



6 WAYS TO BUILD A STRENGTHS CULTURE IN YOUR GROUP

Gambit
COACHING AND CONSULTING

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As a new leader you've heard about StrengthsFinder and know that it could help your group function better. You know that focusing on talents, developing them into strengths and learning how to leverage them to overcome 'areas of opportunity' is beneficial for engagement, for productivity and for working well together in groups.

Even more, you aren't really interested in another professional development activity that is forgotten weeks (or days!) later. You want to actually affect the way your group works together for years to come. But with all the other things on your plate, how do you go about incorporating strengths into the culture of your group?

Here's your step by step guide to getting started.

1. Individual Assessments

First, everyone needs to take Gallup's CliftonStrengths assessment. It is an incredible tool and a valuable investment. Don't be tempted to cut corners by just having leaders take the assessment.

Here's how it works. After answering about 30 minute's worth of questions (that don't always feel like they have a point but, trust me they do) each member of your team will receive their talents and can download a series of reports.

*NOTE: If you are hiring a Strengths Facilitator, purchase your codes through them. This will allow the facilitator to pull your group's information together and better serve you.

Top 5 (≈\$20) is a good introduction. It will give you information about your top five talents and will be truly focused on strengths. If you plan to spend a portion of a day on your workshop (2, 4 or 6 hours) choose Top 5. Full 34 (≈\$50) will give you information on all of the 34 talents Gallup assesses for. It will allow you to manage weaknesses as well and is best used if you can budget in a minimum of 6 hours.

2. Small Group Workshop

It's important that this remains a small group, and a workshop. Sometimes people are tempted to do a company-wide seminar or talk. This information is definitely valuable for all members of your organization, but it needs to be interacted with in small groups.

There should be no more than 20 people per group 10 is an even better number. Why? This group must remain small because your event should truly be an interactive workshop that provides opportunities for personalized interaction and application.

Additionally, the ideal workshop group is a functional team one with shared goals, and a need to depend on each other to get the work done. If a functional team is not realistic or possible for your group, your attendees should know each other well and work together frequently.

If you're looking to role this out organization wide, know that it's not more effective to get more people in the room at this point. Larger groups cause people to interact less and make it an informational report instead of an interactive learning experience.

Budget a bare minimum of 2 hours for your workshop. This will be enough time to introduce your group to their top 5, to identify ways to develop talents into strengths and to leverage talents toward goals. If you can only give two hours to your strengths workshop, it would be wise to have another workshop event the following week or month to expand your groups ability to leverage their own and each other's talents. The ideal time frame you devote to Strengths learning will depend on how deeply you'd like to incorporate strengths.

Be sure that your workshop will incorporate addressing questions like "How are we going to use this new information? What can I apply this information to today?"

3. Follow-Up

Following up, more than any other thing you can do is what will decide if you're building a Strengths culture or offering a short term helpful thing. Consistency in using the tool and directing energy toward developing strengths is key. You have several options for follow up, all of which are valuable, useful and worth the investment. Your decision on what to implement will be influenced by what degree you'd like to your group to incorporate a strength's mindset into their work as well as the depth of your budget.

Daily exercises. These are meant to sharpen, develop and build awareness of talents and how they can be leveraged. These are best delivered at regular intervals, at a regular time. Creating a habit of developing talents into strengths will give the most return on your investment.

Second (or third) Workshop. If you had limited time in the first workshop, meeting again for more content and more application will be instrumental to the group's ability to regularly use their talents.

Strengths discussions. Make strengths discussions part of your team meetings. Ask open-ended questions about how Strengths is showing up in your group's day. Ask questions like "How has this information been helpful? How are you using it? How has it changed the way you interact with others? Which talents are feeling particularly helpful in a given scenario? Which talents feel like they might be getting in your way?"

Coaching. Coaching is a vital step for those who want their talents to become their strengths. You'll learn the tools, get the time and guidance to be able to choose and use the right talent for the right situation. Those who are the best at what they do don't have a specific set of talents. Instead they know and use their talents like tools, selecting the right talent for the right task.

4. Strengths-Based Check-Ins

Incorporate a strengths approach in your 1 x 1's. Ask what's going well for the team member. Ask what their best recent day at work was and why. Ask which talents they were using when they were successful. Ask how the team member can apply those same talents to another upcoming task. Focus your 1 x 1 time on your team member's talents and how to leverage them for upcoming work. Remember it's important to use Strengths as a conversation starter, not as a manual for what role a certain team member should take or what tasks they should be good at.

5. Work With Talents

We don't usually get full days doing only the work we love. There are lots of tasks that must be done that we just don't really enjoy. The key is to make sure that we are incorporating some time for our favorite work every day. Choose a period of time (maybe 10 minutes on super busy days, and 60 minutes on more flexible days) and dedicate it to a work-related activity that you absolutely love. Prioritize this and be intentional about it. Set a timer so that your time is both protected and defined. Do this first thing in the mornings. You'll be looking forward to starting your day, and you'll have a surge of dopamine and serotonin to carry over through your morning. When

6. Strengths Report Refresh

Put it on your calendar to revisit your Strengths Report quarterly. It's likely that something that you read over one quarter will jump out as the key to your successful task completion another quarter. I've been doing this for years and have come to expect that with each reading something applicable will pop out. Your situation is constantly changing and the way you use your talents will change as well. Nine times out of ten rereading my report at different points throughout my year provides me with a fresh insight on how to use, develop or tailor my talent to serve my current situation.

Working in groups is hard. A little strategy goes a long way. Building a Strengths culture is one way to make it easier. Building a Strengths culture is important for any organization that wants to make it easier for their people to get their work done. It will take time and effort, but it will be worth every bit of it.

Schedule a consultation to talk about where your company is in the process and what your next steps are.

[Schedule a consultation](#)

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