MINNESOTA

EMPLOYEE CAREER EXPLORATION WEEK

Your Strengths, Your Story: Ideas on How to Show Up and Stand Out

Participant questions from the live virtual session with responses from the presenter

Understanding My Strengths

How can I identify my strengths if I need concrete tools, guides or definitions?

Assessment tools, guides and definitions can help you know and confirm your strengths. You can determine your strengths by reflecting on what you are naturally good at and where you have 'boundless' energy. Ask others who know you well what they see your strengths are. Also, check online for no cost strengths assessment as well. This Gallup site can help you get more ideas about discovering your strengths: What Are the 34 CliftonStrengths Themes?

Can CliftonStrengths® change over time? How often should I retake it?

Gallup, CliftonStrengths® says that your results are remarkably stable over time, though minor reordering's in your top talent themes can and do happen. Innate natural talent generally remains stable. However, life and work experiences do result in you continuing to discover your strength and talents over time. Retake an assessment as you see that your life experiences have evolve over time.

Does the enterprise offer strengths or skills assessments for all employees or does each agency need to buy them?

There is cost associated with CliftonStrengths assessment either at your agency or at the enterprise level. Ask and discuss possible opportunities available of your supervisor, HR, or others with your agency. Check out this opportunity as a starting point: Put Your Strengths to Work class.

How can I use my strengths when I'm an introvert?

We all have strengths and talents, whether you're an introvert or extrovert! Check out a possible no cost strengths assessment online to get started.

How can I use my strengths when peer feedback is limited?

Get creative and curious about asking for feedback from many people, colleagues, peers, close friends, partners, family, etc.

How can I use my strengths to improve my influencing skills and become a stronger leader?

Know your strengths and 'lesser' talents. If influencing is a lower talent for you, seek coaching and practice opportunities to strengths this skill. Also, seek partnerships with people who are good at influencing, observe and learn from them.

Do strengths and personal values ever conflict? How should I manage that tension?

Yes, it's possible you may see conflict with personal values and strengths. Each situation and environment is unique so it's hard to specifically address how to manage the tension. Always assess and seek the appropriate balance for you.

Can focusing too much on my strengths cause blind spots in my weaknesses? How can I balance both?

Yes, people can show exuding too much of their strengths in certain environments. Know that sometimes exuding too much or more than is needed 'strength' may irritate others. You need to be self-aware and regulate your approach and style for different environments. You need to assess and determine the appropriate amount of 'talent/strength' you want to 'bring' and 'need' to each environment.

Using My Strengths

How can I use my strengths when job descriptions feel vague or copy-pasted?

Seek guidance from your supervisor, trusted colleagues, and other people you work with to find possible opportunities where you can use your strengths. Also, get curious in your current work and see how you can incorporate more of your strengths within your existing job. Bring your ideas to your supervisor for discussion.

How can employees in direct-care roles access training in other fields (i.e. accounting or medical records) to build strengths for future career changes?

Seek out many training ideas and resources online. Ask others about opportunities to discuss and observe other roles to learn more. Training in other fields/ career areas is going to happen on your time.

How can I communicate my strengths clearly to supervisors or hiring managers when I want more responsibility?

Create an 'elevator pitch/personal statement' about your talents/strengths and how you have successfully delivered work 'outcomes and impact' using your strengths. Start with a few examples, then revise and add additional work examples you are proud of. Document these examples and use them in conversations with your supervisor to explain your strengths and how you can do more. Also, use during the interview process!

How can I build an elevator pitch that feels clear and authentic without jargon or buzzwords?

Start by creating a few (2 – 3) specific examples of your work, the outcomes and impact that you are most proud of. Incorporate how your top strengths helped you with these work examples. Always ask for a further conversation as you use your elevator pitch. Be yourself and avoid the use of jargon/buzzwords. Also, be sure to ask a few trusted colleagues or friends to review your statement and provide feedback.