Traits that make an ideal worker

Agreeableness includes sympathy, understanding, and getting along with others. PHOTO | FOTOSEARCH

Interviews represent a hallmark encompassing the very essence of management. Supervisors must get the right talent in the door and weed out incompetent or incompatible workers upfront in order to avoid months and years of organisational pain and conflict in the future.

When asking employers which attribute they most desire in an employee, a myriad of traits gush out like punctual, fun, smart, timely, patient, outgoing, kind, nurturing, aggressive, motivated, and on and on and on. The daunting list represents a cacophony of qualities that blur a more specific picture of a perfect candidate.
In addition to skills needed in a profession, human resources experts recommend hiring managers to look at outward expressions of one’s personality. Many professionals know the famous Myers Briggs personality test developed by the mother-daughter psychologists in 1943. It avoids negative versus positive constructs and focuses instead on personal preferences.

The Myers Briggs approach proves useful in team functioning. But a different type of personality approach yields better hiring decisions. Do not force applicants to take personality tests. Instead notice attributes of the big five personality traits.

Dr. Gregg Henriques delineates the broad big five personality dimensions.

First, extraversion encompasses the degree of sociability, willingness to approach others, and overall positivity.

Introverts represent the opposite with quiet, reflective, and listening behaviours.

Second, agreeableness includes one’s propensity toward interpersonal warmth, sympathy, understanding, and getting along with others. Those without agreeableness demonstrate paranoid hostility.

Third, openness covers the degree to which one desires new feelings, new locations, learning new things, and interacting with novel objects. The opposite of an open person is a closed-minded individual.

Fourth, neuroticism denotes emotionally reactive, avoidance, negative people. Calm and relaxed individuals represent stark opposites to neurotic staff.

Fifth, conscientiousness refers to achievement motivation, organisation, planning, and responsibility. Disorganised workers score low on conscientiousness.

Workplaces require employees with high levels of conscientiousness, which correlates the most to job performance.

During interviews, ask questions such as “please describe how you go about completing regular tasks”, “please explain your ideal work environment”, and “do you like standard expectations”?

A candidate who acts on impulses or behaves erratically should serve as a warning flag. Responses or references featuring “act depending on the day”, “sometimes “, “can surprise you with his/her high productivity” all point to low conscientiousness.

In contrast, a prospective employee who follows established rules, demands high quality from themselves, and keeps a neat work environment. An interviewee who asks about which rules exist, seeks to know quality standards, or values predictability likely scores high in conscientious. Search for such workers in order to boost performance.
Curious about your own big five personality score? Take a free assessment test at: https://www.outofservice.com/bigfive/.

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