

# Justin Douglas Coaching & Business Solutions

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## My Story in Brief...

With almost 15 years' experience at PwC Consulting and IBM Global Business Services delivering consulting projects for major clients across the UK and overseas, one thing stood out above the technical and process changes of the projects... the people. The ability of people to navigate change, to deliver a great experience to their customers, was of paramount importance to me.

In 2012 I joined IBM's internal training team, and the success of that led me to launch my own training and coaching business in 2015. I have delivered training and coaching to over 2600 people face to face, and to over 3000 online.

My passion for the power of focusing on our strengths, and the good that comes from this, was developed further in 2015 when I decided to study with Gallup to become a Gallup Certified Strengths Coach. As a result, and in addition to a wide range of other training courses, I now offer one-to-one coaching to individuals as well as strengths-based development programmes to teams and groups of individuals. This is the subject of this document.

## INTRODUCING GALLUP STRENGTHSFINDER®

### The Business Case...

Gallup was the first organisation to intentionally research and record information about human strengths. This was mostly under the leadership of Dr Donald Clifton (1924-2003) who studied the subject for decades; he is regarded as the Father of Strengths-Based Psychology and received an American Psychological Association Presidential Commendation in 2002. Over 17 million people have now discovered their Clifton strengths profile.

The results of Gallup's research make a compelling case for bringing a strengths-based culture to individuals and organisations:

#### *At the individual level*

- When we have the opportunity to focus on our strengths every day **individuals are 6 times as likely to report being engaged in their jobs, and more than 3 times as likely to report having an excellent quality of life**, when compared to people that do not have this opportunity.
- For people in the early stage of their career, or who are more experienced and looking to make a change or find new ways of excelling and loving what they do, a strengths-based approach can provide **additional clarity in making career choices**, as well as help them **work more productively in teams** that they are members of. Studies showed that people that have had some kind of strengths education or intervention also benefited from **individual productivity gains of 7.8%**.

#### *At the corporate level*

- In the corporate setting **14.9% lower staff turnover** was seen in people that have had some kind of strengths education or intervention, compared to peers who had not received strengths education.
- Again when **team managers** received some form of strengths education or intervention **their teams saw a 12.5% boost in productivity and 8.9% increase in profitability**. Wider **profitability gains of 14% to 29%** have been observed at the business unit level.
- Further studies **at the business unit level** have shown **increases in customer and employee engagement of up to 7% and 15%** respectively, as well as **sales increases of between 10% and 19%**.
- Other benefits found in some industries include a **22% to 59% reduction in safety incidents**.

Further information and 2015 meta-analysis are available at <https://www.gallupstrengthscenter.com> and <http://news.gallup.com/reports/193427/strengths-meta-analysis-2015.aspx> offers more background.

## **Strengths-Based Development**

A range of individual coaching sessions and/or team or group events are possible to help people focus more on their strengths than their weaknesses. With teams or groups that work together, we also look at the overall strengths profile; seeking ways to combine the different strengths of team members.

### **Example Introductory Programme**

Below is an example of an introductory programme that I can bring to teams, and groups of individuals. A lot can be achieved in a short space of time.

Style of delivery: highly interactive – very limited use of Powerpoint – aiming to make it fun as well as informative and valuable.

### **Setup & Pre-work**

- Decide on who will be involved: typical options are an open invitation for individuals, a team that know each other, or a hybrid, where two or three separate teams come together at one event. Whilst there is no minimum number of participants, a maximum of 24 is suggested.
- Prior to the facilitated session, all participants take the web-based Clifton StrengthsFinder® talent assessment to reveal their top 5 talent themes. These innate themes are the sources of strength.

### **Onsite Group Facilitated Session**

We start broad – a look at the principles – then make it personal by considering the individual, and how each person can contribute to those they live and work with including any teams they are a part of.

Suggested duration: 4 to 6 hours. Whatever timing is chosen, I suggest including a lunch break to allow relaxed reflection time as we go through the day. Below is a suggested outline for a day; this can of course be flexed according to needs, interests and time available, for example, an evening introductory class.

- Strengths-Based Development for Individuals – we start by asking why we should look at strengths; we will share what it feels like when we operate ‘in the flow’ and explore the connection to taking on challenge; we will understand the difference between our innate talents, and skills that can be learnt. Critically we will illustrate the ‘return on investment’ principle and the difference between talents and true strengths, and what that looks like; and we will discuss the well-rounded individual.
- What About Weaknesses? – there are only two things we need to worry about, so we consider them and how to manage them.
- Let’s Get Personal – we explore who we have in the room; what individual talents and strengths exist; who has rare talent or strength and what does this mean? At this point we build a team or group profile that is both fun and useful – gaining perspective of the unique qualities of each person and their potential.
- Strengths Domains – grouped specifically for business, we will consider our talents and strengths in four highly relevant business domains: Executing, Influencing, Relationship Building, and Strategic Thinking.
- ‘Love Crazy Envy’ / ‘The Best of Us’ – we use various exercises to self-reflect on the talents that we have that we love and also what can drive us crazy! We consider how to get the best out of ourselves and each other, and in the case of teams, how we work better as a team.
- Living a Strong Life – individual and small group time to consider how to better focus on our individual talents and strengths; time to consider if any weaknesses need managing.
- Celebrate – a chance to share with the group what we have all learnt and to celebrate what gives each of us unique power and edge.

#### *Additional modules for teams or groups that work together*

- Look Again at Team – we return to the team profile and seek to maximise the team effectiveness. We will also consider any gaps: short and long term management options.
- Making Our Team Great – finally, we will celebrate the team and confirm any actions that need to be taken to keep the team strong and growing in strength – ultimately we are well on the way to creating a truly strengths-based team!

#### *Leadership teams*

- Focus on Leadership – when working with leaders, we may take a more in-depth look at leaders' strength profiles, and how leaders can help their team members deploy and invest in their top talent or strength themes.
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### **Value Gained**

The above session likely brings two main areas of value:

- Personal Value: it is a chance to invest in each individual with outputs that each person can use directly and immediately in their life: helping to achieve goals, experiencing an excellent quality of life with less worry and stress, displaying confidence and self-assurance, being more energetic and productive, and when in work, feeling greater levels of engagement.
- Team Value: increased team success from becoming a strengths-based team. This stems from the critical step we explore together of better understanding the talents of every member of the team.

### **Follow-up or Additional Options**

#### *For Individuals*

- One-to-one follow-up strengths-based coaching sessions can be offered to anyone who wants to add extra rigour to deploying their own strengths and those of their team(s); who wants to get help with advancing their career further; and/or to anyone navigating difficult paths in or outside work. This can be delivered face-to-face and/or remotely using Skype, Zoom, or similar technologies.

#### *For Employers*

- As one of the major benefits of focusing on strengths and strengths-based development is often increased employee engagement, it is possible to combine this work with employee engagement measurement (eg, before and after the strengths-based interventions). I favour Gallup's Q<sup>12</sup> survey that is backed by decades of research into what makes the most effective employee engagement questions to ask. As an Engagement Champion, trained by Gallup, I now also deliver employee engagement programmes. More information about the Q<sup>12</sup> Employee Engagement Survey can be found at [q12.gallup.com](http://q12.gallup.com).
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### **Independence**

I am wholly independent from Gallup: I am not employed by Gallup and I do not receive commission for using their products with my clients.

My own investigations suggest Gallup's research and products are some of the most compelling in the area of personal and professional development. It has become part of my own story: the incredible benefits I saw myself from understanding my own natural talents and strengths. After an initial lighthouse moment from a training course I attended when I worked for IBM, focusing on my strengths to deliver training and coaching has been revolutionary in terms of my own career.

If you decide to invest in strengths, I would be thrilled to be part of that journey. On the next page you will find recent endorsement and feedback. More recommendations for my coaching and training are available on my website, <http://www.justindouglas.co.uk/>, and at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/justindouglasfca/>.

## Testimonial, 7 July 2017

*From the first conversation I had with Justin, he simply got what I was trying to achieve with StrengthsFinder. His delivery surpassed all expectations and I would not hesitate in recommending Justin to work with your business or team. His passion, enthusiasm, professionalism, care and execution was a winning formula. The feedback from every single person who attended the events that Justin facilitated was outstanding. His delivery was without doubt world class, with every single team member who attended his sessions commenting on how amazing he was, and how StrengthsFinder was the best personal development tool that gave them real insight into how they could fulfil their potential.*

*I look forward to continuing to work with Justin in the future.*

Alison Fisher, Group HR Director, Cox Automotive UK

## Feedback from a group I worked with at the end of June 2017

Participants were asked to provide feedback to the Strengths Day along one or more of 6 themes. The 6 themes were: "I liked...", "I loved...", "It was good when...", "Even better if...", "I didn't like...", and if they wished, 'One Word' to sum up a thought or feeling.

I was heartened that there was nothing that they did not like, and that notable in the 'Even better ifs' was simply a desire to go deeper, to understand more of their strengths profile beyond the top 5 themes. I would normally only recommend that as a follow-up for smaller groups, for managers, or in one-to-one coaching.

Minor warning: one item of feedback contains a swear word... in a most positive sense!

