

Developing Your Strength

Competition

The genius of your Competition talent begins with the tremendous energy, drive and determination within you. You want to succeed. You demand success for yourself and you measure that success in terms of where you stand in comparison to others. For you, second place is sometimes seen as another word for “loser.” But the drive to win, succeed and achieve isn’t focused on you alone. This can be a basis for leadership and impacting the lives of others. First, your “win attitude” is a model for others. Second, your competition is often turned into being a source of inspiration for others. And finally, you can use your competition talent to stimulate others to strive for higher levels of performance and productivity. You are someone who grabs the attention of others and they begin to believe that they too can achieve.

Adapted from “The Genius and Beauty found within The Clifton StrengthsFinder Themes of Talent,” by Edward C. Anderson

Applying Competition Talents in Careers

- Explore leadership opportunities on campus, particularly in organizations where you can stimulate others to excel and win.
- Go to the career center and take several different career inventories, then compare yourself to others who are successful in fields that interest you.
- Choose work environments that challenge you and in which your success can be quantified with scores, ratings, and rankings. Avoid situations lacking meaningful, objective measurement criteria, as you often desire a "yardstick" with which you can measure your progress and compare it to that of others.
- Decide whether you prefer to compete as an individual or as a team member. Select employment that matches your preference either for total or shared control over final results.
- Environments that reward your achievement and offer status or prestige are likely to bring out your best.
- Talk to sales reps, politicians, lawyers, athletes, and business leaders about what they enjoy most in their work.

Adapted from StrengthsQuest website: www.strengthsquest.com

Career Plan of Action:

Applying Competition Talents in Academics

General Academic Life

- Regard grades as your scorecard. Invest more effort in classes where the results of tests, papers, and projects are posted for all to see.
- Monitor your grade-point average by the week, month, or academic term. Compare your class ranking to that of your closest rivals. Realize that striving for the highest GPA leads you to excel.
- Clarify how professors weight class participation, final exams, presentations, laboratory experiments, and research projects. Continuously monitor your grades and class standing.
- Study your opponents — that is, your classmates. Identify each one's strengths. Evaluate their study strategies. Continually compare your results to theirs.

Study Techniques

- Seek out highly competitive people and study with them. Know that you will push each other to learn more, faster. Figure out how to manage the inevitable undercurrent of tension that will exist.
- Pit yourself against a fellow student to increase your chances of being the first person to finish the paper or project.
- Establish measurable and meaningful academic goals. Use these to force yourself to reach the highest levels of productivity, mastery, or quality.
- Identify the best students in your classes or major area of study. Investigate what they routinely do to be number one.
- Quiz your professors about their criteria for earning the highest grades in their classes. Explain that you aim to understand the material better than anyone else in the class.

Relationships

- Intentionally surround yourself with competitive people.
- Aim to know something special about every person in the class by the end of the first month. Use these insights to your advantage when you vie against them.
- Help classmates understand that you are hardwired to have the last word in casual conversation, classroom discussion, or formal debate.

Class Selection

- Apply at universities and departments within universities where admission standards are highly competitive. Make sure that objective, meaningful, and measurable criteria are used to determine who is selected.
- Take advanced-level classes to enhance the odds of winning important academic scholarships, grants, internships, and fellowships.
- Select instructors who encourage rivalry between students.

Extracurricular Activities

- Try out for the debate or speech team. Audition for a play, first chair in a section of the orchestra, or a featured dancing role.
- Play competitive sports. Risk being a walk-on to win a spot on an athletic team.
- Check your department's bulletin boards for opportunities to enter contests. Gravitate to contests sponsored by student and professional organizations in your major area of study.
- Run for leadership positions such as student senate, class president or club officer. Campaign to win.

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Academic Plan of Action:
