

Par Judy Suiter, President of Competitive Edge, Inc.

"You cannot get to where you want to be by using the same skills set that got you to where you are."

Ref. Dudley Lynch

We live in an interdependent world economy and the wise manager will behave as if human talent is a precious asset. It is.

Despite a worldwide economic downturn, technology is robust and communication is new and cheap. Multinational brands are available to everyone and local products and services are available to the world, thanks to the Internet.

In this day and age, many managers have forgotten that people are assets too. But these assets have feet and feet are "made for walking."

As we approach the mid-point of the first decade in the 21st century, the signs of a growing mismatch between the location of the world's new workers and the locations of the world's best jobs are becoming clear as a bell. Aligning people and skills with the competitive needs of the business will be the defining factor in determining productivity and financial success or failure for decades to come.

However, selecting and retaining an exceptional employee can be more difficult than finding the perfect mate. At least dating disasters occur in a matter of hours; bad hires are not as immediately evident. If couples complain about not really knowing their mates even after years of marriage, how can we expect front-line hiring managers to know a job applicant after a 30- to 45-minute interview?

Exceptional employee performance takes place naturally when key behavioral requirements of the job, and a candidate's behavioral style and values are well matched for the position. Coaching and motivating people will be far more successful when employers treat employees as individuals. Generally speaking, behavioral testing helps managers understand their employees' needs, which creates more alignment and consequentially more success up and down the organization.

To date many new hires and many employees have been assessed on experience, skills, and appearance. But that's a minuscule part of the big picture. Current research clearly demonstrates that between 50-70% of most job qualifications may be more inherent in personality than skill.

Unfortunately, without objective assessment, appropriate behavioral traits are the least-known assets in the decision-maker's arsenal. Behavioral assessments, when accurately implemented, are quintessential tools for managing and motivating individuals and matching the right person to the right position in the right organizational culture for that person.

Fortunately the best of research and technology have been integrated and managers today have two powerful tools to assist them in the selection, management, coaching and development of their employees.

The first tool is called Success Insights and uses the DISC Behavioral Model. DISC assesses an individual's behavioral style. What is behavioral style? Everyone has at least one of four styles that can most easily be described as "how" people approach the 4 P's of everyday living. In other words, how do people approach Problems or challenges is measured by the Dominance scale, how do People try to influence others is assessed on the Influencing scale, how individuals Pace themselves and handle change is measured by the Steadiness factor, and will people follow Procedures and rules set by others is identified by the Compliance/Cautiousness factor. Individuals respond to the 4 Ps with different levels of intensity and energy. These factors may work independently or in tandem with the other behavioral factors. The interrelationship of these factors describes how an individual responds to situations and interactions in a work environment.

DISC identifies and describes these behaviors and how each style is perceived by others in a work environment. It uses a model of behavior developed by William M. Marston. Marston's model has been tested, proven accurate and effective with millions of people for more than 60 years.

After completing a short questionnaire, a report is generated that is designed to help individuals and management achieve a better understanding of this person's behavioral style. It provides powerful insight into the individual's behavioral strengths, as well as, areas that may need possible improvement. The Success Insights (DISC) report can also be used to develop strategies and methods to help individuals increase their personal flexibility in working with clients, managers, peers, and staff.

But behavioral style is only part of the picture when learning to understand human behavior. Imagine that every employee carries two empty buckets to work each day. Each bucket represents a different motivator. If an individual's experiences that day "fill" his (or her) buckets, he (or she) will feel a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. If instead he (or she) ends the day with his (or her) buckets still empty, then job dissatisfaction, stress, and even burnout and depression may result.

Motivators are a collection of learned attitudes and beliefs. They provide an individual with information regarding which motivators are most important to him (or her); individuals and corporations use these motivators for goal setting, management development, team building, decision-making, and other important areas throughout an organization.

There are six motivators (or values clusters) in this model:

1. Theoretical – searching for knowledge and solving problems.
2. Aesthetic – appreciating form, harmony, and beauty.
3. Utilitarian – viewing the world through an economic/practicality filter.
4. Individualistic – needing to control one's own destiny
5. Social – working for the good of others.
6. Traditional – living one's life through a strong set of beliefs.

Motivators/values can be assessed by using the Success Insights assessments and like behaviors, can be viewed in degrees of intensity. The intensity of each motivator is determined by the importance placed on it by our personal priorities. Motivators add depth and dimension to behaviors by providing insight into "why we do what we do." Psychologists often refer to the motivators as the initiators and drivers of behavior. By understanding what drives behaviors, individuals can select jobs and work environments that satisfy them and employers/managers can provide incentives and create corporate cultures that are "self-motivating."

If you would like more information about DISC and Values assessments, please contact my strategic partner—Christiane Benoy-Hoffmann @ The Lilith Project Sarl; 7, avenue Gaston Diderich; L-1420 Luxembourg. Telephone: 352-26-32-12-90 or email: mail@lilith.lu. Christiane Benoy-Hoffmann is the exclusive distributor of Success Insights tools and products in Luxembourg. A full inventory of her services can be obtained by visiting her website www.lilith.lu.

If you would like to purchase books on these models, please contact the author of this article, Judy Suiter, President of Competitive Edge, Inc. @ judy@competitiveedgeinc.com. She has co-authored The Universal Language DISC Reference Manual and has written Energizing People: Unleashing the Power of DISC and Exploring Values: Releasing the Power of Attitudes. Competitive Edge, Inc. has been assisting organizations in selecting, retaining, managing and developing their human capital for the past 21 years.

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