

## Strength = talent x investment

Marcus Buckingham and Donald Clifton describe this formula in their book «Discover your strengths now!» It sums up what I recommend as a strategy in career assessment: Build your career on your personal strengths!

Peter Näf

Do you know the film «Seabiscuit» from 2003? It tells the true story of a small, stubborn horse that was considered to have no chance of a racing career. Nevertheless, with the help of an unconventional team, it fights its way to the top of the racing world - a beautiful story that cinema-goers love. However, the jockey pays a high price for this by having a serious accident.

Applied to a career, I call a similar approach «The American Way». It is based on the idea that we could become anything if we wanted it enough and were prepared to pay any price for it. This approach produces an incalculable number of losers and very rarely a hero or heroine - but at a high price, as the formula in the title suggests.

### «The Pragmatic Way»

For those who do not aspire to hero status, I recommend a more pragmatic approach.

Of course, the prerequisites for certain careers are easier to assess with horses than with people. This is because strengths are poor signposts in human career development, as for many professions there is no direct link between strengths and professional success (see my article on this).

So, what is the point of my recommendation to build a career on personal strengths? It's about personal style. In many professions we can be

successful in different ways, which is often overlooked due to the stereotyping of job roles.

### Find your personal style

Here's an example: Many years ago, I advised a manager on his career development. When discussing his strengths, we were unable to distinguish between natural and acquired strengths and came to different conclusions. As I was aware of his great ambition, I finally asked him to tell me what strengths made a successful manager.

His ideal image of a manager corresponded to the widespread stereotype of a self-confident, extraverted, and charismatic dynamic person. This also made it clear why I always felt a little uncomfortable with him. Because he tried to fulfil his ideal image, which was not his personality, he came across as fake. Due to his young age, he had enough energy to keep up this put-on style. However, I advised him to live according to his nature, which would cost him less energy in the long term and make him more successful.

I was only ever successful in my life when I did things in my own personal way. But it takes courage to go your own way when it doesn't conform to the mainstream.

Find your own personal style so that one day you can sing along to Frank Sinatra's «I did it my way!» at your 80th birthday party.

[#personalbranding](#) [#strengths](#) [#personalitydevelopment](#)

Please find further articles on career topics on my homepage  
<https://karrierecoaching.ch/en/articles/>

