Do strengths work? The effects of strengths use in the work context

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[Abstract]: The emergence of the positive psychology approach has evoked an interest in the study of individual strengths, which refer to specific individual characteristics, traits, and abilities that, when employed, are energizing and allow a person to perform at his or her personal best (Linley & Harrington, 2006; Wood, Linley, Maltby, Kashdan, & Hurling, 2011). While research on strengths use is still in its infancy, recent studies have indicated that strengths use may lead to valuable outcomes, such as work engagement and well-being (Harzer & Ruch, 2012; Keenan & Mostert, 2013), and reduced stress and greater self-esteem (Wood et al., 2011). Also, there is some initial evidence that employees who perceive a strengths-based climate in their organization perform better (Van Woerkom & Meyers, 2014). This makes strengths use behavior of employees and the perceived organizational support (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986) for employees to use their strengths relevant concepts for organizational scholars. In this presentation, I will discuss two empirical studies that we conducted on strengths use and support for strengths use in the work context, including a cross-sectional study predicting employee sick absenteeism (Van Woerkom, Bakker & Nishii, 2015), and a field experiment (Meyers & Van Woerkom, in progress).