



The County Line



November 2016

Why Personality Matters in the Workplace

By Dr. Woody Woodward Ph.D.



Building and cultivating relationships is an integral part of any career strategy. Whether you are a job seeker, manager or entrepreneur, you are in the relationship business. When it comes to building relationships you must start with self-knowledge, and that starts with personality.

The study of personality is fundamentally about asking: Who am I? I know it sounds cliché, but before you can effectively reach outward to others, you have to be able to look inward. The study of personality provides some great insights into how to do this.

Personality can be tough to define; from the four temperaments of Hippocrates (choleric, melancholic, sanguine, and phlegmatic) to Freud's theory of the unconscious there have been countless attempts at nailing down this highly abstract thing we call personality.

According to personality expert, Professor John Mayer, "personality is the organized, developing, system within the individual that represents the collective action of that individual's major psychological subsystems." In layman's terms, I like to think of personality as that inherent driver of how we act. It's that natural disposition we fall back on when all those other forces of the outside world are accounted for.

A great way to describe personality is to use a popular model called the Big Five. The five factor model, more popularly known as the Big Five, is one of the most researched models of personality. The model provides a great overview of

everyday personality and how it relates to the workplace. Compared to other models, the Big Five enjoys a fairly high level of academic consensus as well as empirical support. The theory being that there are five major trait categories that describe our personality. According to the Big Five, we all consistently fall somewhere along each of the following five continuums that I like to remember as OCEAN.

Openness to Experience: At the open end, individuals are highly interested in experiencing new things and are flexible in their thinking, where at the opposite end, individuals are more closed minded and rigid in how they approach new experiences.

Conscientiousness: Those who are high in conscientiousness tend to be diligent and dutiful in the way they approach work and life. Individuals who are lower on the conscientiousness scale tend to be big picture thinkers and less interested in the details of how things get done.

Extraversion/Introversion: Probably the most recognizable personality trait is extraversion because it's easy to see. Extraverts are socially assertive and gain energy from performing for and interacting with others. Introverts draw energy from reflection and tend to prefer working alone or in small groups.

Agreeableness: This scale looks at the level of friendliness versus hostility that someone tends to display when interacting with others. Those high in agreeableness are more trusting and modest whereas those low in agreeableness are more suspicious and oppositional.

Neuroticism (Emotional Stability): Those who are highly neurotic tend to be less stable and frequently demonstrate negative emotions. Those who are more emotionally stable are generally pleasant and tend to be resistant to stress. When

thinking about and observing personality I always caution people to keep two things in mind: behavior and intent.

Behavior vs. Personality: Behavior is what we observe in others as bystanders. We all learn about others and make attributions based on what we see. However, personality is not the only driver of behavior, there are always external forces operating to influence how we behave. Thus, we have to be careful about the attributions we make based on limited observations within certain contexts.

It is important to remember that we all have the ability to act counter to our preferences, which is often referred to as acting out of character. When trying to get a sense of someone, look for consistent behaviors as opposed to unusual behaviors.

Intent and Personality: A frequent complaint I hear from clients is that one of their colleagues is intentionally holding back and not asserting himself. In their mind, this person is actively going against the grain.

The issue is not that the person is trying to be different than you; he/she is actually different from you! Understanding individual differences is critical in managing teams. Diversity of personality is often a key component to building a successful team. The trick is to understand how to harness the power of personality differences for success.

Understanding your own personality and the personalities of those around you is critical to success. Keep in mind personality is only one of many drivers of behavior, but it is one that is consistent over time. There are numerous personality assessments out there on the market, most of which are about as useful as taking the latest Cosmo quiz. Look for those that have some foundation in or strong overlap with the Big Five.

COMPLETE BRIEF "BIG-FIVE MODEL" PERSONALITY TEST | [CLICK HERE](#)

LUNCH AND LEARN



SPONSORED BY THE WELLNESS COMMITTEE AND THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

DECEMBER 8, 2016
YORKTOWN LIBRARY
12:30 PM – 1:30 PM

This is a highly engaging workshop that completely involves all the participants.

Daniel Green, Certified Personal Trainer and Fitness Director at AMERICAN FAMILY FITNESS - WMBG. will lead the session.

All lunch and learn participants will be entered in a drawing for an AFF gift pack.

Bring a lunch to enjoy!

2 Sessions in 1

- Combat Sitting Disease ... Everybody Up!
- Fitness Myths - BUSTED!

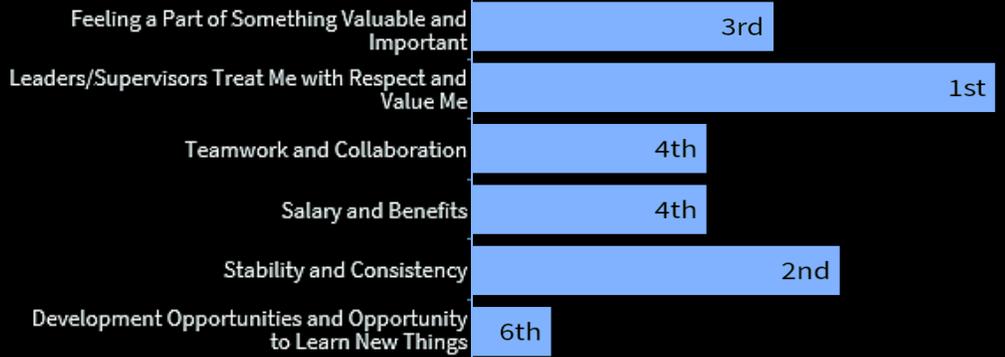
2 Raffles

- \$15 Subway Gift Card
- York County Tote filled with healthy goodies

WHAT IS MOST MEANINGFUL AND REWARDING ABOUT YOUR CURRENT WORK?

THE RESULTS ARE IN!

Answers to this poll are anonymous



FIND OUT WHERE WE STAND.

County employees shared their insights regarding last month's poll.

See results above.

MOST IMPORTANT VALUE

Leaders / Supervisors that Treat Me With Respect and Value Me



Most leaders are trying to figure out the right strategy. The best leaders are obsessed with empowering the right people.

— Craig Groeschel —

How to Build a Strong Relationship with a New Boss

- by Carolyn O'Hara

Harvard Business Review

Your boss has decided to retire, or maybe is moving out of state, and someone else is taking their place. How should you establish a positive, productive working relationship with your new manager?

How do you get to know them in a professional setting? And what's your role in getting them up to speed on the job?



CLICK TO READ ARTICLE

20 POWERFUL QUESTIONS THAT WILL HELP YOU SUCCEED IN LIFE AND BUSINESS

Inc.com

By Marcel Schwantes

It's a widely known fact that getting the help of a professional coach works splendidly to move you forward in whatever areas of work or life are challenging you. Boosting emotional intelligence? No problem. Improving team performance? Sure thing.

And the secret to great coaching lies in the powerful questions being asked, which most people tend not to ask themselves. This is both art and science found in the best of coaches.

READ THE ARTICLE

GO COMMUNICATE! EXPLORING AND IMPROVING HOW YOUR TEAMS INTERACT



All day, every day, teams rely on communication to get work done. But teams are made up of people—and people are human. That means teams will struggle with communication at some point in time.

Join subject matter expert David Hutchens; he'll offer fresh ways to help you address the communication challenges your teams encounter through increasing both dialogue skills and self-awareness.

HRDQ-U
IDEAS FOR LEARNING

REGISTER FOR THE WEBINAR

Reality isn't something you perceive; it's something you create in your mind. Isaac Lidsky learned this profound lesson firsthand, when unexpected life circumstances yielded valuable insights. In this introspective, personal talk, he challenges us to let go of excuses, assumptions and fears, and accept the awesome responsibility of being the creators of our own reality.

Why you should listen

Lidsky runs a big construction services company based in Florida, has co-founded an Internet startup and a nonprofit and is a member of the Young Presidents' Organization (YPO). He graduated in math and computer science from Harvard and then added a law degree magna cum laude from the same university, clerked for US Supreme Court Justices Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg and argued a dozen cases in federal court on behalf of the US Justice Department, not losing any.

Approx. 12 mins. | Over 1 million views

"What Reality Are You Creating For Yourself?"



WATCH THE VIDEO



ORGANIZING TEAM DECISION MAKING: REACHING CONSENSUS FOR BETTER DECISIONS

https://www.mindtools.com/team_decisions

While many of the decisions we make on a daily basis are quite simple, some are not.

These decisions may involve assimilating a huge amount of information, exploring many different ideas, and drawing on many strands of experience.

And the consequences of the right or wrong decision may be profound for the team and the organization.

So, should leaders be decisive, think the issues through on their own, and take firm action? In some cases "no."

There's a limit to how much information any one individual can process, and a limit on how many perspectives one person can see. Many decisions need full group participation to explore the situation, provide input, and make a final choice. As you've probably seen, groups can often make better decisions than any one person operating on his or her own. This is one of the main reasons that good companies have boards, to which important decisions are taken.

What's more, many decisions need "buy-in" from the people affected by them if they're to be implemented successfully, and it's hard to get this buy-in if people haven't been involved in the decision-making process.

The problem is that when you bring other people into the decision-making process, you need to approach decisions differently. These approaches vary, depending on a number of different factors, including:

- The type of decision.
- The time and resources available.
- The nature of the task being worked on.
- The environment the group wants to create.
- The amount of buy-in needed.

Understanding why and how best to organize decisions for your team is an important skill. We'll show you some key tools that you can use when you want to involve your whole team in the decision-making process.

The Challenge of Team Decisions

Using team input is challenging, and it takes preparation and time. As the saying goes, if you put three people together in a room, you'll often get four opinions. People can often see issues differently – and they all have different experiences, values, personalities, styles, and needs. Team decision-making strategies should therefore

be used when you want to get participation and achieve consensus.

When time is of the essence, a good decision is one that's made quickly. That doesn't usually happen with full team decision making. And when one or two people have the necessary expertise to make the decision, it doesn't make sense to involve the whole team – the experts provide most of the input and make the final choice anyway. However, where the situation is complex, consequences are significant, commitment and buy-in are important, and where team members can work together maturely, team decision making is often best.

Team Consensus Methods

When your whole group needs to be involved in the process, you need to explore consensus decision-making models. With these, each team member has the opportunity to provide input and opinions. All members discuss alternatives until they agree on a solution.

With consensus, there's often compromise. Not everyone gets everything they want out of the final decision. However, because everyone has fair input, the decisions reached are often ones that all can live with. Let's look at a few team decision-making strategies.

Ensuring Participation

A consensus decision depends on hearing everyone's opinion. In a team situation, that doesn't always happen naturally: assertive people can tend to get the most attention. Less assertive team members can often feel intimidated and don't always speak up, particularly when their ideas are very different from the popular view.

The Stepladder Technique can help you manage these differences. Each team member thinks about the problem individually and, one at a time, introduces new ideas to the group leader – without knowing what ideas have already been discussed. After the first two people present their ideas, they discuss them together. Then the leader adds a third person, who presents his or her ideas before hearing the previous input. This cycle of presentation and discussion continues until the whole team has a chance to add their opinions.

The benefit of this process is that everyone feels heard and acknowledged. Once all of the ideas have been presented, the team can look at ways to narrow the options down, and make a decision.

Voting for Consensus

Voting is a popular method for making decisions, and it's a good approach to use where opinions are strongly divided between two or three options.

Unfortunately, it becomes less useful where there are many options – imagine an election where people have only one vote to choose between eight candidates: it's possible that a candidate could win with as little as 13 percent of the vote. This would leave 87 percent of people feeling very dissatisfied!

Multi-voting can address this problem. Proceeding through a number of rounds of voting, individuals

are given a certain number of votes in each ballot, which they can allocate to the various options any way they want. Essentially, they provide a "weighting" to their choices. They can give one vote to each of several different choices, all of their votes to one choice, or any combination in between. After all the votes are placed, the choices with the highest number of votes are carried through to the next round, until a winner emerges.

This method allows more people to have input in the final decision. There may still be people who give the final choice no votes, but that number tends to be significantly reduced. This method is popular when time is an issue and full buy-in isn't essential for success.

Establishing Group Priorities

A similar situation is where you need to prioritize a set of options, where everyone has different views, and there's no objective framework that people can use for decisions. (The classic situation in which this occurs is where people are allocating resources between competing projects.)

Here, the Modified Borda Count provides an effective framework for ranking priorities and choosing the option that best fits those priorities. First, the team discusses the problem, then team members narrow down the issues to the key choices they must evaluate. From there, participants each rank their top choices. The team totals the rankings for each alternative, and the options with the highest ranking emerge as the group's priorities.

Anonymous Contributions

Sometimes, people with deep expertise that you need to draw on may dislike one-another so much that they have difficulties working together. In others, people may need to discuss issues which are real, but unpalatable or embarrassing. In still others, proposals may need to be developed and explored in tremendous detail, suiting individual scrutiny and analysis away from a meeting.

For these situations, managing the process in a way that allows anonymous and remote contributions can help you avoid destructive situations and reach a good, well-thought-through decision.

With the Delphi Method, a facilitator helps participants individually brainstorm solutions and submit their ideas "anonymously" – other team members don't know who submitted which ideas. The facilitator collects and organizes the input, submits it to others for development, critique and refinement, then goes back and forth to all participants until everyone agrees to a final set of choices – and, eventually, a final decision.

Conducting these discussions is very time-consuming, and you need an experienced facilitator who can help individuals come together to find a solution. But the result is usually a robust final decision that has been fully explored, and is supported by each team member.

-Written by the Mind Tools Editorial Team

HOW APPROACHABLE ARE YOU?

Being approachable is key to building relationships with your colleagues, and to creating a strong team in which trust, confidence and ideas can flow. When you're approachable, team members do not sit on, or cover up, problems.

Approachability is about being accessible, consciously breaking down perceived barriers, having appropriate body language, and using the right verbal communication and listening skills.

Take this quiz to find out just how approachable you are, and discover strategies for becoming more approachable in areas that are holding you back.



NOVEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

Change is Inevitable; Effective Personnel Management and Adaptation are Key to Success

The Manager /Supervisor Spotlight is a resource on The Navigator specifically geared to the needs and challenges faced by managers, supervisors and lead employees. The topic will be updated monthly and each will be archived for your reference.



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