

CitizensConnection



How to Find Your Strength



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Life is always full of unexpected challenges. We all have days when things go wrong personally or professionally. It may be a minor situation – a presentation does not go as planned, a project or assignment is taking you longer than expected, or something serious happens that impacts you or a family member. Somehow the most challenging situations seem to occur at the most unfortunate times.

During these times, we often find strength and perseverance that we may not even realize we had. As we adapted to changes in our world with the arrival of COVID-19, each of us overcame challenges that we had never experienced before and demonstrated our strength and resiliency individually and as an organization

Grow Through Adversity

When you think of the highest performing team that you have been a part of, or your favorite sports team, one of the keys to their success is leveraging the strengths of each team member. When a team truly recognizes and effectively utilizes individual strengths, the transformation can be amazing. In the past at another organization, I was part of a small and newly formed leadership team responsible for a large division. Outwardly, we appeared to be a cohesive team. Inwardly, we could not understand why we were paired together and did our best to avoid each other whenever possible. Everything about us was vastly different – from our team's functions and responsibilities to our individual personalities, thoughts and skills.

One day, the leader of the team made a mistake. To be resilient as a team, we had no other option but to work closely together on a resolution for that mistake. That moment became the turning point that we needed to finally stop and invest the time to fully understand and genuinely embrace our differences and strengths, which of course made us better collectively. From that point on, we became an exceptionally high-performing team by continuously leveraging our individual and collective strengths to improve the engagement and results of our division.

Identify Your Strengths

Think about a time when you were performing your best and feeling energized and great about your contributions to the team. You were likely in a role or assignment that effectively leveraged your individual strengths. Maybe you were already aware that these skills were your strengths, or your leaders or team recognized your strengths. Sometimes we may be misaligned with other's perceptions of us or overlook the unique strengths that we bring to the team. An exceptional mentor I was paired with through Citizens' LEAD365 program, introduced me to the StandOut 2.0, a scenario-based strengths assessment by Marcus Buckingham.

This assessment helps identify your top two strengths and provides advice on how to improve your performance by sharpening these strengths. The results reflect how you appear to others on your team and may not be the same as how you view yourself. The assessment helped me gain perspective on my strengths, how others see me and what value I may bring to a team. It also helped me understand what types of roles and assignments bring me the most job satisfaction. It was an interesting shift in my perspective and performance to focus on becoming better at my strengths instead of focusing solely on improving my weaknesses.

Embrace and seek out new opportunities and challenging assignments that give you the opportunity to grow and showcase your strengths. Invest time in learning more about your strengths as well as the strengths of the individuals on your team and others you work with across the organization. We are stronger together.