

# *How to Talk About Your Strengths: Interviewing*

Interviewing is all about convincing an employer that you're the candidate they should to hire. To do that effectively you need to communicate that *you* have what *they* want – and that includes your strengths.

## **Step 1: Know your employer's needs**

Study the job description and any information you can find on the employer to understand the employer's requirements and the qualities (including strengths) they're looking for in a candidate.

## **Step 2: Know your value**

You're the only one who can talk about you! To market yourself successfully to employers, you need to convince them you have what they need. That includes your education, experiences, and industry-specific skills – but it also means your unique set of natural talents. The CliftonStrengths instrument can help you identify your Top 5 talent themes/strengths.

Click here to take the [CliftonStrengths](#) instrument.

## **Step 3: Translate your strengths**

Talking to employers about your strengths in CliftonStrengths language (i.e., that you have “woo” or “significance”) is likely to be confusing. Instead, login to your [CliftonStrengths](#) account and click on each of your Top 5 strengths to access the online descriptions and watch the videos to figure out what each strength means to you – then put that strength in your own words. Take it to the next level by answering the question, “So what?” Figure out how each strength might be important and valuable to a potential employer.

For example, instead of just saying “My greatest strength is woo,” you could say “I have a natural talent for building effective and broad social networks” or “I’m a skilled networker, great at initiating relationships and engaging new prospects.”

## **Step 4: Prove it**

You'll always want to think about how you can make someone *believe* that you truly possess the talents and skills you claim to have. Be prepared to provide specific examples that back up the strengths you share in the interview. Stories and specific examples make you credible.

## Step 5: Prepare and practice.

Knowing your strengths will help you more easily answer these and other similar questions:

- **Tell me about yourself.** Take the opportunity with this open-ended question to share your most relevant selling points, including your education, experience, and select strengths. See sample response below.
- **Why should we hire you?** Among other selling points, incorporate the strength(s) that will be particularly important/relevant to the position/employer you're seeking.
- **How does this position fit with your career goals?** If your career goals are broad or undefined, you can still talk about how this position would provide you the opportunity to leverage x strength and that wherever your career path takes you, you know maximizing x strength will be a part of the equation.
- **What's your greatest strength?** Focus on one of your top natural talents that the employer will find relevant – put it in your own words and provide an example that proves it.
- **What's your greatest weakness?** Try to think of a prior or unrelated weakness and bring the conversation back to positives by sharing how your strength(s) allow you to manage that weakness.

Tell me about yourself (sample response):

I'm a junior studying business administration with a concentration in marketing at Towson University (EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION – SHARE WHAT'S RELEVANT). I have a passion for marketing and currently serve as the Marketing Chair for my sorority; I also had an internship as a marketing intern last summer with Company X (RELEVANT EXPERIENCE). In addition to my skills in social media marketing, I've been told that I'm adept at spotting relevant patterns and issues (AKA: Strategic), I love solving problems (AKA: Restorative), and have a strong work ethic (AKA: Achiever) (STRENGTHS IN YOUR OWN WORDS). I'd be happy to dive a bit deeper on any of these if it would be helpful...