

Personality Traits of Leaders

Objectives

- ✓ Define personality traits
- ✓ Describe and understand the “Big Five Model of Personality”
- ✓ Review common personality traits in leaders

Advance Preparation

- ✓ Review the provided materials (typically one hour of preparation)

Materials needed

- ✓ Projection Device
- ✓ The enclosed Power Point Presentation
- ✓ Writing Instruments
- ✓ Copies of Personality Profile Survey (Attachment 1)

Time needed

- ✓ 30 minutes

Background

What are traits of leaders? This is not a new question. As a matter of fact, trying to determine traits of leaders has been studied for years. The first noted leadership theories focused on leadership traits of individuals. Covey (2004) points out that the first recognized leadership theory was *Great-Man Theories*. These theories focused on studying leaders like Moses, Gandhi, Washington, and Churchill. The conclusion of the Great-Man Theories was that “there is no such thing as leadership by the masses. The individuals in every society possess different degrees of intelligence, energy, and moral face” (Covey, p. 352).

Everyone is different. Some people are extroverted while others are introverted. One thing we know for sure. Everyone has traits and everyone has different personalities. There are truly no two people that are exactly alike. We can define traits as distinguishing personal characteristics. Personality is best defined as a combination of traits that classifies an individual’s behavior.

There are all types of personality profiles that help each of us determine our own personalities. One of the most widely recognized personality profiles is the “*Big Five Model of Personality*.” The Big Five Model of Personality categorizes traits into dimensions of surgency, agreeableness, adjustment, conscientiousness, and openness to experience (Lussier and Achua, 2001).

Interest Approach

Attachment 1 (Personality Profile Survey) is provided to allow each participant to independently assess themselves to see where their personality most logically fits.

Lesson

1. Start with slide 1 by introducing the topic.
2. Slide 2 outlines the objectives for this lesson.

3. Slide 3 defines the terms “trait” and “personality.” Most people have their own definitions or know the definitions of these terms. These two definitions just clarify for the lesson what is meant by these two terms.
4. Slide 4 introduces “The Big Model of Personality.”
5. Slides 5-9 discuss each of these individually.
6. Slide 5 - **Surgency** – includes leadership and extroversion traits. People strong in surgency like to lead and want to be in charge.
7. Slide 6 - **Agreeableness** – includes traits related to getting along with people. People strong in this area are typically characterized as warm, easygoing, compassionate, friendly, and sociable.
8. Slide 7 - **Adjustment** – includes traits related to emotional stability. People strong in adjustment are characterized as being good under pressure, having self control, being calm, secure, and positive.
9. Slide 8 - **Conscientiousness** – includes traits related to achievement. People that are conscientiousness are hard working, go beyond the call of duty, and have a strong desire to achieve success.
10. Slide 9 - **Openness to Experience** – includes traits related to being willing to change and try new things. These individuals are risk takers free thinkers, and creative.
11. Slide 10 Summarizes of the “The Big Model of Personality.”
12. Slide 11 discusses nine leadership traits. These include: Dominance, High Energy, Self-confidence, Locus of Control, Stability, Integrity, Intelligence, Flexibility and Sensitivity to Others.
13. Slide 12 discusses reasons why leaders are not successful.
14. Slide 14 is a summary.

Conclusion

There are very few people in the world that are strong in these nine traits. Great leaders may not be strong in all nine of these. However, it is important that each of us know our strengths and weaknesses. What we can do is work on the traits that we may not be strong in. There is one thing we know for sure, you can not lead others until you know yourself.

References

Covey, S. R. (2004). *The eighth habit: From effectiveness to greatness*. New York, NY: FranklinCovey Co.

House, R. J. and Aditya, R. N. (1997). The social scientific study of leadership: Quo Vadis? *Journal of Management*, 23 (May-June 1997) 409-474.

Lussier, R. N. and Achua, C. F. (2001). *Leadership: Theory, Application, Skill Development*. Cincinnati, OH: South-Western College Publishing.