“If you find yourself thinking in the future, if you find yourself actually anticipating the activity (When can I do this again?) it is a pretty good sign that you are enjoying it and that one of your talents is in play.”

Donald O. Clifton – *Now Discover Your Strengths*
Why Focus on Strengths?

• As you develop and use Strengths, achievements will naturally follow.

• If you focus on your Strengths, you can go from average to excellence. If you focus on your weaknesses, you may only go from poor to average.

• Top achievers invent ways to use their Strengths (and ways to manage their weaknesses).
Origin of StrengthsFinder

- Donald O. Clifton studied unique strengths of leaders in the 1960s
- Gallup—more than 20,000 interviews: leaders in all fields worldwide
- Not one leader had same set of strengths

“Our research into human strengths does not support the extreme, and extremely misleading, assertion that 'you can play any role you set your mind to,' but it does lead us to this truth: Whatever you set your mind to, you will be most successful when you craft your role to play to your signature talents most of the time.”

— Donald O. Clifton, Now, Discover Your Strengths
### What is StrengthsFinder®?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is…</th>
<th>It is not…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>an assessment that identifies talents that come naturally to you</td>
<td>a career instrument or meant to tell you what to do or what you should do; it should not be used to determine a major or a career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an assessment that has been analyzed for technical psychometric characteristics, including validity and reliability</td>
<td>a quiz or test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intended to facilitate personal development and growth that will contribute to the achievement of your increased well-being and success</td>
<td>something that will be used to label, stereotype, or put you in “a box”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focused on encouraging you to spend time &amp; energy developing your talents</td>
<td>focused on encouraging you to ignore or disregard your weaknesses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About Strengths-Based Approach

- About self-awareness and action on that awareness
- About natural tendencies or talent
- Approach can inspire individual and organizational growth
Strengths Building Equation

Talent
(a natural way of thinking, feeling, or behaving)

X

Investment
(time spent practicing, developing your skills, and building your knowledge base)

Strength
(the ability to consistently provide near-perfect positive performance)
Influencing

Help team to reach more people/larger audience, "sells" teams' ideas & achievements externally, brings a voice to the team

- Activator
- Command
- Communication
- Competition

- Maximizer
- Self-Assurance
- Significance
- Woo
Relationship Building

"Glue that holds the team together", "creates groups and organizations that are much greater than the sum of their parts."

- Adaptability
- Connectedness
- Developer
- Empathy
  - Harmony
  - Includer
  - Individualization
  - Positivity
  - Relator
Strategic Thinking

Keep people focused on potential and the future, absorb and analyze information to help make effective decisions.

- Analytical
- Context
- Futuristic
- Ideation

- Input
- Intellection
- Learner
- Strategic
You at your best…

• Which of your talent themes fit you best and why?
• What surprises you about your talent themes?
• In what ways do you use your talent themes daily?
Scavenger Hunt

• Find one or more people with a theme different than your own.

• Ask for an example of how each person used that theme or the benefits of that theme.
Scavenger Hunt

• Find one or more people with a theme the same as your own.

• Talk with them and notice how you experience this theme differently or similarly.
Strengths & Your Career

- Your themes do not match one career field, instead they help you understand how you can be successful in your career of choice.

- Best people in a job deliver same outcomes, but with different behaviors (strengths).

- Utilize the ‘Career’ section of the ‘Student Action Items’ report.

- When you find a career that fits you work doesn’t really seem like work.

Source: StrengthsQuest
Finding your Sweet Spot

[Diagram with three overlapping circles labeled: Stuff You Love To Do, Stuff You’re Good At, Stuff Someone Will Pay You To Do, and a arrow indicating Dream Job]

University of Minnesota
Driven to Discover