Knowing work styles predicts work behavior

Success in the knowledge economy comes to those who know themselves, their strengths, their values, and how they best perform,” according to Peter Drucker. And success for workplace leaders comes with knowing employees and associates.

You have worked hard to hire and train a good management team.

George has worked with you for three months. His communication style is direct. He has many good ideas and is good at starting projects. But George is weak on finishing what he starts.

Mary, on the other hand, is good at details. She finishes what she starts. But Mary seems to lack initiative.

Jose is a great teambuilder and keeps the team motivated. His only weakness is time management. He has to be reminded to finish his projects on time.

Victoria is bright and intelligent, but is not sociable. She prefers to stay in her office and send email messages to those she works with.

You ask yourself, "Why can't everyone just be like me?"

In my younger days, I had a narrow approach to managing others. I believed people who did not respond to my management style were DEFECTIVE. I evaluated everyone with the same broken yardstick. I now know I was wrong. There are eight different, but predictable work styles or behavior patterns common in people.

Toxic management

In the workplace, individuals and managers unaware of these behavior patterns will unintentionally damage their personal effectiveness. When a manager understands these unique differences then they are in a more powerful position. They are better able to manage, understand, and lead people toward higher levels of productivity, lower frustration, higher morale, and better retention rates.
Many organizations are turning to behavior assessments and personality trait testing for both hourly workers and managers. Back in the late '90s, only 5% of Fortune 500 companies used some type of assessment. Today, that figure is climbing to 65%. A year 2000 study by American Management Association showed nearly half of 1,085 employers polled use at least one assessment in their interviewing process.

Assessments can…

- Help individuals identify their strengths, know which jobs they are best suited for, and design a development plan to overcome shortcomings.
- Help HR managers predict a job applicant's success before they are hired.
- Help business owners understand the temperament and work style of individual employees and managers.
- Help supervisors give performance feedback to people in a style they understand and accept for improving performance and accelerating professional development.
- Help people enhance communication, understanding, and improve personal relationships.
- Help sales managers select, hire, develop, and motivate super sales people.

One employer used assessments to improve the hiring and recruiting process. Previously, this employer made hiring decisions based on the candidate's resume and then hired the person based on their "gut" reaction. Once hired, many of these new people created friction, had bad work ethics, and their attitudes had a negative impact on their coworkers.

By using assessments this employer created a visual benchmark (graphic) of their "top" performers. The employer used another profile to identify the values, emotional competencies, and behaviors needed for success based on the requirements needed by each department.

The organization had a roadmap for success. The assessments identified the behavior patterns, communication styles, motivations, and attitudes of the top employees. In other words, the organization cloned its top performers.

These assessments measure individual attitudes, values, personal interests, and behavior with 85% accuracy. Now the employer is able to screen out applicants who may have good interview skills, have a great resume, but none the less are not suited for the job. The process saves the employer thousands of dollars in costs and reduces a lot of frustrations.

I worked with one organization that failed to reach its sales goals.

After completing a behavior assessment on each of the directors, the problem was clear. The executive director and two assistant directors possessed the same personality style -- all three of them disliked confrontation. Their natural tendency was to go overboard to please people. They didn't like to hold people accountable. After they understood their natural tendencies, they were able to adapt and manage more effectively.
Developing people is less expensive than firing them.

By understanding behavior differences an organization can align an employee's motivations with its mission. Assessments also help individuals reduce conflict and get along better. Furthermore, coworkers appreciate each person's unique strengths and abilities. With this knowledge organizations and managers can maximize the abilities of their workforce in ways to help make all employees star performers.

**Free information:** For more on this topic go to: www.chartcourse.com/ttiassessmts.html. Gregory P. Smith is author of the book, Here Today Here Tomorrow: Transforming Your Workforce from High Turnover to High-Retention. He is president of Chart Your Course International, Conyers, GA. Phone him at 770-860-9464.

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### Assessment Examples

Most assessments available on the market today can be administered on the Internet and generate an amazing amount of detail. One assessment we are familiar with provides over 25 pages of information including:

- General characteristics
- Value to the organization
- Checklist for communicating
- Don'ts on communicating
- Ideal work environment
- Perceptions
- Keys to motivating
- Keys to managing
- Areas for improvement
- Ranking of 12 leadership competencies
- Action plan for improvement

Successful management development programs first begin with self-analysis. When you understand behavior styles, then you have a roadmap for improved potential and enhanced communication. One assessment identifies eight unique behavior patterns people fall into depicted on a wheel. The behavior styles are:

- Implementor
- Conductor
- Persuader
- Promoter
- Relater
- Supporter
- Coordinator
- Analyzer

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