



# UNDERSTANDING PERSONALITIES ENHANCES RELATIONSHIPS *AND* PRODUCTIVITY

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**R**eflect on a time when you've been frustrated with a boss or coworker—we've all been there. It's likely the conflict arose from miscommunication. Employees who are unable to recognize the symptoms of miscommunication often become trapped in a spiral of frustration. They stew on the disagreement, in turn becoming unmotivated and unproductive. The ability to recognize our communication preferences and how we naturally react to situations can stop the spiral into unproductive behavior. That is where a personality profile becomes so valuable.

## THE BUSINESS CASE

A personality profile aids in our self-awareness. Once we better understand ourselves, our stress

factors, and how our personalities are perceived by others, we can take the next step of developing communication skills and tactics to quickly identify when communication is headed in the wrong direction and resolve the situation.

Simultaneously, personality profiles help us to recognize and understand the behavior and communication styles of others. Learning to value the talents and perspectives of differing personality styles improves collaboration. When we understand others (and ourselves), we can develop the skills to prevent miscues from occurring in the first place. This in turn allows us to decrease “unproductive time” and create better solutions and processes, all leading to enhanced productivity and engagement.

A 2016 Gallup study on employee engagement<sup>1</sup> found that business units with high employee engagement are 21% more productive when compared to their bottom-quartile counterparts. The study also found that higher workplace engagement leads to other positive outcomes, including fewer safety incidents (41%), lower absenteeism (37%), fewer quality defects (41%), and less internal theft or shrinkage (28%).

These benefits make performing a personality profile worth the investment.

## BEGIN THE JOURNEY

Though there are a variety of personality tests available, including free online options, you'd be wise to select a company and model that has been used and tested over

time when making the investment for your business. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® or DiSC® both are widely used by organizational behavior trainers. At BSM Consulting, our preferred model is Insights® Discovery. This model, based on the psychology of Carl Jung, uses the language of memorable color engines to describe personality preferences.

It is uncanny how a 30-minute online preference evaluator can produce a profile that so accurately describes each person in very specific, unique terms. The profile highlights an individual's value to the team, motivators, communication “do's and don'ts,” strengths, weaknesses, and possible blind spots.

Despite its insightfulness, though, reading a personal profile or “how to communicate” tips is not enough.

### PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

To effectively use the information from personality profiles, you need training. Achieving harmonious communication specifically requires participating in workshops and exercises with colleagues. These types of training activities will allow you to observe behavioral preferences in action and teach you specific tactics to effectively communicate among team members.

I find that carefully selected exercises and role-playing usually lead to the biggest moments of self-discovery, along with a greater appreciation for different team member's preferences. While people may grumble about role-playing, if you fail to practice a new communication skill in a safe environment, the chances of you being able to use

it when you are under stress (and likely need it the most) are slim.

### BE COMMITTED TO GROWTH

After initial training, everyone should be encouraged to focus on one or two key items. For instance, at BSM, we hand out color energy blocks provided by Insights® Discovery to serve as a reminder for employees to focus on all the color energies and the need to use different behaviors at the right time. Specifically, some use their blocks as a reminder to contemplate the value of each unique color energy's preferences, while others take a more tangible approach by using their blocks to channel their associated communication styles.

Personally, when I'm working on a benchmarking report and need focused analysis, I place the block related to analytical thinking — cool blue — at the top of my stack. Or, as I'm entering a coaching call, I place the color energy preferred by that administrator at the top of my stack to remind me to communicate using his or her preference style. Subtle steps such as these can make a noticeable difference.

Typically, this type of shift in a company's attitude and culture takes 12 to 18 months to “stick,” and refreshers should be regularly scheduled to serve as reinforcement. Every three months or so, practices committed to improving their teamwork and corporate culture should provide a refresher on either a communication skill or an employee's ability to use different behavior styles in the appropriate situation. A commitment should be made to reading, retraining, and facilitating refresher exercises at regular intervals. Remember, continuous improvement is

never-ending, and crafting a long-term plan is critical to success.

### BE PATIENT

As individuals, we are each “wired” differently. Our own unique experiences and preferences have compounded to form our personality and behavioral styles. This has been years in the making, so be patient with yourself as you work to gain self-knowledge.

Acquiring a fundamental understanding of yourself through a unique personality profile will help you to enhance your strengths and mitigate your weaknesses. Meanwhile, you will learn to value the talents and perspectives of differing personality styles, allowing you to be better equipped at preventing misunderstandings. The dividends you will reap include improved relationships in the workplace, which will increase your job satisfaction and engagement; your practice will experience better solutions and processes and a more productive environment. **AE**

### NOTE

<sup>1</sup>Gallup. (2016). Gallup Q12® Meta-Analysis Report. Retrieved from [https://news.gallup.com/reports/191489/q12-meta-analysis-report-2016.aspx?utm\\_source=link\\_news9&utm\\_campaign=item\\_190352&utm\\_medium=copy](https://news.gallup.com/reports/191489/q12-meta-analysis-report-2016.aspx?utm_source=link_news9&utm_campaign=item_190352&utm_medium=copy)



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