

Strengths and Career Development

How Do People Choose Careers?

There are four general characteristics that affect how people make career choices.

1. **Personality** – this factor includes a person’s personal orientation (whether the individual is realistic, enterprising, artistic, etc.) and personal needs (including affiliation, power, and achievement needs).
2. **Strengths and Interests** – people tend to pursue careers that they believe match their interests, talents and strengths.
3. **Self-Identity** – a career is an extension of a person’s self-image, as well as a mold of it. Your career is an extension of you.
4. **Social Backgrounds** – socioeconomic status and the education and occupation level of a person’s parents are a few factors included in this category.

People seem to pick an organization to work for on the basis of a “fit” between the climate of an organization, as they perceive it and their own personal characteristics.

*If you love what you are doing, if it's part of your being;
then you will be successful in your career.*

Career Collection Container

Idea and review from *The Millionaire Mind* by Thomas Stanley, Ph.D.

Leveraging One’s Collection: Too many people today lack focus; they are not collectors of anything—not data, not customers, not specific marketable skills. On the other hand, collectors can read one newspaper and find several ideas or pieces of information about their chosen vocation. In twenty years they can generate a collection of treasures. Start collecting articles that spark your interest; then research those careers and write your thoughts down in a career journal. Non collectors often don’t understand what they should be doing given their aptitudes and abilities. They can read thousands of newspapers and not add one item to their collection.

The key is to find the job that's well suited to your talents, and then it's easier to fall in love with it. But you should also find one that has the potential to make you rich. If you account for these factors, you'll be amazed at how well disciplined you become. Time and work hours pass quickly when you're having fun.

The ideal career is not always easy to find. In fact, most millionaires told me they had several other jobs before they found the ideal one. Often it's something in our past, some training or work experience that leads to the idea for that ideal career. Look for ways to fill market needs that others have ignored those with little or no competition. Start thinking about and conceptualizing it today. The very best careers that I find in my research on millionaires are genuinely unique. Even areas that seem traditional can have some degree of uniqueness. I was trained to be a plain old marketing professor, but I selected a specific, unique topic of research that has enabled my success. If you:

- 💰 Love your work and it excites you every day
- 💰 Know that your chosen career is one that allows full use of your strengths, abilities and aptitudes
- 💰 Get high self-esteem from your work
- 💰 Are absolutely certain that your career will make you financially independent one day

then you should have no difficulty focusing on your goal and working at a high level of productivity.

Discover Your Strengths at
www.GallupStrengthsCenter.com

Research performed by the Gallup Organization shows that businesses that practice the *Discover Your Strengths* philosophy are more successful. Discovering your individual strengths can help you use those strengths to build your business and also develop employees and teams. By building on the talents of the team, a business can increase productivity and job satisfaction.

Almost every person who takes the Gallup StrengthsFinder profile asks the same questions: What's the right career for me? What should I consider doing now? What is my best fit? These are complex questions that involve more than just strengths. Goals, interests and education also play key roles in career development. But Strengths must be an important part of your career considerations.

Definition of Strengths

A strength is consistent and near perfect performance on an activity. This definition is comprised of three factors - when combined create strengths:

1. Talents or naturally recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior.
2. Knowledge, which consists of facts and lessons learned.
3. Skills, or steps of an activity.

Two principles are embedded in this definition of strengths. The first is that for a talent to be labeled as a strength, there must be consistent performance of that activity, or that the strength is a predictable part of an individual's performance. Secondly, the strength does not need to be present in all aspects of an individual's life in order to excel. Focusing solely on weaknesses is not as effective as sharpening strengths. So build your career and your business on your strengths.

Source: www.gallupstrengthscenter.com or www.strengthsfinder.com or www.strengthsquest.com.

The Strengths Formula: Talent x Investment = Strengths

What principles should guide career planning, and how can we develop an effective strengths-based career plan?

1. **Own your own development.** Take charge of your career – this requires you to act. Active decision-making and follow-through drives career development. Understanding your strengths boosts your confidence and encourages you to explore career options based on your talents.
2. **You are successful because of who you are – not who you aren't.** By focusing on your strengths, you can succeed and move ahead professionally.
3. **You cannot be successful alone.** Mentors, Coaches, and friends who know you well can lend you considerable insight about your talents and abilities. Ask them to suggest career's for you to research that they think you could make full use of your strengths in.
4. **What about your weaknesses?** Don't focus on your limitations – but don't ignore your weaknesses altogether, either. If you are a Business Trainer who can't remember names - this is important to try to improve. But if you are a Business Trainer who can't fix a computer problem – don't learn to be a computer technician – hire one!

5. **Make sure your plan is one you would CHOOSE to do, not one you feel you SHOULD do.** Career development without a plan isn't career development at all – it's career risk! Consider forming a “career board” to help you develop your action plan. Assemble individuals who know your strengths, believe in you, and are willing to offer their insights, connections and support. Start working early – no later than 16; you will learn a lot about what you like and don't like about jobs.
6. **The test of development: RESULTS!** The more time you invest in searching out the right career, the more likely you will be to find the rewards that come from doing what you do best, each and every day.

You can Discover Your Strengths by taking the quiz at www.GallupStrengthsCenter.com This will cost around \$10.

You can also purchase the book *StrengthsQuest: Discover and Develop Your Strengths in Academics, Career, and Beyond* and there will be a code in the back of the book for you to use to take the Strengthsfinder quiz. You can find more information at www.strengthsquest.com.

After you take the quiz you will have access to StrengthsQuest Online program which includes your individualized online book with information on how to best utilize your strengths in your education and career. There is a wealth of information available to you in this online program; I have taken the test and use this program regularly. I have attached my strengths so you will be able to see how I use my strengths everyday in my career and that is why I love my job!!!!

Jackie's Top Five Clifton Strengths Finder Themes

Edward “Chip” Anderson, Ph.D. *“From my experience, each of the themes of talent identified by the Clifton StrengthsFinder Inventory has a stroke of genius within it. The genius of our talents reflects what those talents enable and empower us to do to potential levels of excellence. The concept of genius refers to an extraordinary ability to do certain things, and as such there is great beauty in seeing what is done by the genius within individuals. Accordingly, what follows is the genius I see in each of the themes of talent identified by the Clifton StrengthsFinder Inventory.”* (These following five are Jackie's Strengths there are a total of 34 strengths; after you take the SFI you will be able to access a lot of valuable information on the website and they will create your own book that will tell you how to use your strengths in your career.)

ACHIEVER

The genius of your Achiever talent begins with your tremendous motivation, drive and determination. You are in constant motion to reach your goals. The second aspect of your genius is found in the types of goals you set. You have daily goals in the form of lists of things to do. Then you have future goals tied to your daily goals. Finally you have ultimate goals. Your ultimate goals are always tied to excellence. So the genius of your Achiever talent is the tremendous amount of motivation and drive you have to reach your goals and to move your goals toward being excellent in terms of performance, productivity effectiveness and efficiency. No wonder this talent is called Achiever.

FOCUS

The genius of your Focus talent begins with what you can do with your mind. You can focus your attention to an unusual level of concentration. That concentration enables you to amass facts and information, read with clarity of understanding, and solve problems with great precision. You can concentrate to the extent that people may come into a room you are in, and you may not hear or see them. While others pride themselves with their ability to multi-task, you know that for you, you are most productive when you concentrate on one thing at a time. Your focusing talent results in prolonged concentration to address and solve complex problems and planning processes. You learn in great depth, and because of your focusing, when you learn, plan and solve problems, your recall is remarkable.

LEARNER

The genius of your Learner talent begins with the fact that you love to learn in many areas. It doesn't matter to you what you are learning, just so that you keep on learning something each and every day. But the genius of your learning doesn't stop there. You have thought a lot about the learning process. You know how you learn and you know what best contributes to you learning effectively and efficiently. This self understanding provides a basis for understanding and helping others learn. With little effort, you can analyze the learning habits of others and think through how they can learn most effectively. Based on this understanding of the learning process in yourself and others, you can establish ingenious programs and services to help others become better learners, high achievers, and be better prepared for the future.

MAXIMIZER

The genius of your Maximizer talent starts with what you can see in people. You can see the strengths and talents, the potentials and the capabilities, and you can see the emerging abilities within people even before they can see them. But this is only the beginning of the genius of your Maximizer talent. You can literally see what people could be like if they were to fully develop and maximize the talents, potential and emerging abilities within them. This results in you having an incredible impact in the lives of others. As you hold up pictures and mirrors of what you see in others, you help them form new concepts of themselves that build hope and motivation to achieve and be what they have the capacity to be. Moreover, you are a great "coach" in moving people to their greatest potential and in moving people into roles where their potential can be lived out.

STRATEGIC

The genius of your Strategic talent involves the way you think and generate alternatives. When faced with a problem or a dilemma you can quickly generate multiple alternatives to circumvent obstacles that prevent your progress. Sometimes you think in a backwards manner by first visualizing the outcome you want to produce and then generating multiple alternative paths to get to that objective. But your genius of Strategic doesn't simply begin and end with generating alternatives. The real genius of this strength is found in the way that you can quickly sort through the various alternative paths and determine the one that will work best and most efficiently.

Your career is a reflection of you; so find out what your strengths are and build a career that uses your strengths!

Questions to ask yourself when you are considering potential careers:

1. Will I be able to use my greatest talents on a regular basis in this career?
2. Will I be able to build strengths in this career?
3. Is this career consistent with my deepest values and beliefs?
4. Will I have an opportunity to do what I love to do in this career or because of this career?
5. Will I have an opportunity to fulfill my sense of destiny and my sense of personal mission because of this career?

If you can't answer "yes!" to each of the foregoing questions, you have to ask yourself: "What business do I have even considering this career?"