

4 Easy Clues to Know Your Strengths

by Marci Rinkoff

You've got to stand out in today's market more than you probably have in your lifetime.

Want to work to your full potential? Want your business to thrive? Want your staff to work to their full potential? I'm not sure why but many of the women I have worked with over the years are typically very clear about their weak spots and less clear about their strengths. Coaching works because we play to strengths, not to weaknesses. Research data shows that most people do not come close to making full use of their assets -- in fact, only 17 percent of the workforce believe they use all of their strengths on the job. [Gallup scientists](#) polled more than 20,000 teams to find that leaders who ask others to use their strengths more can increase staff motivation by 75%.



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Your self-perception may be quite different from external perceptions. Market research, focus groups, 360-feedback forms, interviews, etc... are great tools to help you get clear with your core competencies, aka: Strengths. So, if your self-perception is skewed from reality or if you're really not sure where you excel, ask yourself these questions:

1. **What special skills do my friends, customers, colleagues come to me for?** (Ex: Advice, organizing, fixing something in the house, ...)
2. **What am I asked to teach others?** (Ex: Marketing, selling, animal behavior, ...)
3. **What responsibilities have typically been designated to me?** (Ex: Writing newsletters, mediating a customer dispute, ...)
4. **What parts of my job are the hardest to fill?** (Ex: Legal advising, editing, ...)

So What? Because you could be wasting your time, energy and money.

Now What?

If you own a business...

Focus on your business' core competencies instead of trying to do it all (one of my greatest lessons). Where do you really give your clients the most value? What is your [Personal Brand](#)? Hire people who are smart in areas where you are NOT. You may be great at fashion design but stink at finances, so hire a good accountant. If you are strong in marketing but lack follow-through, get a coach to get you in action (hint hint). One client of ours hired a part-time bookkeeper and found 20 extra hours per month to focus on getting clients and completing client projects early. You get the point.

If you're a leader in an organization...

Play to your strengths and play to your team's. Recognize that you are human and that you can rely on your talents and resources to balance out areas where you may be weak. AND acknowledge others at least once a week for what they're doing well if you want them to play to their strengths. One of our clients is a sales manager who is great in sales but not so great at managing. She started focusing more on her sales expertise to manage her team: Listening skills, asking questions, setting goals, identifying problems, providing information based on their

needs and offering resources to help them with their own unique challenges.

Marci Rinkoff is the founder of MBR Coaching & Training, which specializes in helping women in business and in leadership positions achieve clarity, confidence and tools to achieve outstanding business results.