

Facilitator Notes: Team Strengths

This section is designed as a mix of activities: individual, review, reflection questions, and general team discussion. Included in this section:

- Strengths Bubble Chart
- Strengths Action Plan
- Now Apply Your Strengths Discussion Questions

NOTE: A "Strengths of our business" topic follows Tuckman model and Decision Traps so the workshop can be tied together and you can transition to financial goals and strategic planning.

1. Take a couple of minutes to review the complete Strengths list with your team. Provide a general overview reminder that there are no 'good' or 'bad', 'better' or 'worse' strengths.
2. Review The Strengths Bubble Chart. Ask:
 - a. "What are some of the things you notice about this diagram?"
 - b. "What might be the benefit and/or challenge of being the **ONLY** person with a specific strength?"
 - c. "What are some of the benefits and/or challenges of having multiple team members sharing a strength?"
 - d. Write down answers on a whiteboard or flipchart in order for the team to see. Look for common answers and listen for answers that indicate worry or anxiety. Think about how you would like to address this during the workshop as well as in the future. It's valuable to acknowledge concerns but be careful not to reinforce the anxiety.
3. Guide the team discussion: "Look at the strengths **not** represented on your team. How might this affect your work together? How will you address these strengths? Is there somewhere outside your 'walls' where we can go to leverage those strengths when they are needed? If not, what will we do, what actions can we take to ensure that we are not missing something that is necessary for our long-term success?"
4. Review the Strengths Action Plan with the team. This list includes only the actions that are specific to your team strengths. Facilitate a short team discussion about how it is everyone's responsibility to help each other use their strengths to benefit themselves and the team.

Note: As their director, you can use this later as a jumping-off-point for project assignments, coaching, team development opportunities, etc.
5. Use the **Now, Apply Your Strengths** Discussion Questions to tie this section together. Ask the team (including you) to answer their questions individually and then ask each person to share their answers. Then facilitate a group discussion about their answers. Pay close attention to answers and highlight areas where team members might not see the value. Provide coaching (now and later) around the value of each strength.

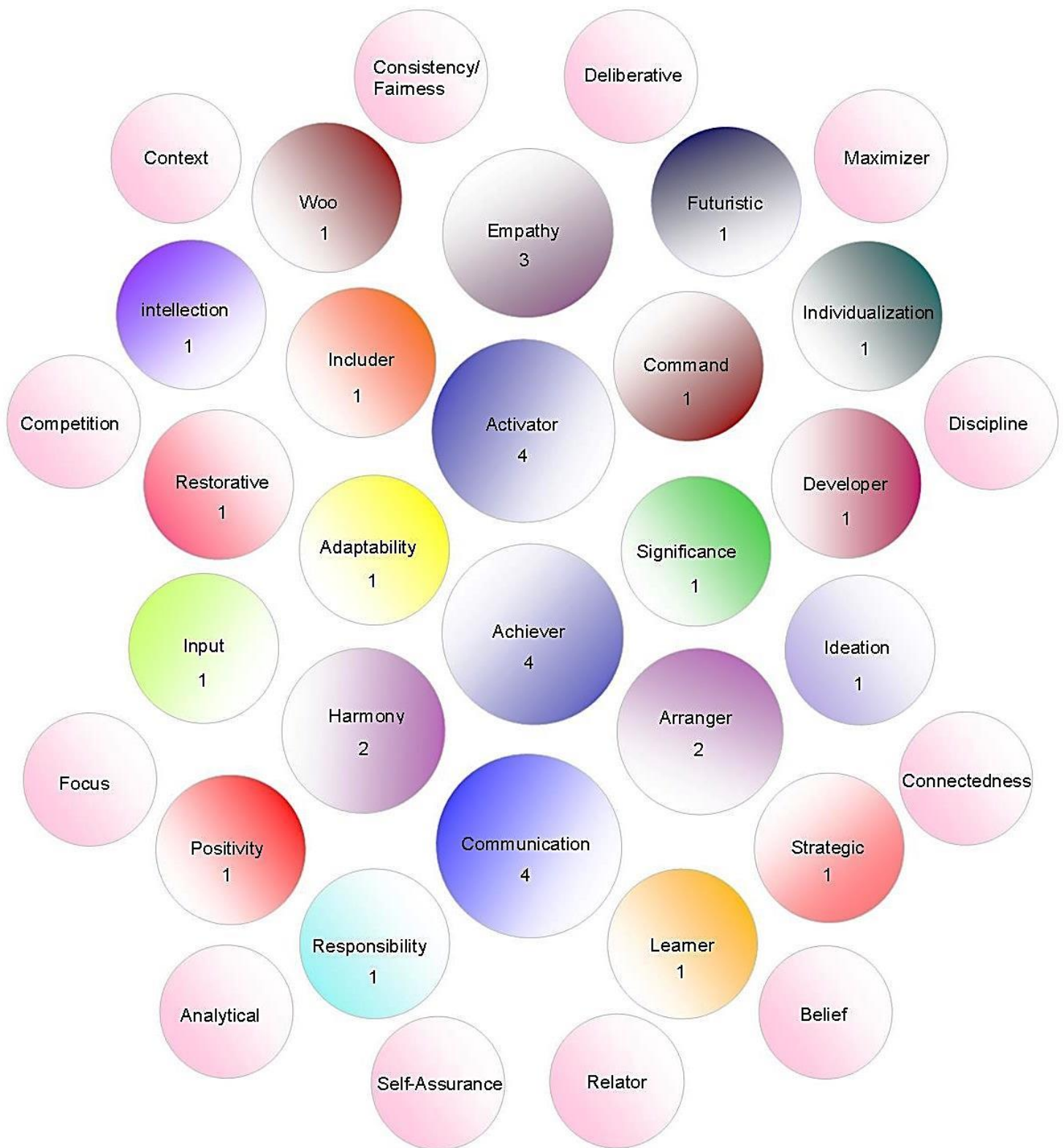
IMPORTANT NOTE: As a leader and the training facilitator, it is important for you to think ahead about what the mix of strengths means. The following charts are prepared to give you, **as the facilitator**, another way to look at the make-up of your team strengths. Please review these prior to the training and think about the impacts of this mix. Be careful not to use this information to drive the conversation but to be prepared for discussion/activity points where people get stuck, lose focus, or don't understand their value.

Based on the book "Now, Discover Your Strengths" by Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D. and Clifton, StrengthsFinder, these activities were part of a two day training and team building retreat for a small business client. Team discussions, customer scenarios and individual reflection questions provided the foundation for deeper discussions about the future. Strengths were the theme woven throughout the retreat, moving from highlighted individual strengths to team strengths and the monetary value (in new clients, client retention, customer service, etc.) that would influence financial goals and strategic planning. The client requested that the agenda be flexible and self-directed.

The following are in the team's primary strengths list. The team will need to determine how to leverage these strengths from other resources as needed.	Strengths that are <i>unique</i> to 1 team member	Largest number of shared strengths -4 team members share these strengths
Analytical	Adaptability	Achiever
Belief	Command	Activator
Competition	Developer	Communication
Connectedness	Futuristic	
Consistency/Fairness	Ideation	
Context	Inclusiveness/Includer	
Deliberative	Individualization	
Discipline	Input	
Focus	Intellection	
Maximizer	Learner	
Relator	Positivity	
Self-Assurance	Responsibility	
	Restorative	
	Significance	
	Strategic	
	Woo	

First Name	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5
A	Communication	Empathy	Activator	Responsibility	Harmony
C	Empathy	Communication	Achiever	Activator	Adaptability
A	Restorative	Strategic	Input	Achiever	Intellection
K	Communication	Activator	Empathy	Includer	Command
S	Achiever	Positivity	Harmony	Arranger	Developer
M	Achiever	Learner	Ideation	Futuristic	Individualization
R	Activator	Woo	Communication	Arranger	Significance

StrengthsFinder Themes



Now, Apply Your Strengths

Team Discussion Questions

Take a few minutes to answer the following questions. When you've finished, you will work in small groups to share your answers and generate ideas for leveraging and applying the collective strengths of your team. You should also discuss how you will support each other in using strengths to help everyone achieve their 2017 development goals.

1. Which of your strengths is (or could be) most helpful or valuable in your current role?

2. Where and how often are you currently able to apply this strength to your job or your life?

3. What other opportunities would allow you to leverage or apply this strength?

4. In your role, what is the potential pay value of applying this strength to these opportunities? For you? For your team? (i.e. increased sales, better placements, clearer direction, improved relationships, etc.-How would you quantify it?)

5. Are there obstacles, that you or your team can control, that are keeping you from taking advantage of these opportunities? What about obstacles you *can't* control? Describe both.

6. What are some of the possible solutions to overcoming these obstacles? What resource and support would you need?

Facilitator Notes: Strengths of our business:

Individual Activity followed by a General Group Discussion.

This activity is designed to take the idea of individual “strengths” and “team” and move them into the real world perspective of our success and how everyone contributes and is responsible. There are key sections of several testimonials to remind everyone of your hard work and success -Add any recent feedback from clients. Ask the team if they've had any feedback to share. Focusing on this high point of success gives everyone a sense of potential and momentum as well as a view of how each member influences our success.

This is also a great place to transition to focusing on the team: a facilitated discussion of new growth and financial goals, new successes, ideas, and plans for our future. How can the team take this positive momentum and use it to achieve more?

Strengths of our business

Now that you’ve talked about your personal strengths and discussed how your team is doing, take a few minutes to review the following testimonials and consider: What are the key strengths of our team that continue to build our brand, create loyal customers and resources, and encourage referrals and recommendations? What are the key strengths that make you want to work for our company?

Work on the following questions, make notes, and be prepared to share with the team.

Thinking about our company values, our team’s roles and responsibilities, as well as our day-to-day processes and procedures:

1. When reviewing the testimonials as well as feedback you’ve received directly in conversations with clients, what themes or “strengths” come to mind?

2. How are we different from other agencies and services?

3. What do we DO and HOW do we do it? What are our **key** day-to-day processes and what is the value and benefit of consistently following them to:

Our individual roles and development opportunities:

Our teammates and their achievements:

Our company and our financial health:

Our customers and their needs:

Our placements and their success:

Testimonials

- “It’s reassuring to know that we can go to them with all of our concerns...never feeling like any question is too big or too small. We wouldn’t think of using any other service in Seattle!”
- “They really worked hard to find the best fit for me and I could not be happier with where I was placed. I can honestly say for the first time that I love my job.”
- “Without exception, the temporary nannies have been personable and competent, and well-liked by our children.”
- “It was a wonderful process to interview with your company and to have help finding the right job! The staff is so supremely caring, fast, helpful, and respectful!”
- “You have always been flexible with my schedule and are constantly offering me work opportunities. I couldn’t be happier.”
- “They are very supportive in meeting the needs of their clients by fostering communication throughout the process, and beyond. Their care and attention ensure a favorable match and we are well-served and given the potential to thrive.”
- “They understand the concerns of clients and are able to identify specific needs and provide services that meet those needs.”
- Your company took the time to really discuss my needs and provided valuable feedback. Your team was prompt and responsive, sending me a candidate the very next day! When we met the first candidate, we knew that she was a perfect fit. Throughout the entire process, your team was prompt and professional and even took the time to meet me in person. I would highly recommend your company!”
- “They have been consistent in their personal attention and guidance in these important decisions. Not only have they made an effort to get to know our needs, they are always there if I have questions or concerns.”
- ***Add your favorite customer or nanny comment or feedback here:***

Facilitator Notes: Applying what you learned

This is where you will bring back earlier discussion(s) about specific projects and how everyone is involved and should be connected, supportive, and responsible for everyone's progress, growth, and success. This can lead to (and should tie to) additional priorities, financial goals, and strategic planning.

"Now that we've explored our individual strengths, our team development, making good decisions, and our strength as a business, let's apply what we've learned to our business and set some goals ..."

"Remember when we had that great discussion and coaching around... last week? (Last Tuesday, last month, We discussed...etc." Briefly review points to bring everyone into the mindset of goals and responsibilities currently in play as well as strategic, future thinking.

NOTE: This section may be more challenging to balance as facilitator and then team leader. However, this is a valuable time to reinforce everyone's equal role in what can be accomplished. Allow the group 'room' to help guide this discussion. There will be better/more buy-in from the team. Also, try to keep it at a higher level of the 'what' for now. It is very easy to dive into the weeds and you don't want to slow/stop collaborative creativity, innovation, and improvement ideas that are being generated. There will be time to dive deeper later in the "how" do we achieve these goals?

At the end of the session, transition to current financials, goals, and client reviews. Think about how you can encourage your team to leverage/apply their strengths to these numbers.

Review of our financials and strategies for achieving our goals. Below are suggested talking points. Try to encourage people to ask questions, add insights, make suggestions. This is critical to keep momentum. Prepare your path through the financials prior to training so you can highlight areas of interest, achievement, and challenge.

- Where are we now? How do the numbers look to you? How do they compare to last year at this time?
- New goals: Do our goals seem achievable? Why or why not? What are they based on?
- Could they be stretched and could we do more? How? Are their dangers/challenges to stretching the goal? What are they? How do we get around them?
- Longer term, what strategies do we need to have in place to get to where we want to be?
- Think about how much each of our strengths can impact the bottom line and the goals we have set for ourselves and our team. Is there a dollar value to leveraging your strengths? What does it look like? How do we do this? NOTE: This is where you can start to dive deeper and become more specific. Make notes on ideas that have a 'future' orientation.