

### “What are your strengths?”

When asked this question, it is an opportunity to communicate to the employer your skills and how you will use them in that position. So, the most important thing to consider is that the answer accurately reflects your inborn talents. Strengths are talents, which are naturally recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior that you can productively apply. Furthermore, employees who have the opportunity to use their strengths are 6 times more likely to be engaged in their work, and 3 times more likely to report having an excellent quality of life.

### Identifying Strengths

Think through the following three steps in order to self-identify your strengths: 1) Consider your most meaningful positions or experiences you’ve held. 2) Once you can identify those, think about the skills, responsibilities, and outcomes that you achieved in that experience. 3) Now think about how you actually accomplished those responsibilities and outcomes. What strengths and skills did you utilize? When did those strengths and skills stand out the most?

Another way to learn your strengths is to take the StrengthsQuest™ inventory. StrengthsQuest™ is a strengths development program designed by Gallup. It gives you the opportunity to develop strengths by building on your greatest talents – the way you naturally think, feel, and behave as a unique individual. You can contact Gallup to purchase the assessment and then bring it to the Career Center to have a Career Advisor interpret your results.

### Communicating Strengths

One of the most important things to remember when discussing your strengths in an interview is to communicate how your strengths will benefit the company. Employers are looking for candidates who will be able to apply their skills directly to the new position. In these instances, employers may ask behavioral/situational questions. When these questions are asked, use the **STAR Method**. **Situation**: give an example of the situation you were involved in that resulted in a positive outcome. **Task**: describe the tasks involved in that situation. **Action**: talk about the various actions involved in the situation’s task. And **Results**: what results followed due to your actions?

Finally, do not be caught off guard if an employer asks about your weaknesses. When this happens, you might describe how you are working to improve that weakness or show the weakness in a positive manner – a necessary challenge worth overcoming. Whatever the case, try to bring the focus back to your strengths and how you will use those to their benefit.

By having a firm understanding of your natural talents, you will be able to effectively communicate how you will apply your strengths to best benefit the company.