

Section II: Strengthening and Utilizing Your Strengths



Your strengths are the building blocks for most of your successes.

Three strengths from your INSIGHTMirror 360 Feedback Report we will assume you scored very high on. We offer examples of how to even more effectively utilize these strengths. These examples will assist you complete a short assignment on the next page.

Strength Question -- Example 1:

Structures meetings that maximize the possibility for concrete results. (Question 18 from the INSIGHTMirror 360°.)

Building upon the strength:

Prepare a written agenda stating desired specific outcomes for the meeting, such as a list of proposed annual conference topics, and the identification of those who will prepare the program brochure by a specific date. Distribute the agenda via e-mail before the scheduled meeting.

Using this existing asset in a new way:

Enroll your staff's help and develop their skills in structuring meetings to achieve concrete results. For example: Coach them in planning for an upcoming meeting and request that they (a) identify which topics are for information only, which are for discussion, and which are for decision-making, and (b) specify the desired outcomes that represent the concrete results you want to achieve.

Strength Question -- Example 2:

Encourages creative thinking and innovation. (Question 19)

Building upon the strength:

Periodically (e.g., weekly), post a challenging problem on a bulletin board viewed by your staff. Ask them to post innovative solutions (with post-it notes) over the following week, and to note each author's name so that people can see and build on others' ideas. Then select a solution

and discuss its implementation at the next staff meeting. **Using this existing asset in a new way:** Make the process electronic and expand potential contributors. Post a challenging problem or issue on a web site or an electronic bulletin board to which people (i.e., customers/clients/peers) can respond with their favorite creative solutions. Invite stakeholders' suggestions on feedback forms. Select, announce, recognize/reward the idea that appears to be closest to an ideal solution.

Strength Question -- Example 3:

Introduces change even though there is a likely chance that this change may antagonize important people within the organization. (Question 23)

Building upon the strength:

Identify the change and discuss successful implementation strategies with an executive sponsor to diminish any political backlash from any powerful antagonists.

Using this existing asset in a new way:

Identify someone who was previously raising objections to change you introduced that is now working very contently. After first researching any needs their office might have, approach them as a partner to introduce a change that might be mutually beneficial.

Now It's Your Turn Do More With Your Strengths

Identify three important strengths that you have but feel that you are not using them to your fullest. As illustrated on the preceding page, compose 1 or 2 ways you can strengthen that strength, and 1 or 2 ways of utilizing that existing strength in a new way:

First Strength:

1 or 2 ways of strengthening this strength:

1 or 2 ways of utilizing this strength:

Second Strength:

1 or 2 ways of strengthening this strength:

1 or 2 ways of utilizing this strength:

Third Strength:

1 or 2 ways of strengthening this strength:

1 or 2 ways of utilizing this strength:

Even a *Jock* Quotation Could Change The Way You Think and Act.

Vince Lombardi, the winner of two Super Bowl championships, applied the Strength theory when he observed that after most football games were over, the errors were spotlighted instead of the successes. One day he proclaimed, "From now on, we only replay the winning plays." Look how the theory plays out. When are you most confident? when recalling a moment of success or a moment when you couldn't deliver the goods? Individuals are always stronger when they have their successes and strengths clearly in mind.

Strengthening A Strength: An Often Forgotten Art

- A personal story from the developer of the INSIGHTMirror 360:

When I launched the INSIGHTMirror 360 enterprise, I thought I did all the right things. I sent out e-mail blasts, and spent a lot of money on Google-sponsored ads. But sales were below expectations. Now business is excellent. **WHAT CHANGED?**

I changed. I changed my marketing strategy from high tech advertising and put my marketing energies back to what I relied on in the past: networking (meeting with people I know.)

I talked to my good friend, David Alan Yoho, an outstanding sales trainer in Louisville, Kentucky. **I asked David how I could strengthen my talent in the area of sales and networking?***** He asked me to tell him how I typically closed my discussions when I networked. He gave me a C-. David told me: *the people I was networking with knew I did my coaching work with law firms and federal government agencies. So, obviously there were generally not a lot of ideas when I ended my networking discussion with, "And do you know any organizations I might contact that could benefit by using my 360° assessment?"* Eventually, people generously came up with more law firms and federal agencies. Not once did anybody think to offer their private sector or association references or other local or state government points of contact.

* We will underscore the importance of asking outstanding questions on pages 12, 18.

So with David's coaching, I now conclude with "And do you know any organizations I might contact that could benefit by using my 360° assessment in such areas as: associations, manufacturing, retail, the building trades, local or state government agencies?" I was stunned that by adding just a few words, how many good solid leads I began receiving.

Strengthening a strength is hardly thought of outside of sports and artistic endeavors. What a waste of such a great undertaking!

A Superb Way to Learn More About Your Strengths:

Identifying your weaknesses has probably already been done (and overdone) for you countless times by your friends, spouse, family, neighbors, people at work, schools, and, of course, yourself. Sometime people are right and sometimes they're not.

We can offer you pages of objective assessments to help you, but such a list would be overwhelming and hard to choose from. So we simply chose our top three recommendations, and hope you use at least one.

- **The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)** assessment is the most widely used personality assessment in the world. It offers a foundation for understanding individual differences and applying that understanding to the ways people think, interact, communicate, and organize.
<http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes2.asp>
- **Strengths Finder 2.0**, is an outstanding online assessment by Dr. Clifton O'Neil, the father of the Strengths Movement. Most professionals in our field find it almost how uncanny this instrument is in identifying strengths.
<http://sf2.strengthsfinder.com/>
- **Platinum Rule:** By recognizing if another person is behaving like a *Director*, *Socializer*, *Relater*, or *Thinker*, you can easily shift the pace and focus of each conversation to "connect" with the other person. This outstanding assessment is sent to those people who know you well and they resubmit their filled-in answers. We have all used it at INSIGHTMirror 360 and found it the most insightful of the three assessments mentioned here. Dr. Tony Alessandra did a masterful job of laying out the information gathered by this tool in a very easy to follow format.

<http://www.platinumrule.com>