

# Understanding CliftonStrengths



CliftonStrengths helps us understand ourselves and team members through a collection of 34 distinct themes sorted into four domains. The concept was initially developed by Don Clifton in an effort to answer one simple question: what happens if we look at what we're doing right instead of what we're doing wrong?

Adopting a strengths-based approach helps us individualise learning and development, gain a deeper understanding of our strengths, and understand how they affect our work.



## THE CLIFTONSTRENGTHS DOMAINS

### EXECUTING

People with dominant Executing themes **make things happen**.

### INFLUENCING

People with dominant Influencing themes **take charge, speak up** and **make sure others are heard**.

### RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

People with dominant Relationship Building themes **build strong relationships** that hold a team together and make it greater than the sum of its parts.

### STRATEGIC THINKING

People with dominant Strategic Thinking themes **absorb and analyse information** that informs better decisions.

## WHY USE STRENGTHS?

A strengths-based approach helps us see and understand ourselves and others in a positive, constructive light. Teams become more well-rounded, and individuals can leverage their talents to succeed. When we can channel our talents in a way that empowers us, we can achieve real change and positive results.

## BALCONY VERSUS BASEMENT

When strengths are used constructively, they are seen as coming from the 'balcony'. *For example: When Focus is acting from the balcony, the individual can narrow in on tasks and smash through them with ease.*

When strengths are used unproductively, they are coming from the 'basement'. *For example: When Focus plays out from the basement, it can mean that other important tasks are ignored in favour of a singular task.*

## POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Some strengths are complementary to each other. Pairing them and the people with those particular strengths can create powerful partnerships, which helps to:

- Make up for a 'weaker' talent
- Enhance what one person already possesses
- Minimise conflict.

## DEVELOPING STRENGTHS

Strengths result from talent (a natural way of thinking and feeling) and investment (practice and developing your skills). You can improve your strength in any of the 34 themes, from any of the 4 domains, through practice and hard work.

Name a **Talent** of yours.

*E.g. Time management, delegation or learning.*



How can you **Invest** in it?

*E.g. Speaking up in meetings, online learning or goal setting.*



**Strength**

The ability to provide consistent and perfect performance.