

Balanced Work Strengths Assessment: Personal and Team

Gallup's StrengthsFinder + Foresight U's (4U's) Foresight Strengths

The best assessment of **workplace strengths** that we know is **Gallup's StrengthsFinder**, developed by [Don Clifton](#) (1924-2003). **StrengthsFinder** describes **thirty-four common team workplace strengths**. It is reasonably evidence-based and validated, with 0.6-0.8 test-retest reliability for the **top five strengths** over 6 months. The test takes **40 minutes** to complete. It uses 177 forced-choice questions, allowing 20 seconds to answer each question. While you can take a [Top 5 Strengths](#) test (\$20), for this diagnostic you must take the full [CliftonStrengths 34 test](#) (\$50), as that **ranks all 34**, giving insight into both **your strongest and your weakest talents**. Knowing the **value and traps** of **all thirty-four strengths** will make you a better manager.

Gallup divides these **strengths** into **four key working skills: Strategy, Executing, Influencing, and Relating**.¹ While **strengths are individual, skills are general**, and must be **used with basic competency by each of us, to be a good team member**. We don't necessarily have to improve our weakest strengths, but we should **all strive to improve our weaker skills**, as they are all essential to **effective teamwork**. Their four skills model is depicted below:

Gallup's Four Working Skills

[StrengthsFinder 2.0 Book](#), \$20
(Get your **Top 5 strengths** only).

[CliftonStrengths 34 Online](#), \$50
(Get all 34 strengths in ranked order).



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Gallup Found 34 Working Strengths, Spanning Four Essential Skills

One Foresight Skill	← Three Action Skills →		
1. Strategic Thinking	2. Executing	3. Influencing	4. Relating
"Knowing Where to Go"	"Getting Somewhere"	"Getting There With Others"	"Keeping Others on Your Team"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical • Context • Futuristic • Ideation • Input • Intellection • Learner • Strategic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achiever • Arranger • Belief • Consistency • Deliberative • Discipline • Focus • Responsibility • Restorative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activator • Command • Communication • Competition • Maximizer • Self-Assurance • Significance • Woo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptability • Developer • Connectedness • Empathy • Harmony • Includer • Individualization • Positivity • Relator

Gallup's strengths model is excellent. Nevertheless, we find we can add **six additional foresight strengths**, focused on **Anticipation and Innovation**, giving a total of **forty strengths**.

Their **skills model** needs more work. The **Do loop** tells us **four additional skills** must be added: **Learning, Anticipating, Innovating, and Reviewing**, to understand the **key foresight and action skills** used every day by teams. Together these are the **Eight Skills of Foresight and Action**.

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Gallup and 4U's Eight Skills Diagnostic Table

The table below **recategorizes** Gallup's thirty-four strengths across the **Eight Skills**. To their credit, these strengths span the Eight Skills in a very balanced way. In our analysis, only two sets of strengths, in **Anticipation and Innovation**, are underrepresented in their model. We **have added them** below, noted with "(4U)" after their names. See the next page for their descriptions.

Foresight Skills – LAIS			
1. Learning	2. Anticipation	3. Innovation	4. Strategy
Learner	Analytical	Ideation	Arranger
Input	Intellection	Futuristic	Belief
Connectedness	Defender (4U)	Advancer (4U)	Deliberative
Context	Investigator (4U)	Creator (4U)	Maximizer
Empathy	Predictor (4U)	Designer (4U)	Strategic

Action Skills - EIRR			
5. Execution	6. Influence	7. Relating	8. Reviewing
Achiever	Communication	Adaptability	Competition
Activator	Positivity	Harmony	Consistency
Command	Self-Assurance	Includer	Developer
Discipline	Significance	Individualization	Responsibility
Focus	Woo	Relator	Restorative

This expanded set of forty strengths brings **foresight process** fully into the **workplace**, and it shows both the **great diversity of team working styles** and the **Eight Essential Team Skills**.

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Homework

6A. Take the Gallup + 4U Eight Skills Diagnostic

Once you have completed the [CliftonStrengths 34](#), and you have **your strengths report in ranked order**, you are **ready to take our diagnostic**, following the **four steps below**.

1. First, read the titles and brief descriptions of **4U's Anticipation and Innovation Strengths** below. These strengths are **sometimes overlooked** in the workplace. It is the job of **team leaders to recognize their value**, and to **facilitate trusted conflict ("predictive contrasting")** between anticipation and innovation thinking **prior to strategy creation**.

"Both often and naturally, I am a **Probability Thinker**, in one or more of the following ways..."

4U Anticipation Strengths – Title and Brief Description

1. **Defender** Risk and Disruption Finder and Assessor, Protector ("**Defensive Pessimist**")
2. **Investigator** Question Asker, Hypothesis Tester, Data Sleuth, Scientist
3. **Predictor** Trend and Constraint Finder, Probability Estimator, Predictor

"Both often and naturally, I am a **Possibility Thinker**, in one or more of the following ways..."

4U Innovation Strengths – Title and Brief Description

4. **Advancer** Opportunity and Advantage Finder, Assessor, Motivator ("**Strategic Optimist**")
5. **Creator** Imaginative Thinker, Storyteller, Producer, Entertainer, Artist, Stylist
6. **Designer** Problem Empathizer, Definer and Solver, Builder, Optimizer, Simplifier

2. Now, **circle** any of the **above six strengths** that seem to describe your **natural inclinations at work**, even if you **don't feel very effective yet** in using them. Please **also circle EITHER Strength 1** (defensive pessimist), **OR Strength 4** (strategic optimist), **or BOTH**, if you frequently use each in your workplace.

You can now do a personal **SWOT Assessment** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) with these **forty strengths**:

1. First, find your **top twelve strengths** in the **CliftonStrengths 34 report**. **Circle each** on the **table**. Next, **circle on the table** any strength circled in the **4U list** of six foresight **strengths** above. You now have a **rough model** of your **Eight Skills strengths**.
2. Next, locate your **eight worst strengths** (biggest weaknesses) in the CliftonStrengths 34 report. Locate and **draw a ~~strikeout~~ line through each** in our **Eight Skills Diagnostic Table**. Then, in 4U's list of Anticipation and Innovation strengths, **draw a ~~strikeout~~ line through any you rarely use and value**. Transfer those ~~strikeouts~~ to the Eight Skills Table.

Good work! You now have a rough model of your current **Eight Skills strengths** and **weaknesses**.

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6B. Do an Eight Skills SWOT Assessment.

Now look at your **strengths** on the table. How many **4U Anticipation and Innovation strengths** did you circle? Were they **balanced** across **probability** and **possibility** thinking (e.g., one or two each)? How did your thirty-four **CliftonStrengths** sort across the **Eight Skills**? Did you end up with **two strengths in each skill**? Few of us do. What about your **weaknesses**? Do they **spread evenly** across the Eight Skills, or **cluster** in a few? Draw an **up arrow** next to a **few striked-out strengths**, if you'd like to **make a plan to improve them**. Note your plan thoughts below:

Again, if we are **weak any of the forty strengths**, it is less important to try to fix them than it is to fix our **Eight Skills** weaknesses. As management guru **Peter Drucker** says, it is far easier to employ **our strengths better**, and to work better with others who have **complementary strengths**, than it is to try to improve our weaker talents very much.

By contrast, **leaders** should **strive to be strong in all Eight Skills**, as they all **so useful** on teams. **Not devaluing** the foresight and action skills we are weak in, and knowing **who to delegate to** when we think we might need help with a skill, are great starts. Building **skills-diverse teams**, and having a **skills development plan** for our weaker skills, can also help. See **Nir Eyal's** [*Indistractable*](#), 2019, for a great set of tools for executing personal plans. If we also have **good values**, another **leadership requirement**, we can be **adaptive** over the **long-term** as well.

To finish your SWOT assessment, write down a few **Opportunities** you have to better use your **circled strengths** in personal and team contexts. What about in your organization? In the world?

Now consider some **Threats** (risks to reputation and career) that your **weaknesses or imbalances in the Eight Skills** might present, now or in the future:

Finally, how can you best defend against your skill **imbalances** and **weaknesses**? What is your skills improvement **plan**? Note any thoughts below:

Feedback? Email John at johnsmart@gmail.com. Thanks.