



Spot Your Strengths: Skills Inventory Worksheet

Summary

The “Spot Your Strengths: Skills Inventory Worksheet” is part of a five-part series called *Your Career is Calling: Five Paths to Job Perfection*. This series focuses on finding your career calling and discovering the five paths to your perfect job. See www.squawkfox.com/category/career-work to follow the series.

Four Points to Ponder

Before itemizing your skills inventory, be sure to ponder the following three points. Keeping these points in mind can help you spot your strengths.

1. Go beyond the obvious: One key to accessing your strengths is to see beyond the functional roles performed by your job title. Indeed, a teacher tends to teach, a marketer markets stuff, and a manager often manages things. Get past job functions and look at your transferable skills sets. Some marketable skills sets include:

- **Communication:** The ability to express and interpret ideas and convey knowledge. Skills like speaking effectively, writing concisely, listening attentively, expressing ideas, reporting information, editing, interviewing, and facilitating group discussion.
- **Research and Planning:** The ability to search for specific knowledge and formulate a program for a definite course of action. Skills like forecasting, predicting, identifying issues, finding alternatives, gathering information, solving problems, setting goals, extracting information, and developing strategies.
- **Human Relations:** The ability to apply interpersonal skills to resolve conflict, relate to people, and help people. Skills like providing support for others, listening, delegating with respect, representing others, asserting, developing rapport, and perceiving feelings.
- **Management, Organization, Leadership:** The ability to supervise others and guide individuals and groups towards the completion of tasks. Skills like managing groups, selling ideas, making decisions, managing conflict, coordinating tasks, teaching, enlisting help.

2. List specific skills: Avoid generalizations and be specific about your skills. Try to list transferable skills which can be broadly applied across a number of fields. For example, “excellent communicator” is general, while “writes concise instruction manuals” is more specific.

3. Be brutally honest: We all can’t be good at everything. Ok, if you’re good at everything then please, stop reading. But if you’re like me, then you have some weaknesses which should be listed. For example, I am a terrible public speaker. I break into cold sweats whenever I face a crowd. I usually prefer avoiding roles where public speaking is of paramount importance. If you have some weaknesses, be sure to list them.

4. Consider hobbies, pastimes, and sports: Go beyond past careers and courses and consider all your hobbies, pastimes, and sports. There's huge value in translating your strengths from your favorite activities to your career calling. Expand your skills inventory to include the wicked things you do on the weekends.

Itemizing Your Skills Inventory

It's time to itemize your skills inventory. This is not an easy task. I find listing my accomplishments, strengths, and weakness very challenging. Just throw away your humble nature and really be honest when listing your weaknesses and tenacious by tallying your talents.

1. Start by making a chronological list of all the jobs you've held since the beginning of your career.

Go ahead and list some of your pastimes and hobbies too. If you are a new graduate student, then list all pertinent courses, projects, cooperative education experiences, and awards. Don't be afraid to list both your stellar subjects and the courses you cursed. Remember, there is value in knowing what you are good at and where your weakness lies.

3. Next to each job, hobby, or course make a note of the things you did well, and not so well.

In the "Strengths" column, list your best skills. In the "Weakness" column, list what didn't go so well in this position, course, or hobby.

4. For each position, note what you believe was your most important accomplishment.

Did you win a new customer, solve a problem, or sell above quota? Be thoughtful about this and try to go beyond the obvious. For new graduates, mention if you won a scholarship, aced an exam, or finished at the top of your class.

5. Review all your responses.

Be sure you followed the *Four Points to Ponder* by going beyond the obvious, listing only specific skills, considering pastimes, and being brutally honest. After filling in a few columns you may see patterns and themes emerging from the strengths and weakness throughout your career or coursework. When I've completed this exercise I've found surprising consistency over time. Being brutally honest really helps.

Skills Inventory

JOB or COURSE or HOBBY	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESS	ACCOMPLISHMENT

Conclusion

Congratulations! You reached the end of the “Spot Your Strengths: Skills Inventory Worksheet”. Continue to the next instalment in the series, *Your Career is Calling: Five Paths to Job Perfection*. See www.squawkfox.com/category/career-work for more information.