

# Understanding Your Talents & Strengths

Management Development Meeting  
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Strategic | Responsibility | Deliberative | Restorative | Futuristic

# Strengths Session Goals

- Background/History of Strengths
- Become aware of YOUR talents and your potential for strengths.
- Verbalize your themes.
- Define your signature themes and better understand those around you (colleagues).
- Focus on who you are and what you have – not on what you don't have!
- Strengths Based Leadership

# Background/History

- Rooted in more than 40 years of research. Over 7 million people have taken the Clifton StrengthsFinder® online assessment.
- Was developed with the premise of studying “what is right with people” (positive psychology).
- In 1998, the Father of Strengths Psychology, Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D. (1924-2003), along with Tom Rath and a team of scientists at Gallup created the online StrengthsFinder assessment.
- In 2004, the assessment's name was formally changed to "Clifton StrengthsFinder" in honor of its chief designer.
- In 2007, Gallup scientists released a new edition of the assessment, program, and website, dubbed “StrengthsFinder 2.0.

# Strengths Philosophy and Uses

- Individuals are able to gain far more when they expend effort to build on their greatest talents than when they spend a comparable amount of effort to remediate their weaknesses.
- Used for understanding individuals and groups in a variety of *settings*
  - ✓ Employees
  - ✓ Executive teams
  - ✓ Students
  - ✓ Family
  - ✓ Personal and Professional Development
- Available in over 20 languages
- Modifiable for individuals with disabilities
- Reading level is grade 10 or higher

# Six Principles of Human Nature and Behavior Using Strengths

1. You have a group of talents within you.
2. Your greatest talents hold the key to high achievement, success, and progress at levels of personal excellence.
3. Becoming aware of your talents builds confidence and provides a basis for achievement.
4. Learning how to develop and apply strengths will improve your levels of achievement.
5. Each of your talents can be applied in many areas including relationships, learning, academics, leadership, service, and careers.
6. As you develop and apply strengths, your achievements will increase and you will experience greater and more frequent successes.

# Strengths Testing

- Subjected to repeated psychometric scrutiny by its developers using the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing
  - ✓ American Educational Research Association
  - ✓ American Psychological Association
  - ✓ National Council on Measurement in Education
- Researchers inside and outside Gallup have contributed validation and reliability of the instrument. Studies included are:
  - ✓ Confirmatory Studies (Psychometric Properties)
  - ✓ Reliability Studies (Internal Consistency & Test-Retest Reliability)
  - ✓ Validity Studies (Content, Construct, & Criterion-Related Validity)
  - ✓ Utility Studies (Employee Engagement, Employee Turnover, Productivity, & Profitability)

**NOTE:** This instrument is NOT intended for use of employee selection or mental health screening. Given that CSF feedback is provided to foster intrapersonal development, comparisons across profiles of individuals are discouraged.

# Clifton StrengthsFinder™

- The structure of talent measured does not vary across cultures and demographics.
- Identifies areas where the greatest potential for strength development exists.
- Is used as a starting point for self-discovery in strengths-based development programs.
- Successful strength-based development results in desired behavioral change.
- Relates to various positive outcomes, employee engagement and productivity.
- Is grounded in research and has adequate internal consistency, stability, validity, and cross-cultural applicability.

# Improving Your Life

Using a strengths-based approach has shown to:

1. Help people make better choices in their life;
2. Help improve performance;
3. Increases productivity;
4. Increases self-confidence;
5. Improves employee morale;
6. Improve employees engagement at work; and
7. Assist employees feel valued for their contributions.



# Focus on You

- One thing that is very important to you.
- Something at which you excel
- One challenge

# Strength, Talent, and Theme

*A strength is the ability to provide consistent, near-perfect performance in a given activity.*

*Talents are naturally recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior that can be productively applied.*

*The key to building a strength is to first identify your dominant theme of talent, then to discover your specific talents within those themes, and to lastly refine them with knowledge and skills.*

Clifton & Hodges

# Strength Formula

Strength: The ability to provide consistent, near-perfect performance in a given activity.

$$\text{Strength} = \text{Talent} + \text{Knowledge} + \text{Skills}$$

Identify your talents, add knowledge and skills to build upon your strengths.

# Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and Clifton StrengthsFinder

- Gallup Senior Scientist, Phil Stone, psychology professor at Harvard
- Both are self assessment tools
- Categorizing people can be challenging and artificial at times
- Patterns of thought and behavior are unique to individuals
- Can be used to foster discussion and awareness of preference and talents
- Recognizing the fundamentally different measurement objectives of the two yields a more productive use of each

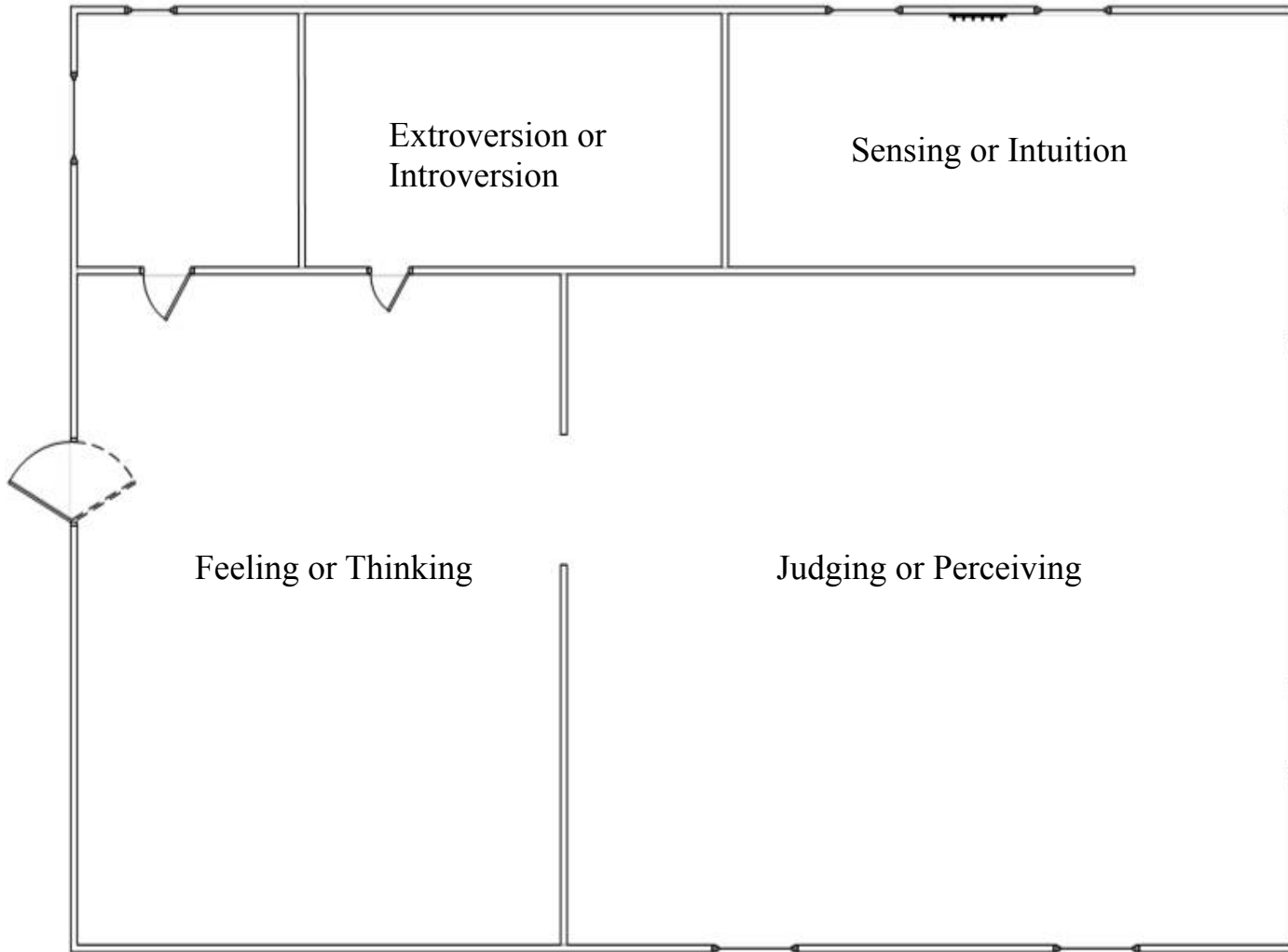
Primary Difference: They are designed to measure different dimensions of an individual

## **MBTI**

- Measures preferred modes of psychological processing;
- Provides information about how an individual experiences and makes sense of his/her surroundings.

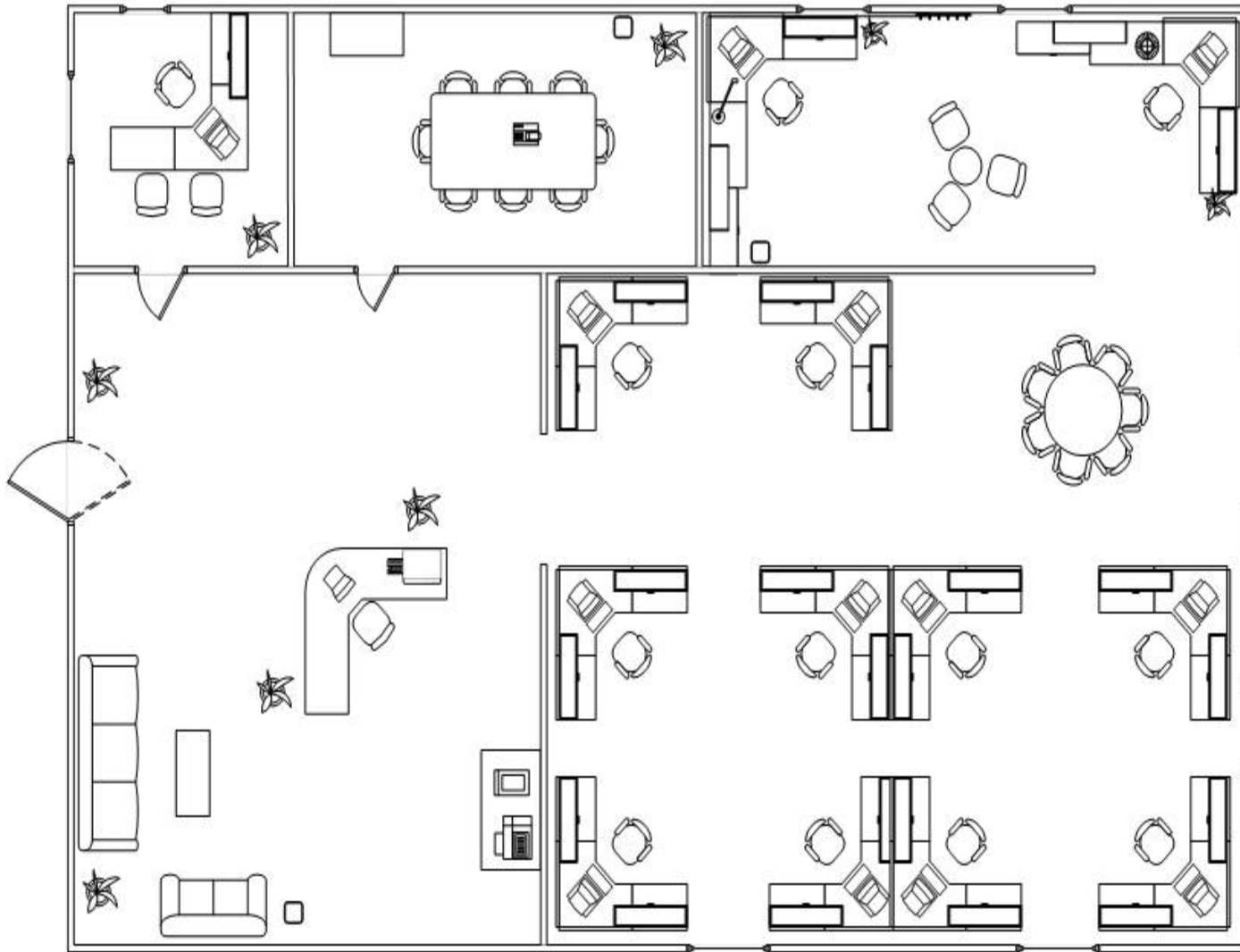
## **Clifton StrengthsFinder**

- Measures talent that generates performance;
- Provides insights into recurring patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior that can be productively applied for optimal performance and success.



Myers-Briggs Type Indicator groups individuals into sixteen personality types measuring distinct polarities of preference: Extroversion or Introversion; Sensing or Intuition; Feeling or Thinking; and Judging or Perceiving.

Basic personality types are indicated by four preferences through dynamic interaction. Insight as to how these individuals gain energy, process information, and act upon their conclusions is provided by their personality types.



*“Clifton StrengthsFinder offers an opportunity for talent discovery and language through which individuals can express their unique talents.*

*The Clifton StrengthsFinder identifies talents that an individual routinely demonstrates, revealing powerful areas of potential that will yield the greatest investment value. When the depth of discovery is shared within organizations, employees become intelligently and intensely focused on maximizing what they and their teammates naturally do best.”*

Phil Stone, Professor,  
Harvard

*What do you think about **YOUR** strengths?*

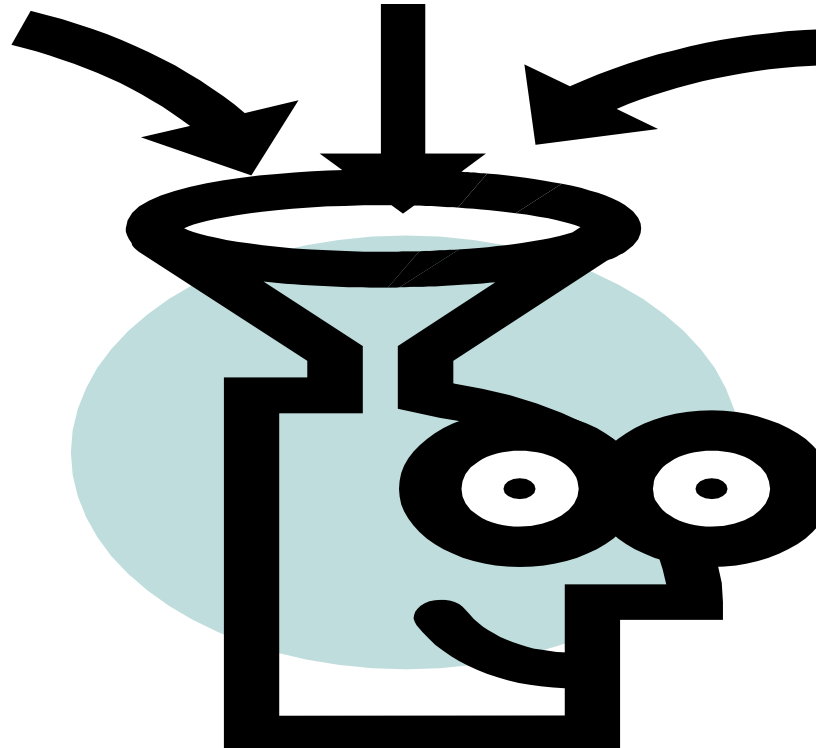
*How does this apply in **YOUR** daily life?*

*What has this helped **YOU** achieve at work?*

*What strengths/talents does **YOUR** team have and how does that help **YOU**?*

*How do I use **MY** top 5 Signature Themes?*

*What are the benefits of the talents of **OTHERS**?*



# Weakness Fixing: The Wrong Assumptions

All behaviors can be learned.

- If you try hard enough, you can do it.
- If you want it badly enough, you can do it.
- If you dream it, you can achieve it.
- Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine per cent perspiration.

The best in a role all get there exactly the same way.

Weakness fixing leads to success.



# Weakness versus Strengths

*“Guided by the belief that good is the opposite of bad, mankind has for centuries pursued it’s fixation with the fault and failing.*

*Doctors have studied disease in order to learn about health. Psychologists have investigated sadness in order to learn about joy. Therapists have looked into the causes of divorce in order to learn about happy marriage.*

*And in schools and workplaces around the world, each one of us have been encouraged to identify, analyze, and correct our weakness in order to become strong.”*

Now, Discover Your Strengths

# Strengths Building: The Right Assumptions

Some behaviors can be learned. Many are nearly impossible to learn. There is a difference between talent, skills, and knowledge.

The best in a role can deliver the same outcomes, but use different behaviors.

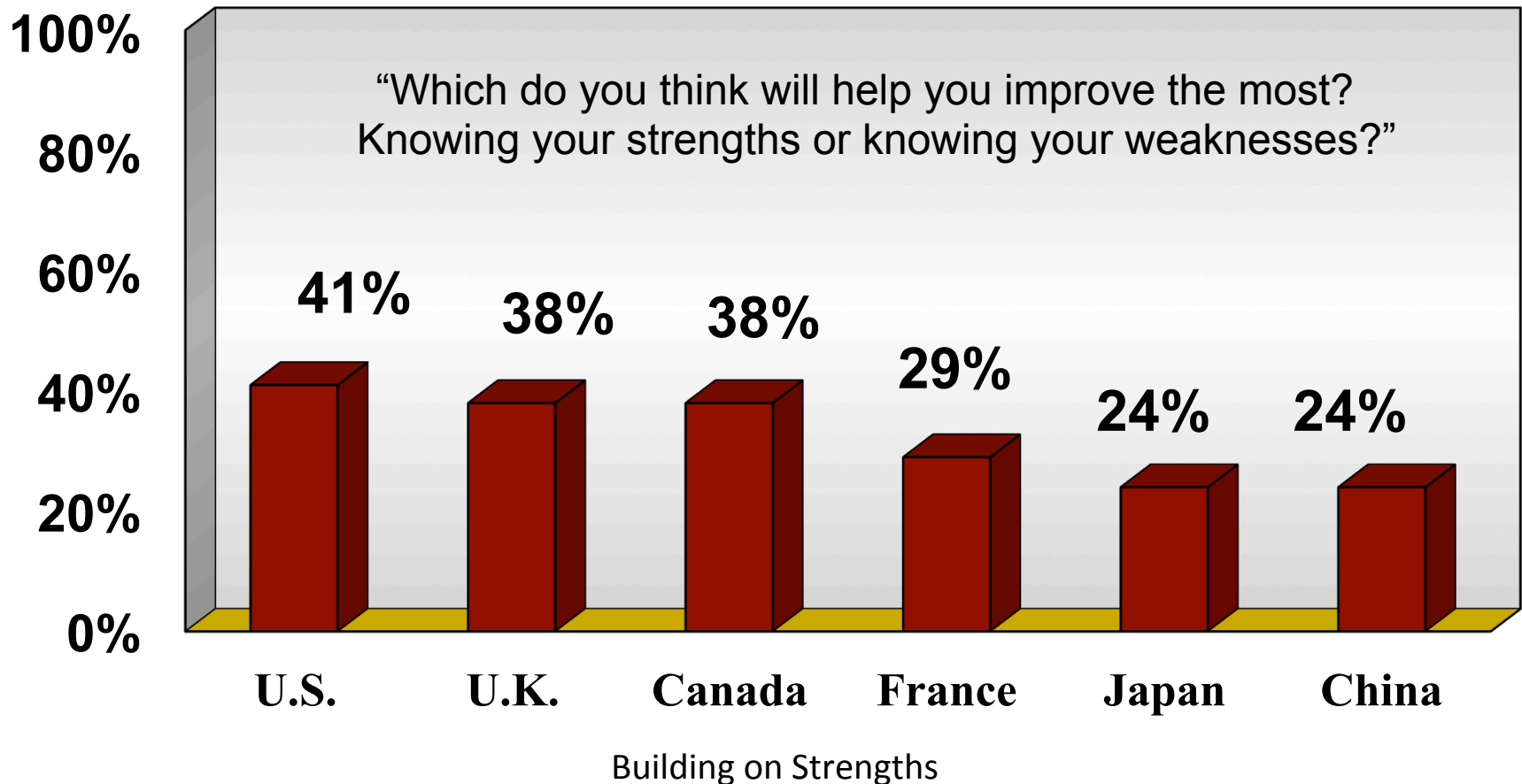
Weakness fixing prevents failure. Strengths building leads to success.

# Strengths vs. Weaknesses

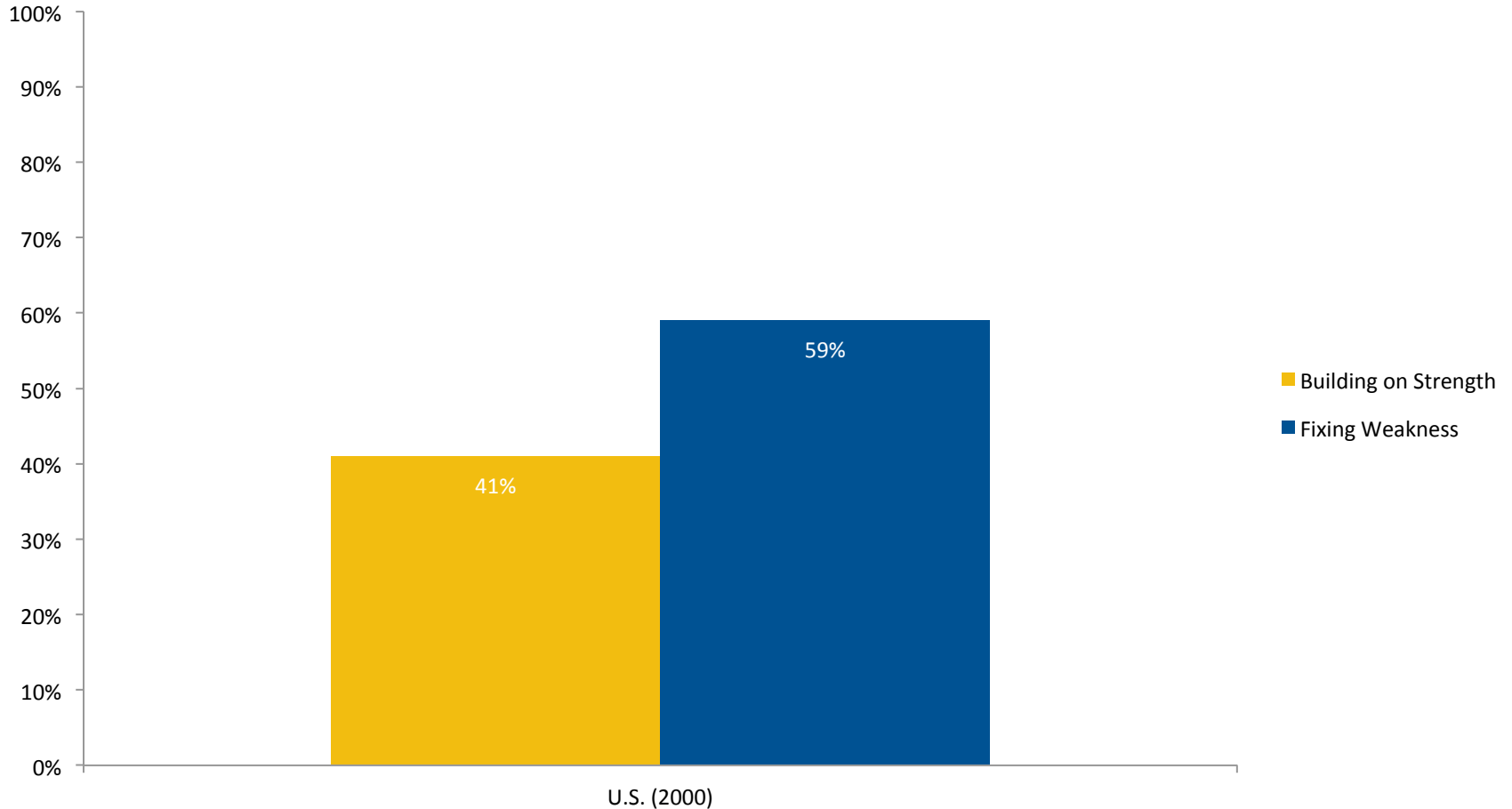
Which would help you be more successful in life: knowing what your weaknesses are and attempting to improve them, or knowing what your strengths are and attempting to build on them?

Gallup Poll, 1,016 adults

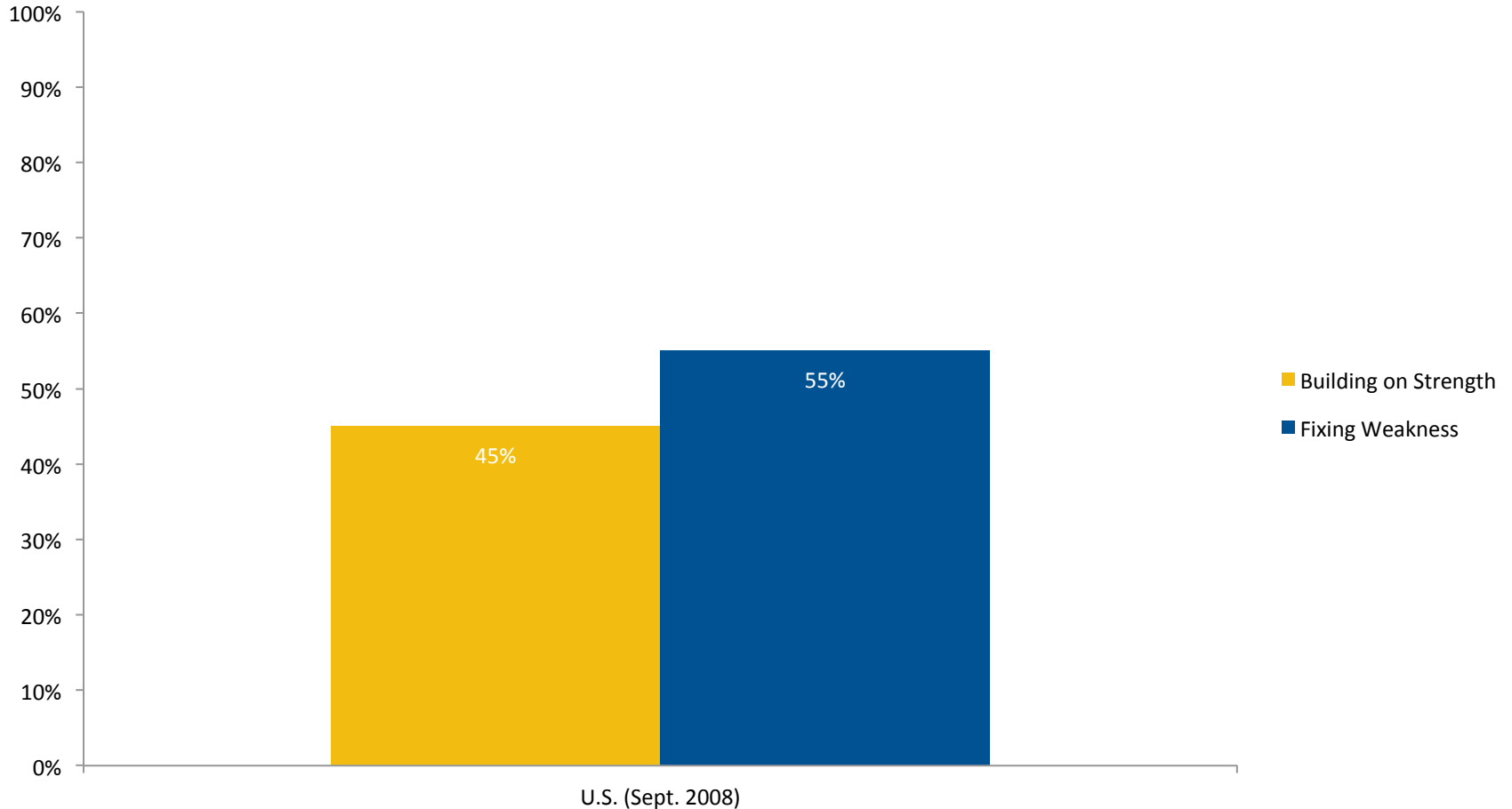
# Strengths or Weaknesses?



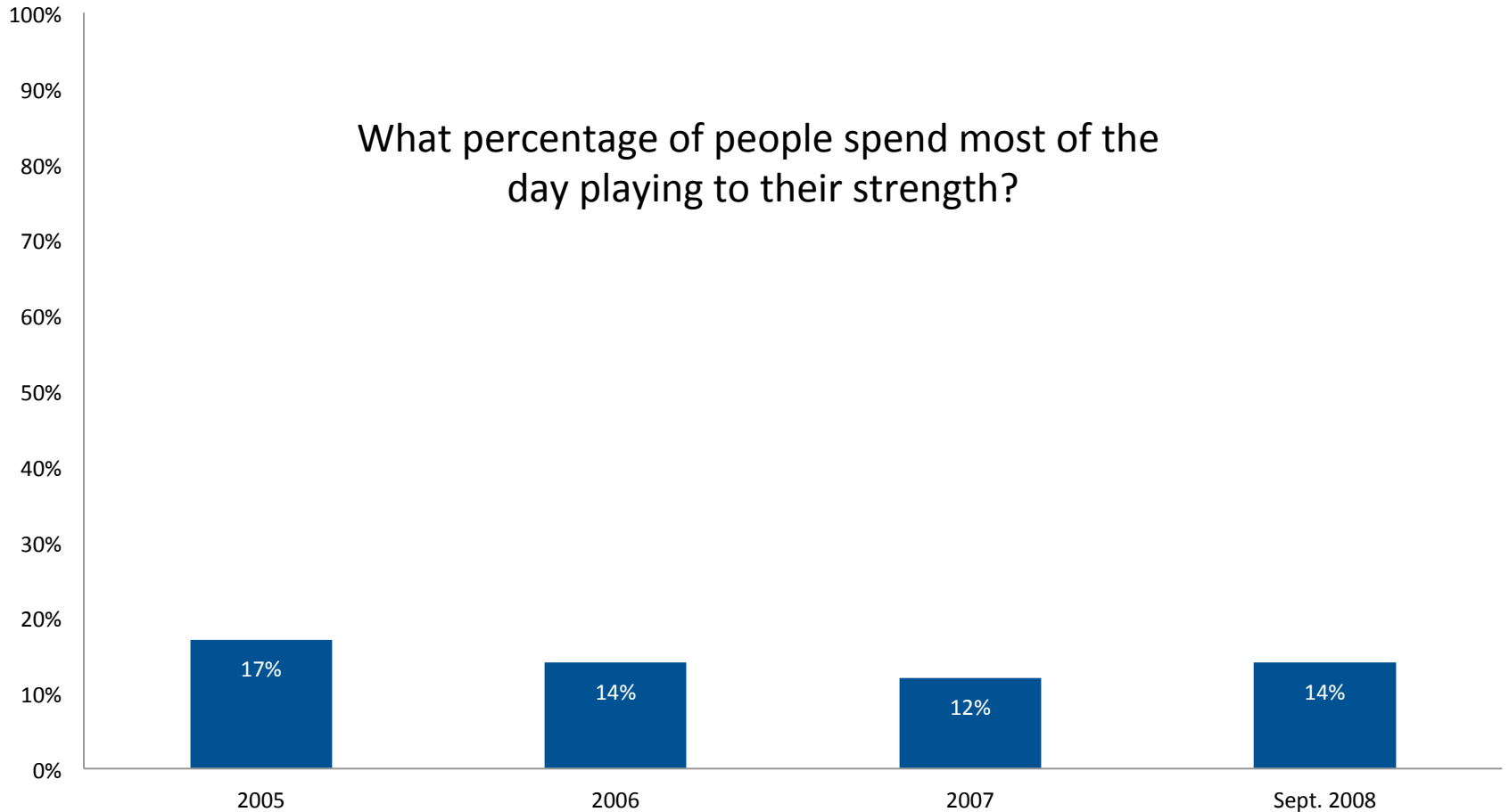
# Strengths or Weaknesses



# Strengths or Weaknesses



# Play To Your Strength



People don't change that much.  
Don't waste time trying to put in what was left out.  
Try to draw out what was left in.  
That is hard enough.

*Marcus Buckingham & Curt Coffman*  
*First, Break All The Rules*



# Knowing and Leveraging Your Talent

## Five Clues to Talent

Are there particular tasks I can do easy at work?

Are there any tasks with which I struggle at work?

# Yearning

An argument!

**What kinds of activities are you naturally drawn to?**

Organizing a closet

# Rapid Learning

Choosing the perfect gift

**What kinds of activities do you seem to pick up quickly?**

Meeting someone new

# Flow

Getting from point A to point B

**In what activities did the “steps”  
just come to you automatically?**

Event planning

# Glimpses of Excellence

The perfect auditing session

**During what activities have you had moments of subconscious excellence, and you think, “How did I do that?”**

Fixing something

# Satisfaction

## Capturing an audience

**What activities give you a kick, either while doing them or immediately after finishing them, and you think, “Oh, when can I do that again?”**

✓ Checking it off the list

# Building Strengths *includes* Talents

Talents: (*non-teachable*)

A naturally recurring pattern of thought, feeling, or behavior that can be productively applied.

A talent is a potential for strength. A “diamond in the rough” or something raw that needs nurturing.

Examples: Tiger Woods, Bill Gates, Pat Summit

# Themes of Talent

## Traces of Talent

Look for ...

Yearning, rapid learning, flow, glimpses of excellence, and satisfaction

## Examples of Talent

Detailed oriented

Constant need for achievement

Impatient for action

Orderly and planned

Need for precision

Curious about people

Sense emotions of those around you

Easily understand complex issues

You see potential in others

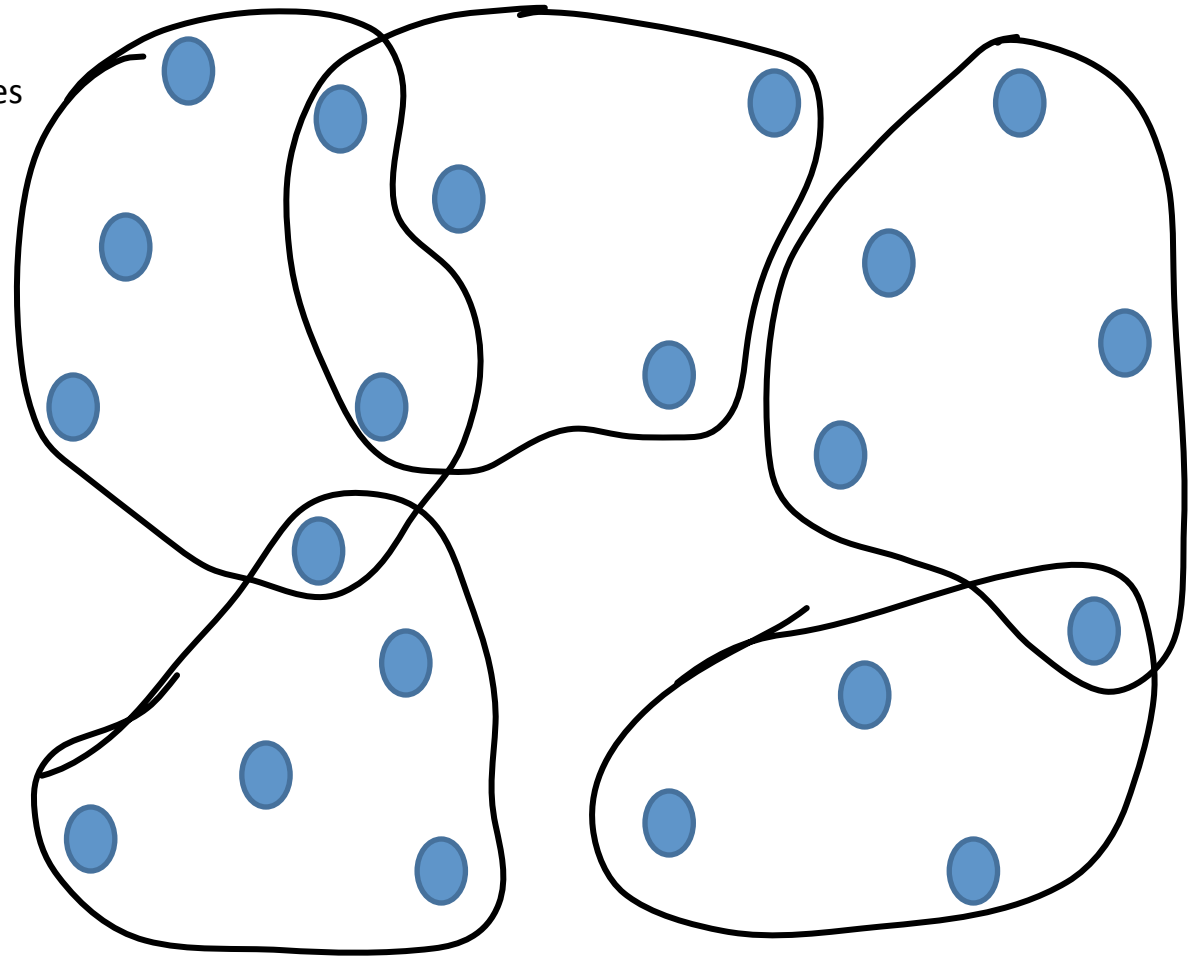
Need to include others

Compulsion to take charge

Like to challenge people

You are careful, vigilant, and private

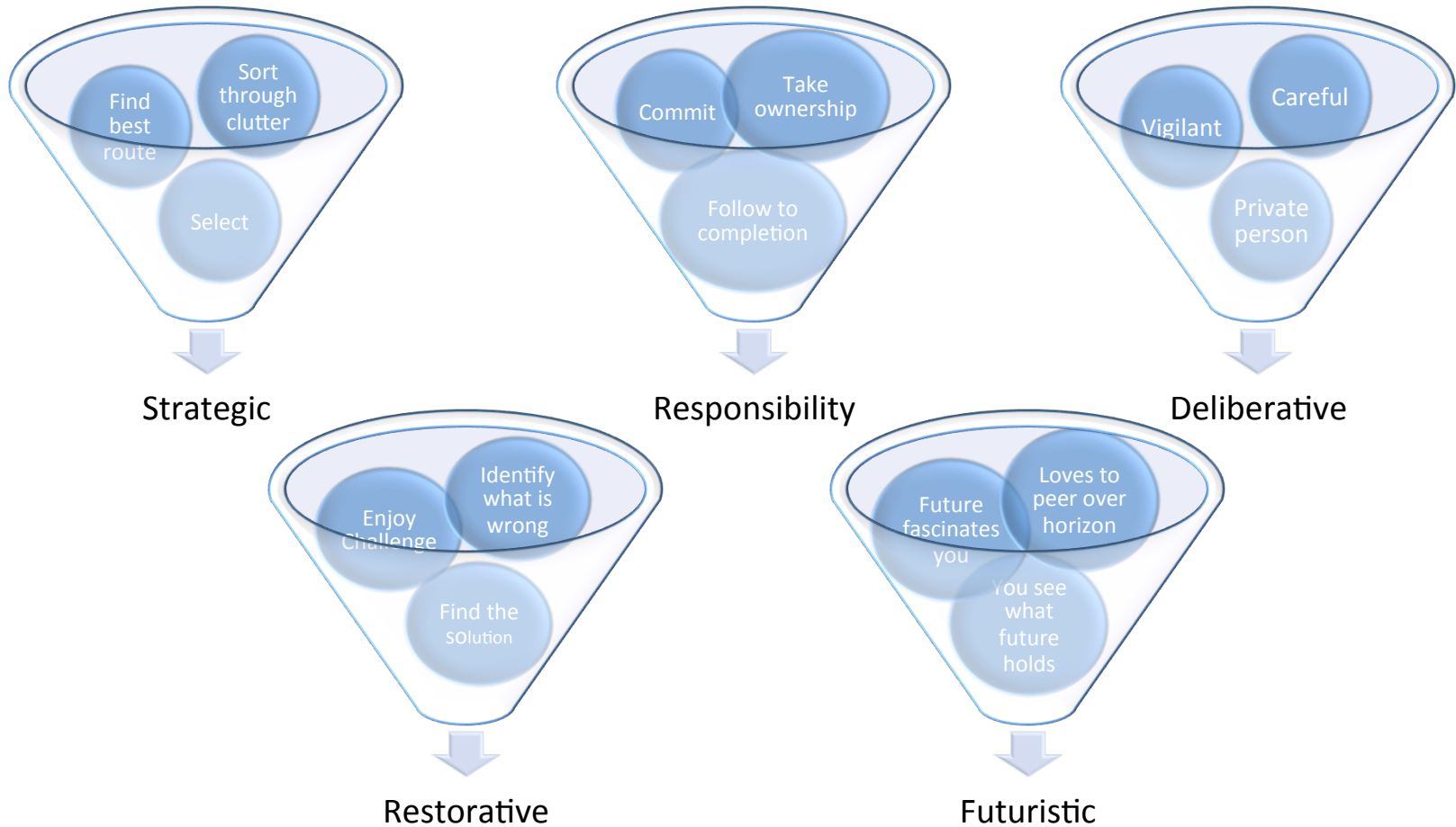
You see visions of what could be



 *Depicts Examples of Talent*



# Signature Themes



# Building Strengths *includes* Skill

Skill: (*teachable*)

The capacity to perform the fundamental steps of an activity.

Skill deals with the “**how to**” areas of your job. Once you have acquired the skill for something – you know how to do it.

Basically, it’s the steps to doing something (e.g. PowerPoint)

# Building Strengths *includes* Knowledge

Knowledge: (*teachable*)

What you know, either factually or through awareness gained by experience.

What you are aware of...and may be purely factual knowledge. It may be how you make sense of what you know – your understanding.

Example: Factual – reading a book, school, talking...

Experiential – doing something. Learn by doing.

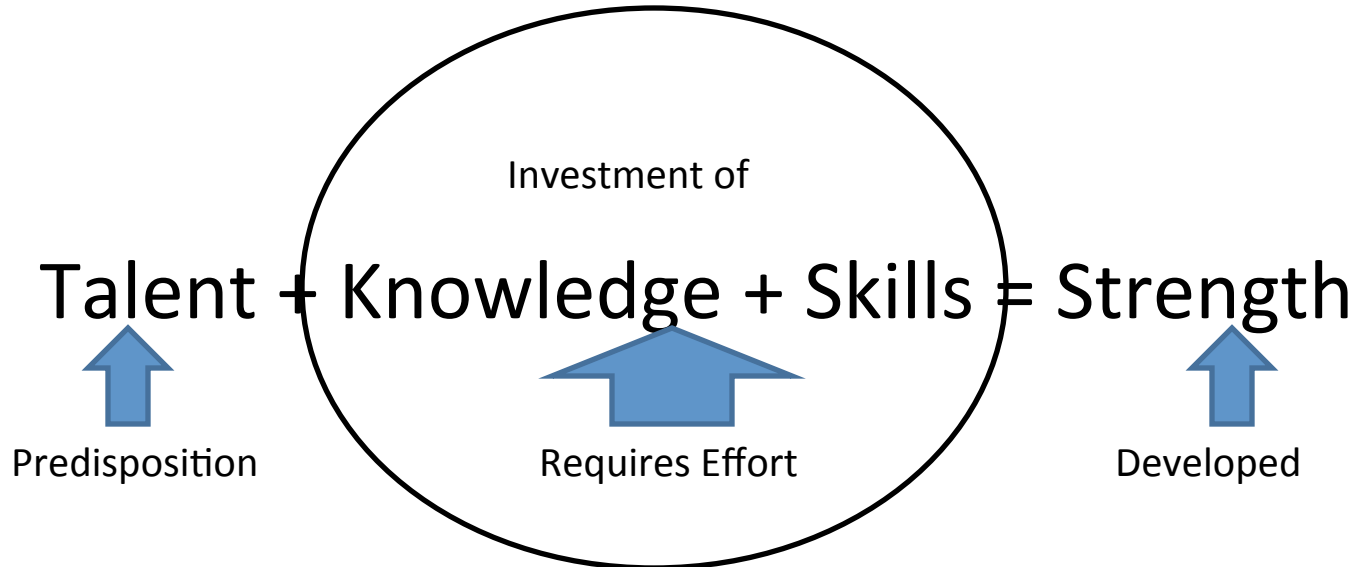
# Building Strength *includes* a Formula

Strength: The ability to provide consistent, near-perfect performance in a given activity.

$$\text{Strength} = \text{Talent} + \text{Knowledge} + \text{Skills}$$

Identify your talents, add knowledge and skills to build upon your strengths.

# How does talent become a Strength?



Identify your talents, add knowledge and skills to build upon your strengths.

*“Talent without technique is merely a bad habit.”*

Pablo Picasso

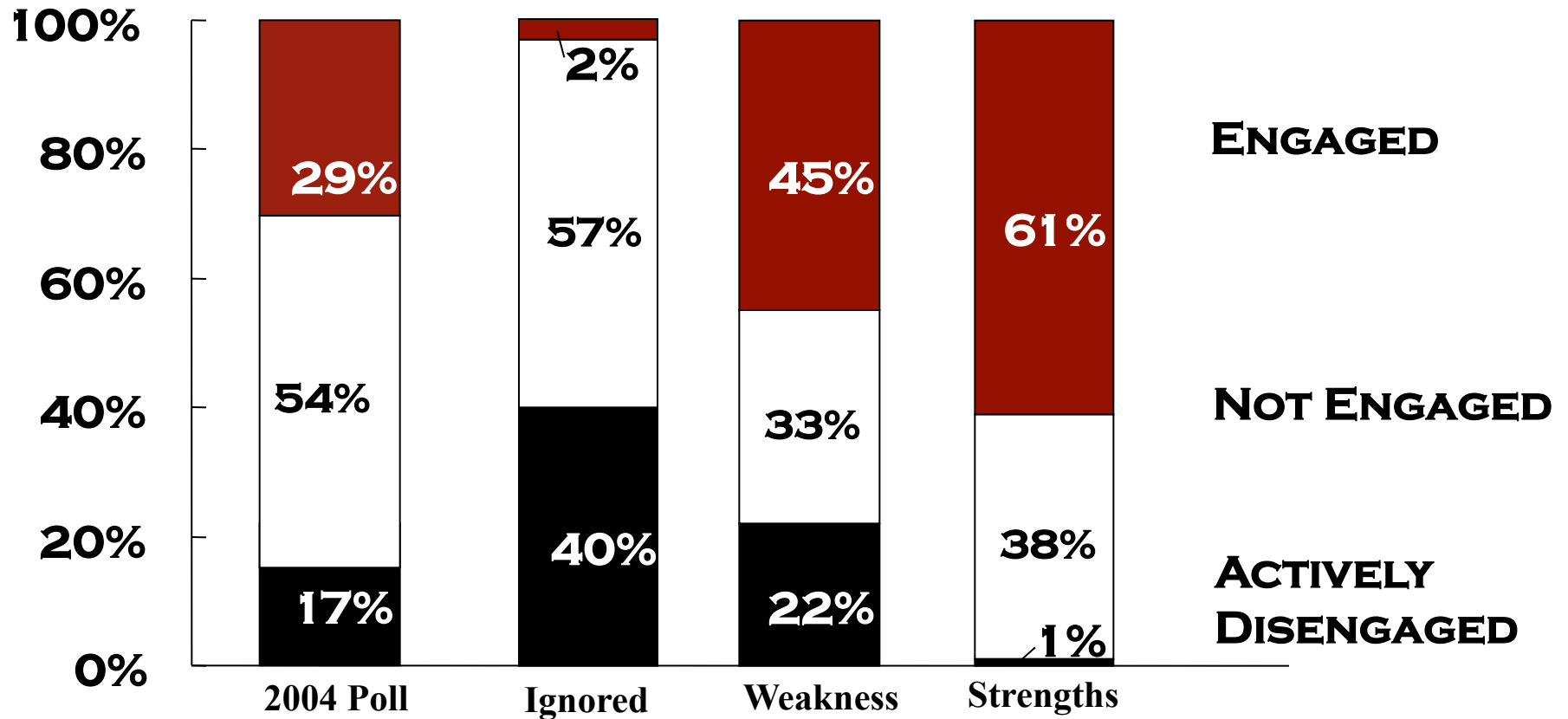
# StrengthsFinder Reflection

1. Which of your Signature Themes describe you?
2. Which of your Signature Themes do you use most frequently?
3. Were you surprised by anything in the report?

# The Three Types of Employees

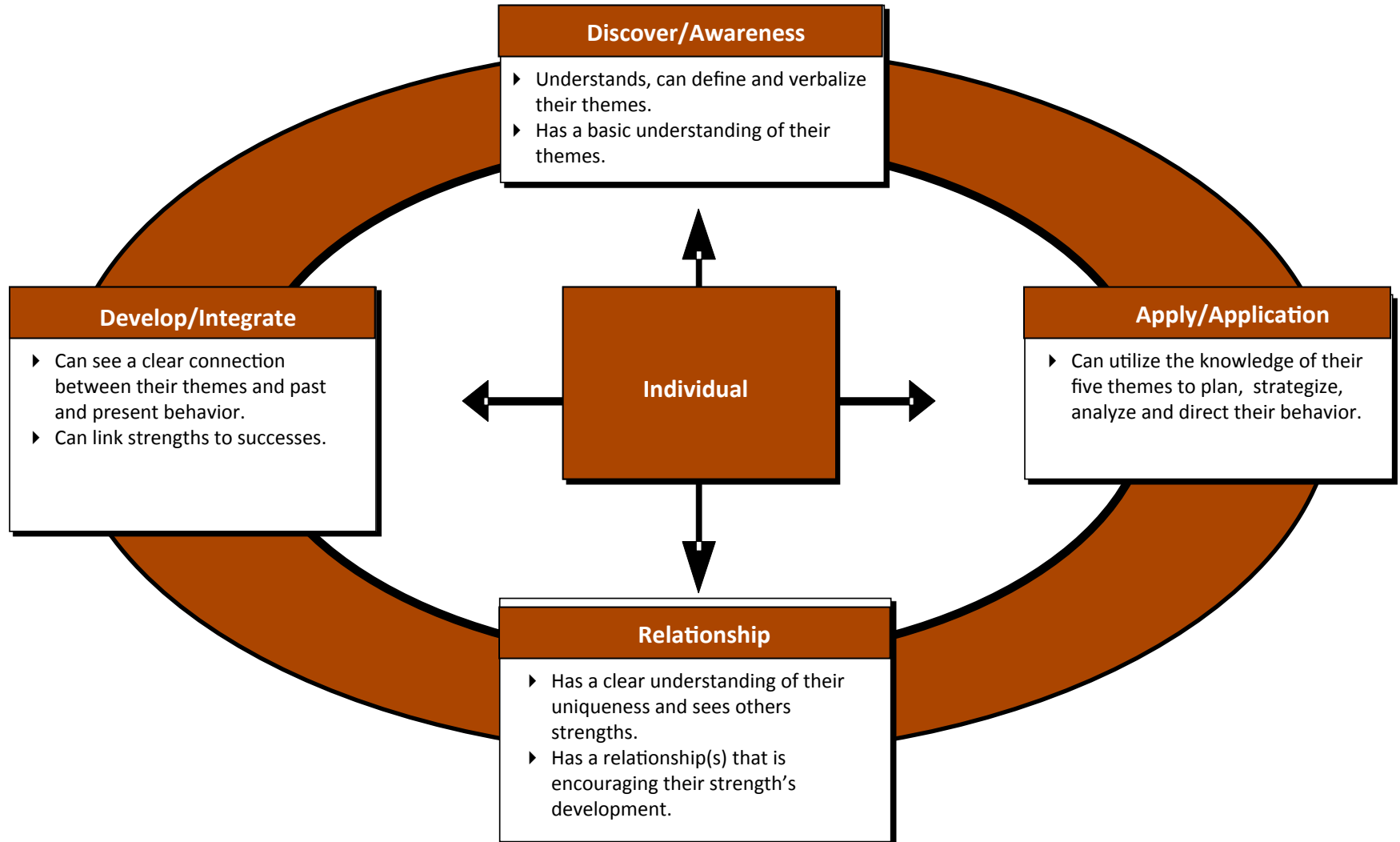
- Engaged – employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company. They drive the innovation and move the organization forward.
- Not Engaged – employees are essentially “checked out.” They are sleepwalking through their work day, putting time – but not energy or passion – into their work.
- Actively Disengaged – employees aren’t just unhappy at work; they are busy acting out their unhappiness. Every day, these workers undermine what their engaged coworkers accomplish.

## The Organizational Focus

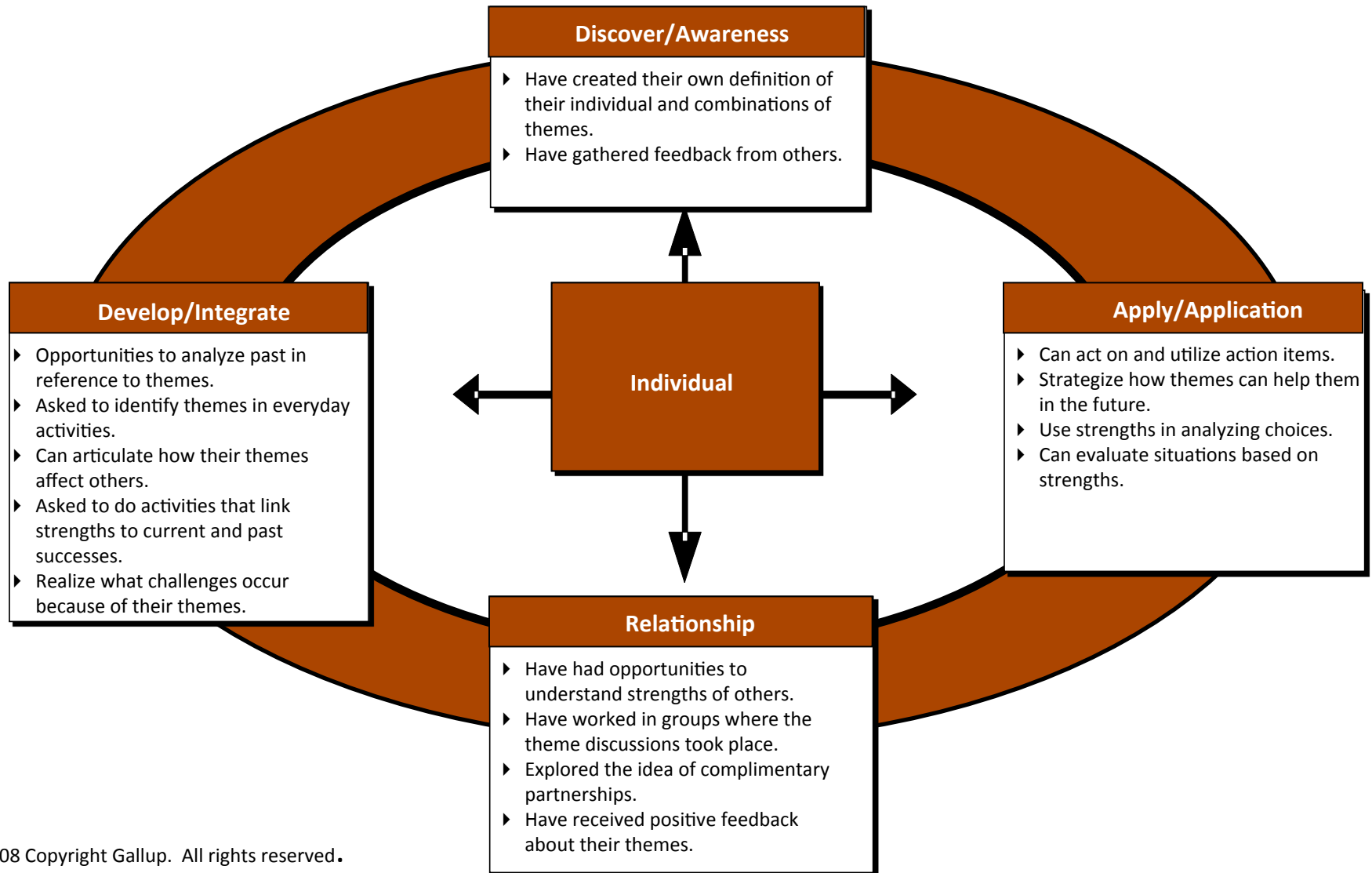




## Strengths Development Framework

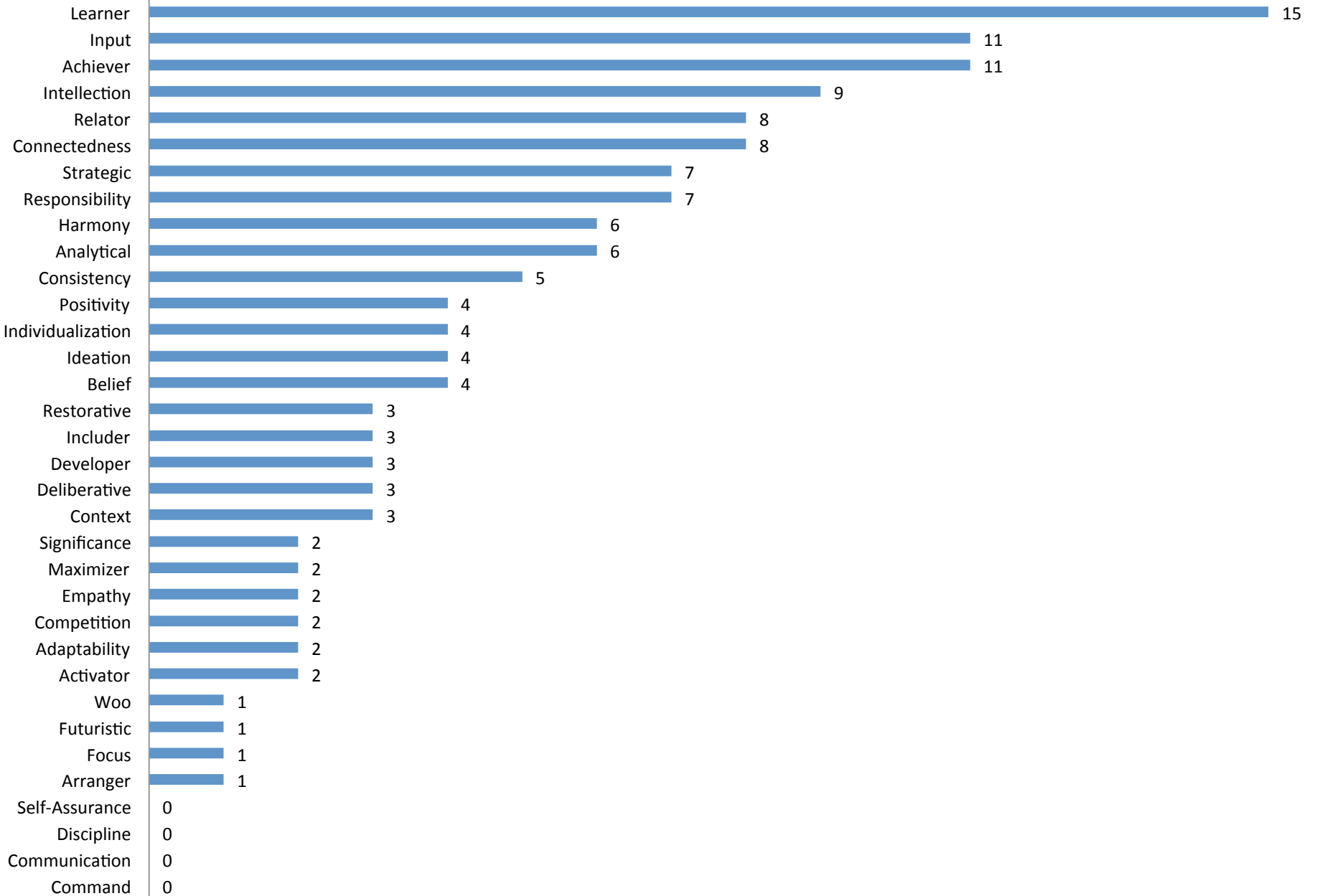


## Strengths Development Framework In Action



# A Strengths Based Approach to Leadership

# Management Development Training



# Domains of Leadership Strength

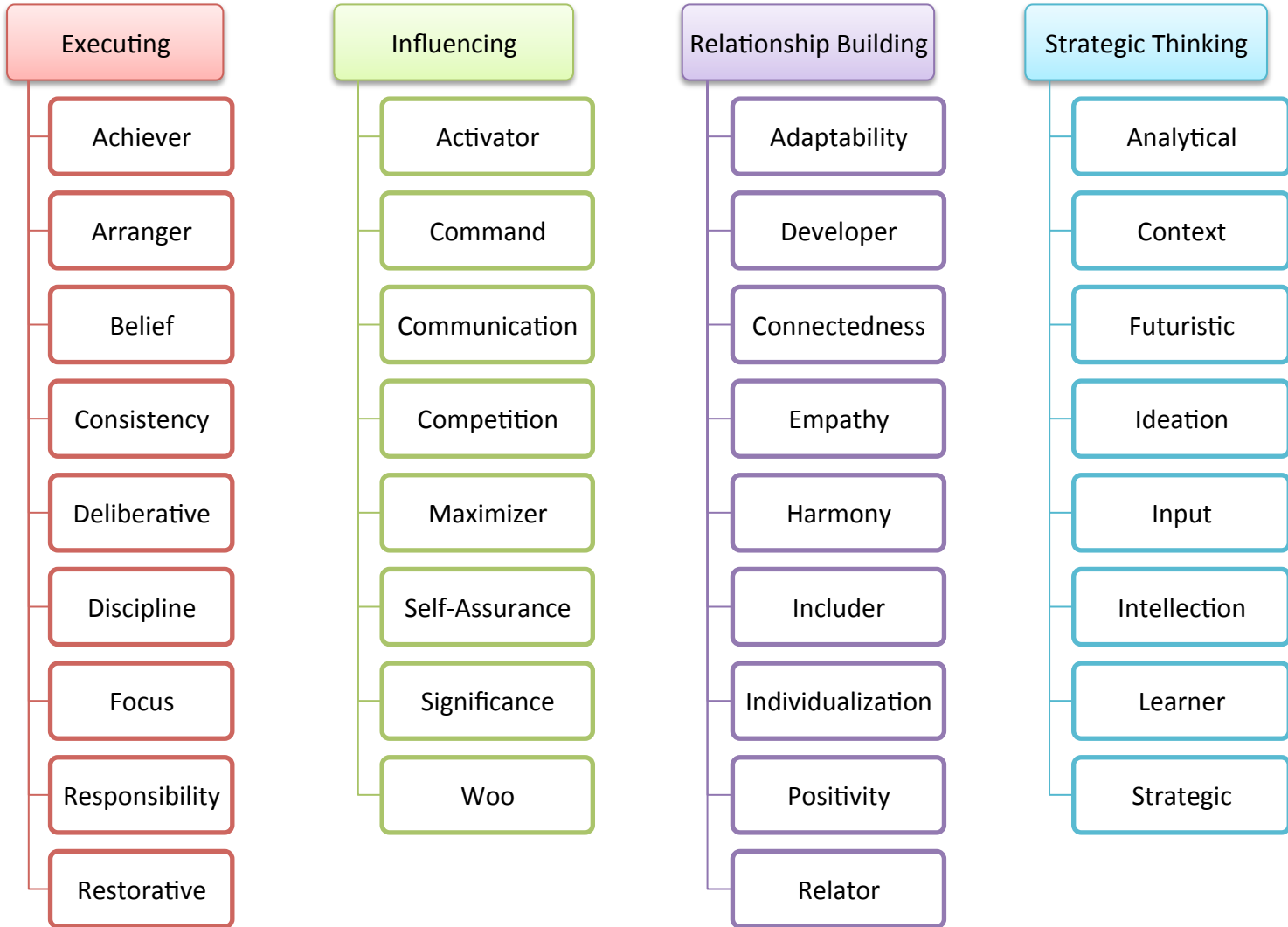
Leaders with ***Executing*** domain know how to make things happen and will work to get it done. They have the ability to “catch” an idea and make it a reality.

Leaders with ***Influencing*** domain help their team reach a much broader audience. Are always selling the team’s ideas inside and outside the organization. They take charge, speak up, and make sure your group is heard.

***Relationship Builders*** are essential glue that holds the team together. They have the unique ability to create groups and organizations that are much greater than the sum of their parts.

***Strategic Thinking*** domain leaders keep us all focused on what *could be*. They are constantly absorbing and analyzing information and helping the team make better decisions. They continually stretch our thinking for the future.

# Domains of Leadership Strength



*“The nice thing about teamwork is that you always have others on your side.”*

Margaret Carty

*What do you think about **YOUR** strengths?*

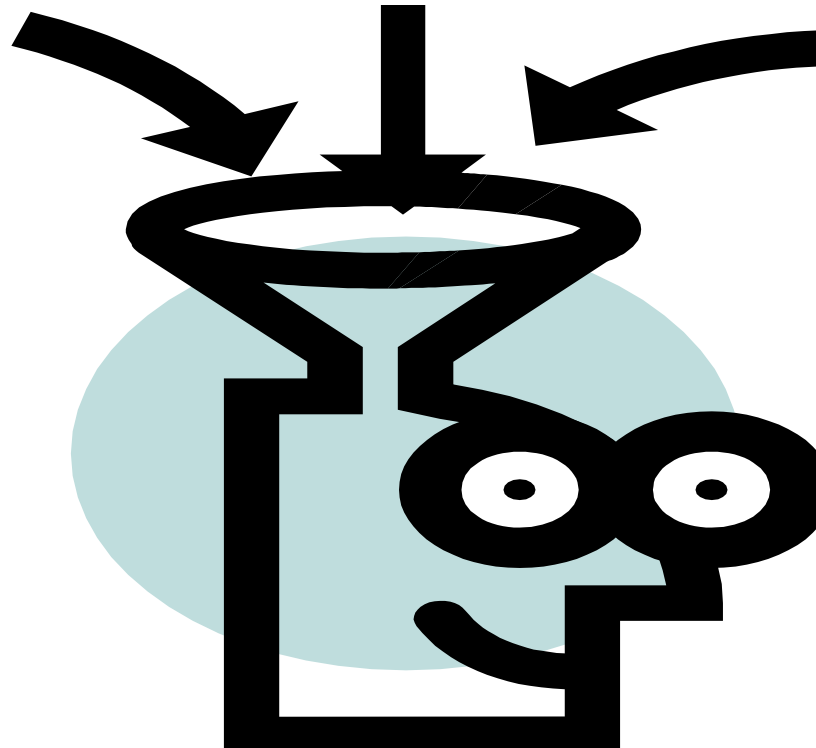
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# Resources

- <http://www.gallup.com/consulting/61/Strengths-Development.aspx>
- <https://www.strengthsquest.com>
- <http://strengths.ning.com>
- *First Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently*, Marcus Buckingham & Curt Coffman
- *Strengths Based Leadership*, Tom Rath & Barry Conchie
- *StrengthsQuest*, Donald Clifton, Edward Anderson, & Laurie A. Schreiner

# Questions?

Thank you for allowing me to spend  
the afternoon with you!