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# Character Building

## PERSONALITY SNAPSHOTS CAN HELP COMPANIES MAXIMIZE POTENTIAL

**W**OULDNT IT BE GREAT IF DNA tests could determine the right people to hire? Recruitment ads would call for personality DNA samples the same way they do resumes or salary histories – great in theory, but not a reality. While DNA breakthroughs are occurring in biological and forensic science laboratories around the world, DNA still does little to predict an individual's hiring suitability in terms of preferred management style, expectations or ability to communicate.

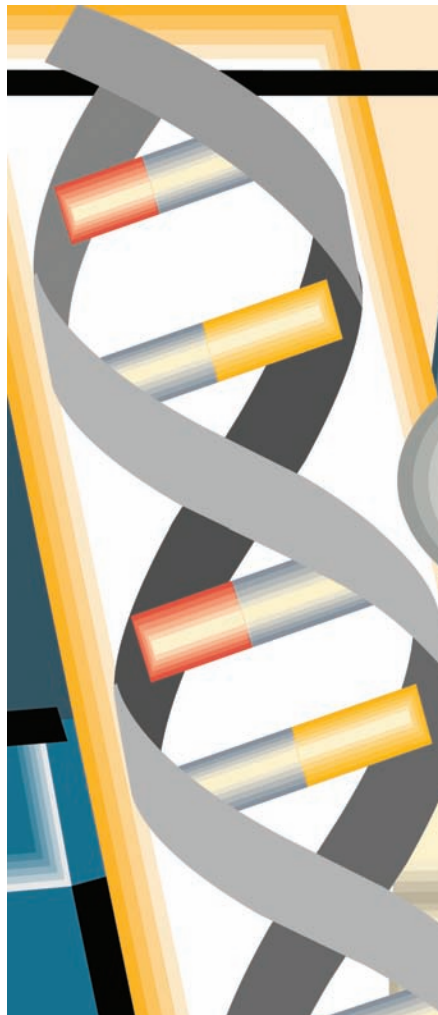
So, on to the next best method: a personality snapshot. A personality snapshot helps managers understand how an individual thinks, solves problems, copes with stress and deals with others. It also reveals how individuals are alike or different, where potential conflicts may lie and what is required to build trust. In other words, the quick glimpse offers an employer insight into someone's personality in a way that may otherwise take years to learn.

### ROADBLOCKS TO EFFICIENCY

One primary reason companies use personality data is because they've hit a roadblock, which often has a negative impact on efficiency. Getting to the root of the problem means determining its source. Routinely, obstacles stem from the managers who believe they can apply one style of management to any problem successfully. When this approach fails with specific employees, productivity decreases and resistance develops. Obviously, the individuals who clash with management don't come forth to complain about the manager's style for fear of job security. Instead, they simply do their best to get by working under a manager whose style they either abhor or don't understand.

Other roadblocks that are virtually eliminated using personality data include:

- Lack of trust. Unless management recognizes a trustworthy employee fairly quickly, in order to build and sustain that trust over the long term, it will severely undermine team and individual productivity.
- Unsupportive environment. A supportive workplace is necessary to sustain both individual and team efficiency. Once an employee develops the skills to help get up to speed in a given position, eventually



a comfort zone is reached. When the same individual enters a different environment where his or her ability to feel at ease is undermined, expect an adverse reaction. Personality data offers a heads-up in this situation.

- Judgmental attitude. Instead of judging people by reviewing their diverse styles or unique perspectives, managers tend to judge them as being "laborious to deal with" or "lacking common sense." Once this negative perspective is set in motion, it compromises willingness for people on the team to work efficiently.

- Lack of personal awareness. Take a team, any team, and ask its members to offer an idea of what they need to feel comfortable in a given environment. The sad

truth is many of them don't know how to answer the question as easily in their own words as they do through the questions of certain personality tests.


### PRODUCTIVITY GAINS

Corporations are using personality assessments now more than ever; still they aren't utilized anywhere near their potential. This may be due to the way assessments are perceived. While many employers rely on these only for hiring purposes, there are other ways to use personality assessments to increase productivity such as:

- To identify different learning styles.
- To reduce conflict.
- To present information in a more meaningful way.
- To define one's management style.
- To capitalize on strengths.

### TIME TO PLAY "CATCH-UP"

Consider this unfortunate statement a manager was overheard saying: "Over the last year, we've lost a lot of great people and most of them are still with us." It's time to play "catch-up." Management is long overdue when it comes to taking a closer look at employees, managing them based on their subtle differences and learning to understand what drives them.

At a time when there is no scarcity of personality assessments from which to choose, it's important to pick one that doesn't stop at measuring how people come across. Employers simply can not neglect people's motivations for doing something in the first place. Rather, studying a person's motivation using an objective, actionable tool creates a strong sense of understanding and eliminates a lot of the guesswork in order to better predict employee success in the workforce. 

*Deborah Dorsett and J. Tracy Russell are vice presidents and executive consultants for Personalysis Corporation, a management consulting firm located Houston, Texas. With their expertise in process change, they utilize the Personalysis Management System to increase skill development, design organizational strategies and bring about cultural change. For more information call 713 784-4421 or visit [www.personalalysis.com](http://www.personalalysis.com)*