

STRENGTHS BASED LEADERSHIP

Great Leaders, Teams and Why People Follow

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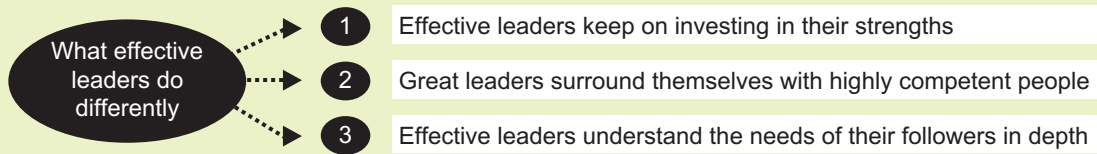
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The Web site for this book is at strengths.gallup.com.

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MAIN IDEA

After Gallup studied more than 1 million work teams and interviewed 20,000 leaders and 10,000 followers worldwide, it was found the best and most effective leaders do three things well:



To become a better and more effective leader yourself, start by figuring out what your own personal strengths are. Once you know what specific strengths you bring to the table, you can then start working on honing those strengths and enhancing them even further. If you keep at this, you will be doing all you can to become a great leader and if you're fortunate enough to be in the right place at the right time, you may get involved in projects that live on long after you're gone. The best leaders always live on because they shape the thoughts and beliefs of the people within their organizations.

"When we invest our financial resources, we understand that it's best to bet on winning funds, stocks and companies. Most of us know better than to sink all our money into a business that has continually struggled. Yet when we think about how to invest our personal resources, we continue to put more time and energy into perennial losers. Instead of honing our natural strengths, we strive to fill in what nature left out. The path of great leadership starts with a deep understanding of the strengths you bring to the table."

– Tom Rath and Barry Conchie

1. Effective leaders keep on investing in their strengths Page 2

Gallup's research has shown when an organization's leadership fails to focus on the individual strengths of the people who work within it, only about 9% (about one-in-eleven) employees become engaged. When the leadership make focusing on the strengths of employees a priority, the level of engagement rises to almost 73% (three-in-four). This eightfold increase in level of engagement is significant. It can generate substantial gains for the organization's bottom line while simultaneously enhancing each employee's individual well-being. It's little wonder, therefore, that effective leaders keep on investing in their individual strengths and in the strengths of their people.

2. Great leaders surround themselves with highly competent people Pages 2 - 7

As counterintuitive as it may sound, the best leaders are not at all well-rounded individuals. Instead, they tend to excel in one of four specific areas:

1. *Executing* – they know how to make the right things happen.
2. *Influencing* – they know how to sell their organization's ideas both to insiders and outsiders.
3. *Relationship building* – they are good at keeping a high performing team together and on song.
4. *Strategic thinking* – they keep everyone focused on the possibilities and what could be.

Savvy leaders know where their own strengths lie and therefore build their own team made up of individuals who are exceptionally strong in those areas in which the leader himself or herself is weak. Great leaders achieve more because they assemble and utilize a better team than average performers. They put together great teams and then harness the collective talents of the team to maximum effect.

3. Effective leaders understand the needs of their followers in depth Page 8

People follow leaders for only four reasons:

1. They trust that leader to do the right thing at all times.
2. They believe the leader genuinely cares about the rank-and-file employees.
3. They consider the leader is stable and can be counted on in times of need.
4. They have confidence in the leader because he or she makes them feel enthusiastic about the future.

Great leaders understand their people and intuitively provide them with just what they need to perform to the best of their abilities.

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