

## ***“Fitting the Right Personality in the Right Position in the Workplace”***

Nothing seems quite as important and effective in an office or business than to have the right worker in the right position. In the words of a dental office manager, “it finally feel’s great to have all of the right people on the right bus and *in the right seats*”.

The other day I was talking with a proprietor and financial analyst at a local coffee shop about this very issue. He said that recently he and his assistant interviewed two applicants for a receptionist and secretary position. The first one interviewed, had an air tight resume and extensive experience in a professional office. The next one had an inferior resume and less experience but was far more verbally engaging (the perfect quality for the position they were trying to fill). Against conventional wisdom, they hired the person with fewer miles in an office setting and “haven’t regretted it a day since”. Why? The right personality type was placed in the right position. In that particular position, the business owner needed someone with good verbal and relational skills over someone that may have had a higher IQ or better qualifications.

When organizations fail to do their research in this area of placement before hiring or keep the wrong person in the wrong position there are generally some negative consequences. A few of them are:

- *The misplaced employee will feel consistently awkward and ineffective.*
- *For them, work becomes less enjoyable, and can lead to burnout.*
- *Co-workers can become resentful because of less efficiency.*
- *Clients can sense the tension or lack of professionalism.*
- *It cost more to retrain a second person than to get it right the first time.*

Of course in our current economy, a lot of organizations prefer to cross-train and reduce individual benefits so they can keep the team in tact rather than termination. This requires more creativity in moving people around within the office and placing them in positions they didn’t originally, “sign up for”.

However, there is still an optimal need to fit the right personality type in the proper role especially during a transition time. In order to hire, place and/or keep the right worker in the right position, H.R., management or personnel directors, need at the very least a basic working knowledge of the different personality types and how they fit within the organization. For example, it's not recommended to put a social extrovert in a back cubicle working alone or an introvert as the leader of a marketing or sales team. Nor is it wise to have someone who thinks protocol and detail in a position where there is little or no structure. It would also be a misplacement to have one who is a natural leader and decision maker in a position where they are rarely able to voice their opinion or participate in some decisions.

Hippocrates founded the theory of the different temperaments in 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The 4 terms he used to distinguish the differences were Choleric, Melancholy, Phlegmatic and Sanguine.

Below are some basic samples of the differences how the 4 personality types fit within the organization:

#### CHOLERIC:

##### **Professional Interest:**

*Leadership and Administration*

##### **Unnatural Positions:**

*Assistants, support staff, subservient role, any position where advancement isn't possible, non-competitive portfolios*

##### **Natural positions:**

*CEO, director's, upper management roles, decision makers, financial vision for the organization*

## MELANCHOLY:

### **Professional Interest:**

*Organizers and detail oriented, assistants, excellent leaders/support staff*

### **Unnatural Positions:**

*Chaotic roles with no structure or specific direction, working with slackers, lack of professionalism in the organization, unclear as to what is expected of them, work frequently questioned or criticized*

### **Natural Positions:**

*One who oversees policies, protocol, and upholds the standards of the organization. Planner, delegate and oversees all the details of a given project. They are always striving for personal improvement within the organization.*

## PHLEGMATIC:

### **Professional Interest:**

*They manage systems, analyze, and mediate conflict within the organization.*

### **Unnatural Positions:**

*Any positions that is fast-paced and forced. They lose interest if there are high levels of conflict. Generally they are not strong in sales, marketing or any frontline projects. Decision makers and key leadership roles will not work for them unless they have a strong support staff.*

### **Natural Positions:**

*They work well alone and are excellent with research. They thrive on details and with a plan if they can work at their own pace. Phlegmatic people are fair and non-judgmental in their treatment of staff and clients. They excel in position's that promote fairness or need a calming influence within the organization.*

## SANGUINE:

### **Professional interest:**

*They excel at public relations, creative planning, marketing and sales.*

### **Unnatural Positions:**

*They wouldn't commonly do well in positions where they are forced to work alone. Managing finances within the organization without accountability or restricted in a role without variety or new opportunities.*

### **Natural Positions:**

*They thrive in positions where spontaneity and creativity are welcomed. They function best when they are in contact with people and are excellent in their presentations and communication skills.*

Obviously these are general categories that temperaments seem to fit in an organizational structure. As previously stated, they can be cross-trained in other areas of interest. However, for productivity sake, personal motivation, enjoyment at work, as well as a revenue concerns, people need to feel well suited for the positions they hold.

Remember, when the bus is driven by the right person, and everyone who is on the right bus are *finally* in the right seats, the ride somehow feels much smoother and destinations are reached in an enjoyable way!