

# Influence

in•flu•ence ['ɪnfluəns] *ability to effect change in your sphere of responsibility*

## Coaching to build strength

STRENGTHS ARE NOT things that a person does well; they are things that make a person feel strong. Our strengths-based coaching shows clients how to discern the difference and employ their strengths to contribute fully in their work roles.

Our coaching model reflects these principles:

- **Each person's talents are enduring:** Talents indicate strengths that remain with individuals all their lives. Coaching can help determine the best environment and roles to develop and use their strengths.
- **Each person's talents are unique:** Coaching can help clients set performance expectations and outcomes that match their strengths rather than trying to fit into a stylistic mold.
- **Each person's greatest opportunity for growth lies in his or her strengths:** Our goal is to help clients understand how to accomplish more while achieving greater satisfaction. Organizations become more productive and competitive when every employee is leveraging his or her strengths.



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## Leading from Strength

*Real potential lies in cultivating talents, not fixing weaknesses.*

DOCTORS STUDY DISEASE to learn about health. Psychologists study depression to learn about joy. Therapists study divorce to learn about marriage. The workplace is no different. Performance appraisals are designed for employees to identify and correct their weaknesses to become worthy of promotion and recognition. Typical coaching programs seek to develop leaders by fixing soft skills gaps. Conventional developmental approaches reveal little about a person's strengths. This is not surprising since most organizations take employees' strengths for granted and focus on minimizing their weaknesses.

**Organizations fail to capitalize on the strengths of their people.**

In a global poll conducted by Gallup, only 20 percent of employees report working in their areas of strength every day. Worse yet, the longer an employee stays with an organization and the higher they climb, the less likely they are to strongly agree that their jobs play to their strengths.<sup>(1)</sup>

Unfortunately, people in leadership roles are often enrolled in training or coaching with a goal to address weaknesses. These programs are sometimes necessary, but development typically takes a back seat to damage control. Consequently,

*Only 20% of employees report working in their areas of strength.*

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## Leading from Strength

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people most responsible for the success of the enterprise may be doing so without full benefit of their strengths.

**How can leaders tap into strength?** In *Now Discover Your Strengths*, authors Buckingham and Clifton make the case that to excel, each person must become an expert at finding, applying and refining his or her strengths. For more than 20 years, our leadership coaching process shows leaders why and how to use their strengths. Energy, motivation and business results flow when people can connect what they do best with their work roles – and help others to do the same.

Increasingly, research confirms our experience. Consider Gallup's surveys

of more than 10 million workers and responses to the question, "Do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?" Employees who *strongly agree* were 50% more likely to work in business units with lower employee turnover, 38% greater productivity, and 44% higher customer satisfaction scores. Over time, business units that increased positive scores on this question also realized comparable increases in productivity, customer loyalty and employee retention.<sup>(1)</sup> Matching employees to what they naturally do best emerged as one of 12 elements that best predict the performance of an employee or team.<sup>(3)</sup>

As Stephen R. Covey put it, "Ultimately, a good leadership team is a complementary team where people's strengths are made productive and their weaknesses irrelevant by the strengths of others."

## Strength-based leadership sustains marketplace advantage.

What would happen if every leader in your company worked in a role aligned closely with his or her strengths? What if those leaders could identify and nurture the talents of every individual on their team?

Sustainable success in the marketplace flows from success in the workplace. We believe a strengths-based work environment produces the culture for sustainable organizational excellence in innovation and execution, and, ultimately marketplace results.

(1) BUCKINGHAM AND CLIFTON, *NOW DISCOVER YOUR STRENGTHS*, SIMON & SCHUSTER, 2001

(2) HARTER AND WAGNER, 12: *THE ELEMENTS OF GREAT MANAGING*, GALLUP PRESS, 2006

(3) COVEY, *THE 8TH HABIT*, FREE PRESS, 2004



# Power Coaching for Leaders

*Breakthrough results in 90 Days*

VJ Holcomb Associates has worked with thousands of men and women to enhance their leadership ability. Clients experience results quickly because we focus on building strengths versus fixing weaknesses.

**Power Coaching** provides a 90-day, structured format for leaders to gain clarity, fine tune soft skills and develop concrete strategies to become more effective in their roles. The program includes assessments, feedback interviews, and seven, 2-hour coaching sessions.

Primary emphasis is placed on understanding the client's talents, skills and scenarios for optimal performance. A key deliverable is an action plan to capitalize on strengths, address weaknesses appropriately, and define success milestones.

One follow-up session takes place about six weeks after the main program has been completed.

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**Our coaching programs are delivered only by experienced leadership development professionals.**

Please contact us for details...

**Phone:** 800-606-1568

**Web:** [VJHolcomb.com/coaching](http://VJHolcomb.com/coaching)

## What makes you strong at work?

Use this page to track your tasks, activities and accomplishments for 2 days.

Check off only those things that make you “feel” strong.

Tasks, Activities, Accomplishments	Feel Strong
<b>Day 1</b>	
<b>Day 2</b>	

### Power Coaching Tip

At end of Day 2, review the items you checked and look for patterns.

Record your observations in the following way: I feel strong when . . .

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This exercise is adapted from a presentation given by Marcus Buckingham, author, *Go Put Your Strengths To Work*.