

## **Personality Tests Crack the Job Fit Code** **By Ira Wolfe**

What does it mean when people talk about finding the right personality for a job?

Personality is typically defined as the unique bundle of motivations, attitudes and behaviors that make each of us who we are. One individual's bundle may be outgoing, creative, and excitable and another is reserved, organized, and calm. But when the quiet speak and the assertive are tamed, do aliens suddenly take over their bodies to do these weird things? Can people actually change their personalities so easily?

No, not really. When you observe changes like these, you typically are observing behaviors. Behaviors describe how individuals react to specific situations like problems, people, pace of environment and procedures. People, when willing and able, can adapt and modify their behavior easily but can personalities be changed? Do personalities keep us stuck in our ways?

Overwhelmingly consensus agrees that personalities rarely change after adolescence and when change does happen it happens slowly. For example. Your salesperson refuses to work your database and call prospects and clients. He has been "diagnosed" as having call reluctance. You invest thousands in training, provide coaching and phone scripts, and add sales incentives. Maybe, just maybe his behavior will change. But will this change stick? Not likely. If it does, how long will it be until the core personality shows through again or the individual burns out?

When it comes to the workplace, behaviors are like the wrapping on the gift. Sometimes the shape of the box and the design of the paper give away hints to what is inside. Many times the gift inside turns out to be something totally unexpected.

What is happening as a result of many of today's hiring and succession decisions is that managers are making decisions based on the "gift wrap" or behaviors. After the gift is unwrapped and the proverbial honeymoon is over, all that is left is what's inside - the personality. And many managers are wishing they kept the receipts because they are now stuck with very expensive unwanted gifts.

Personality testing is saving managers the enormous expense, heartache and embarrassment of hiring a "great personality" only to find out who they really hired is the wrong fit or worse, the infamous "problem personality". Personality tests based on the five-factor model are widely accepted due to their usefulness in finding out who a person really is and how they will fit an environment, a team, or a job.

One five factor employee assessment TotalView helps hiring managers easily separate the achievers from the do-ers, the risk-takers from the risk-averse, the outgoing from the reserved, and the relaxed from the easily excitable. It helps predict if an individual will adapt and lead change, display leadership or sales ability, and benefit from coaching and development.

When looking to build an organization of people with the "right stuff", think personality. Breakthroughs in technologies and volumes of empirical research are beginning to crack the code for identifying and developing peak performers.

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