

How to Lead With Your Strengths

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People who use their strengths at work are more likely to be engaged and perform at higher levels. Learning how to lead with your strengths will not only help you set the example for others, but will also help you achieve your highest potential as a leader in your department and your organization as a whole.

Method 1

Method 1 of 3: Learning about Your Strengths



1 Understand what strengths are. Strengths have recently been defined as activities that make you feel strong. Everyone has certain talents, knowledge, and skills that make them feel successful and unique.

- Talents are aptitudes, personality traits, or interpersonal characteristics like assertiveness, curiosity, empathy, or strategic thinking. These are often things you are born with.
- Knowledge is information based on facts and personal experience, like symptoms for a specific illness, the structure of a good speech, or how to take care of a horse.
- Skills are learned activities or tasks that you can do well, such as presenting a speech, playing a sport, or creating a spreadsheet.



2 Find your strengths. Strength-based leadership requires you to be aware of your own strengths. Realize that some strengths play more to leadership than others. Try to focus on those. There are several ways you can identify your strengths.

- Take a strengths assessment test. These assessments help you identify specific strengths based on how you answer certain questions.
- Take a personal inventory. List activities you enjoy and that come easily to you. Identify tasks that energize you. List your values and beliefs. Identify knowledge you have that others around you do not.
- Look at past performance reviews. Note what your supervisors or colleagues praise you for.
- Ask others. Friends, family members, and colleagues can often point out things we do well that we may assume came naturally to everyone but are really special strengths we alone possess.



3 Write strength statements. These statements capture, in one sentence, what it is that makes you feel strong. Try to identify three areas of strength to focus on. Be as specific as possible. For example, "I feel strong when I am coaching my team to meet project goals" or "I feel strong when I write a clear report outlining potential steps for my organization to take."

Method 2 of 3: Growing Your Strengths



1 Use your strengths in the workplace. Keep your strength statements in a place where you can see them as you work. Each week, try to find another way that you could play to your strengths as a leader in your organization.

- Identify how each strength can be used in your current role as a leader.
- Find specific activities that play to your strengths. These activities often leave you feeling confident, energized, and eager to do it again.
- Modify your role so that you use your strengths instead of your weaknesses.
- Invest in your strengths. Find ways to further develop the skills and knowledge you have. Participate in training, workshops, and conferences. You can also read books or blogs that deal with your leadership area.



2 Plan around your weaknesses. In strengths-based leadership, you need to focus your time and energy on the things you do well. Therefore, it is important to find the necessary tools to help you deal with your weaknesses.

- Utilize appropriate technology. Tools like online calendars, smart phones, and alarms can help you stay organized and on time.
- Delegate tasks to other people. When possible, pass a task on to someone else that is better suited for it.
- Collaborate with others on group projects and assign tasks based on each person's strengths.

Method 3 of 3: Building a Strong Team



1 Create a strong leadership team. Choose people who both complement your strengths and help fill in the gaps. You should have an individual who demonstrates strength in each of the following areas.

- People strong in execution will be able to implement plans and procedures effectively and in a timely manner.
- People strong in matters of influence will be able to communicate ideas to different people in or outside of the organization and motivate them to join your mission.
- People strong in relationships will be able to help the team work through conflict, minimize potential distractions, and keep energy levels high.
- People strong in strategic thinking will be able to brainstorm other possibilities, collect and organize data, and analyze information.



2 Build relationships with those on your team. Followers need to know that you care about them, not necessarily that you can recite the mission or vision of the organization. The most influential leaders create an environment of trust, compassion, stability, and hope. Use your strengths to communicate and connect with your followers.



3 Lead others in identifying and using their strengths. As a leader, you can help your employees take similar steps to find and use their strengths at work.

- Acknowledge what other people do well.
- Provide employees opportunities to grow in their talents, skills, and knowledge.
- Restructure performance reviews to focus more on strengths than on areas of weaknesses that need to be improved. This helps empower people to own their own strengths and recognize their weaknesses without focusing too much on them.



Expert Q&A

Question

What does "leading with your strengths" mean?



Devin Jones
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Expert Answer

To me, it means being able to do your best every day, and being able to acknowledge that you have your own gifts and talents. Also, it means being confident without feeling like you have to compare yourself to someone else or feel less than them. Really relish what it is that you offer, because if we keep silent or we're overly humble with our own talents, other people will miss out on them.

Helpful 0 Not Helpful 0

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About This Article



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This article was co-authored by **Devin Jones**. Devin Jones is the creator of "The Soul Career," an online career incubator for women. She is certified in the CliftonStrengths assessment and works with women to clarify their purpose and create meaningful careers. Devin received her BA from Stanford University in 2013. This article has been viewed 70,726 times.

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