

Personal Leadership Analysis

Assessment 2 – Individual Report: Strategic Plan

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MBA6140 - Strategic Leadership & Stakeholder Management



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Introduction

This paper looks to examine and critically analyse the strategic leadership style of the author. Through an historical reflection, will be a discussion on how the author manages change. The paper then concludes with a strategic planning process that looks forward to the years to come in order to evaluate and express goals, career objectives and desired leadership qualities.

Research suggests that strategic leadership (pp. 206-245), managing change and a strategic planning process (pp. 134-171) are all important aspects of modern leadership (McKee, Kemp, & Spence, 2012). That being the case, it could be argued that leaders have a responsibility to themselves and their followers to analyse their characteristics and abilities in these important aspects in order to recognise their strengths and growth areas accordingly.

Many would agree that know thyself is one of the most commonly utilised phrases in leadership courses and is prominent in Turesky and Gallagher's 2011 paper on Kolb's experimental leadership theory (Turesky & Gallagher, 2011). Dating back to ancient Greece, this Delphic Maxim whilst appearing to be quite obvious, can also be taken to have a much deeper meaning (Betz, 1981). When looked at in conjunction with the tens of other Maxims, one can easily perceive the strong moral and ethical nature attempting to be communicated (Oikonomides, 1987). Further to this Plato and Socrates conject that to know thyself as described in the Maxim, extends to more than simply looking towards oneself but also how we are perceived by others or how we are reflected (Betz, 1981). This suggests any analysis would be incomplete without such data showing this reflection.

The essential characteristics of a good leader

Leadership characteristics are varied and numerous. The individual attitudes and ideas from the leadership lectures show leadership traits such as visionary, communicative, capable of change, trustworthy, wise, passionate, resilient, have heart and strength (Werner, 2015, Hall, 2015, Bowen, 2015, Faix, 2015). Interestingly these are all traits that could be described as having a positive connotation. Most would agree that successful leaders from recent history do display many of these characteristics. Leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Sir Winston Churchill, Warren Buffet, Sir Richard Branson and Donald Trump, all show elements of these common

characteristics at one point or another. For example, in a class presentation Even Hall spoke of the moral strength of Winston Churchill as well as his outstanding ability to communicate (Hall, 2015).

Leadership analysis does suggest that there are characteristics that are common to being a good leader. Most would agree that the characteristics listed above are common amongst many leaders. However this is not always the case and *Figure 1 – leaders and their traits*, shows this commonality or lack thereof in greater detail.

Leader	Characteristics				
Churchill	Courage	Perseverance	Communicative	Resilience	
Mandela	Positiveness	Forgiving	Humble	Visionary	Resilience
Trump	Ambitious	Sociable	Inquisitive	Bold	Lacks diligence
Branson	Confident	Trust worthy	Humble	Authentic	Enthusiastic
Buffet	Humble	Decisive	Passionate	Dedicated	Conscientious

Figure 1 – leaders and their traits (Benmorehead.com, 2015), (Pillai, 2015), (Prichard, 2014), (The personality of Donald Trump, 2015)

Figure 1 – leaders and their traits does suggest that traits such as humbleness, resilience and vision are common however, when looking at these results we see that while the majority of these leaders display traits considered by many to be positive, Donald Trump does not share these characteristics. In fact according to psychology today, Mr Trump is bold, ambitious, outspoken and lacks diligence (The personality of Donald Trump, 2015). These traits appear to be on the opposite scale of those shared by other leaders in business or otherwise.

In her 2012 book, Annie McKee talks about the secret to effective leadership (McKee, Kemp, & Spence, 2012). An interesting and informative metaphor used by McKee is that of an iceberg. The iceberg metaphor clearly shows the stages or levels of leadership development but more than that it suggests the parts that help make up an effective leader. McKee suggests that there is a difference between the visible capabilities and the hidden ones as depicted in *figure 2 – The iceberg metaphor*. Interestingly, motives, traits and the conception of self, are all considered hidden aspects. This indicates that there is a difference between how one feels or acts under

normal circumstances opposed to what is shown to others or that is disguised and covered by ones outward skills.

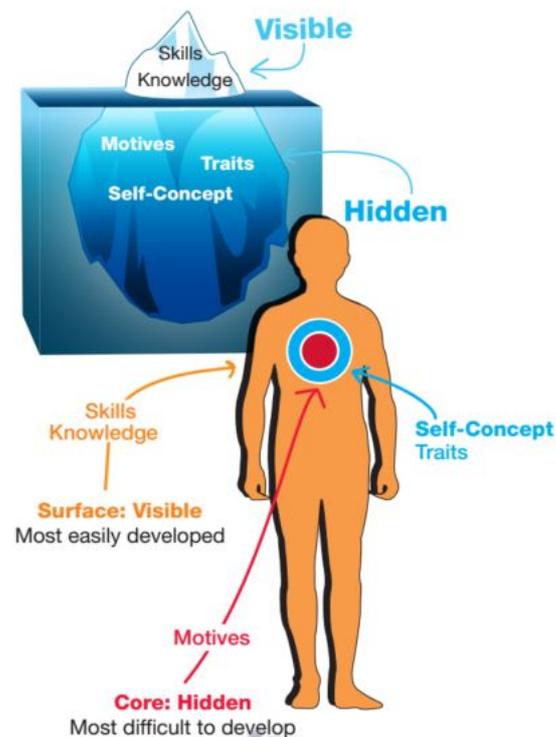


Figure 2 – The iceberg metaphor (McKee, Kemp, & Spence, 2012)

Could this hidden aspect explain why leaders such as Donald Trump show traits not common to other leaders? Is Mr Trump simply not as adept at disguising these traits as his peers and if one could see behind closed doors, would all leaders equally demonstrate the more negative side of their personalities?

Recent research suggests that personality traits actually have very little to do with good leadership. In fact according to studies undertaken by Charles Handy, only about 5% of traits were found to be common across leaders (Martin & Fellenz, 2010, p. 197). This leads us to the conclusion that leadership is not something held only by the select few as expressed in Great Man theory, but rather is something that can be learnt or achieved by any who have the motivation and determination to do so. This kind of understanding has been labelled situational theory. The evidence of this is shown by the very different natures of leaders such as Warren Buffet and Donald Trump. One being humble and empathetic, the other self-absorbed and immodest yet both are arguably successful leaders and have amassed large fortunes in the billions of dollars.

What characteristics then should those wishing to enhance their leadership skills look to emulate? Research suggests that there is no correct answer to this question and that one's own personality would suffice. Further works on behavioural and situational leadership however, show that behaviours and traits such as intelligence, integrity, initiative, interpersonal abilities and stress resilience are all important factors of great leadership (Martin & Fellenz, 2010). This research also suggests that the situation and the traits of the followers will also have an impact on the particular behaviours required or realised.

My leadership strengths and weaknesses

SWOT Analysis

In my role as an Operations Manager and formally as an IT Project Manager, risk analysis and decision making is common place. These items cannot be taken lightly however so articles must sometimes be used to aid in the decision process. One such article is the SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The purpose of the SWOT analysis is for the user to brainstorm the different areas, noting down key items according to the corresponding quadrant for use in strategic planning and decision making. By analysing the SWOT grid one can better understand areas needing to be strengthened, areas showing to be of greatest opportunity, and allow the user to begin to align localised tactics to overarching strategies.

	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	Strengths good communicator willing to share victory intelligent confident well presented human	Weaknesses sometimes miss the fine details can be dismissive don't suffer fools lightly need to enjoy what I do lack of organisation



Figure 3 – SWOT analysis

Looking at the SWOT chart shown in *Figure 3 – SWOT analysis* we can clearly see the strengths and weaknesses as they relate to me. To align this strategically it would seem prudent that in my future work, I would need someone to pick up on the areas noted as weaknesses. For example an administration assistant should be utilised to organise and remind. Subject matter experts or SME's such as consultants and specialist should be engaged to fill in any gaps around the finer details.

Opportunities are here along with the threats to their success. It is clear that overwork and failure are important factors to me and I need to be mindful of my work life balance. To align these strategically, care must be taken to plan for leave and advice must be solicited in order to sufficiently plan for both up and downturns to the target market. Threats also indicate that solid market research would be essential prior to starting a business such as the gym.

General Learning

Through the course of this unit I have been mindful of the different types of leaders that have presented. We have been graced with academics and successful women such as Dr Lianne Cretney-Barnes and Esme Bowen, highly driven and ambitious leaders like Ben Auld and Allan Williams along with political types such as Evan Hall. I found the lectures and presentations I attended most informative and in every case came away with a new learning. In the case of Esme Bowen I was awakened to the human aspect of leadership and how Esme really utilised her

empathy guide her team and get the best out of the group she was working with (Bowen, 2015). In the case of Ben Auld, Ben showed that by falling back on our support network such as family and friends, we can find great inspiration and drive even when things are tough. Allan Williams on the other hand, really made me think about the importance of continuous improvement through education and things of that nature (Williams, 2015).

Another surprising source of knowledge was that of my class mates. I was pleasingly impressed with the class presentations and especially those of Martin Luther King and Ratan Tata. Not only did I find these leaders inspirational but more so the presentations themselves I found to be interesting and engaging. Knowing that some of my colleagues struggle with public speaking and confidence, the lesson of knowledge is power was certainly driven home. My class mates evidenced that by really knowing the subject matter and being passionate about it, gave them the ability to deliver presentations with conviction and strength. I was personally able to use the example of the Tata Nano with work colleagues to impress upon them the importance of integrity and completing what we start with little compromise.

Throughout this semester I have found contributing to the discussion board helpful in a number of ways. First, reading the other students comments and questions has helped with my insight into the mindset of others and other cultures. Reading the points and takeaways others have from the guest speakers really helps to expand my own thinking and awareness of what was said and portrayed by the speakers. Further to this, having to explain my understandings to the rest of the group as well as answering questions others posted, adds to and cements one's own knowledge of a particular subject.

Forward Plan

My life in brief

In a previous essay I outlined my short, medium and long distance career plan. That being the case when researching for this paper, it is no surprise that one of the first places I looked was that original essay. It is interesting to see how I felt about my future 5, 10 and 15 years from now and compare that to how I feel now, just 12 months down the road. *Figure 4 – goal comparison by year range* shows the

comparison of my thoughts and goals through the years, comparing each to 5, 10 and 15 years into the future.

Looking forward	1995-2000	2000-2010	2015 onwards
5	Equal earning but a more enjoyable job.	Increasing my role to cover an entire region	Already promoted to regional management level so new goal of furthering this region to greater levels of success.
10	Increased earning towards financial freedom	Utilising my skills and leanings from my MBA to work on a struggling region bringing it to success.	Completing PHD and moving into an executive level position.
15	Running own business and aiming at retirement	Possibly completing a PHD in order to move into lecturing.	Lecturing allowing for greater balance of free time.

Figure 4 – goal comparison by year range

To synthesise the results of *Figure 4 – goal comparison by year range*, we can see that in the first instance around the mid 1990’s, my goals were much simpler and less far reaching than that of the later times. Without increasing my earning but performing a role that was enjoyable, had an incredible attraction to me. Within 10 years I wanted to enjoy a level of financial freedom and was always looking for business opportunities with an idea of retiring at an early age.

Throughout the first decade of the new millennium I found that my career had taken a slightly different path. I had started and stopped a few business ventures, all with differing levels of success but found that what I was really good at was moving up the ladder at my work places and continually improving my education. Throughout this time and culminating in my personal and professional development submission, my immediate goal was to move into a vice presidency role managing the entire

APAC region of my current employ. Having moved quite well through my MBA to date, and following discussions with Dr Brian Handley, the idea of further study began to enter my mindset.

Just 12 months on I find that I have already moved into a regional position looking after over 40 staff across the UK, Thailand, Singapore and Australia. In this role I have increased control over strategies and processes for the region as well as greater influence with the executive team in the United States. That being said and having achieved a grade sufficient to apply for the PHD course, I find that completing this is a desire that has increased dramatically. Opposed to what many may consider success, I find the notion of lessening my work load and stresses, even if that means a reduction in income is also desirable. To that end, part time lecturing is very much a goal I would like to achieve in the next 10 to 15 years.

My leadership style

Having been in a management position for over 10 years I have had many occasions to analyse my particular style of leadership. I have also explored this by undertaking tests such as Myer Briggs type indicator, McGregor's XY management style, Honey and Mumford's learning styles, the SAPA project and the DISC personality test. The SAPA project was quite a lengthy exercise and covered areas from personality through to logic. *Figure 5 - SAPA personality report*, shows graphically the levels indicated against those results. This shows a relatively balanced outcome without one area dominating too greatly.

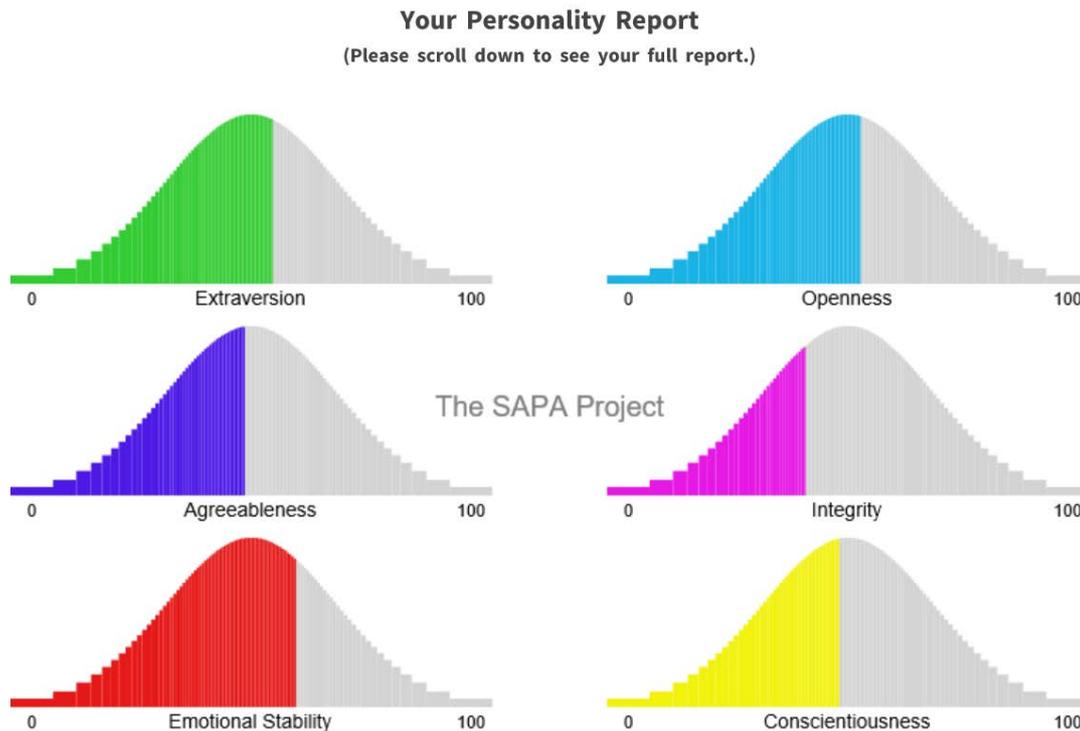


Figure 5 – SAPA personality report

s at a management or leadership level. My DISC results score me as IDSC which is explained as comparatively high influence, comparatively high dominance, comparatively high steadiness and comparatively low compliance. *Appendix A - DISC Personality Report* explains in detail each of these areas and offers probable corresponding traits. Reading these results I do feel that they are mostly accurate and do describe how I see myself quite well.

Earlier in the paper we discussed Plato and Socrates conjecture regarding knowing oneself and how it is incomplete without knowing how you are reflected in the eyes of others (Betz, 1981). To this end I turned to McGregor’s XY theory of management. McGregor’s Theory is based around two distinct styles of management. Theory X managers tend to be of the opinion that employees are generally lazy and will attempt to get out of work as often as possible. Employees need to be highly supervised, can’t be trusted and often dislike work. On the other end of the scale, Theory Y managers believe employees are not lazy, have much to offer an organisation and are a great source of ideas and innovation (Kopelman, Prottas, & Davis, 2008). *Appendix B - The ‘X - Y Theory’ Questionnaire* is a resource I have previously used as a way to gauge my own idea of my management style as well as

what others in my organisation think. The results clearly showed me to be a Theory Y manager and it was encouraging to know that others saw me as such.

My leadership vision

I feel very strongly about the kind of leader that I wish to be. Researching leadership styles has shown that there are many traits and behaviours that make a good leader and that there is little to no evidence suggesting that there is a recipe to follow that will create great leadership ability. That being said there are certain characteristics that I employ in my leadership style and others that I would like to develop more fully. Honesty, integrity and strength of character are all very high on my list. Durability and keeping a human aspect to the tasks at hand are also very important. I would like to be known as an intelligent leader that treats everyone fairly and is able to lead teams and departments toward common goals and undertakings both in the long and short term.

Conclusion

Strategic planning, managing change and knowing ones strategic management style are all important aspect of ones evolution as a leader (McKee, Kemp, & Spence, 2012). Historically Plato and Socrates conjectured that knowing oneself involves more than a personal analysis but includes the opinions of others (Betz, 1981).

The 360° view of the author's management style suggests that Plato and Socrates question of truly knowing thyself has been answered. Further to this the strategic planning process undertaken and the management of change discussed within the forward planning section of the paper, firms the knowledge of the type of leader envisioned.

Many would agree that great leaders such as a Sir Richard Branson, Warren Buffet or Bill Gates are something to aspire to but more honestly, my vision is far simpler. My leadership vision is one of collaboration and strength. I enjoy the challenge of pushing through the trenches and emerging victorious. I also find that victory for oneself is often hollow and that when accomplished with a team the celebration is far sweeter. I do enjoy being liked and revered as someone outstanding in their field but I have no qualms and in fact thrive on my ability to help transform others and take them along for the journey towards success.

In conclusion the research and opinions offered in this paper speak of a transformational leader that is willing to work with the people and truly lead from the front. To be human and remember what is important in life and that may not be the traditional aspects of wealth or power but challenge, happiness and balance.



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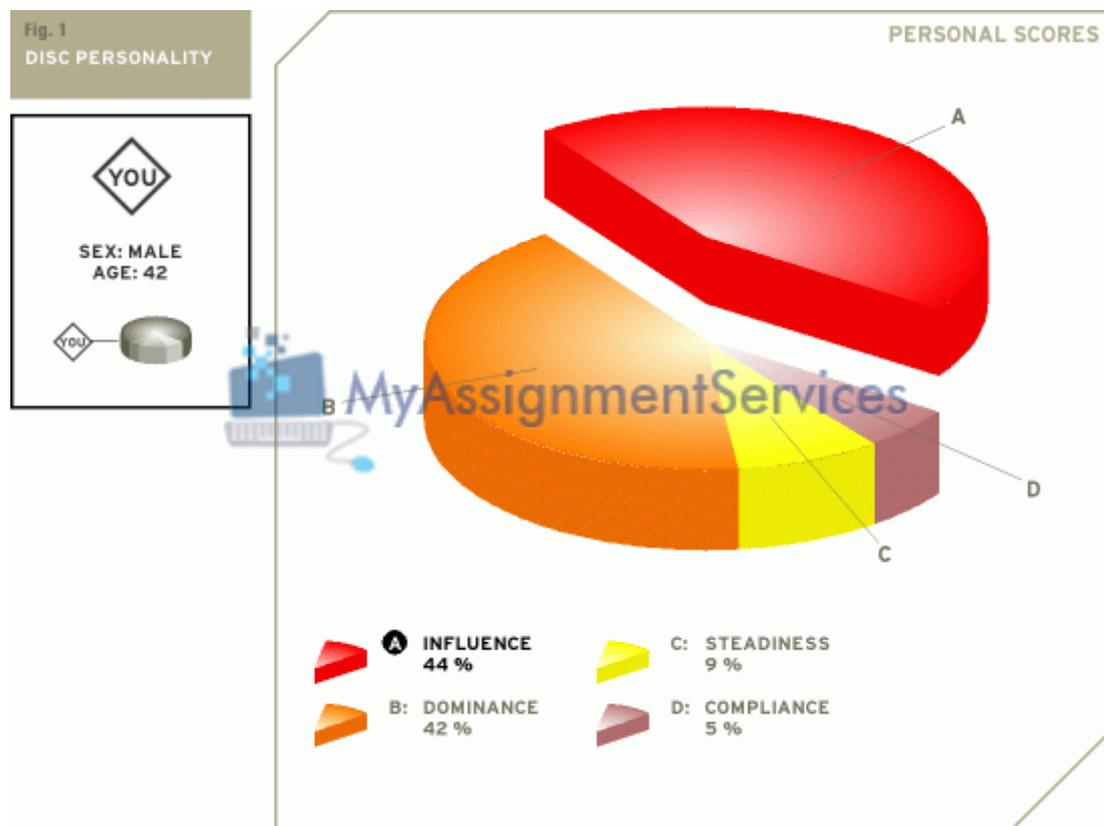
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Appendix A – DISC Personality Report

Introduction

Your specific distribution of scores on the DISC personality test is an indication of your unique personality. You can think of this as your DISC Personality 'DNA'. In the pie chart below you see your distribution of scores.

The highest percentage is likely to be your most dominant personality factor, the second highest your next most dominant personality factor and so on. As such for you the DISC factors are ordered as: Influence, Dominance, Steadiness, Compliance.



DISC Personality Model

To help you understand the DISC model of personality here are definitions of the four factors measured.

Dominance Describes the way you deal with problems, assert yourself and control situations.

Influence Describes the way you deal with people, the way you communicate and relate to others.

Steadiness Describes your temperament - patience, persistence, and thoughtfulness

Compliance Describes how you approach and organize your activity, procedures and responsibilities.

Your DISC personality type

Your unique sequence of scores characterizes you in a specific way. The positive impact you are likely to make on people is:

You are socially oriented. You have a strong self-motivation to get to know people in all walks of life and to nurture those relationships.

You have a natural enthusiasm for all types of ideas and projects - your own and other people's.

People are likely to describe you as gregarious, persuasive and optimistic.

DISC Patterns or Profiles

As you will appreciate, there are literally thousands of different combinations of scores. Therefore to help interpretation, communication and understanding, DISC Personality Model experts have defined - through statistical analysis of the score combinations - fifteen DISC 'Patterns' or 'Profiles'.

The 'Profiles' are often given names. The objective of these names is to give a single descriptive term that captures the essence of that Profile. Names often used are Achiever, Coach, Evaluator, Counselor, Creative, Individualist, Inspirational, Investigator, Objective Thinker, Perfectionist, Persuader, Practitioner, Enthusiast, Results-Oriented or Specialist

To understand the DISC theory even further descriptions are given for people who score comparatively high and comparatively low on each of the four DISC dimensions.

Dominance

Comparatively High

Here are some traits and behaviours that describe people who are **comparatively high in Dominance**:

- enjoy competition and challenge.
- are goal orientated and want to be recognised for their efforts.
- aim high, want authority and are generally resourceful and adaptable.
- are usually self-sufficient and individualistic.
- may lose interest in projects once the challenge has gone and they tend to be impatient and dissatisfied with minor detail.

They are usually direct and positive with people, enjoying being the centre of attraction and may take it for granted that people will think highly of them.

They may have a tendency to be rather critical of others. Consequently, other people may tend to see them as being rather domineering and overpowering.

Comparatively Low

Here are some traits and behaviours that describe people who are **comparatively low** in **Dominance**:

- tend to want peace and harmony.
- prefer to let others initiate action and resolve problems.
- are quiet and indirect in their approach to most situations.
- are usually cautious and calculate risks carefully before acting.

They are generally well liked because of their mild and gentle nature. Other people will tend to see them as being patient, calm, thoughtful and a good listener.

Influence

Comparatively High

Here are some traits and behaviours that describe people who are **comparatively high** in **Influence**:

- are strongly interested in meeting and being with people.
- are generally optimistic, outgoing, and socially skilled.
- are quick at establishing relationships.

Sometimes their concern for people and people's feelings may make them reluctant to disturb a favourable situation or relationship.

Comparatively Low

Here are some traits and behaviours that describe people who are **comparatively low** in **Influence**:

- are usually socially passive.
- quite frequently have an affinity for things, machinery and equipment.
- are generally comfortable working alone.
- frequently have a tendency to be analytical and once they have sorted the facts out they communicate them in a straightforward direct way.
- tend to take little at face value.

They may well have learned and developed good social skills but they only bring these into play when logic dictates such tactics.

Steadiness

Comparatively High

Here are some traits and behaviours that describe people who are **comparatively high** in **Steadiness**:

- are usually patient, calm and controlled.
- have a high willingness to help others particularly those they consider as friends.

Generally they have the ability to deal with the task in hand and to do routine work with patience and care.

Comparatively Low

Here are some traits and behaviours that describe people who are **comparatively low** in **Steadiness**:

- tend to enjoy change and variety in their work and non-work life.
- are expansive by nature and tend not to like routine and repetitive work/activities.

They enjoy stretching themselves intellectually and physically.

Compliance

Comparatively High

Here are some traits and behaviours that describe people who are **comparatively high** in **Compliance**:

- are usually peaceful and adaptable.
- tend not to be aggressive.
- tend to be cautious rather than impulsive.
- avoid risk-taking.
- act in a tactful, diplomatic way and strive for a stable, ordered life.
- are comfortable following procedures in both their personal and business life.

They prefer sticking to methods that have proved successful in the past. They have a high acceptance of rules and regulations.

Comparatively Low

Here are some traits and behaviours that describe people who are **comparatively low** in **Compliance**:

- are independent and uninhibited.
- resent rules and restrictions.
- prefer to be measured by results and are always willing to try the untried.

Free in thought, word and deed, they long for freedom and go to great lengths to achieve it.

They feel that repetitive detail and routine work is best "delegated" or avoided.



Appendix B – The 'X - Y Theory' Questionnaire

Indicates whether the situation and management style is the 'X' or 'Y' style:

Score the statements (5 = always, 4 = mostly, 3 = often, 2 = occasionally, 1 = rarely, 0 = never)

- ___ 01) Russell asks me politely to do things, gives me reasons why, and invites my suggestions.
- ___ 02) I am encouraged to learn skills outside of my immediate area of responsibility.
- ___ 03) I am left to work without interference from Russell, but help is available if I want it.
- ___ 04) I am given credit and praise when I do good work or put in extra effort.
- ___ 05) People leaving the company are given an 'exit interview' to hear their views on the organisation.
- ___ 06) I am incentivised to work hard and well.
- ___ 07) If I want extra responsibility Russell will find a way to give it to me.
- ___ 08) If I want extra training Russell will help me find how to get it or will arrange it.
- ___ 09) I call Russell and Russell's boss by their first names.
- ___ 10) Russell is available for me to discuss my concerns or worries or suggestions.
- ___ 11) I know what the company's aims and targets are.
- ___ 12) I am told how the company is performing on a regular basis.
- ___ 13) I am given an opportunity to solve problems connected with my work.
- ___ 14) Russell tells me what is happening in the organisation.
- ___ 15) I have regular meetings with Russell to discuss how I can improve and develop.
- ___ Total Score

60 - 75 = Strong Y Theory Management (Effective long & short term)

45 - 59 = Generally Y Theory Management

16 - 44 = Generally X Theory Management

0 - 15 = Strongly X Theory Management (Autocratic leadership may be effective in the short term but poor in the long term)

Most people prefer 'Y-theory' management. These people are generally uncomfortable in 'X-theory' situations and are unlikely to be productive, especially long-term, and are likely to seek alternative situations. This quick test provides a broad indication as to management style and individual preference, using the 'X-Y Theory' definitions.

Indicates whether the person prefers being managed by the 'X' or 'Y' style:

Score the statements (5 = always, 4 = mostly, 3 = often, 2 = occasionally, 1 = rarely, 0 = never)

- ___ 01) I like to be involved and consulted about how I can best do my job.
- ___ 02) I want to learn skills outside of my immediate area of responsibility.
- ___ 03) I like to work without interference from my boss, but be able to ask for help if I need it.
- ___ 04) I work best and most productively without pressure from my boss or the threat of losing my job.
- ___ 05) When I leave the company, I would like an 'exit interview' to give my views on the organisation.
- ___ 06) I like to be incentivised and praised for working hard and well.
- ___ 07) I want to increase my responsibility.
- ___ 08) I want to be trained to do new things.
- ___ 09) I prefer to be friendly with my immediate boss and management.
- ___ 10) I want to be able to discuss my concerns, worries or suggestions with my boss or another manager.
- ___ 11) I like to know what the company's aims and targets are.
- ___ 12) I like to be told how the company is performing on a regular basis.
- ___ 13) I like to be given opportunities to solve problems connected with my work.
- ___ 14) I like to be told by my boss what is happening in the organisation.
- ___ 15) I like to have regular meetings with my boss to discuss how I can improve and develop.
- ___ Total Score

60 - 75 = Strongly prefers Y Theory Management (Effective long & short term)

45 - 59 = Generally prefers Y Theory Management

16 - 44 = Generally prefers X Theory Management

0 - 15 = Strongly prefers X Theory Management (Autocratic leadership may be effective in the short term but poor in the long term)

Most people prefer 'Y-theory' management. These people are generally uncomfortable in 'X-theory' situations and are unlikely to be productive, especially long-term, and are likely to seek alternative situations. This quick test provides a broad indication as to management style and individual preference, using the 'X-Y Theory' definitions.

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