Building Talents into Strengths

STRENGTHS FINDER TRAINING

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Goals for Training

1. Understand Strengths-Based Philosophy.
2. Understand your strengths and weaknesses.
3. Understand how to communicate about your strengths.
4. Understand how to use and develop your strengths while you manage your weaknesses in your work.
5. Understand your strengths as a leader.
6. Understand how strengths can build a stronger team in your organization.
Welcome and Warm up Activity

1. Think of your favorite vegetable.
2. Write it down
3. Gather with everyone in the room who wrote down that vegetable.
4. In groups: Share names and your favorite way to eat that vegetable.
Strengths-based Philosophy

- Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D. (1924-2003)

- Gallup Research

- *Now, Discover Your Strengths* Marcus Buckingham & Donald Clifton 2001

- *Strengths Finder 2.0 (2007)* Tom Rath
Strength Finder Tool

Four Decades of Research (over 10 million interviews)

Research is:

- Focused on what works.
- Cross Sector.
- Cross Cultural.
Weaknesses

Myth: When you know your strengths, you know your weaknesses. (vice versa)

Reality: Everyone possesses some percentage of talent and some percentage of weakness in every theme area.

Example: In talent theme ‘Woo’ I could have 10% talent and 90% weakness.
In your work, when have you experienced a lack of:

**Success**— *You tried repeatedly, but had little success*

**Instinct**— *You find yourself trying to avoid these activities or delegate them to someone else.*

**Growth**— *No matter how try you hard, you do not find yourself improving in this area of your work.*

**Energy**— *The activities that leave you feeling tired and drained*
Weakness Statement Card

I feel Weak when...

__________________________
I have to mingle with a large group of
people at any kind of gathering.
Managing Weaknesses

Stop— eliminate the activity/area of work altogether

Team up – work with others who are strong in your areas of weakness

Offer up— volunteer your strength and steer your work toward it

Perceive— challenge yourself to look at your weaknesses differently
“We must remember that casting a critical eye on our weaknesses and working hard to manage them, while sometimes necessary, will only help us prevent failure”

-Marcus Buckingham

Now, Discover Your Strengths
The “Old Way of Thinking”
Paradigm Shift

Where is your focus?

My strengths

My Weaknesses
Paradigm Shift

Strengths-based balance

My strengths

My Weaknesses
Assumptions

• Each person’s talents and set of talents are enduring and unique.

• Each person’s greatest potential for growth is in their strength areas.
Why be Strengths-Based?

Engagement

More satisfied Employees

Better Results
Barriers to being Strengths-Based

What do you think?
Definitions

**Talent**— A natural (innate) way of thinking, feeling or behaving

**Knowledge**— what you know (information).

**Skill**— The basic aptitude to move through the fundamental steps of the task.

**Investment**— time and resources spent practicing and developing your knowledge and skill base.

**Strength**— The ability to consistently produce a nearly perfect positive outcome in a specific task.
Weaknesses: Areas of lesser talent

Blind Spots: Traits of your dominant “talent theme” that may cause you to overlook important considerations
The Strengths Equation

Talent + Knowledge + Skills
X Investment

= STRENGTH
The Strengths Cycle
Introspection → Awareness
Do you know what your strengths are?

*Trombone Player Wanted*

Marcus Buckingham
Introspection Revisited

In your work, when have you experienced:

**Success** — *When did you achieve excellence?*

**Instinct/yearning** — *What activities attracted you?*

**Growth/rapid learning** — *What activities did you learn quickly (without frustration)?*

**Energy/satisfaction** — *What activities did you “get a kick out of” doing?*
Examples

Strength Statement Card

I feel Strong when...

_ I interview someone who excels at his job and explore why he excels._

Strength Statement Card

I feel Strong when...

_ I present, but only to a large group of people, on a subject I know a lot about, when I'm completely prepared, and when I know my presentation will further a mission._
Your Top 5

Revisit your top five report and highlight the words/sentences that relate to you.

VISTA and Supervisor Debrief:

- What was right on the money?
- Where there strengths that seemed less applicable? Why?
1. Chose the Strength that you identified with the most.
2. Go to the corresponding poster.
Conversation

Share with your group:

1. What do you identify with in this talent theme?
2. What does not fit?
3. What activities at/outside of work can you connect to this strength?
FREE Your Strengths

1. Work in VISTA/supervisor pairs
2. Supervisor will guide brainstorming using the questions outlined on worksheet.
3. VISTA should fill in ideas on the blank side.
4. Share your action plan with the other groups at your table.
Strengths-based leadership

Strengths-based Teams

Strengths-based Teams
Four Domains of Leadership

- Executing
- Influencing
- Relationship Building
- Strategic Thinking
Executing Strengths

- Achiever
- Arranger
- Belief
- Consistency

- Deliberative
- Discipline
- Focus
- Responsibility
- Restorative
Influencing Strengths

- Activator
- Command
- Communication
- Competition
- Maximizer
- Self Assurance
- Significance
- Woo
Relationship Building

- Adaptability
- Developer
- Connectivedness
- Empathy
- Harmony
- Includer
- Individualization
- Positivity
- Relator
Strategic Thinking Strengths

- Analytical
- Context
- Futuristic
- Ideation

- Input
- Intellection
- Learner
- Strategic
Who says there is no ‘I’ in team?

Myth: A good team member is well-rounded.

Strengths-based truth: A good team member, but a good team is.
1. Identify the strengths of individual team members
2. Tailor the task to the team member
3. Organize
4. And reorganize (be willing to shift throughout the process of what works best)
Top 5 Grid

- Do you share strengths in common?
- Do you have more unique strengths than similar strengths?
- What do you think are the strengths of others in your team?
Looking Ahead

The Strengths “Cycle”

1. Introspection
2. Conversation
3. Ownership
4. Feedback
5. Focus
6. Identify

Change, Awareness, Development, Understanding, Performance Impact, Application
Where can you learn more?

- *Strengths Based Leadership* (2009)
- *StrengthsFinder 2.0* (2007)
- *StrengthsQuest* (2006)
- *Teach With Your Strengths* (2005)
- *Now, Discover Your Strengths* (2001)
- www.simplystrengths.com
- www.strengths.gallup.com
Thank You!