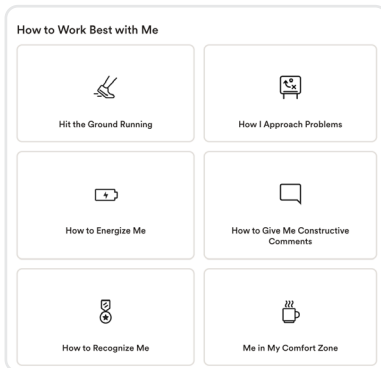
Milestone Connect

While long-range performance discussions cannot substitute for the ongoing, in-the-moment performance conversations that weekly Check-Ins provide, they can often be desirable as an opportunity for a team leader to help a team member take stock of personal growth and development. Milestone Connect is an interactive conversation guided directly within StandOut, asking team members to answer questions that get to the core of their strengths, challenges, wins, growth, and goals at work over several months. These conversations give the team leader and team member a chance to look at the bigger picture from time to time, ensuring that team leaders understand what matters to team members and what they can do to thrive and contribute their best.



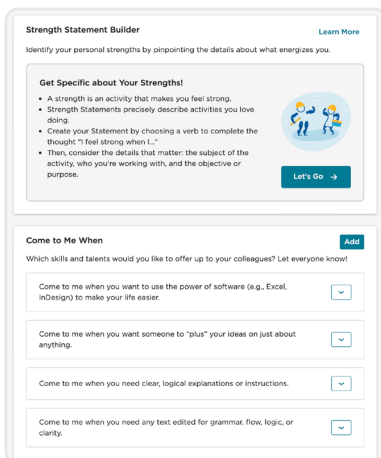
Conversation Guides

Conversation Guides offer an engaging framework for discussion on a variety of topics that can help to drive both personal performance and team collaboration. Examples include: career conversations; how to make Check-Ins even more powerful; comparing StandOut Roles for insights on collaboration; and how each person prefers to approach various aspects of work. These Conversation Guides create meaningful connection points that help people understand each other better, work together more effectively, and feel that they are seen for the talent they bring.



How to Work Best with Me

Based on each person's StandOut Roles, the "How to Work Best with Me" section of a StandOut Platform user's Snapshot makes it easier for colleagues to work effectively with one another, starting from a foundation of how they naturally show up at work. Specific themes such as "How I Feel about Change," "How to Give Me Constructive Comments" and "How to Receive My Comments Constructively" provide a framework for removing friction in workplace interactions and helping people build understanding of themselves and each other. As team members discover more about how their StandOut Roles show up for them, they can customize this section to suit them even more precisely.



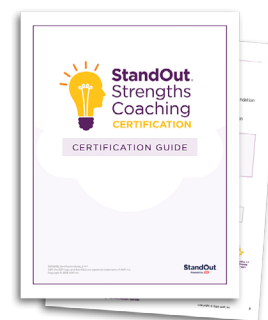
Strength Statement Builder

Strength Statement Builder, familiar from StandOut workshops and now built into the StandOut Platform, helps individuals capture specific details about the activities that make them feel strong. Beginning with a verb representing an action the user loves to do, it walks people through a series of questions that explore which factors contribute to making an activity a strength. Users can create as many Strength Statements as they want and share them on the Platform. Strength Statements are a useful tool for anyone who wants to identify how to make the greatest contribution possible and drive personal performance.

StandOut Strengths Coaching Products

StandOut Strengths Coaching

StandOut Strengths Coaching is personalized 1:1 coaching that focuses on leveraging strengths to unlock potential and accelerate performance. While StandOut coaches have extensive backgrounds in any number of models and deep knowledge of general coaching techniques, this is the specific type of coaching offered by StandOut, based on our proprietary strengths coaching methodology that helps people maximize their contributions.



This simple but powerful approach asks people to apply their unique strengths to real-world challenges and opportunities in the work as it happens, rather than concentrating only on specified checkpoints throughout the year. It leverages the principles of positive psychology (consciously making the effort to pay attention what is right, not just what is wrong) through what we call the “Strengths Lens.” Our coach approach is not limited to our 1:1 coaching but is the basis of all of StandOut’s core offerings, including workshops and technology.

StandOut Debrief

A StandOut Debrief is a standalone 60- or 90-minute personal 1:1 session with a certified StandOut Debrief practitioner to deepen a person’s understanding of how Roles can be used to create the greatest impact at work. StandOut DebrieFs dive into an individual’s StandOut Report in depth, helping people embrace the positive language the StandOut Assessment provides to understand and describe their comparative advantage. Exploring people’s Roles and learning more about how they show up at their best becomes a powerful lever for enabling people to perform at their highest level and make their greatest contribution.



Strengths Coaching Certifications

StandOut Debrief Certification and StandOut Strengths Coaching Certification teach coaches and leader development practitioners to leverage the StandOut Assessment and our StandOut Strengths Coaching model. Equipping the Coaching, LD, and OD teams who support an organization’s leaders with these StandOut certifications will allow the organization to support the types of connection discussed above.

Strengths Development Offering

StandOut eLearning Modules

StandOut eLearning modules introduce people to StandOut's strengths-based approach to performance in highly interactive, engaging self-paced sessions that can be added to any Learning Management System.



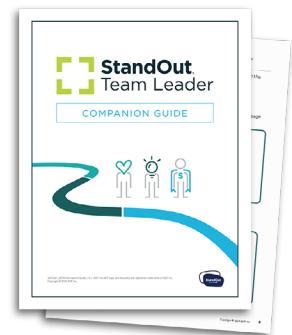
StandOut Team Member Workshop

The *StandOut Team Member* workshop provides individuals or entire intact teams with a simple yet powerful way to learn more about their StandOut Roles and strengths, so that every team member can connect and work more effectively with others.



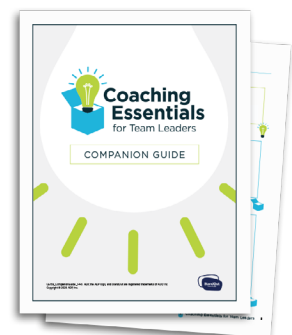
StandOut Team Leader Workshop

The *StandOut Team Leader* workshop helps team leaders understand the power of leading their people based on Roles and strengths, and gives them practical experience applying Platform tools — specifically Check-Ins and Engagement Pulse — effectively to sustain performance week by week throughout the year.



Coaching Essentials for Team Leaders Workshop

The Coaching Essentials for Team Leaders workshop teaches leaders how to ask coaching-style questions that will empower team members to contribute their unique best. This session explores how to take a coach approach to some of the most common conversations a team leader has with team members (e.g., course correction, career). By meeting people where they are and enabling them to discover insights about the best ways to approach their work, team leaders can create meaningful impact across their teams.



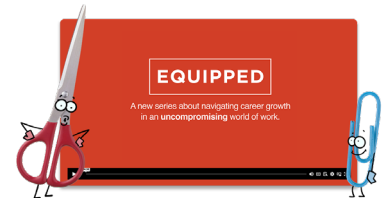
Cultivating Connection for Your Team Workshop

The Cultivating Connection for Your Team workshop deepens interpersonal connections within teams based on shared values and strengths, and fosters a stronger, more unified organization.



Micro-Coaching Video Series

StandOut video series offer micro-coaching explorations of common issues and challenges in the workplace, such as career development and building connection at work.



V. CONCLUSION: HUMANIZING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Organizations looking to effectively drive performance should design for what actually contributes to it: not simply an annual record of where everyone stands, but an ongoing commitment to helping each team leader and team member create weekly clarity about how to put strengths into action to achieve success.

StandOut aims to modernize and humanize performance management by simplifying and improving measurement inputs while creating an ongoing culture of high performance rather than relegating performance conversations to an annual cycle.

StandOut's position is not that performance management should be softer or less rigorous, but that it should be more connected to how performance actually happens, and truer to what actually helps people sustain and grow their contributions.

Just like every individual person, every organization has unique needs when it comes to performance. StandOut can be leveraged to suit whatever performance mechanisms an organization needs to employ. Flexible and adaptable to a world of work that is constantly changing, StandOut's approach is grounded not just in decades of rock-solid research on real-world practices, but also in ongoing, up-to-the-minute research. It provides a system of continuous, real-time talent intelligence to clients, who are invited not only to receive its Data Insights, but to partner with StandOut in contributing to an applied research engine that helps to evolve performance management as the workplace itself evolves.

This ongoing research ensures that StandOut effectively addresses the two core needs of performance management, enabling clients to reliably measure performance that has occurred while empowering their team members, team leaders, and entire organization to create future performance — one week and one individual at a time.

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