Module 14

Read Ahead

Employee Personality
Module 14: Employee Personality

Objectives

After attending the training in Module 13, participants will be able to:

- recognize the need to understand the unique personalities of employees and other individuals.
- identify the benefits of working with others based on their temperaments.
- identify various tools to “type” people’s personalities.
- understand that personalities do result in daily behaviors and viewpoints.

Understanding Employees and Others

Examining and working with the personalities of others provides a highly-personalized development experience. Additionally, personality tools allow a supervisor to gain strategies for becoming an effective leader. Personality traits do not excuse poor performance, but understanding weaknesses can assist a supervisor in coaching an employee. Likewise, understanding strengths will assist in managing others.

“Knowing your own personality type will help you know your natural tendencies in facing change and making day-to-day decisions.” - Gene Wilkes, Jesus on Leadership

Benefits of Understanding Personalities

Benefits of working with personalities and temperaments in mind are numerous. Some benefits include the following:

- Boosts productivity of employees when working with their strengths
- Increases employee development by assessing and working to minimize weaknesses
- Reduces stress for employees and supervisors
- Increases respect for one another
- Improves communication
- Decreases conflict that arises from relational style differences
- Increases self-awareness
- Helps supervisors and employees grow personally
- Increases positive aspects of team management

The kind of leadership that brings about innovation, social change, or business transformation must have a broad perspective about the range of behaviors required. These behaviors can be detected by examining personality.
Personality Typing

“Better understanding of our motivations and actions that grow out of our basic personality can help us reach personal satisfaction.” -- Dr. Gary Smalley

Why is it that we automatically “click” with some of our coworkers, while others seem to grate on our last nerve? Why do some people fit right into certain jobs, while others never seem to get the hang of it? A lot of our workplace interactions—the good and the bad—may be connected to our personality styles. Sometimes, two similar personality styles might butt heads, or other times, totally opposite personality styles might not understand each other. These examples and others can cause tension, conflict, and frustration.

There are many models for personality testing. Below is a list of a few personality typing tools:

- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
- Smalley Animal Style Personality Test
- DISC Profile

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

The Myers–Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a self-report questionnaire designed to indicate psychological preferences in how people perceive the world and make decisions. It was constructed by Katharine Cook Briggs and her daughter, Isabel Briggs Myers. It is based on the typological theory proposed by Carl Jung in his book, Psychological Types. The underlying assumption of the MBTI is that we all have specific preferences in the way we construe our experiences and that these preferences underlie our interests, needs, values, and motivation. An MBTI Type has four letters representing an individual’s preferences from the following four pairs. The MBTI assessment sorts for an overall preference for one or the other within each pair.

**Attitudes: Extraversion/Introversion**

*Extraversion:* outward-turning; operates in the external world of behavior, action, people, and things; draws energy from action with others; and tends to act, then reflect, then act further;

*Introversion:* inward-turning; operates in the internal world of ideas and reflection; expends energy through action; prefers to reflect, maybe act, then reflect again; needs quiet time alone, away from activity.

**Perceiving Mental Function: Sensing and Intuition**

These are the information-gathering pair (how you prefer to take in information). They describe how new information is understood and interpreted.
Sensing: trusts information that is in the present, tangible, and concrete; understands information through the five senses (smell, touch, see, hear or taste); distrusts gut hunches, which seem to come out of nowhere; tends to be more logical; works in a step by step method; looks for details and facts; and finds meaning in the data.

Intuition: trusts information that is less dependent upon the senses; trusts their sixth sense; associates with information either remembered or discovered by seeking a wider context or pattern; interests are in future possibilities; tends to be more imaginative and ingenious; and understands life as underlying theory and principles.

Judging Mental Function: Thinking and Feeling

Thinking and Feeling are the decision-making pair and are used to make rational decisions.

Thinking: tends to decide things from a more detached standpoint; measures the decision by what seems logical, consistent, and match with a given set of rules; has trouble interacting with people who are inconsistent or illogical to their given set of rules or values; and are very direct in communication.

Feeling: tends to come to decisions by associating or empathizing with the situation or people involved; looks at situations from the inside; weighs the situation to achieve (with balance) the greatest harmony, consensus, and fit; and considers the needs of the people involved.

Lifestyle Preferences: Judging/Perceiving

Judging or Perceiving function relates to the outside world of people and how their life is presented.

Judging: enjoys order and structure; tends to be very decisive and opinionated; likes situations and work to be complete and finished; believes timeliness is important; and enjoys routine, known and fixed work environments.

Perception: keeps decisions open to more research or information; are flexible and spontaneous; tends to be distracted easily; and enjoys a less rigorous schedule or agenda.

There is much more to the MBTI; thus, it is considered a more in-depth temperament assessment tool. However, the MBTI is a more accurate assessment of one’s core personality overall.

Smalley Animal Style Personality Test

This personality assessment is based on the following areas: Lion, Otter, Golden Retriever, and Beaver which each have varying characteristics.

Lion (Choleric/Dominance):
Strengths: visionary, practical, productive, strong-willed, independent, decisive
Weaknesses: cold, domineering, unemotional, self-sufficient, unforgiving, sarcastic, cruel

Otter (Sanguine/Influence)
Strengths: outgoing, responsive, warm, friendly, talkative, enthusiastic, compassionate
Weaknesses: undisciplined, unproductive, exaggerates, egocentric, unstable

Golden Retriever (Phlegmatic/Steadiness)
Strengths: calm, easy-going, dependable, quiet, objective, diplomatic, humorous
Weaknesses: selfish, stingy, procrastinator, unmotivated, indecisive, fearful, worrier

Beaver (Melancholy/Compliance)
Strengths: analytical, self-disciplined, industrious, organized, visual, sacrificing
Weaknesses – moody, self-centered, touchy, negative, unsociable, critical, revengeful

DISC Profile
For ALDOT leadership, the DISC will be used to teach how varying personalities are important.

In the 1920’s, Dr. William Moulton Marston, a psychological researcher from Harvard, originated the theory on which the DISC Profile was developed. His work focused on directly observable and measurable psychological phenomena. In 1940, Walter V. Clarke, an industrial psychologist, used Marston’s theories to develop the first DISC Personality Profile. About 10 years later, Walter Clarke Associates developed a new version of this instrument for John Cleaver. It was called Self-Description. Self-Description was used by John Geier, Ph.D., to create the original Personal Profile System (PPS) in the 1970s. Published in 1994, Inscape Publishing improved this instrument’s reliability by adding new items and removing non-functioning items. The Personal Profile System 2800 Series (PPS 2800) is used primarily for increasing self-awareness in a setting where an individual could use the insights during interactions with others. This self-scored and self-interpreted assessment is now known as DISC.

DISC personality is a good indicator of how people communicate in the workplace. A leader will benefit by understanding the communication style that works best with each employee, how the team works together, and how the team works with the leader. The DISC is not considered valid or reliable as far as personality tests are concerned, but it will provide adequate data to give team leaders a starting point for understanding employees. The DISC breaks down personality into four categories:

D (Dominant)
The D personality is considered a driver and can run over other people if not careful. This personality is a hard-charging individual who is results-oriented and does not care as much about details. Dominant personalities are not too concerned about how their decisions will affect other people’s feelings. They just want to get the job done—and get it done quickly.

**I (Influencing)**

The I personality style is a party waiting for a place to happen because this individual is gregarious and outgoing. These “people persons” can be described as influential, expressive, compulsive, persuasive, and easily distracted. They are loaded with energy and love being around people.

**S (Stable)**

The S personality is amiable, loyal, anti-conflict, and concerned about peace. Everybody loves the S, and the S loves everybody. S people can be slow about making decisions—only because they want to make sure everyone is on board.

**C (Compliant)**

The C is the rule-keeper. This person is analytical, factual, and loves detail and procedures. Rule-keepers can seem rigid. But, to them, the rules are the rules, and there is a reason for each one.

Can you see how the differences between each of the personality types can have an impact on how an organization operates every day?

For instance, the S wants to make decisions slowly, making sure everyone agrees, while the D wants quick decisions and does not care if feelings get hurt. At the same time, the I is talking and having a good time seeking information from others, while the C is analyzing everything being said.

Personality conflicts can interfere with an organization of just two people, so just imagine some of the possible issues in a company of dozens, or even hundreds or thousands of people. That is why understanding these personality types is so important.

**Your Profile Exercise - Homework**

Your homework:
1. Go online to the DISC website - [https://discpersonalitytesting.com/free-disc-test/](https://discpersonalitytesting.com/free-disc-test/)
2. Take the free test.
3. Print your results.
4. Answer the following questions.
What did you discover?

Name three strengths.
1.
2.
3.

Name three weaknesses or areas you need to develop.
1.
2.
3.

Please remember that your personality is not a license to ignore your weaknesses or make excuses for them. The point is to discover more about yourself and your team.

**Future Homework**

Now let’s expand your new knowledge to benefit your team.
- Set some goals and “type” your team:
- Plan a team building time.
- Introduce a personality assessment and provide a clear goal for the results.
- Share the results, if everyone agrees.
- Have some fun.
- Help your team grow through this process.
References


