How to Manage These 6 Different Workplace Personality Types

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I've been on a 15-year journey of going from "bad boss" (more like "terrible" boss) to "good boss" (okay, I'll settle for "better" boss). Ideas, vision and content are my thing, not so much how to expertly manage all the different kinds of people who have worked for me over the years.

Nowadays, my company is stable, my clients are happy and my team is amazing. But that wasn't always the case. There was a time when I embraced the philosophy of "equal management for all." When that didn't produce the desired results, I realized I had to pivot to a more individualized approach to managing and motivating my people.

I started noticing who responds best to what and which personality types reach their full potential under which types of leadership. Here are a few pages from my notes on cultivating and nurturing the best team possible.

Speaking to your staff members in their own language

It's a given that everyone is unique and that no one fits precisely into a particular mold (who'd want that, anyway?). Nevertheless, there are some basic categories, generally speaking, with which your team members' personalities will naturally align. Individuality at work is actually much

preferred to uniformity, but you also can't have each member running their own race, by their own rules.

To leverage each person's strengths to the advantage of both your company and your clients, consider these tips on taming certain personality traits that might be restraining talents or hindering performance.

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#1: The detail-oriented perfectionist

Though not everyone appreciates "the stickler," I, for one, do. Yes, they can get lost in the forest for the trees (sometimes even the leaves), but you're sure to have someone on staff who sees only the big picture (on my staff, that's me!), and the perfectionist serves as the yin to that yang, adding their microvision to the organization's macrovision. This person's "love language" is clear direction:

- Provide them with as much detail as possible when you assign them tasks.
- When they invariably pose questions, answer them quickly and thoroughly, then follow up by asking if they have all the information they need to proceed.
- Opt for a phone call here over an email, in which you're sure to leave something out, simply because your brain doesn't work like theirs.

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#2: The defensive type who doesn't

take feedback well

No doubt you'll encounter someone who is great at their job but not so great when you need to provide input on how to do that job. Often, defensiveness stems from insecurity born long ago, and while you can't make this person more comfortable receiving constructive criticism, you *can* gently guide them toward less defensiveness by putting them at ease with certain tactics:

- Whenever possible, communicate personally with this person – a Zoom chat or a phone call; texts and emails can be misinterpreted and exacerbate issues.
- Make this person feel secure (the antidote to insecurity). Let them know, often and openly, how safe their place on your team is and how valuable their contributions are.
- Always employ the "sandwich method": words of praise, necessary feedback, more praise.

#3: The wannabe coach instead of field player

It can be a blessing to have someone on your team who wants to be the leader instead of being led. But your job is already taken. So, how do you handle someone who wants to take charge when you're the boss in charge?

- Recognize this personality's need to lead something and give them something to lead: a department, a niche of the business, a particular client list.
- Allow this person their domain, show trust in their competency and let them direct what they prove themself good at directing.
- Even while you're granting them space to flex their leadership muscles, though, have regular check-ins to

manage expectations and job parameters. Loosen and tighten the reins a bit as you deem fit to grant them freedom to oversee without inviting them to overstep.

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#4: The overly confident type

People who lack self-confidence respond well to a lot of hand-holding and assurance to help them find their inner strength. People who have an overabundance of confidence are often masking self-doubts and perceived deficiencies behind a veil of bravado. What's common to both types? They both need extra support to get more in tune with a healthy balance of self-regard. When dealing with a "know-it-all" whose confidence in their skills might exceed those skills somewhat:

- Red-line their work as needed — no long, drawn-out criticisms and explanations or lecturing that would just be met with resistance. Simply show in black-and-white the tweaks that would elevate their output with the goal of them noticing their own areas for improvement.
- Communicate with this person via email to keep discussions more objective and focused.
- Don't give an arrogant attitude less support because it seems so self-sufficient; give this person more to demonstrate where and how direction is needed.

#5: The low-motivation employee

You might ask, "Why would I hire someone who isn't self-motivated?" The answer lies in their impressive skill set or proven track record, and the operative word here is "self." When someone isn't self-motivated, that doesn't mean they can't make a stellar contribution; it just means you have to step in as the motivating force. Some employees just need

their boss to push them – they expect the supervision and react favorably to the encouragement.

- Send many reminders: upcoming projects, pending deadlines and expected benchmarks. They may not look at the clock naturally, but your notifications will prompt them to.
- Guide them to find what lights their fire (music? balancing budgets? travel?), and then incorporate those identified passions into their job function to light a fire under them.
- Make sure they're aware that you support their work-life balance. Often, with the right leader behind them permitting them to be who they are, the employee will discover their own well of motivation.

#6: The challenged organizer

We all can't be good at everything, right? You'll likely have a staffer who's long on creativity and resourcefulness but short on time management and prioritization. When it comes to the more disorganized personality, add order to their workflow in a variety of ways:

- Require them to use your company's project management software to automate and track job progress.
- Use the "buddy system" when applicable, teaming them up with someone stronger where they're weaker to model desired performance and promote accountability.
- Talk to them candidly about the lack of organization you've observed, then ask them outright what you can do and what tools you can provide to support their process for job completion.

Sure, there are a lot more types of people you'll work with and a lot more techniques for helping them achieve their personal best. But if you take the time to learn what drives them and what fuel they need to drive most efficiently, your

management style can help get them out of their own way and on the surefire path to their highest potential.

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