

### Employee's Guide to Strengths Based Performance Management

#### Introduction

Performance Management includes performance development.

Research shows:

- When an individual tries to improve their weaknesses, improvement is limited to about 10%
- When an individual works to improve their strengths, the improvement is substantial, 100% improvement and beyond

Focusing on strengths improves performance, goal achievement, engagement, job satisfaction, wellbeing, decreases stress, and has positive business results for the institution.

Concentrating on strengths does not mean ignoring challenges that are critical. Critical challenges are those that substantially limit an individual's performance and/or have a negative impact on their ability to be effective. They include behaviors that involve, but are not limited to: negativity, unprofessionalism, poorly handling conflict, providing or accepting mediocre performance, and resistance to change.

The best way to determine any critical challenge is to get anonymous supplemental feedback from peers, customers, vendors, etc. Also, watch for similar reoccurring situations or scenarios that consistently frustrate you or where you exhibit a negative or unproductive response – those are situations that challenge you beyond your strengths and/or ability to respond effectively.

#### Strengths Self-Reflection

Perform the below self-reflective activities to gain insights into your own strengths, performance, job satisfaction, and more. The activities can be done in any order and at different points in time. Be honest with your true self – these activities are not a judgement on you, they are to find out if you are being true to who you are, if you are doing what comes naturally to do, and if you are doing what you enjoy.

- **Complete a strengths assessment** (see [Resources](#) below)
  - Reflect on the assessment
    - Do you agree with the strengths that were identified? Why or why not?
    - What activities listed in the assessment align with your role?
    - What activities listed in the assessment are not part of your role?
- **Create a list of professional and personal activities that consider:**
  - Yearnings – What do you really want to do?
  - Rapid Learning – What areas do you quickly catch on?
  - Flow – List activities/tasks that when you are doing them time passes away without you knowing it
  - Glimpses of Excellence – List things you do really well and areas where you have received accomplishments/awards
  - Your satisfaction – What activities/tasks give you satisfaction?

- **Create a Love it/Loathe it list (a Marcus Buckingham exercise)**
  - Document your activities/duties as you do them for one week or more if your work is cyclical
  - Make note of whether you Love it! or Loathe it!
    - Don't put too much thought into it
  - Use these questions to determine if you Love it or Loathe it!
    - Did/do you actively look forward to it? - Love it
    - Did/do you procrastinate or have apprehension before starting the task? - Loathe it
    - While you were doing the activity, did time fly by and you could easily concentrate? - Loved it
    - Did you struggle to complete the activity because you were bored or distracted? - Loathed it
    - Afterward, were you invigorated and authentically proud, strong, or happy? - Loved it
    - Did the completion of the activity leave you drained? - Loathed it
  - After you are done documenting your lists, reflect:
    - Which list is longer?
    - Why/what specifically about each activity made you love it or loathe it?
    - For loathe it activities: Could you change or alter the activity or task to love it?
    - Hardest question: Does your current role align with your strengths?

## Act

Self-reflection is useless unless you act on it, that is where the true development begins. With your supervisor debrief the activities, your insights, and determine next steps.

For the love it/loathe it tasks, specifically, create a strategy to minimize the loathe it tasks.

- How can you collaborate with team members on activities to leverage team strengths?
- How can the team reorganize or structure work/activities to leverage everyone's strengths to be most effective?

You may also meet with a Human Resources and Affirmative Action representative. Contact us at 715-346-2606 or [hr@uwsp.edu](mailto:hr@uwsp.edu).

## Resources

[StrengthsFinder 2.0 by Gallop](#)

[Strengths Based Leadership by Gallop](#)

[Standout by Marcus Buckingham](#)

[Gallop Business Journal](#)

[Beyond Performance: How Great Organizations Build Ultimate Competitive Advantage by Scott Keller](#)

[Scientific American Article: A Self-Improvement Secret: Work on Strengths](#)