

# Putting Strengths To Work



# Some Reflection

## Questions

What are you paid to do?

What types of challenges give you the most satisfaction?


To what types of activities do you feel drawn to at work and in your personal life?

What do you enjoy most about your role?

What do you enjoy least about your role?

Of all the things you do well, which two things do you do best?

What are the key outcomes for which you are held accountable?



**Where Do We Start?**

# Why all the talk about Strengths?

- Individual and Team Awareness
- Building Culture
- Accelerating Engagement
- Connecting to Work
- Delivering Results



# Why now?

- Impressive bodies of research being conducted
- Evolution of social and educational structures
- Changes in company cultures
- Need to engage associates and consumers to a deeper level
- Knowledge economy
- Competition is fierce
- The need to do more work with less
- Focus on total wellness at work

# Current Research and Practices

- Positive Psychology, Strengths Practices, Engagement
  - Dr. Marty Seligman, University of Pennsylvania
  - Dr. Kim Cameron, University of Michigan
  - Gallup
  - Harvard
  - Corporate Leadership Council
  - Marcus Buckingham
- Practices
  - Many Fortune 500 companies, including
    - Best Buy, Ann Taylor, Ritz-Carlton, Humana, Caterpillar, Toyota
    - Case studies show the dramatic improvement in engagement (associate and consumer), individual and team performance and specific business outcomes



**It Starts With Engagement**

# The Beginning

1990

University of Michigan

Dr. Robert L. Kahn, Professor of Psychology

***"Employees expressing themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performance."***



# The Fundamentals Of Engagement

1. I **know what's expected** of me at work →
2. I have the materials and equipment I need to do work right
3. At work, I have the opportunity to **do what I do best** every day →
4. I have received recognition for doing good work in the last seven days
5. My supervisor, or someone at work, **seems to care** about me as a person →
6. There is someone at work who encourages my development
7. At work, my opinions seem to count
8. The mission and purpose of the company makes me feel my job is important
9. My associates and coworkers are committed to doing good work
10. I have a best friend at work
11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress
12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow

Focus me

Know me

Care about me

# Critical Role of Engagement to Perfect Service

## Engaged associates drive value

- Quality
- Productivity
- Emotionally satisfied consumers
- Profit
- Retention



## Description of an Engaged Associate

**“An engaged employee brings his/her ‘A’ game to work, goes the extra mile, and feels a strong sense of commitment both to and from the organization.”**

**- Leigh Branham**

**Every interaction an associate has  
with a consumer represents an  
opportunity to build that  
consumer's emotional connection –  
or to diminish it.**

Harvard Business Review  
“Manage Your Human Sigma”

# Emotionally Engaged Consumers . . .

**Deliver 23% more over the average consumer in terms of wallet share, profitability, revenue, and relationship growth.**

Harvard Business Review  
“Manage Your Human Sigma”




**What Do We Know?**



**One Key Lever of Engagement?**

**Strengths...**

**Principles, Practices, Processes**

A person is standing on a grassy hill, looking out over a vast landscape under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The person is silhouetted against the sky. A large, semi-transparent oval highlights the person and the sky above them.

“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. It will not help us reach excellence...you will reach excellence only by understanding and cultivating your strengths.”

- Marcus Buckingham,  
“Now Discover Your Strengths”



# Strengths Fundamental Premise

***Greatness requires more than skill and knowledge. Strength requires skills, knowledge and talent. Talent comes naturally to you, while knowledge and skills are learned.***





# Key Underlying Assumptions

- **Each person's talents are enduring and unique**
- **Each person's greatest room for growth is in their area of greatest strength**

# Stand up if you almost always...

- Talk to people on elevators, airplanes...bathrooms.
- Clean the house before you can relax.
- Hang the shirts in your closet according to color.
- Are the social coordinator for your family and friends.
- A car salesman's worst nightmare.
- Find yourself mediating conflict between friends and family.
- You love the limelight....really, really love it!
- Take charge of situations.
- Ask lots of questions.....lots and lots and lots of questions.
- Find yourself thinking a lot more about tomorrow than today.
- Make a list of things to do.
- Make a list of thing to do ON WEEKENDS.

# An Innate Strength:

- Is drawn from the way your are wired neurologically
- Comes easy for you
- You have a yearning to do it
- You may take it for granted
- You can learn it fast
- You get satisfaction from it
- Time passes quickly when you are engaged in it
- You feel “strong” when using a Strength

# Strength = Natural Ability + Knowledge + Skill + Practice

## Natural Ability

- A natural way of thinking, feeling or behaving. The more natural the ability, the greater its power, and the greater your opportunity for strength.



## Knowledge:

- What you know. Can be acquired through formal or information education.

## Skill:

- The basic aptitude to move through the fundamental steps of a task. Can be acquired through formal or informal training.

## Practice:

- Repeated performance or systematic exercise for the purpose of acquiring skill or proficiency: *Practice makes perfect.*



## Strength:

- The ability to consistently produce a nearly perfect positive outcome in a specific task

Personal  
Investment

A large white curly brace on the left side of the slide groups the four components (Natural Ability, Knowledge, Skill, Practice) under the label 'Personal Investment'. A blue arrow points downwards from the bottom of this brace towards the 'Strength' section.

# Strengths are when....

- The way we think
- The way we act
- The way we do things
- The way we build relationships
- The way we see the world

Create

Positive Outcomes  
That Add Value

# Strengths Mindset

- Know your innate abilities and strengths, AND your weaknesses
- Have conversations about them with leaders, peers, and others
- Leverage what you are best at in your role every day
- Recognize and reward the use of strengths
- Focus on developing strengths
- Reduce the times per day that you have to do things you are not good at
- Capitalize on the strengths of others to complement your areas of “weakness”
- Leverage your greatest talents to overcome your “blind spots” and “flat sides”
- Volunteer your greatest strengths to the team whenever possible

# What does a Strengths Mindset get us?

Insights



Enhanced  
Conversations



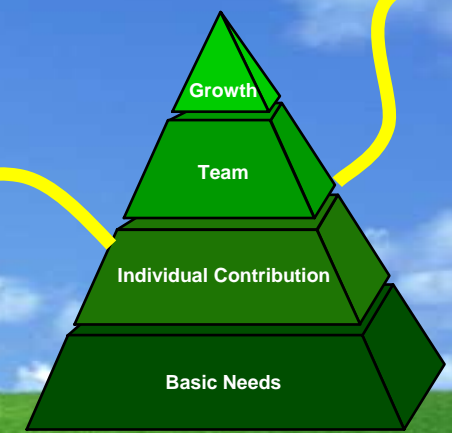
Growth and Development



Happy  
Customers, Consumers  
Stakeholders



Improved Performance



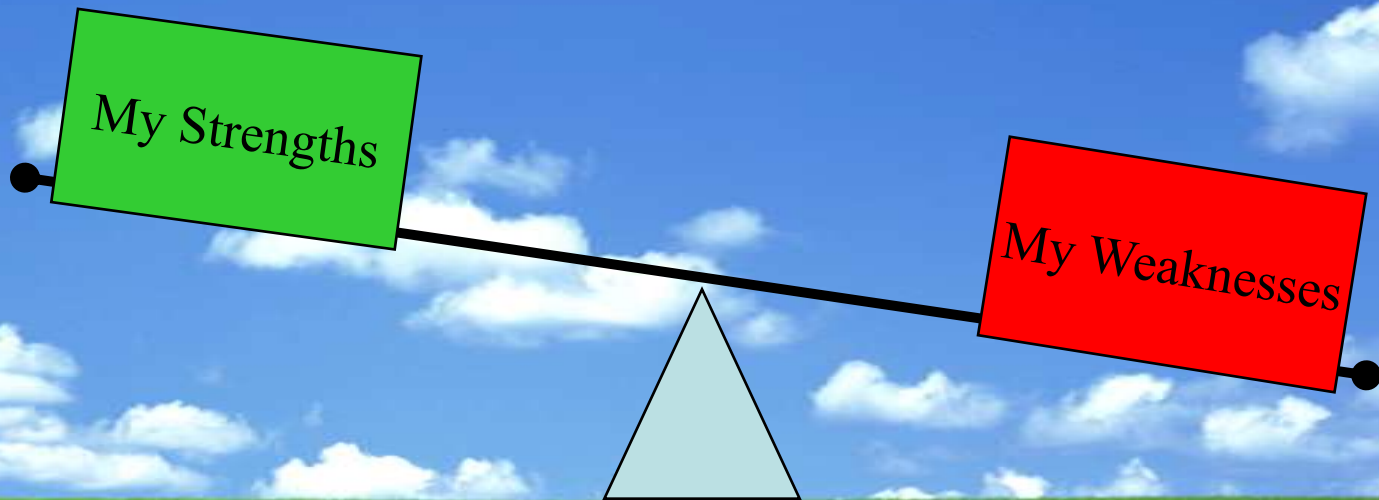
Engagement



# The Reality Is...

- Only **17%** of the US workforce believes they use all of their strengths at work
- 51% of workers say they play to their strengths **“about once a week”**
- An employee who truly knows how to apply their strengths is **8.2 times as likely** to strongly agree that they know what is expected of them at work.
- Of the people who felt their manager focused on their weaknesses, **22% were actively disengaged** as employees.
- When people felt their manager focused on their strengths, only **1% were actively disengaged.**

# Where is Your Focus?





**So, how do we change and grow?**



Present  
 "Point A"  
 28

Capacity Acceleration  
 Individual > Team > Organization

Future  
 "Point B"

# Putting Strengths to Work



# Partner Discussion

- Think back to when you were a child....do you see any positive patterns of behavior that have stayed with you since then?
  - What are they?
  - Have you developed these?
- What specific activities did you find yourself looking forward to last week?
  - Do you always seem to look forward to these activities?
  - Why?
- Was there any time last week that you were “in the zone”?
  - You found it easy to concentrate and time flew by...
  - What were you doing?

# What is the Clifton StrengthsFinder ©?

- An online, 180 question assessment validated through years of research, testing and millions of interviews
- Created by Donald Clifton and The Gallup Organization; Now, Discover Your Strengths
- Based on “positive psychology”
- 34 “Talent Themes”
- Results of the assessment provide you with your Top 5 Talent Themes
  - Areas where you are innately wired to have the greatest potential
  - Provided with a personal development plan to help you focus on your strengths

# Why StrengthsFinder©?

- Validated assessment
- Increase self awareness
- Increase team awareness
- Help guide personal and team performance and development
- Enhance conversations within your teams and with leaders
- Focus on “strengths building” rather than “weakness fixing”



# The 34 Themes

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## *A Common Language*

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<i>Achiever</i>	<i>Connectedness</i>	<i>Harmony</i>	<i>Relator</i>
<i>Activator</i>	<i>Consistency</i>	<i>Ideation</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
<i>Adaptability</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Inclusiveness</i>	<i>Restorative</i>
<i>Analytical</i>	<i>Deliberative</i>	<i>Individualization</i>	<i>Self-Assurance</i>
<i>Arranger</i>	<i>Developer</i>	<i>Input</i>	<i>Significance</i>
<i>Belief</i>	<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Intellection</i>	<i>Strategic</i>
<i>Command</i>	<i>Empathy</i>	<i>Learner</i>	<i>Woo</i>
<i>Communication</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Maximizer</i>	
<i>Competition</i>	<i>Futuristic</i>	<i>Positivity</i>	

## What StrengthsFinder © Strengths Are

- ✓ Useful in focusing on individual and team development
- ✓ Aligned with our desire to increase performance by leveraging what we're good at
- ✓ Multi-dimensional
- ✓ Individual means of achieving and approaching competencies and contribution

## What StrengthsFinder © Strengths Are Not

- ✓ A selection tool
- ✓ A promotional tool
- ✓ Do not define a role
- ✓ A replacement for competencies which define corporate direction and desired behaviors

A vibrant landscape featuring a lush green field in the foreground and a bright blue sky filled with scattered white clouds. A semi-transparent grey rectangular box is centered in the upper half of the image, containing the text "So What's Next...".

**So What's Next...**

# Some Steps You Can Take

1. Bust the Myths – capitalizing on your strengths is the way to succeed rather than “fixing” your weaknesses
2. Get Clear – identify your own strengths and weaknesses
3. Focus – develop your talents into strengths, create a plan, stick to it
4. Free Your Strengths – Learn how to volunteer your strengths to the team
5. Stop Your Weaknesses – Learn the best strategies for lessening the impact of your weaknesses on the team
6. Speak UP – Master the art of talking about your strengths
7. Build Strong Habits – that you will repeat day after day that push you toward activities that play to your natural talents and strengths

# Bust the Myths

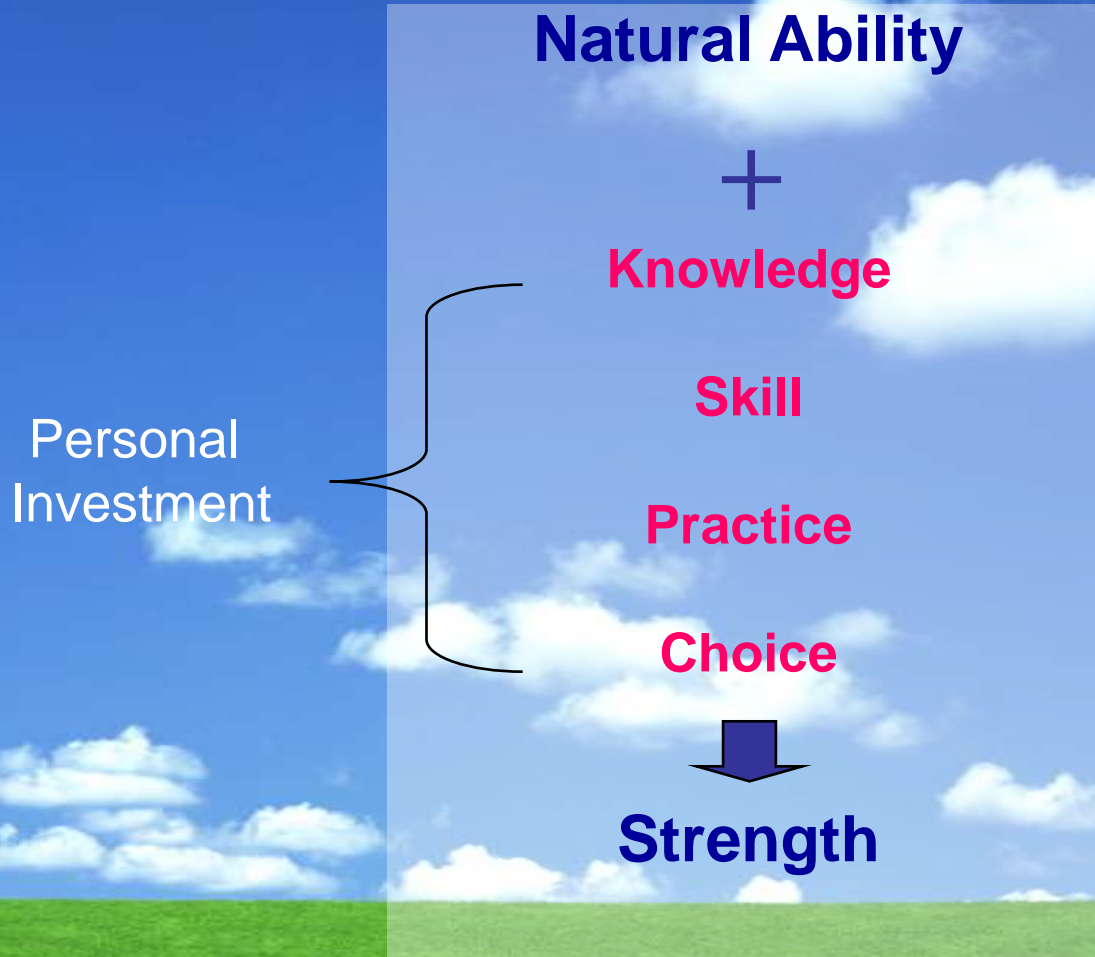
- **As you grow, your personality changes**
  - Your values, skills, self-awareness and some of your behaviors may change, but the most dominant aspects of your personality will remain the same
- **You will grow the most in your areas of greatest weakness**
  - You will be the most inquisitive, most resilient, most creative and most open to learning in your areas of strength.
- **A good team member does whatever it takes to help the team**
  - A great team member is not well rounded, but a great team is.

# Get Clear

- 4 Signs of a Strength
  - Success
  - Instinct
  - Growth
  - Needs
- Capture, Clarify, Confirm
  - I loved it...
  - I loathed it...

Step 3

# Focus Your Work & Development



# What's Your Personal Investment?

**Discuss these questions at your table:**

- 1. What knowledge have you added to you innate talents ?**
- 2. What skill have you developed that aligns with your talents?**
- 3. Describe how you have practiced – what have you done with your talents + knowledge/skill?**
- 4. What challenges have you faced with bringing your natural talents to life?**
- 5. What successes have you had?**



# Strengths Based Development

- Choose 2-3 “strengths” upon which to focus
- Create a development plan that gives you knowledge, skill and/or practice for those strengths
- Highlight specifics and measures of success
- Share with your leader, mentor, etc
- Review your plan every month to check your progress
- Focus the bulk of your development time, resources and energy not on what makes you well rounded , but on areas of ability/strength.

How does / can this person help you grow?



Do they know what you expect of them? Y N

How does / can this person help you grow?



Do they know what you expect of them? Y N

How does / can this person help you grow?



Do they know what you expect of them? Y N



You



How does / can this person help you grow?

Do they know what you expect of them? Y N

Board members outside of work

How does / can this person help you grow?



Do they know what you expect of them? Y N



Do they know what you expect of them? Y N

# Free Your Strengths

- **Focus**
  - Identify how and where this specific strength helps you in your current role
- **Release**
  - Find the missed opportunities in your current role
- **Educate**
  - Learn new skills and techniques to build this strengths
- **Expand**
  - Build your role around these strengths

# Stop Your Weaknesses

- Stop doing the activity (does anyone care or notice?)
- Team up with someone
- Offer up one of your strengths
- Perceive your weakness differently

Step 6

# Speak Up

- The Strengths Chat
- How I can help you
- The Weakness Chat
- How you can help me

# Build Strong Habits

- Every Day...
- Every Week...
- Every Quarter...
- Every 6 Months...
- Every Year...