**TALENTS INQUIRY AND STRENGTHS SCAN EXERCISE**

**It is crucial that your employees know their strengths – the key skills, abilities, and behaviors that they can leverage and use successfully in their role. It is not uncommon for employees to underestimate their strengths and how they might further develop those areas as well as contribute / perform at a higher level.**

Part 1: Employee asks others for feedback to help identify strengths.

# EMPLOYEE STRENGTHS SCAN

* Ask 3-5 friends, family members, supervisors (former or current), career mentors, and/or co‐workers (former or current) to tell you what they think are your strengths and talents, most positive or special qualities, and your greatest personal characteristics.
* If possible, try to include people who know you from different times and contexts of your life and include people in at least the following categories: family member(s), friend(s), and co‐worker(s).
* It is best to ask them to provide this to you in written form so that you can compare the responses and see patterns.
* Once you have their responses, summarize the themes you see among them.
* Some possible questions to ask:
  1. *What are my standout strengths? (very few others are as good as I am)*
  2. *What are my moderate strengths? (I’m good – so are many others)*
  3. *How would people describe me?*
  4. *What does it look like when I overuse my strengths?*

For example, if one’s strength is “passion for their work” he/she may appear emotional or too intense if “passion” is overused.

* 1. *What are 1-2 skills I should strengthen? How would it help me, given what I want to do?*

Part 2: Self-Reflection

# TALENTS INQUIRY

Make a list of everything that comes naturally – things for which you seem to have a “knack”.

* Include work‐related and non‐work‐related things in your list. Sometimes talents are those things that we consider fun and not “work”, even if we do them in a work‐related context.
* Do not include those things where you think you have developed a skill, but have no real *natural* talent.
* Think about times when you are in *flow* – when you lose track of time because you are enjoying what you are doing. These might be times that hold clues as to your talents.

Part 3: Putting it All Together

* + Write a “Talents and Strengths” profile of yourself based on the information you gathered from the Strengths Scan and your Talents Inquiry process.
  + As you write, describe your strengths and talents *in action*. Use examples from your work and life history.
  + Share this with others as a way to refine your understanding of the information. For example, you may share it with your supervisor in a discussion about your work goals and the kinds of experiences and responsibilities you’d like to take on.

Once the Talents and Strengths Profile is complete, the employee and supervisor / manager can begin to discuss how the profile can help with their current role, as well as looking forward to future opportunities.