Benefits of Strength Based Hiring

**Improved Performance:** When using strengths based hiring, the people hired naturally fit into the role; they are not forced to fit into something they don’t like.

**Increased Employee Engagement:** Because employees are doing what they enjoy and are good at, they are excited to come to work.

**More Cost Effective:** There is less employee turnover because workers are more engaged, work harder and are more productive. Additionally there is less time and effort spent to “fix” employees who are not performing.

**Happier Employees:** Employees are able to do what they are naturally good at so they are under less stress and are more confident.

**More Diverse Candidates:** Because there is less focus on specific skills people have gained in the past, people with less work history are not at a disadvantage.

**Strengths vs. Competency**

It is important to understand the difference between a competency and a strength. Strengths are things that a person does well and finds energizing, whereas competencies are things that a person has shown they can do through prior experience.

**Examples:**

A *competency* is completing referrals
A *strength* is connecting with others.

A *competency* is managing several tasks at once.
A *strength* is seeing the connections between the different tasks and intertwining them.

**Implementing Strength Based Hiring**

**Determine Necessary Strengths:** Compile a list of strengths (not competencies; see below for more detail) that the top performers in this position have.

**Commit to selecting the right person, not weeding out the wrong people:** When the goal of hiring is getting rid of the people who don’t fit criteria, you often lose people with the strengths to do the job.

**Post an ad using strength based language:** Explain what will motivate the ideal candidate and what strengths they need to possess.

**Conduct a strengths-based interview:** Ask questions to determine strengths, including:

- What do you enjoy doing the most at work?
- What are the things you could do all day, every day, and never get bored?
- What activities come naturally for you?
- What makes you feel you’ve had a rewarding and successful day?

If you have further questions, or a topic to suggest, please contact results@umn.edu
Using strengths based hiring does not negate competencies all together. Candidates must still possess a minimum of skills, but that list can, and should, be much shorter. E.g.: instead of requiring familiarity with a specific computer program, you could require basic computer skills. Someone with the drive to do the job will learn the necessary computer competencies to complete the tasks. Competencies are still necessary and looked at, but they are much less important than the strengths of the person.

**Competencies + Strengths = Best hire for the job**

**Strengths for County Workers**
A recent study by University of Minnesota master’s students looked at the top competencies for MFIP financial and employment services workers (see below for link to the study). Though this paper is competency focused several strengths can be inferred.

**Empathy** – the ability to imagine yourself in the situation of another.

**Relating** – finding deep satisfaction in working with others to achieve a goal.

**Restorative** – Good at dealing with problems and resolving them.

Definitions from StrengthsFinder List (see below link)

**Connections to Human Service Redesign**
Hiring the right people is vital to continuing to change the work that human service departments do. By finding the people who will thrive in their role, instead of just completing the task the client experience will be greatly improved.

*Spheres of Use:* Human Resources departments, hiring managers

**Explore Further**
Visit [Strengths List](http://www.strengthstest.com/strengths-finder-themes) (This is one of the most commonly used lists of strengths, there are many other available.)

Visit [The Strength of Strength-Based Recruiting](http://engagingminds.co.uk/sbr/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/The-strength-of-strengths-based-recruitment.pdf)


Read Matter, Kathleen; Monson, Kelly; Simonett, Andrea; Voigt, Susan. (2014). Analysis of Job Competencies for Minnesota Family Investment Program Workers. HHH. Retrieved from the University of Minnesota Digital Conservancy, [http://hdl.handle.net/11299/172515](http://hdl.handle.net/11299/172515).

**Notes**