

# Assessing Your Strengths

PPPM has been working with the Holden Center for Leadership and Community Engagement at the University of Oregon to help students use StrengthsFinder to undertake individual or group assessments to learn more about their styles and be more effective. The information below is from the Holden Center.

## What is StrengthsFinder?

---

Clifton StrengthsFinder is a tool that provides you with the opportunity to develop strengths by building on what you do best – the way you most naturally think, feel, and behave as a unique individual. The 30-minute online assessment has international presence as a talent measurement instrument and has currently helped students at more than 600 schools and universities to discover and build upon:

- Behavior patterns that make you effective
- Thought patterns that make you efficient
- Beliefs that empower you to succeed
- Attitudes that sustain your efforts toward achievement and excellence
- Motivations that propel you to take action and maintain the energy needed to achieve

## Quick Reference Guide to Strengths Basics

---

Talents come naturally, but strengths are earned.

- A strength is the ability to consistently produce a positive outcome through near-perfect performance in a specific task.
  - › Example: the ability to recommend the perfect services for a client's needs.
  - › Example: the ability to always meet your family's grocery needs on a tight budget.
- Skills are your basic abilities to perform the fundamental steps of a task.
  - › Example: the ability to move through the fundamental steps of a complex task.
  - › Skills do not naturally exist within us; they must be acquired through training and practice.
- Knowledge is simply what you know.
  - › Example: your awareness of historical dates and your grasp of the rules of a game.
  - › Knowledge does not naturally exist within us; it must be acquired through education.
- Talents are the ways in which you naturally think, feel, and behave.
  - › Example: the inner drive to compete.
  - › Example: sensitivity to the needs of others.
  - › Example: the tendency to be outgoing at social gathering.
  - › Although talents must come into existence naturally and cannot be acquired like skills and knowledge, we each have unique talents within us.

Because your most powerful talents represent the best of your natural self, they are your best opportunities to perform at levels of excellence through strength.

Your **dominant talents** naturally appear frequently and powerfully. Almost no matter where you are or what you are doing, your dominant talents are active.

Your **supporting talents** naturally surface only when their support is needed, and do so with only relative power. Because they aren't as powerful, your supporting talents are unlikely to serve as a foundation for strength.

Your **lesser talents** naturally appear rarely, and they offer little power. Because of that minimal power, lesser talents seldom contribute to strength.

Source: Rath, Tom. 2007. Strengthsfinder 2.0. Gallup Press.