What are the traits of leaders? This is a question that has been studied for years. The first important leadership theories focused on leadership traits of individuals and were called Great-Man Theories. These theories focused on studying leaders such as 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 2004, p. 352).

Everyone is different, with different traits and different personalities. Truly, no two people are exactly alike. We can define traits as distinguishing personal characteristics. Personality is a combination of traits that classifies an individual’s behavior.

There are many personality profiles that help us determine our own personalities. One of the most widely recognized is the Big Five Model of Personality. This personality profile categorizes traits into dimensions of surgency, agreeableness, adjustment, conscientiousness, and openness to experience (Lussier and Achua, 2001) (Fig. 1).

**Interest approach**

Give each person a copy of the Personality Profile Survey (Attachment 1) and have them independently assess their own personalities.

**Lesson**

1. Introduce the topic (slide 1).
2. Review the objectives for this lesson (slide 2).
3. Define the terms “trait” and “personality” (slide 3). Most people have their own definitions or know the definitions of these terms.
4. Introduce The Big Five Model of Personality (slide 4).
5. Discuss each of these individually (slides 5-9).
6. **Surgency** – includes leadership and extroversion traits. People strong in surgency like to lead and want to be in charge (slide 5).

7. **Agreeableness** – includes traits related to getting along with people. People strong in this area are warm, easygoing, compassionate, friendly and sociable (slide 6).

8. **Adjustment** – includes traits related to emotional stability. People strong in adjustment are good under pressure, have self control, and are calm, secure and positive (slide 7).

9. **Conscientiousness** – includes traits related to achievement. People who are conscientious are hard working, go beyond the call of duty, and have a strong desire to succeed (slide 8).

10. **Openness to experience** – includes traits related to being willing to change and try new things. These individuals are risk takers, free thinkers, and creative (slide 9).

11. Summarize The Big Five Model of Personality (slide 10).

12. Discuss these nine leadership traits: dominance, high energy, self-confidence, locus of control, stability, integrity, intelligence, flexibility and sensitivity to others (slide 11).

13. Discuss reasons why leaders sometimes are not successful (slide 12).

14. Summarize the lesson (slide 13).

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**Conclusion**

There are very few people in the world who are strong in all nine leadership traits. Even some great leaders are not strong in all of them. It is important for each of us to know our strengths and weaknesses so we can work on the traits we need to develop. You cannot lead others until you know yourself.

**References**

