

Building on Strengths

Overview: Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D., published “Now Discover Your Strengths” in 2001 and employers and employees have been talking about it since. These authors have found that by discovering and building on what you are naturally good at, and not by focusing on improving in areas where one is weak, you can better define who you are as a person and as an employee. Through their online “Strengths Finder” assessment, you can discover five personal themes that will help you can think about yourself anew and guide you to excel in your chosen field. This works individually and for an organization.

There are 34 personal themes. Examples include:

Achiever - one with a constant drive for accomplishing tasks

Activator - one who acts to start things in motion

Developer - one who sees the untapped potential in others

Futuristic - one who has a keen sense of using an eye towards the future to drive today's success

WOO (Wins Over Others) - one who is able to easily persuade

My take on this: Interesting training (with a video portion, an in-class trainer, a workbook and a book), but seems a bit too much like pop psychology. However, one HR person I corresponded with listed her 5 descriptors in the signature of her email, and guest speaker Andrea Todaro mentioned being “an activator”, so people are using it. It generated 5 descriptors that accurately defined me (and which I cannot now remember), but at times I feel that any of the 34 may describe someone at different times in their careers.

Resources

1. Our own Pat McGee (www.mcgeecoaching.com) does a similar training where personal attributes are defined as colors.
2. Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Now, Discover Your Strengths](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Now,_Discover_Your_Strengths))
3. "Strengths Finder" website (www.strengthsfinder.com)
4. Gallup's Strengths Homepage (<http://strengths.gallup.com/110659/Homepage.aspx>)
5. Marcus Buckingham homepage (<http://www.tmbc.com/>)

“People who have the opportunity to focus on their strengths every day are SIX times as likely to be engaged in their jobs and more than THREE times as likely to report having an excellent quality of life.” - Tom Rath