



How Personality Impacts Your Bottom Line

While employees must have the basic skills necessary to do their jobs, skill alone doesn't make them great employees. They also need to have the willingness to perform consistently and successfully as part of your team. They must be eager, committed, and free from tendencies that translate into poor workplace performance. Otherwise, no matter how talented they are, they will fail to perform to their potential.

Personality transforms abilities into achievements.

Research shows that people who are conscientious, achievement-oriented, emotionally stable and agreeable are far more productive in the workplace. If you hire someone who is skilled but lacks these traits, they are less likely to get the job done. And that lack of productivity directly impacts your bottom-line.

For HR professionals, this means that assessing an applicant's personality can be just as important as evaluating their skills – for any position. Conscientiousness and emotional stability are important for every job. These are the preeminent traits that serve as a foundation for strong performance. These traits translate into a willingness and desire to meet or exceed job requirements, achieve company goals, and to work effectively within a team or workplace. If employees are not fulfilling their job requirements, the company suffers.

Understanding an employee's personality can also help with office interactions. Understanding an employee's personality "quirks" can significantly improve work communication, whether in meetings or group projects. For example, if employee John is an introvert, putting him on the spot during a meeting or placing him in situations where he works mostly on group rather than individual projects might make him anxious. However, if John is an extrovert, he might actually enjoy offering his opinion, or might even take on a leadership role during teamwork. The same principle applies for just about any personality factor.

One of the most accepted theories of personality is the Big Five - also known as OCEAN (the 5 first letters of the factors). Since its inception in the early 20th century, it has become the premier theory to explain personality differences. The model is composed of the following factors:

- **Openness:** Extent to which a person seeks out new experiences and is receptive to different views and people.
- **Conscientiousness:** Degree to which a person is productivity oriented – organized, reliable, striving, and rule-abiding.



- **Extraversion:** Assesses a person's outward orientation – whether he or she is drawn more towards the social world of people and activities or the inner world of thoughts and emotions.
- **Agreeableness:** Degree to which a person is likeable, approachable, and cooperative.
- **Neuroticism:** Degree to which a person experiences negative emotional states.

It is important to note that the combination of personality traits that translate to successful job performance can vary depending on the type of position. In essence, while extroversion and agreeableness may be the key characteristics of sales representatives, a healthy dose of conscientious tends to work better for a programming position. Psychtests' AMPM personality profile was constructed around the OCEAN model and has helped many companies understand their employees better, and allowed them to find the people with the right set of traits for various job positions.