

Personality, Perception, and Attribution

Thinking Ahead

The Woman (Oprah) Behind the Company (Harpo)

Most companies reflect the personality of the leader—Southwest Airlines’s culture reflects Herb Kelleher’s love of fun, Microsoft reflects Bill Gates’s intensity and love of technology. Another company, perhaps less visible, undoubtedly reflects the personality of the woman at the helm. Harpo Productions (Oprah spelled backwards) is led by one of the most visible, and most admired, women in the world.

Harpo employs around 175 employees and has revenues of approximately \$140 million per year. The company ranks 84th in the list of woman-owned businesses, behind Mary Kay Cosmetics and Jockey International. Although the public may perceive Oprah as larger than life, her company, Harpo, is small in terms of number of employees. One of Harpo’s products, the Oprah Winfrey Show, has tremendous visibility. The show is seen in 200 U.S. markets and 130 foreign markets. More than 15 million people per day tune in to the show.

Such exposure leads to tremendous speculation about Oprah’s personality. But is the Oprah we see on television the “real” Oprah or just our perception of who she is? From all accounts, she seems to practice what she preaches. “I’ve tried to have the show be an extension of what I am and what I stand for,” she has said. Oprah created the “Angel Network” to encourage people to be charitable; she gives millions each year to charity herself. She encourages free dialogue on her show, and her own revelations about child abuse galvanized support for

After reading this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

1. Describe individual differences and their importance in understanding behavior.
2. Define *personality*.
3. Explain four theories of personality.
4. Identify several personality characteristics and their influences on behavior in organizations.
5. Explain how personality is measured.
6. Discuss Carl Jung’s contribution to our understanding of individual differences, and explain how his theory is used in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.
7. Define *social perception* and explain how characteristics of the perceiver, the target, and the situation affect it.
8. Identify five common barriers to social perception.
9. Explain the attribution process and how attributions affect managerial behavior.



Chapter 3

America's first national database of child abusers. Oprah encourages viewers to write down things they are thankful for—and does so herself each morning, listing five things she is grateful for. Her Oprah's Book Club was started to enrich people's lives through reading—Oprah herself is a voracious reader. And Harpo Productions receives no financial benefit from book selections or sales.

Harpo Productions, its Oprah Winfrey Show, and its other projects, such as films, appear to represent Oprah's own personality. Oprah herself has said "You really have to work hard to let what you are come through." A more accurate case might be built for this supposition when Oprah's autobiography is published—if it ever is. She wrote it, and then canceled its publication because she didn't feel the book was reflective of her true spirit. In the Looking Back feature, you can learn more about the management philosophy on which Harpo was built.¹

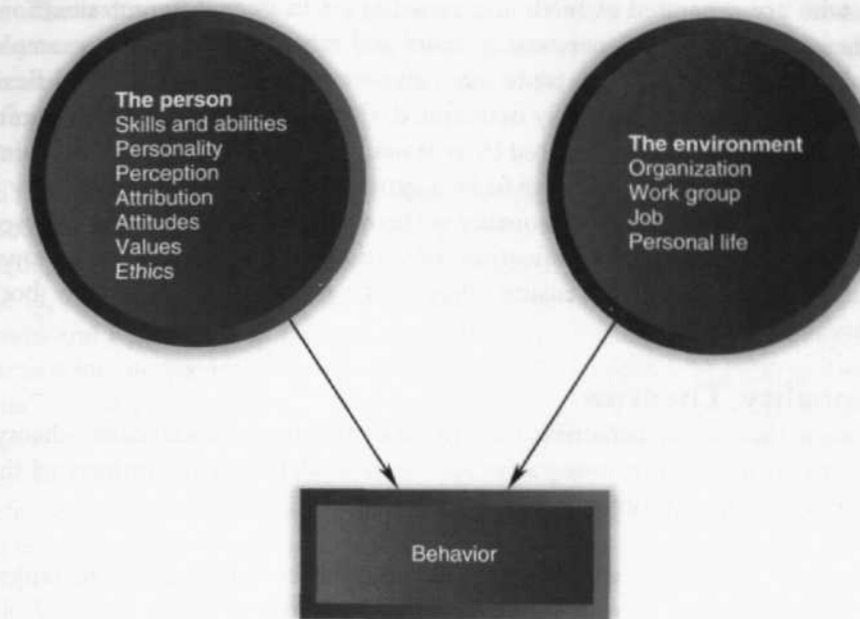


FIGURE 3.1

Variables Influencing Individual Behavior

3. People vary in many characteristics, including cognitive, affective, motivational, and ability factors.
4. Two interpretations of situations are important: the objective situation and the person's subjective view of the situation.⁴

The interactional psychology approach points out the need to study both persons and situations. We will focus on personal and situational factors throughout the text. The person consists of individual differences such as those we emphasize in this chapter and Chapter 4: personality, perception, attribution, attitudes, values, and ethics. The situation consists of the environment the person operates in, and it can include things like the organization, work group, personal life situation, job characteristics, and many other environmental influences. One important and fascinating individual difference is personality.

Web Sighting 

Psychologists are very interested in individual differences. The American Psychological Association (APA) is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. When you visit its web site at <http://www.apa.org>, follow the links to the public area. In the public area, you can click on links to find out about careers in psychology, or visit the APA Monitor Online to see if there are any recent articles that interest you.

<http://www.apa.org>

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AND ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

In this chapter and continuing in Chapter 4, we explore the concept of *individual differences*. Individuals are unique in terms of their skills, abilities, personalities, perceptions, attitudes, values, and ethics. These are just a few of the ways individuals may be similar to or different from one another. Individual differences represent the essence of the challenge of management, because no two individuals are completely alike. Managers face the challenge of working with people who possess a multitude of individual characteristics, so the more managers understand individual differences, the better they can work with others. Figure 3.1 illustrates how individual differences affect human behavior.

The basis for understanding individual differences stems from Lewin's early contention that behavior is a function of the person and the environment.² Lewin expressed this idea in an equation: $B = f(P, E)$, where B = behavior, P = person, and E = environment. This idea has been developed by the *interactional psychology* approach.³ Basically, this approach says that in order to understand human behavior, we must know something about the person and something about the situation. There are four basic propositions of interactional psychology:

1. Behavior is a function of a continuous, multidirectional interaction between the person and the situation.
2. The person is active in this process and both is changed by situations and changes situations.

PERSONALITY

What makes an individual behave in consistent ways in a variety of situations? Personality is an individual difference that lends consistency to a person's behavior. *Personality* is defined as a relatively stable set of characteristics that influence an individual's behavior. Although there is debate about the determinants of personality, we conclude that there are several origins. One determinant is heredity, and some interesting studies have supported this position. Identical



2.

Define *personality*.

personality
A relatively stable set of characteristics that influences an individual's behavior.



1.

Describe individual differences and their importance in understanding behavior.

individual differences

The way in which factors such as skills, abilities, personalities, perceptions, attitudes, values, and ethics differ from one individual to another.

interactional psychology

The psychological approach that emphasizes that in order to understand human behavior, we must know something about the person and about the situation.

twins who are separated at birth and raised apart in very different situations have been found to share personality traits and job preferences. For example, about half of the variation in traits like extraversion, impulsiveness, and flexibility was found to be genetically determined; that is, identical twins who grew up in different environments shared these traits.⁵ In addition, the twins held similar jobs.⁶ Thus, there does appear to be a genetic influence on personality.

Another determinant of personality is the environment a person is exposed to. Family influences, cultural influences, educational influences, and other environmental forces shape personality. Personality is therefore shaped by both heredity and environment.

Personality Theories

Four major theories of personality are the trait theory, psychodynamic theory, humanistic theory, and the integrative approach. Each theory has influenced the study of personality in organizations.

TRAIT THEORY Some early personality researchers believed that to understand individuals, we must break down behavior patterns into a series of observable traits. According to *trait theory*, combining these traits into a group forms an individual's personality. Gordon Allport, a leading trait theorist, saw traits as broad, general guides that lend consistency to behavior.⁷ Thousands of traits have been identified over the years. Raymond Cattell, another prominent trait theorist, identified sixteen traits that formed the basis for differences in individual behavior. He described traits in bipolar adjective combinations such as self-assured/apprehensive, reserved/outgoing, and submissive/dominant.⁸

More recently, researchers have argued that all traits can be reduced to five basic factors. The "big five" traits include extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience.⁹ Descriptions of the "Big Five" are shown in Table 3.1. The "Big Five" are broad, global traits. Although there is evidence to support the existence of the Big Five traits, research is needed to see whether these five traits actually predict behavior at work.

From preliminary research, we know that introverted and conscientious employees are less likely to be absent from work.¹⁰ The traits most associated with high-performing employees are conscientiousness and emotional stability.¹¹

3.
Explain four theories of personality.

trait theory
The personality theory that states that in order to understand individuals, we must break down behavior patterns into a series of observable traits.

Table 3.1

The "Big Five" Personality Traits	Extraversion	The person is gregarious, assertive, and sociable (as opposed to reserved, timid, and quiet).
	Agreeableness	The person is cooperative, warm, and agreeable (rather than cold, disagreeable, and antagonistic).
	Conscientiousness	The person is hardworking, organized, and dependable (as opposed to lazy, disorganized, and unreliable).
	Emotional stability	The person is calm, self-confident, and cool (as opposed to insecure, anxious, and depressed).
	Openness to experience	The person is creative, curious, and cultured (rather than practical with narrow interests).

SOURCES: P. T. Costa and R. R. McCrae, *The NEO-PI Personality Inventory* (Odessa, Fla.: Psychological Assessment Resources, 1992); J. F. Salgado, "The Five Factor Model of Personality and Job Performance in the European Community," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 82 (1997): 30-43.

The trait approach has been the subject of considerable criticism. Some theorists argue that simply identifying traits is not enough; instead, personality is dynamic and not completely stable. Further, trait theorists tended to ignore the influence of situations.¹²

PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORY Based on the work of Sigmund Freud, *psychodynamic theory* emphasizes the unconscious determinants of behavior.¹³ Freud saw personality as the interaction between three elements of personality: the id, ego, and superego. The id is the most primitive element, the source of drives and impulses that operates in an uncensored manner. The superego, similar to what we know as conscience, contains values and the "shoulds and should nots" of the personality. There is an ongoing conflict between the id and the superego. The ego serves to manage the conflict between the id and the superego. In this role, the ego compromises, and the result is the individual's use of defense mechanisms such as denial of reality. The contribution of psychodynamic theory to our understanding of personality is its focus on unconscious influences on behavior.

HUMANISTIC THEORY Carl Rogers believed that all people have a basic drive toward self-actualization, which is the quest to be all you can be.¹⁴ The *humanistic theory* focuses on individual growth and improvement. It is distinctly people centered and also emphasizes the individual's view of the world. The humanistic approach contributes an understanding of the self to personality theory and contends that the self-concept is the most important part of an individual's personality.

INTEGRATIVE APPROACH Recently, researchers have taken a broader, more *integrative approach* to the study of personality.¹⁵ To capture its influence on behavior, personality is described as a composite of the individual's psychological processes. Personality dispositions include emotions, cognitions, attitudes, expectancies, and fantasies.¹⁶ *Dispositions*, in this approach, simply means the tendencies of individuals to respond to situations in consistent ways. Influenced by both genetics and experiences, dispositions can be modified. The integrative approach focuses on both person (dispositions) and situational variables as combined predictors of behavior.

Personality Characteristics in Organizations

Managers should learn as much as possible about personality in order to understand their employees. Hundreds of personality characteristics have been identified. We have selected four characteristics because of their particular influences on individual behavior in organizations: locus of control, self-esteem, self-monitoring, and positive/negative affect. Because these characteristics affect performance at work, managers need to have a working knowledge of them.

LOCUS OF CONTROL An individual's generalized belief about internal (self) versus external (situation or others) control is called *locus of control*. People who believe they control what happens to them are said to have an internal locus of control, whereas people who believe that circumstances or other people control their fate have an external locus of control.¹⁷ Research on locus of control has strong implications for organizations. Internals (those with an internal locus of control) have been found to have higher job satisfaction, to be more likely to assume managerial positions, and to prefer participative management

psychodynamic theory
The personality theory that emphasizes the unconscious determinants of behavior.

humanistic theory
The personality theory that emphasizes individual growth and improvement.

integrative approach
The broad theory that describes personality as a composite of an individual's psychological processes.

4.
Identify several personality characteristics and their influences on behavior in organizations.

locus of control
An individual's generalized belief about internal control (self-control) versus external control (control by the situation or by others).

styles.¹⁸ In addition, internals have been shown to display higher work motivation, hold stronger beliefs that effort leads to performance, receive higher salaries, and display less anxiety than externals (those with an external locus of control).¹⁹

Knowing about locus of control can prove valuable to managers. Because internals believe they control what happens to them, they will want to exercise control in their work environment. Allowing internals considerable voice in how work is performed is important. Internals will not react well to being closely supervised. Externals, in contrast, may prefer a more structured work setting, and they may be more reluctant to participate in decision making.

SELF-ESTEEM *Self-esteem* is an individual's general feeling of self-worth. Individuals with high self-esteem have positive feelings about themselves, perceive themselves to have strengths as well as weaknesses, and believe their strengths are more important than their weaknesses.²⁰ Individuals with low self-esteem view themselves negatively. They are more strongly affected by what other people think of them, and they compliment individuals who give them positive feedback while cutting down people who give them negative feedback.²¹

A person's self-esteem affects a host of other attitudes and has important implications for behavior in organizations. People with high self-esteem perform better and are more satisfied with their jobs.²² When they are involved in a job search, they seek out higher status jobs.²³ A work team made up of individuals with high self-esteem is more likely to be successful than a team with lower average self-esteem.²⁴

Very high self-esteem may be too much of a good thing. When people with high self-esteem find themselves in stressful situations, they may brag inappropriately.²⁵ This may be viewed negatively by others, who see spontaneous boasting as egotistical.

Self-esteem may be strongly affected by situations. Success tends to raise self-esteem, whereas failure tends to lower it. Given that high self-esteem is generally a positive characteristic, managers should encourage employees to raise their self-esteem by giving them appropriate challenges and opportunities for success. Cisco Systems is a company that believes in self-esteem. See how John Chambers, Cisco's CEO, creates a culture that enhances self-esteem in Organizational Reality 3.1.

SELF-MONITORING A characteristic with great potential for affecting behavior in organizations is *self-monitoring*—the extent to which people base their behavior on cues from people and situations.²⁶ High self-monitors pay attention to what is appropriate in particular situations and to the behavior of other people, and they behave accordingly. Low self-monitors, in contrast, are not as vigilant to situational cues and act from internal states rather than paying attention to the situation. As a result, the behavior of low self-monitors is consistent across situations. High self-monitors, because their behavior varies with the situation, appear to be more unpredictable and less consistent. You can use Challenge 3.1 to assess your own self-monitoring tendencies.

Research is currently focusing on the effects of self-monitoring in organizations. In one study, the authors tracked the careers of 139 MBAs for five years to see whether high self-monitors were more likely to be promoted, change employers, or make a job-related geographic move. The results were "yes" to each question. High self-monitors get promoted because they accomplish tasks through meeting the expectations of others. However, the high self-monitor's flexibility may not be suited for every job, and the tendency to move may not fit every organization.²⁷

self-esteem

An individual's general feeling of self-worth.

self-monitoring

The extent to which people base their behavior on cues from other people and situations.

ORGANIZATIONAL REALITY 3.1

At Cisco Systems, Self-Esteem Produces Success

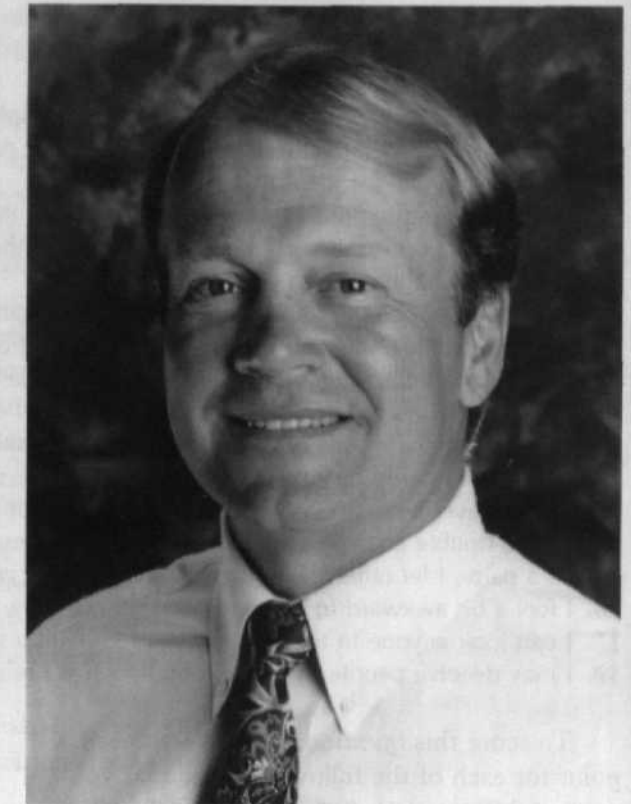
Once every four months, Cisco Systems's chief executive puts on a red apron, picks up a canvas bag full of ice cream treats, and walks through corporate headquarters handing out ice cream to his staff. He greets employees with "Hi, my name is John Chambers. Corporate overhead here at Cisco." You might think this behavior unusual of a CEO, but Chambers's belief in himself and his employees lends itself to good humor, and to success.

Cisco dominates the business for data networking equipment that makes up the plumbing of the Internet and corporate computer networks. Since Chambers became CEO in January 1995, Cisco's share price has increased by 800 percent, giving the company a market value of over \$100 billion in a mere 8.5 years—the fastest to do so in history. (Even Microsoft took 11 years to accomplish this!)

Chambers is preparing Cisco to compete in a much bigger league, the \$250 billion per year market for telecommunication equipment. He'll have to do battle with Nortel, twice as big as Cisco, Lucent, three times as big, and Siemens, seven times as big as Cisco. "I want Cisco to be a dynasty," he says. "I think it can be a company that changes the world." His own self-esteem and self-efficacy (his "can do" attitude) will help the company do this, along with a culture that enhances employees' self-esteem.

A belief in himself was essential in Chambers's childhood. He grew up in an era where learning disabilities were undiagnosed, and because he was severely dyslexic, he couldn't learn to read. His childhood reading coach recalls about Chambers, "He knew that he had a problem, and he had no doubt in his mind that he was going to do something about it. He made no excuses for not being able to read, and that's very rare." His hard work paid off. He graduated second in his class from high school.

At Cisco, Chambers built a culture in which it's not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength, to say, "I can't do everything myself. I will find a partner and trust myself to be able to manage the process." Teamwork is essential; managers who are not team players are flushed out of the company. He constantly polls his staff on problems. How is



Cisco Systems's chief executive officer, John Chambers, will occasionally put on a red apron, pick up a canvas bag full of ice cream treats, and walk through corporate headquarters handing out ice cream to his staff.

the Scottish factory coming along? Is our softball team on track? Do we need to consider having a day care center on site? Such teamwork, combined with success, fuels employee self-esteem.

Despite the formidable competition Cisco Systems faces in the telecommunications industry, Wall Street is bullish on the company. Many analysts attribute the success and promising future to Chambers and the way he has motivated his managers to stay focused on the customer.

Discussion Question

1. What can managers do to encourage the development of self-esteem among employees? Why is this an important thing to do?

SOURCE: A. Kupfer, "The Real King of the Internet," *Fortune* (September 7, 1998): 84–92.

CHALLENGE 3.1

Are You a High or Low Self-Monitor?

For the following items, circle T (true) if the statement is characteristic of your behavior.

Circle F (false) if the statement does not reflect your behavior.

1. I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people.
2. At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like.
3. I can only argue for ideas that I already believe.
4. I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information.
5. I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain others.
6. I would probably make a good actor.
7. In a group of people, I am rarely the center of attention.
8. In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons.
9. I am not particularly good at making other people like me.
10. I am not always the person I appear to be.
11. I would not change my opinions (or the way I do things) in order to please others or win their favor.
12. I have considered being an entertainer.
13. I have never been good at games like charades or at improvisational acting.
14. I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.
15. At a party, I let others keep the jokes and stories going.
16. I feel a bit awkward in company and do not show up quite as well as I should.
17. I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie with a straight face (if it is for a good cause).
18. I may deceive people by being friendly when I really dislike them.

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To score this questionnaire, give yourself 1 point for each of the following items that you answered T (true): 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 17, and 18. Now give yourself 1 point for each of the following items that you answered F (false): 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16. Add both subtotals to find

your overall score. If you scored 11 or above, you are probably a *high self-monitor*. If you scored 10 or under, you are probably a *low self-monitor*.

SOURCE: From *Public Appearances, Private Realities: The Psychology of Self-Monitoring* by M. Snyder. Copyright © 1987 by W. H. Freeman and Company. Used with permission.

positive affect

An individual's tendency to accentuate the positive aspects of himself or herself, other people, and the world in general.

negative affect

An individual's tendency to accentuate the negative aspects of himself or herself, other people, and the world in general.

Because high self-monitors base their behavior on cues from others and from the situation, they demonstrate higher levels of managerial self-awareness. This means that, as managers, they assess their own workplace behavior accurately.²⁸

Although research on self-monitoring in organizations is in its early stages, we can speculate that high self-monitors respond more readily to work group norms, organizational culture, and supervisory feedback than do low self-monitors, who adhere more to internal guidelines for behavior ("I am who I am"). In addition, high self-monitors may be enthusiastic participants in the trend toward work teams because of their ability to assume flexible roles.

POSITIVE/NEGATIVE AFFECT Recently, researchers have explored the effects of persistent mood dispositions at work. Individuals who focus on the positive aspects of themselves, other people, and the world in general are said to have *positive affect*.²⁹ In contrast, those who accentuate the negative in themselves, others, and the world are said to possess *negative affect* (also referred to as negative affectivity).³⁰ Interviewers who exhibit positive affect evaluate job candidates more favorably than do interviewers whose affect is neutral.³¹

Employees with positive affect are absent from work less often.³² Individuals with negative affect report more work stress.³³ Individual affect also influences the work group. Negative individual affect produces negative group affect, and this leads to less cooperative behavior in the work group.³⁴

Positive affect is a definite asset in work settings. Managers can do several things to promote positive affect, including allowing participative decision making and providing pleasant working conditions. We need to know more about inducing positive affect in the workplace.

The characteristics previously described are but a few of the personality characteristics that affect behavior and performance in organizations. Can managers predict the behavior of their employees by knowing their personalities? Not completely. You may recall that the interactional psychology model (Figure 3.1) requires both person and situation variables to predict behavior. Another idea to remember in predicting behavior is the strength of situational influences. Some situations are **strong situations** in that they overwhelm the effects of individual personalities. These situations are interpreted in the same way by different individuals, evoke agreement on the appropriate behavior in the situation, and provide cues to appropriate behavior. A performance appraisal session is an example of a strong situation. Employees know to listen to their boss and to contribute when asked to do so.

A weak situation, in contrast, is one that is open to many interpretations. It provides few cues to appropriate behavior and no obvious rewards for one behavior over another. Thus, individual personalities have a stronger influence in weak situations than in strong situations. An informal meeting without an agenda can be seen as a weak situation.

Organizations present combinations of strong and weak situations; therefore, personality has a stronger effect on behavior in some situations than in others.³⁵

Measuring Personality

Several methods can be used to assess personality. These include projective tests, behavioral measures, and self-report questionnaires.

The **projective test** is one method used to measure personality. In these tests, individuals are shown a picture, abstract image, or photo and are asked to describe what they see or to tell a story about what they see. The rationale behind projective tests is that each individual responds to the stimulus in a way that reflects his or her unique personality. The Rorschach ink blot test is a projective test commonly used to assess personality.³⁶ Like other projective tests, however, it has low reliability.

There are **behavioral measures** of personality as well. Measuring behavior involves observing an individual's behavior in a controlled situation. We might assess a person's sociability, for example, by counting the number of times he or she approaches strangers at a party. The behavior is scored in some manner to produce an index of personality.

The most common method of assessing personality is the **self-report questionnaire**. Individuals respond to a series of questions, usually in an agree/disagree or true/false format. One of the more widely recognized questionnaires is the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI). The MMPI is comprehensive and assesses a variety of traits, as well as various neurotic or psychotic disorders. Used extensively in psychological counseling to identify disorders, the MMPI is a long questionnaire. The big five traits we discussed earlier are measured by another self-report questionnaire, the NEO Personality Inventory.

strong situation

A situation that overwhelms the effects of individual personalities by providing strong cues for appropriate behavior.

5.

Explain how personality is measured.

projective test

A personality test that elicits an individual's response to abstract stimuli.

behavioral measures

Personality assessments that involve observing an individual's behavior in a controlled situation.

self-report questionnaire

A common personality assessment that involves an individual's responses to a series of questions.

Another popular self-report questionnaire is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). In the next section, we will introduce the Jungian theory of personality. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is an instrument that has been developed to measure Jung's ideas about individual differences. Many organizations use the MBTI, and we will focus on it as an example of how some organizations use personality concepts to help employees appreciate diversity.



A POPULAR APPLICATION OF PERSONALITY THEORY IN ORGANIZATIONS: THE MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR

6.

Discuss Carl Jung's contribution to our understanding of individual differences, and explain how his theory is used in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

One approach to applying personality theory in organizations is the Jungian approach and its measurement tool, the MBTI.

Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung built his work on the notion that people are fundamentally different, but also fundamentally alike. His classic treatise *Psychological Types* proposed that the population was made up of two basic types—extraverted and introverted.³⁷ He went on to identify two types of perception (sensing and intuiting) and two types of judgment (thinking and feeling). Perception (how we gather information) and judgment (how we make decisions) represent the basic mental functions that everyone uses.

Jung suggested that human similarities and differences could be understood by combining preferences. We prefer and choose one way of doing things over another. We are not exclusively one way or another; rather, we have a preference for extraversion or introversion, just as we have a preference for right-handedness or left-handedness. We may use each hand equally well, but when a ball is thrown at us by surprise, we will reach to catch it with our preferred hand. Jung's type theory argues that no preferences are better than others. Differences are to be understood, celebrated, and appreciated.

During the 1940s, a mother-daughter team became fascinated with individual differences among people and with the work of Carl Jung. Katharine Briggs and her daughter, Isabel Briggs Myers, developed the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* to put Jung's type theory into practical use. The MBTI is used extensively in organizations as a basis for understanding individual differences. More than 20 million people completed the instrument in 1991.³⁸ The MBTI has been used in career counseling, team building, conflict management, and understanding management styles.³⁹

The Preferences

There are four basic preferences in type theory, and two possible choices for each of the four preferences. Table 3.2 shows these preferences. The combination of these preferences makes up an individual's psychological type.

EXTRAVERSION/INTROVERSION The *extraversion/introversion* preference represents where you get your energy. The extravert (E) is energized by interaction with other people. The introvert (I) is energized by time alone. Extraverts typically have a wide social network, whereas introverts have a more narrow range of relationships. As articulated by Jung, this preference has nothing to do with social skills. Many introverts have excellent social skills but prefer the internal world of ideas, thoughts, and concepts. Extraverts represent ap-

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

An instrument developed to measure Carl Jung's theory of individual differences.

extraversion

A preference indicating that an individual is energized by interaction with other people.

introversion

A preference indicating that an individual is energized by time alone.

Table 3.2

Type Theory Preferences and Descriptions	
EXTRAVERSION	INTROVERSION
Outgoing	Quiet
Publicly expressive	Reserved
Interacting	Concentrating
Speaks, then thinks	Thinks, then speaks
Gregarious	Reflective
SENSING	INTUITING
Practical	General
Specific	Abstract
Feet on the ground	Head in the clouds
Details	Possibilities
Concrete	Theoretical
THINKING	FEELING
Analytical	Subjective
Clarity	Harmony
Head	Heart
Justice	Mercy
Rules	Circumstances
JUDGING	PERCEIVING
Structured	Flexible
Time oriented	Open ended
Decisive	Exploring
Makes lists/uses them	Makes lists/loses them
Organized	Spontaneous

proximately 70 percent of the U.S. population.⁴⁰ Our culture rewards extraversion and nurtures it. Jung contended that the extraversion/introversion preference reflects the most important distinction between individuals.

In work settings, extraverts prefer variety, and they do not mind the interruptions of the phone or visits from coworkers. They communicate freely but may say things that they regret later. Introverts prefer quiet for concentration, and they like to think things through in private. They do not mind working on a project for a long time and are careful with details. Introverts dislike telephone interruptions, and they may have trouble recalling names and faces.

SENSING/INTUITING The *sensing/intuiting* preference represents perception or how we prefer to gather information. In essence this preference reflects what we pay attention to. The sensor (S) pays attention to information gathered through the five senses and to what actually exists. The intuitor (N) pays attention to a "sixth sense" and to what could be rather than to what actually exists.⁴¹ Approximately 70 percent of people in the United States are sensors.⁴²

At work, sensors prefer specific answers to questions and can become frustrated with vague instructions. They like jobs that yield tangible results, and they enjoy using established skills more than learning new ones. Intuitors like solving new problems and are impatient with routine details. They enjoy learning new skills more than actually using them. Intuitors tend to think about several things at once, and they may be seen by others as absentminded. They like figuring out how things work just for the fun of it.

sensing

Gathering information through the five senses.

intuiting

Gathering information through "sixth sense" and focusing on what could be rather than what actually exists.

thinking

Making decisions in a logical, objective fashion.

feeling

Making decisions in a personal, value-oriented way.

THINKING/FEELING The *thinking/feeling* preference represents the way we prefer to make decisions. The thinker (T) makes decisions in a logical, objective fashion, whereas the feeler (F) makes decisions in a personal, value-oriented way. The general U.S. population is divided 50/50 on the thinking/feeling preference, but it is interesting that two-thirds of all males are thinkers, whereas two-thirds of all females are feelers. It is the one preference in type theory that has a strong gender difference. Thinkers tend to analyze decisions, whereas feelers sympathize. Thinkers try to be impersonal, whereas feelers base their decisions on how the outcome will affect the people involved.

In work settings, thinkers do not show much emotion, and they may become uncomfortable with people who do. They respond more readily to other people's thoughts. They are firm minded and like putting things into a logical framework. Feelers, in contrast, are more comfortable with emotion in the workplace. They enjoy pleasing people and need a lot of praise and encouragement.

judging

Preferring closure and completion in making decisions.

perceiving

Preferring to explore many alternatives and flexibility.

JUDGING/PERCEIVING The *judging/perceiving* preference reflects one's orientation to the outer world. The judger (J) loves closure. Judges prefer to lead a planned, organized life and like making decisions. The perceiver (P), in contrast, prefers a more flexible and spontaneous life and wants to keep options open. Imagine a J and a P going out for dinner. The J asks the P to choose a restaurant, and the P suggests ten alternatives. The J just wants to decide and get on with it, whereas the P wants to explore all the options.

For judges in all arenas of life, and especially at work, there is a right and a wrong way to do everything. They love getting things accomplished and delight in marking off the completed items on their calendars. Perceivers tend to adopt a wait-and-see attitude and to collect new information rather than draw conclusions. Perceivers are curious and welcome new information. They may start too many projects and not finish them.

The Sixteen Types

The preferences combine to form sixteen distinct types, as shown in Table 3.3. For example, let's examine ESTJ. This type is extraverted, sensing, thinking, and judging. ESTJs see the world as it is (S); make decisions objectively (T); and like structure, schedules, and order (J). Combining these qualities with their preference for interacting with others makes them natural managers. ESTJs are seen by others as dependable, practical, and able to get any job done. They are conscious of the chain of command and see work as a series of goals to be reached by following rules and regulations. They may have little tolerance for disorganization and have a high need for control. Research results from the *MBTI Atlas* show that most of the 7,463 managers studied were ESTJs.⁴³

There are no good and bad types, and each type has its own strengths and weaknesses. There is a growing volume of research on type theory. The MBTI has been found to have good reliability and validity as a measurement instrument for identifying type.^{44,45} Type has been found to be related to learning style, teaching style, choice of occupation, decision-making style, and management style.

Recent studies have begun to focus on the relationship between type and specific managerial behaviors. The introvert (I) and the feeler (F), for example, have been shown to be more effective at participative management than their counterparts, the extravert and the thinker.⁴⁶ Companies like AT&T, Exxon, and Honeywell use the MBTI in their management development programs to help employees understand the different viewpoints of others in the organiza-

Table 3.3

Characteristics Frequently Associated with Each Type

	Sensing Types				Intuitive Types			
Introverts	ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ				
	Quiet, serious, earn success by thoroughness and dependability. Practical, matter-of-fact, realistic, and responsible. Decide logically what should be done and work toward it steadily, regardless of distractions. Takes pleasure in making everything orderly and organized—their work, their home, their life. Value traditions and loyalty.	Quiet, friendly, responsible, and conscientious. Committed and steady in meeting their obligations. Thorough, painstaking and accurate. Loyal, considerate, notice and remember specifics about people who are important to them, concerned with how others feel. Strive to create an orderly and harmonious environment at work and at home.	Seek meaning and connection in ideas, relationships and material possessions. Want to understand what motivates people and are insightful about others. Conscientious and committed to their firm values. Develop a clear vision about how best to serve the common good. Organized and decisive in implementing their vision.	Have original minds and great drive for implementing their ideas and achieving their goals. Quickly see patterns in external events and develop long-range explanatory perspectives. When committed, organize a job and carry it through. Skeptical and independent, have high standards of competence and performance for themselves and others.				
	ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP				
	Tolerant and flexible, quiet observers until a problem appears, then act quickly to find workable solutions. Analyze what makes things work and readily get through large amounts of data to isolate the core of practical problems. Interested in cause and effect, organize facts using logical principles, value efficiency.	Quiet, friendly, sensitive, and kind. Enjoy the present moment, what's going on around them. Like to have their own space and to work within their own time frame. Loyal and committed to their values and to people who are important to them. Dislike disagreements and conflicts, do not force their opinions or values on others.	Idealistic, loyal to their values and to people who are important to them. Want an external life that is congruent with their values. Curious, quick to see possibilities, can be catalysts for implementing ideas. Seek to understand people and to help them fulfill their potential. Adaptable, flexible, and accepting unless a value is threatened.	Seek to develop logical explanations for everything that interests them. Theoretical and abstract, interested more in ideas than in social interaction. Quiet, contained, flexible, and adaptable. Have unusual ability to focus in depth to solve problems in their area of interest. Skeptical, sometimes critical, always analytical.				
Extraverts	ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP				
	Flexible and tolerant, they take a pragmatic approach focused on immediate results. Theories and conceptual explanations bore them—they want to act energetically to solve the problem. Focus on the here-and-now, spontaneous, enjoy each moment that they can be active with others. Enjoy material comforts and style. Learn best through doing.	Outgoing, friendly, and accepting. Exuberant lovers of life, people, and material comforts. Enjoy working with others to make things happen. Bring common sense and a realistic approach to their work and make work fun. Flexible and spontaneous, adapt readily to new people and environments. Learn best by trying a new skill with other people.	Warmly enthusiastic and imaginative. See life as full of possibilities. Make connections between events and information very quickly, and confidently proceed based on the patterns they see. Want a lot of confirmation from others, and readily give appreciation and support. Spontaneous and flexible, often rely on their ability to improvise and their verbal fluency.	Quick, ingenious, stimulating alert, and outspoken. Resourceful in solving new and challenging problems. Adept at generating conceptual possibilities and then analyzing them strategically. Good at reading other people. Bored by routine, will seldom do the same thing the same way, apt to turn to one new interest after another.				
	ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ				
	Practical, realistic, matter-of-fact. Decisive, quickly move to implement decisions. Organize projects and people to get things done, focus on getting results in the most efficient way possible. Take care of routine details. Have a clear set of logical standards, systematically follow them and want others to also. Forceful in implementing their plans.	Warmhearted, conscientious, and cooperative. Want harmony in their environment work with determination to establish it. Like to work with others to complete tasks accurately and on time. Loyal, follow through even in small matters. Notice what others need in their day-by-day lives and try to provide it. Want to be appreciated for who they are and for what they contribute.	Warm, empathetic, responsive, and responsible. Highly attuned to the emotions, needs, and motivations of others. Find potential in everyone, want to help others fulfill their potential. May act as catalysts for individual and group growth. Loyal, responsive to praise and criticism. Sociable, facilitate others in a group, and provide inspiring leadership.	Frank, decisive, assume leadership readily. Quickly see logical and inefficient procedures and policies, develop and implement comprehensive systems to solve organizational problems. Enjoy long-term planning and goal setting. Usually well informed, well read, enjoy expanding their knowledge and passing it on to others. Forceful in presenting their ideas.				

NOTE: I = introvert; E = extravert; S = sensor; N = intuitor; T = thinker; F = feeler; J = judger; and P = perceiver.

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tion. The MBTI can be used for team building. Hewlett-Packard and Armstrong World Industries use the MBTI to help teams realize that diversity and differences lead to successful performance.

Now that you understand the theory behind the MBTI, you can use Challenge 3.2 to speculate about your own type. Before you can understand others, you must understand yourself.

Type theory is valued by managers for its simplicity and accuracy in depicting personalities. It is a useful tool for helping managers develop interpersonal skills. Type theory is also used by managers to build teams that capitalize on individuals' strengths and to help individual team members appreciate differences.

It should be recognized that there is the potential for individuals to misuse the information from the MBTI in organizational settings. Some inappropriate uses include labeling one another, providing a convenient excuse that they simply can't work with someone else, and avoiding responsibility for their own personal development with respect to working with others and becoming more flexible. One's type is not an excuse for inappropriate behavior.

We turn now to another psychological process that forms the basis for individual differences. Perception shapes the way we view the world, and it varies greatly among individuals.

Web Sighting

Want to explore practical applications and background information on the MBTI? Visit <http://www.typeworks.com> and see if you can find out how organizations are applying the MBTI. Also, does personality type affect the probability of becoming an entrepreneur, the kind of venture founded, and possible future business problems? Follow the links to find out.

<http://www.typeworks.com>



SOCIAL PERCEPTION

7.

Define *social perception* and explain how characteristics of the perceiver, the target, and the situation affect it.

social perception

The process of interpreting information about another person.

Perception involves the way we view the world around us. It adds meaning to information gathered via the five senses of touch, smell, hearing, vision, and taste. Perception is the primary vehicle through which we come to understand ourselves and our surroundings. *Social perception* is the process of interpreting information about another person. Virtually all management activities rely on perception. In appraising performance, managers use their perceptions of an employee's behavior as a basis for the evaluation.

One work situation that highlights the importance of perception is the selection interview. The consequences of a bad match between an individual and the organization are devastating for both parties, so it is essential that the data gathered be accurate. Typical first interviews are brief, and the candidate is usually one of many seen by an interviewer during a day. How long does it take for the interviewer to reach a decision about a candidate? In the first four to five minutes, the interviewer has often made an accept or reject decision based on his or her perception of the candidate.⁴⁷

Perception is also culturally determined. Based on our cultural backgrounds, we tend to perceive things in certain ways. Read the following sentence:

Finished files are the result of years of scientific study combined with the experience of years.

Now quickly count the number of *F*s in the sentence. Individuals for whom English is their second language see all six *F*s. Most native English speakers report that there are three *F*s. Because of cultural conditioning, *of* is not an im-

CHALLENGE 3.2

Guess Your Myers-Briggs Type

Review the section on Jungian theory and the MBTI. You probably began to evaluate your own type while reading the section. Now you can formulate an idea of your type.

Place the letters corresponding to your guesses on the following line:

Your type is: _ _ _ _

Circle one:

Are you	<input checked="" type="radio"/> an Extravert	or	<input type="radio"/> an Introvert?
	<input type="radio"/> a Sensor	or	<input type="radio"/> an Intuitive?
	<input type="radio"/> a Feeler	or	<input type="radio"/> a Thinker?
	<input type="radio"/> a Judger	or	<input checked="" type="radio"/> a Perceiver?

Next, take a look at Table 3.2 and find the description of your type. How well does it fit you?

portant word and is ignored.⁴⁸ Culture affects our interpretation of the data we gather, as well as the way we add meaning to it.

Valuing diversity, including cultural diversity, has been recognized as the key to international competitiveness.⁴⁹ This challenge and others make social perception skills essential to managerial success.

Three major categories of factors influence our perception of another person: characteristics of ourselves, as perceivers; characteristics of the target person we are perceiving; and characteristics of the situation in which the interaction takes place. Figure 3.2 shows a model of social perception.

Characteristics of the Perceiver

Several characteristics of the perceiver can affect social perception. One such characteristic is *familiarity* with the target (the person being perceived). When



The perceiver's attitudes also affect social perception. Imagine what would happen if you interviewed both male and female candidates for an important position, yet you felt that women are not capable of holding their own in tough negotiations. This would cause you to overlook some excellent female candidates.

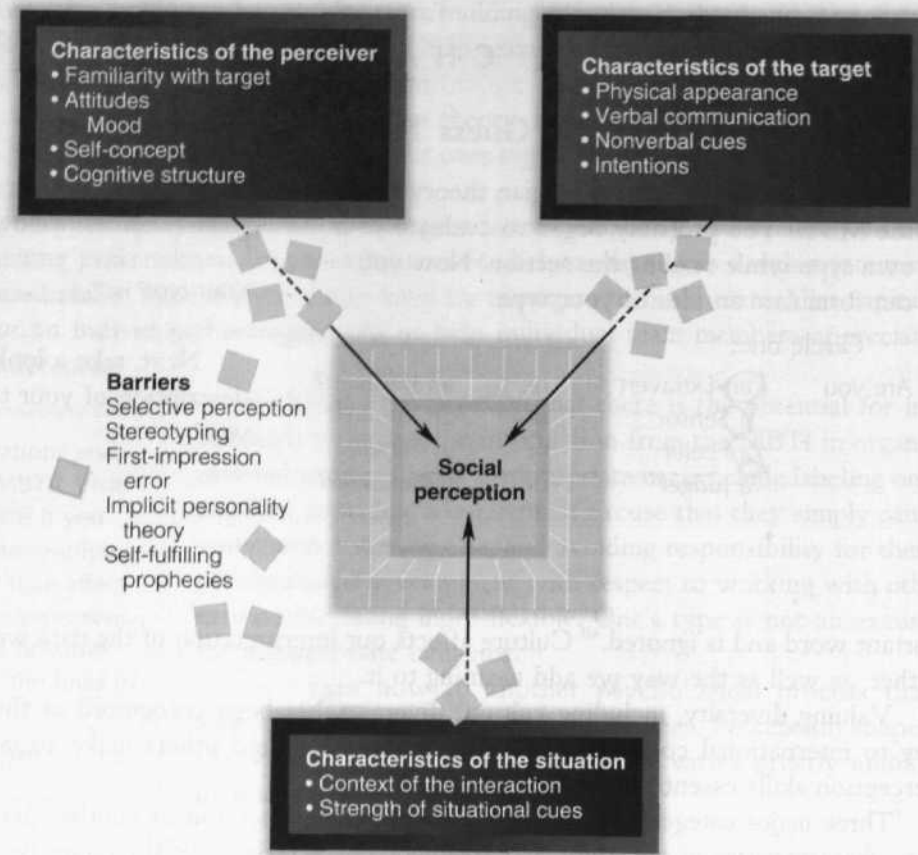


FIGURE 3.2

A Model for Social Perception

we are familiar with a person, we have multiple observations on which to base our impression of him or her. If the information we have gathered during these observations is accurate, we may have an accurate perception of the other person. Familiarity does not always mean accuracy, however. Sometimes, when we know a person well, we tend to screen out information that is inconsistent with what we believe the person is like. This is a particular danger in performance appraisals where the rater is familiar with the person being rated.

The perceiver's *attitudes* also affect social perception. Suppose you are interviewing candidates for a very important position in your organization—a position that requires negotiating contracts with suppliers, most of whom are male. You may feel that women are not capable of holding their own in tough negotiations. This attitude will doubtless affect your perceptions of the female candidates you interview.

Mood can have a strong influence on the way we perceive someone.⁵⁰ We think differently when we are happy than we do when we are depressed. In addition, we remember information that is consistent with our mood state better than information that is inconsistent with our mood state. When in a positive mood, we form more positive impressions of others. When in a negative mood, we tend to evaluate others unfavorably.

Another factor that can affect social perception is the perceiver's *self-concept*. An individual with a positive self-concept tends to notice positive attributes in another person. In contrast, a negative self-concept can lead a perceiver to pick out negative traits in another person. Greater understanding of self allows us to have more accurate perceptions of others.

Cognitive structure, an individual's pattern of thinking, also affects social perception. Some people have a tendency to perceive physical traits, such as height, weight, and appearance, more readily. Others tend to focus more on central traits, or personality dispositions. Cognitive complexity allows a person to perceive multiple characteristics of another person rather than attending to just a few traits.

Characteristics of the Target

Characteristics of the target, who is the person being perceived, influence social perception. *Physical appearance* plays a big role in our perception of others. The perceiver will notice the target's physical features like height, weight, estimated age, race, and gender. Clothing says a great deal about a person. Blue pin-striped suits, for example, are decoded to mean banking or Wall Street. Perceivers tend to notice physical appearance characteristics that contrast with the norm, that are intense, or that are new or unusual.⁵¹ A loud person, one who dresses outlandishly, a very tall person, or a hyperactive child will be noticed because he or she provides a contrast to what is commonly encountered. In addition, people who are novel can attract attention. Newcomers or minorities in the organization are examples of novel individuals.

Physical attractiveness often colors our entire impression of another person. Interviewers rate attractive candidates more favorably, and attractive candidates are awarded higher starting salaries.^{52,53} People who are perceived as physically attractive face stereotypes as well. We will discuss these and other stereotypes later in this chapter.

Verbal communication from targets also affects our perception of them. We listen to the topics they speak about, their voice tone, and their accent and make judgments based on this input.

Nonverbal communication conveys a great deal of information about the target. Eye contact, facial expressions, body movements, and posture all are deciphered by the perceiver in an attempt to form an impression of the target. It is interesting that some nonverbal signals mean very different things in different cultures. The "okay" sign in the United States (forming a circle with the thumb and forefinger) is an insult in South America. Facial expressions, however, seem to have universal meanings. Individuals from different cultures are able to recognize and decipher expressions the same way.⁵⁴

The *intentions* of the target are inferred by the perceiver, who observes the target's behavior. We may see our boss appear in our office doorway and think, "Oh no! She's going to give me more work to do." Or we may perceive that her intention is to congratulate us on a recent success. In any case, the perceiver's interpretation of the target's intentions affects the way the perceiver views the target.

Characteristics of the Situation

The situation in which the interaction between the perceiver and the target takes place has an influence on the perceiver's impression of the target. The *social context* of the interaction is a major influence. Meeting a professor in his or her

office affects your impression in a certain way that may contrast with the impression you would form had you met the professor in a local restaurant. In Japan, social context is very important. Business conversations after working hours or at lunch are taboo. If you try to talk business during these times, you may be perceived as rude.⁵⁵

The *strength of situational cues* also affects social perception. As we discussed earlier in the chapter, some situations provide strong cues as to appropriate behavior. In these situations, we assume that the individual's behavior can be accounted for by the situation, and that it may not reflect the individual's disposition. This is the *discounting principle* in social perception.⁵⁶ For example, you may encounter an automobile salesperson who has a warm and personable manner, asks about your work and hobbies, and seems genuinely interested in your taste in cars. Can you assume that this behavior reflects the salesperson's personality? You probably cannot, because of the influence of the situation. This person is trying to sell you a car, and in this particular situation he or she probably treats all customers in this manner.

You can see that characteristics of the perceiver, the target, and the situation all affect social perception. It would be wonderful if all of us had accurate social perception skills. Unfortunately, barriers often prevent us from perceiving another person accurately.

Barriers to Social Perception

Several factors lead us to form inaccurate impressions of others. Five of these barriers to social perception are selective perception, stereotyping, first-impression error, implicit personality theories, and self-fulfilling prophecies.

We receive a vast amount of information. *Selective perception* is our tendency to choose information that supports our viewpoints. Individuals often ignore information that makes them feel uncomfortable or threatens their viewpoints. Suppose, for example, that a sales manager is evaluating the performance of his employees. One employee does not get along well with colleagues and rarely completes sales reports on time. This employee, however, generates the most new sales contracts in the office. The sales manager may ignore the negative information, choosing to evaluate the salesperson only on contracts generated. The manager is exercising selective perception.

A *stereotype* is a generalization about a group of people. Stereotypes reduce information about other people to a workable level, and they are efficient for compiling and using information. Stereotypes can be accurate, and when they are accurate, they can be useful perceptual guidelines. Most of the time, however, stereotypes are inaccurate. They harm individuals when inaccurate impressions of them are inferred and are never tested or changed.⁵⁷ Thus, stereotypes may not be effective if they are too rigid or based on false information.

Suppose that a white male manager passes the coffee area and notices two African-American men talking there. He becomes irritated at them for wasting time. Later in the day, he sees two women talking in the coffee area. He thinks they should do their gossiping on their own time. The next morning, the same manager sees two white men talking in the coffee area. He thinks nothing of it; he is sure they are discussing business. The manager may hold a stereotype that women and minorities do not work hard unless closely supervised.

In multicultural work teams, members often stereotype foreign coworkers rather than getting to know them before forming an impression. Team members from less developed countries are often assumed to have less knowledge simply because their homeland is economically or technologically less developed.⁵⁸

Stereotypes like these can deflate the productivity of the work team, as well as create low morale.

Attractiveness is a powerful stereotype. We assume that attractive individuals are also warm, kind, sensitive, poised, sociable, outgoing, independent, and strong. Are attractive people really like this? Certainly all of them are not. A recent study of romantic relationships showed that most attractive individuals do not fit the stereotype, except for possessing good social skills and being popular.⁵⁹

Some individuals may seem to us to fit the stereotype of attractiveness because our behavior elicits behavior that confirms the stereotype from them. Consider, for example, a situation in which you meet an attractive fellow student. Chances are that you respond positively to this person, because you assume he or she is warm, sociable, and so on. Even though the person may not possess these traits, your positive response may bring out these behaviors in the person. The interaction between the two of you may be channeled such that the stereotype confirms itself.⁶⁰

First impressions are lasting impressions, so the saying goes. Individuals place a good deal of importance on first impressions, and for good reason. We tend to remember what we perceive first about a person, and sometimes we are quite reluctant to change our initial impressions.⁶¹ *First-impression error* means that we observe a very brief bit of a person's behavior in our first encounter and infer that this behavior reflects what the person is really like. Primacy effects can be particularly dangerous in interviews, given that we form first impressions quickly and that these impressions may be the basis for long-term employment relationships.

Implicit personality theories can also lead to inaccurate perceptions.⁶² We tend to have our own mini-theories about how people look and behave. These theories help us organize our perceptions and take shortcuts instead of integrating new information all the time. We are *cognitive misers*. Because the world is complex and ambiguous and we have a limited mental capacity, we try to expend the least amount of effort possible in attempting to make sense of the world.⁶³ We group traits and appearances into clusters that seem to go together. For example, you may believe that introverted people are also worriers and intellectuals, or that fashionable dressers are also up on current events and like modern music. These implicit personality theories are barriers, because they limit our ability to take in new information when it is available.

Self-fulfilling prophecies are also barriers to social perception. Sometimes our expectations affect the way we interact with others such that we get what we wish for. Self-fulfilling prophecy is also known as the Pygmalion effect, named for the sculptor in Greek mythology who carved a statue of a woman that came to life when he prayed for this wish and it was granted.

Early studies of self-fulfilling prophecy were conducted in elementary school classrooms. Teachers were given bogus information that some of their pupils had high intellectual potential. These pupils were chosen randomly; there were really no differences among the students. Eight months later, the "gifted" pupils scored significantly higher on an IQ test. The teachers' expectations had elicited growth from these students, and teachers had given them tougher assignments and more feedback on their performance.⁶⁴ Self-fulfilling prophecy has been studied in many settings, including at sea. The Israeli Defense Forces told one group of naval cadets that they probably wouldn't experience seasickness, and even if they did, it wouldn't affect their performance. The self-fulfilling prophecy worked! This group of cadets was rated as better performers than other groups,

discounting principle

The assumption that an individual's behavior is accounted for by the situation.

selective perception

The process of selecting information that supports our individual viewpoints while discounting information that threatens our viewpoints.

stereotype

A generalization about a group of people.

8.

Identify five common barriers to social perception.

first-impression error

The tendency to form lasting opinions about an individual based on initial perceptions.

implicit personality theory

Opinions formed about other people that are based on our own mini-theories about how people behave.

self-fulfilling prophecy

The situation in which our expectations about people affect our interaction with them in such a way that our expectations are fulfilled.

and they also had less seasickness. The information improved the cadets' self-efficacy—they believed they could perform well even if they became seasick.⁶⁵

The Pygmalion effect has been observed in work organizations as well. A manager's expectations of an individual affect both the manager's behavior toward the individual and the individual's response.⁶⁶ For example, suppose you have an initial impression of an employee as having the potential to move up within the organization. Chances are you will spend a great deal of time coaching and counseling the employee, providing challenging assignments, and grooming the individual for success.

Managers can harness the power of the Pygmalion effect to improve productivity in the organization. It appears that high expectations of individuals come true. Can a manager extend these high expectations to an entire group and have similar positive results? The answer is yes. When a manager expects positive things from a group, the group delivers.⁶⁷

Impression Management

Most people want to make favorable impressions on others. This is particularly true in organizations, where individuals compete for jobs, favorable performance evaluations, and salary increases. The process by which individuals try to control the impressions others have of them is called *impression management*. Individuals use several techniques to control others' impressions of them.⁶⁸

Some impression management techniques are self-enhancing. These techniques focus on enhancing others' impressions of the person using the technique. Name-dropping, which involves mentioning an association with important people in the hopes of improving one's image, is often used. Managing one's appearance is another technique for impression management. Individuals dress carefully for interviews because they want to "look the part" in order to get the job. Self-descriptions, or statements about one's characteristics, are used to manage impressions as well.

Another group of impression management techniques are *other-enhancing*. The aim of these techniques is to focus on the individual whose impression is to be managed. Flattery is a common other-enhancing technique whereby compliments are given to an individual in order to win his or her approval. Favours are also used to gain the approval of others. Agreement with someone's opinion is a technique often used to gain a positive impression.

Some employees may engage in impression management to intentionally look bad at work. Methods for creating a poor impression include decreasing performance, not working to one's potential, skipping work, displaying a bad attitude, or broadcasting one's limitations. Why would someone try to look bad to others? Sometimes employees want to avoid additional work or a particular task. They may try to look bad in hopes of being laid off, or they may create poor impressions in order to get attention.⁶⁹

Are impression management techniques effective? Most of the research has focused on employment interviews, and the results indicate that candidates who engage in impression management by self-promoting performed better in interviews, were more likely to obtain site visits with potential employers, and were more likely to get hired.^{70,71} In addition, employees who engage in impression management are rated more favorably in performance appraisals than those who do not.⁷²

Impression management seems to have an impact on others' impressions. As long as the impressions conveyed are accurate, this process can be a beneficial one in organizations. If the impressions are found to be false, however, a strongly

impression management

The process by which individuals try to control the impression others have of them.

negative overall impression may result. Furthermore, excessive impression management can lead to the perception that the user is manipulative or insincere.⁷³ We have discussed the influences on social perception, the potential barriers to perceiving another person, and impression management. Another psychological process that managers should understand is attribution.

ATTRIBUTION IN ORGANIZATIONS

As human beings, we are innately curious. We are not content merely to observe the behavior of others; rather, we want to know *why* they behave the way they do. We also seek to understand and explain our own behavior. *Attribution theory* explains how we pinpoint the causes of our own behavior and that of other people.⁷⁴

The attributions, or inferred causes, we provide for behavior have important implications in organizations. In explaining the causes of our performance, good or bad, we are asked to explain the behavior that was the basis for the performance.

Internal and External Attributions

Attributions can be made to an internal source of responsibility (something within the individual's control) or an external source (something outside the individual's control). Suppose you perform well on an exam in this course. You might say you aced the test because you are smart, or because you studied hard. If you attribute your success to ability or effort, you are making an internal attribution.

Alternatively, you might make an external attribution for your performance. You might say it was an easy test (you would attribute your success to degree of task difficulty) or that you had good luck. In this case, you are attributing your performance to sources beyond your control, or external sources. You can see that internal attributions include such causes as ability and effort, whereas external attributions include causes like task difficulty or luck.

Attribution patterns differ among individuals.⁷⁵ Achievement-oriented individuals attribute their success to ability and their failures to lack of effort, both internal causes. Failure-oriented individuals attribute their failures to lack of ability, and they may develop feelings of incompetence as a result of their attributional pattern. Evidence indicates that this attributional pattern also leads to depression.⁷⁶

Attribution theory has many applications in the workplace. The way you explain your own behavior affects your motivation. For example, suppose you must give an important presentation to your executive management group. You believe you have performed well, and your boss tells you that you've done a good job. To what do you attribute your success? If you believe careful preparation and rehearsal led to your success, you're likely to take credit for the performance and to have a sense of self-efficacy about future presentations. If, however, you believe that you were just lucky, you may not be motivated to repeat the performance because you believe you had little influence on the outcome.

One situation in which a lot of attributions are made is the employment interview. Candidates are often asked to explain the causes of previous performance (Why did you perform poorly in the math classes?) to interviewers. In addition, candidates often feel they should justify why they should be hired (I



attribution theory

A theory that explains how individuals pinpoint the causes of the behavior of themselves and others.

9.

Explain the attribution process and how attributions affect managerial behavior.

work well with people, so I'm looking for a managerial job). Research shows that successful and unsuccessful candidates differ in the way they make attributions for negative outcomes. Successful candidates are less defensive and make internal attributions for negative events. Unsuccessful candidates attribute negative outcomes to things beyond their control (external attributions), which gives interviewers the impression that the candidate failed to learn from the event. In addition, interviewers fear that the individuals would be likely to blame others when something goes wrong in the workplace.⁷⁷

Attributional Biases

The attribution process may be affected by two very common errors: the fundamental attribution error and the self-serving bias. The tendency to make attributions to internal causes when focusing on someone else's behavior is known as the *fundamental attribution error*.⁷⁸ The other error, *self-serving bias*, occurs when focusing on one's own behavior. Individuals tend to make internal attributions for their own successes and external attributions for their own failures.⁷⁹ In other words, when we succeed, we take credit for it; when we fail, we blame the situation on other people. Organizational Reality 3.2 illustrates how "Chainsaw Al" Dunlap fell prey to self-serving bias. Even CEOs are not immune to these biases.

Both of these biases were illustrated in a study of health care managers who were asked to cite the causes of their employees' poor performance.⁸⁰ The managers claimed that internal causes (their employees' lack of effort or lack of ability) were the basis for their employees' poor performance. This is an example of the fundamental attribution error. When the employees were asked to pinpoint the cause of their own performance problems, they blamed a lack of support from the managers (an external cause), which illustrates self-serving bias.

There are cultural differences in these two attribution errors. As these biases have been described above, they apply to people from the United States. In cultures that are more fatalistic, as is India, people tend to believe that fate is responsible for much that happens. People in such cultures tend to emphasize external causes of behavior.⁸¹

In China, people are taught that the route to accomplishment is through hard work. When faced with either a success or a failure, Chinese individuals first introspect about whether they have tried hard enough or whether their attitude was correct. In a study of attributions for performance in sports, Chinese athletes attributed both their successes and failures to internal causes. Even when the cause of poor athletic performance was clearly external, such as bad weather, the Chinese participants made internal attributions. In terms of the Chinese culture, this attributional pattern is a reflection of moral values that are used to evaluate behavior. The socialistic value of selfless morality dictates that individual striving must serve collective interests. Mao Ze-dong stressed that external causes only function through internal causes; therefore, the main cause of results lies within oneself. Chinese are taught this from childhood, and form a corresponding attributional tendency. In analyzing a cause, they first look to their own effort.⁸²

The way individuals interpret the events around them has a strong influence on their behavior. People try to understand the causes of behavior in order to gain predictability and control over future behavior. Managers use attributions in all aspects of their jobs. In evaluating performance and rewarding

employees, managers must determine the causes of behavior and a perceived source of responsibility. One tough call managers often make is whether allegations of sexual harassment actually resulted from sexual conduct and, if harassment did occur, what should be done about it. To make such tough calls, managers use attributions. The Scientific Foundation shows that sometimes these attributions can be biased.

ORGANIZATIONAL REALITY 3.2

"Chainsaw Al's" Self-Serving Bias

Al Dunlap is possibly one of the most notorious men in business, known both for his successes and his failures. In his case, these successes and failures have been very public, and he has taken credit for the successes, and blamed others, or circumstances, for the failures. Is this a case of self-serving bias?

Al Dunlap acquired a reputation as the king of downsizing. At Scott Paper, he fired thousands of employees and sold the company to Kimberly-Clark for huge profits, earning him the nickname "Chainsaw Al." The Scott Paper deal netted him around \$100 million. Dunlap wrote a best seller, *Mean Business*, in which he sang his own praises (the subtitle of the book tells it all—*How I Save Bad Companies and Make Good Companies Great*). In the book, he claims he's worth every penny: "I'm a superstar in my field, much like Michael Jordan in basketball and Bruce Springsteen in rock 'n roll" (p. 21).

He was hired in 1996 by Sunbeam, a maker of blenders, electric blankets, and gas grills, and Sunbeam's stock doubled in six weeks. Over the course of a year at Sunbeam, he cut half of Sunbeam's 12,000 employees, cut back its product line, and took massive writeoffs. Dunlap declared victory and put the company up for sale after just a year, but no buyers emerged. Instead, Dunlap bought three consumer products companies. With

tricky accounting, the acquisitions looked good. However, when his accounting tricks were uncovered, Sunbeam had over \$2 billion in debt and a negative cash flow. It was in worse shape than when "Chainsaw Al" took over.

Dunlap blamed the results on an executive he fired, on underlings who were allowed to make "stupid, low-margin deals," and even on El Nino—"People don't think about buying grills during a storm." He claimed he was blindsided by the bad results. Facing the board of directors, he claimed that a billionaire financier was conspiring to buy the company at a bargain by orchestrating a torrent of negative media coverage.

The board didn't buy his story. Chainsaw Al got the ax. Would the situation have been different if he had owned up to the failures? We will never know.

Discussion Question

1. How did "Chainsaw Al" exhibit self-serving bias? Do you think things would have turned out differently if he had made more accurate attributions?

SOURCES: P. Sellers, "Exit for Chainsaw?" *Fortune* (June 8, 1998): 300-331; M. Schifrin, "The Unkindest Cut," *Forbes* (May 4, 1998): 44-45; A. Dunlap and B. Andelman, *Mean Business* (New York: Random House, 1996).

employees, managers must determine the causes of behavior and a perceived source of responsibility. One tough call managers often make is whether allegations of sexual harassment actually resulted from sexual conduct and, if harassment did occur, what should be done about it. To make such tough calls, managers use attributions. The Scientific Foundation shows that sometimes these attributions can be biased.

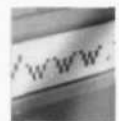
Attribution theory can explain how performance evaluation judgments can lead to differential rewards. A supervisor attributing an employee's good performance to internal causes, such as effort or ability, may give a larger raise than a supervisor attributing the good performance to external causes, such as help from others or good training. Managers are often called on to explain their own actions as well, and in doing so they make attributions about the causes of their own behavior. We continue our discussion of attributions in Chapter 6 in terms of how attributions are used in managing employee performance.

fundamental attribution error

The tendency to make attributions to internal causes when focusing on someone else's behavior.

self-serving bias

The tendency to attribute one's own successes to internal causes and one's failures to external causes.



Web Sighting

Interested in learning more about your locus of control and attributional style? Visit the Cyberia Shrink at <http://www.queendom.com/tests.html> and complete the locus of control and attributional style inventory. Did you find out anything surprising about your personality?

<http://www.queendom.com/tests.html>

SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATION

Committees That Review Sexual Harassment Allegations May Be Biased

Allegations of sexual harassment have become more common in the workplace. Given that more than 50 percent of women in the workplace report experiencing some form of sexual harassment, it is important that effective and unbiased review processes take place in organizations.

How do members of review boards that investigate sexual harassment allegations make attributions? They use a two-stage attribution process. First, managers must determine whether the behavior was inappropriate, and second, they must determine what actions to take if misconduct has occurred. Researchers studied this process by asking 573 employees of a university to read a sexual harassment scenario in which a subordinate accused a supervisor of harassment and then to answer questions about it.

The study showed that managers may be biased. In the first part of the attribution process

(whether misconduct occurred), males were more likely to be biased in favor of the supervisor if the supervisor was male and of their same ethnicity. In the second part of the attribution process, female and non-white respondents were more likely to find the supervisor and the company at fault and to recommend that some action be taken. White males were less likely to find the company at fault.

The practical implication of this study is that managerial panels that review sexual harassment allegations should consist of a diverse panel of reviewers. Panels of reviewers of similar gender or ethnicity are likely to be biased in their attributions.

SOURCE: M. A. Plater and R. E. Thomas, "The Impact of Job Performance, Gender, and Ethnicity on the Managerial Review of Sexual Harassment Allegations," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 28 (1998): 52-70.



MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS: USING PERSONALITY, PERCEPTION, AND ATTRIBUTION AT WORK

Managers need to know as much as possible about individual differences in order to understand themselves and those with whom they work. An understanding of personality characteristics can help a manager appreciate differences in employees. With the increased diversity of the workforce, tools like the MBTI can be used to help employees see someone else's point of view. These tools also can help make communication among diverse employees more effective.

Managers use social perception constantly on the job. Knowledge of the forces that affect perception and the barriers to accuracy can help the manager form more accurate impressions of others.

Determining the causes of job performance is a major task for the manager, and attribution theory can be used to explain how managers go about determining causality. In addition, knowledge of the fundamental attribution error and self-serving bias can help a manager guard against these biases in the processes of looking for causes of behavior on the job.

In this chapter, we have explored the psychological processes of personality, perception, and attribution as individual differences. In the following chapter, we will continue our discussion of individual differences in terms of attitudes, values and ethics.

Looking Back

Oprah's Reflections on Management

Many of us see Oprah, the television celebrity, rather than Oprah, head of Harpo Productions. Let's take a look at her role as manager, and her view of it, in her own words. Here are a few of her thoughts related to management.

On management style:

To me one of the most important things about being a good manager is to rule with a heart. You have to know the business, but you also have to know what's at the heart of the business, and that's the people. People matter.

You have to surround yourself with people you trust, and people that are good. But they also have to be people who will tell the emperor you have no clothes.

She inspires loyalty by treating people "like I would want to be treated, and I allow them to make mistakes."

On the 1994 personnel shakeup at Harpo Productions:

I made mistakes. My goal is to be fair.

On decision making at Harpo:

I don't do anything unless it feels good. I don't move on logic. I move on my gut. And I have a good gut.

On her personal mission:

My fortune gives me choices. If a child is in need, I help. My money enables me to make an important difference in people's lives.

On Harpo's mission:

The mission of Harpo Productions is "to inform, enlighten, uplift and entertain; to use our lives and voices as a means of service to the viewing public."⁸³



Oprah Winfrey is not only a television celebrity, but also the head of Harpo productions.

Chapter Summary

1. Individual differences are factors that make individuals unique. They include personalities, perceptions, skills and abilities, attitudes, values, and ethics.
2. The trait theory, psychodynamic theory, humanistic theory, and integrative approach are all personality theories.

- Managers should understand personality because of its effect on behavior. Several characteristics affect behavior in organizations, including locus of control, self-esteem, self-monitoring, and positive/negative affect.
- Personality has a stronger influence in weak situations, where there are few cues to guide behavior.
- One useful framework for understanding individual differences is type theory, developed by Carl Jung and measured by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).
- Social perception is the process of interpreting information about another person. It is influenced by characteristics of the perceiver, the target, and the situation.
- Barriers to social perception include selective perception, stereotyping, first-impression error, implicit personality theories, and self-fulfilling prophecies.
- Impression management techniques such as name-dropping, managing one's appearance, self-descriptions, flattery, favors, and agreement are used by individuals to control others' impressions of them.
- Attribution is the process of determining the cause of behavior. It is used extensively by managers, especially in evaluating performance.

Key Terms

individual differences (p. 80)
 interactional psychology (p. 80)
 personality (p. 81)
 trait theory (p. 82)
 psychodynamic theory (p. 83)
 humanistic theory (p. 83)
 integrative approach (p. 83)
 locus of control (p. 83)
 self-esteem (p. 84)
 self-monitoring (p. 84)
 positive affect (p. 86)
 negative affect (p. 86)
 strong situation (p. 87)

projective test (p. 87)
 behavioral measures (p. 87)
 self-report questionnaire (p. 87)
 Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (p. 88)
 extraversion (p. 88)
 introversion (p. 88)
 sensing (p. 89)
 intuiting (p. 89)
 thinking (p. 90)
 feeling (p. 90)
 judging (p. 90)
 perceiving (p. 90)

social perception (p. 92)
 discounting principle (p. 96)
 selective perception (p. 96)
 stereotype (p. 96)
 first-impression error (p. 97)
 implicit personality theory (p. 97)
 self-fulfilling prophecy (p. 97)
 impression management (p. 98)
 attribution theory (p. 99)
 fundamental attribution error (p. 100)
 self-serving bias (p. 100)

Review Questions

- What are individual differences, and why should managers understand them?
- Define *personality*, and describe its origins.
- Describe four theories of personality and what each contributes to our knowledge of personality.
- Describe the eight preferences of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. How does this instrument measure Carl Jung's ideas?
- What factors influence social perception? What are the barriers to social perception?
- Describe the errors that affect the attribution process.

Discussion and Communication Questions

- What contributions can high self-monitors make in organizations? Low self-monitors?
- How can managers improve their perceptual skills?
- Which has the strongest impact on personality: heredity or environment?
- How can managers make more accurate attributions?
- How can managers encourage self-efficacy in employees?
- How can self-serving bias and the fundamental attribution error be avoided?
- (communication question) You have been asked to develop a training program for interviewers. An integral part of this training program is focused on

- helping interviewers develop better social perception skills. Write an outline for this section of the training program. Be sure to address barriers to social perception and ways to avoid these barriers.
- (communication question) Form groups of four to six, then split each group in half. Debate the origins

Ethics Questions

- What are the ethical uses of personality tests? What are the unethical uses?
- Suppose a manager makes an incorrect attribution for an employee's poor performance (for instance, the manager cites equipment failure), and peers know the employee is at fault. Should they blow the whistle on their colleague?
- Suppose one of your colleagues wants to eliminate all biases and stereotypes from the hiring

of personality, with one half taking the position that personality is inherited, and the other half taking the position that personality is formed by the environment. Each half should also discuss the implications of their position for managers.

- process. He suggests that only résumés be used, with no names or other identifying data—only experience and education. What are the ethical consequences of this approach? Would any group be unfairly disadvantaged by this approach?
- Suppose a manager makes a misattribution of an employee's poor performance. What are the ethical consequences of this?

Experiential Exercises

3.1 MBTI Types and Management Styles

Part I. This questionnaire will help you determine your preferences. For each item, circle either a or b. If you feel both a and b are true, decide which one is more like you, even if it is only slightly more true.

- I would rather
 - Solve a new and complicated problem.
 - Work on something I have done before.
- I like to
 - Work alone in a quiet place.
 - Be where the action is.
- I want a boss who
 - Establishes and applies criteria in decisions.
 - Considers individual needs and makes exceptions.
- When I work on a project, I
 - Like to finish it and get some closure.
 - Often leave it open for possible changes.
- When making a decision, the most important considerations are
 - Rational thoughts, ideas, and data.
 - People's feelings and values.
- On a project, I tend to
 - Think it over and over before deciding how to proceed.
 - Start working on it right away, thinking about it as I go along.
- When working on a project, I prefer to
 - Maintain as much control as possible.
 - Explore various options.
- In my work, I prefer to
 - Work on several projects at a time, and learn as much as possible about each one.
 - Have one project that is challenging and keeps me busy.
- I often
 - Make lists and plans whenever I start something and may hate to seriously alter my plans.
 - Avoid plans and just let things progress as I work on them.
- When discussing a problem with colleagues, it is easy for me to
 - See "the big picture."
 - Grasp the specifics of the situation.

11. When the phone rings in my office or at home, I usually
 - a. Consider it an interruption.
 - b. Do not mind answering it.
 12. Which word describes you better?
 - a. Analytical.
 - b. Empathetic.
 13. When I am working on an assignment, I tend to
 - a. Work steadily and consistently.
 - b. Work in bursts of energy with "down time" in between.
 14. When I listen to someone talk on a subject, I usually try to
 - a. Relate it to my own experience and see if it fits.
 - b. Assess and analyze the message.
 15. When I come up with new ideas, I generally
 - a. "Go for it."
 - b. Like to contemplate the ideas some more.
 16. When working on a project, I prefer to
 - a. Narrow the scope so it is clearly defined.
 - b. Broaden the scope to include related aspects.
 17. When I read something, I usually
 - a. Confine my thoughts to what is written there.
 - b. Read between the lines and relate the words to other ideas.
 18. When I have to make a decision in a hurry, I often
 - a. Feel uncomfortable and wish I had more information.
 - b. Am able to do so with available data.
 19. In a meeting, I tend to
 - a. Continue formulating my ideas as I talk about them.
 - b. Only speak out after I have carefully thought the issue through.
 20. In work, I prefer spending a great deal of time on issues of
 - a. Ideas.
 - b. People.
 21. In meetings, I am most often annoyed with people who
 - a. Come up with many sketchy ideas.
 - b. Lengthen meetings with many practical details.
 22. I am a
 - a. Morning person.
 - b. Night owl.
 23. What is your style in preparing for a meeting?
 - a. I am willing to go in and be responsive.
 - b. I like to be fully prepared and usually sketch an outline of the meeting.
 24. In a meeting, I would prefer for people to
 - a. Display a fuller range of emotions.
 - b. Be more task oriented.
 25. I would rather work for an organization where
 - a. My job was intellectually stimulating.
 - b. I was committed to its goals and mission.
 26. On weekends, I tend to
 - a. Plan what I will do.
 - b. Just see what happens and decide as I go along.
 27. I am more
 - a. Outgoing.
 - b. Contemplative.
 28. I would rather work for a boss who is
 - a. Full of new ideas.
 - b. Practical.
- In the following, choose the word in each pair that appeals to you more:
29. a. Social.
b. Theoretical.
 30. a. Ingenuity.
b. Practicality.
 31. a. Organized.
b. Adaptable.
 32. a. Active.
b. Concentration.

SCORING KEY

Count one point for each item listed below that you have circled in the inventory.

Score for I	Score for E	Score for S	Score for N
2a -	2b	1b	1a
6a -	6b	10b	10a -
11a -	11b	13a -	13b
15b	15a -	16a -	16b
19b	19a -	17a	17b -
22a -	22b	21a	21b -
27b -	27a	28b -	28a
32b	32a	30b	30a
Total 3	6	5	5

Circle the one with more points—I or E.

Circle the one with more points—S or N.

Score for T	Score for F	Score for J	Score for P
3a -	3b	4a -	4b
5a	5b -	7a -	7b
12a	12b -	8b -	8a
14b -	14a	9a -	9b
20a	20b -	18b -	18a
24b	24a -	23b -	23a -
25a	25b -	26a -	26b
29b	29a -	31a	31b
Total 6	2	0-1	7

Circle the one with more points—T or F.

Circle the one with more points—J or P.

3.2 Stereotypes in Employment Interviews

Step 1. Your instructor will give you a transcript that records an applicant's interview for a job as a laborer. Your task is to memorize as much of the interview as possible.

Step 2. Write down everything you can remember about the job candidate.

For more practice exercises, consult the fifth edition of *Organizational Behavior: Experiences and Cases* by Dorothy Marcic and Joseph Seltzer (South-Western, 1998).

Your score is

I or E 6

S or N 5

T or F 6

J or P 7

Part II. The purpose of this part of the exercise is to give you experience in understanding some of the individual differences that were proposed by Carl Jung and are measured by the MBTI.

Step 1. Your instructor will assign you to a group.

Step 2. Your group is a team of individuals who want to start a business. You are to develop a mission statement and a name for your business.

Step 3. After you have completed Step 2, analyze the decision process that occurred within the group. How did you decide on your company's name and mission?

Step 4. Your instructor will have each group report to the class the name and mission of the company, and then the decision process used. Your instructor will also give you some additional information about the exercise and provide some interesting insights about your management style.

SOURCE: "MBTI Types and Management Styles" from D. Marcic and P. Nutt, "Personality Inventory," in D. Marcic, ed., *Organizational Behavior: Experiences and Cases* (St. Paul: West, 1989), 9-16. Reprinted by permission.

Step 3. Your instructor will lead you in a discussion.

SOURCE: Adapted from D. A. Sachau and M. Hussang, "How Interviewers' Stereotypes Influence Memory: An Exercise," *Journal of Management Education* 16 (1992): 391-396. Copyright © 1992 by Sage Publications. Reprinted with permission of Sage Publications, Inc.

Case

Trilogy Software, Inc.

As a student at Stanford University, Joe Liemandt did part-time consulting jobs for various Palo Alto computer companies. On these consulting jobs he noticed that computer companies were very inefficient at selling and delivering their products. "He was surprised at how primitive the process was. Much of it was handwritten, using cumbersome inventory manuals and often requiring lengthy consultation between the company's salespeople and its engineers." Intrigued by this order processing (or sales configuration) problem, Liemandt began to work on a software idea that would become the foundation of his software development company.

Liemandt saw opportunity stamped all over the sales configuration problem. His research on the problem revealed that other companies like IBM and Hewlett-Packard were working on it as well. With this kind of competition he worried that his window of opportunity was closing. So a few months before graduation in 1990, twenty-one-year-old Joe Liemandt dropped out of Stanford to start Trilogy Software. He convinced four classmates to join him, three of whom juggled classes and work until they graduated.

Liemandt says, "Starting Trilogy was the easy part. Keeping it going in the early years wasn't." Venture capitalists were not interested in investing in Trilogy. To keep the firm financially afloat, Liemandt took consulting jobs and leveraged one credit card against another, having twenty-two credit cards outstanding at one point. After moving the company to Austin, Texas, in 1991, Hewlett-Packard signed a \$3.5 million contract with Trilogy for sales configuration software and support services. H-P in effect abandoned its own effort to develop sales configuration software.

Soon other big customers purchased Trilogy's software. Called *Selling Chain*, the software enables companies to "use computers to configure orders for a range of products from airplanes to shoes to telephone switches, and to perform other complex tasks." Boeing, for instance, uses *Selling Chain* to

cut the cost of processing aircraft orders. A Boeing 747 contains more than six million parts, and customers can select from hundreds of options. Without Trilogy's software, the sales configuration process required a salesperson to make numerous customer visits. The salesperson also had to spend considerable time working with Boeing engineers "to make sure all the chosen pieces fit together, renegotiating the price at every step." However, use of the *Selling Chain* software enables the salesperson to make a single visit to a customer and, using a laptop computer, configure the 747 complete with a price quote. This is possible because *Selling Chain* "knows which parts go together and how much they cost."

By late 1998, Liemandt had built Trilogy into a business with annual revenue in excess of \$100 million. Plus the company was still privately held. How did he accomplish this? Liemandt credits Trilogy's success to the types of people he hires and how he treats them.

Most of Trilogy's new employees come from computer science departments at MIT, Harvard, Carnegie Mellon, Rice, Stanford, and Berkley. Trilogy can't match Microsoft's salary offers and stock options to attract top talent. Liemandt, however, does use other means to attract top talent. He gives employees a lot of responsibility right away. One twenty-two-year-old, in describing the attraction of working for Trilogy, says the company gives people more responsibility than they think they can possibly handle and then lets them go do the job. According to Liemandt, "What matters is the ability to learn, adapt, and figure out what the answer is. You've got to be willing to get in over your head and struggle to make things happen."

Liemandt also looks for risk takers. He says, "You've got to be willing to jump off a cliff for your idea." Indeed, a significant element of Trilogy's training for new recruits focuses on developing their risk-taking propensity. Liemandt says that "he learned the hard way that taking risks and suffering the consequences are a crucial part of

business. And he wants new hires to understand the experience firsthand."

Liemandt puts Trilogy's college recruits through a rigorous three-month-long corporate boot camp. During the first month training sessions last from 8:00 A.M. until midnight. In the second week new hires are divided into teams and given three weeks to complete difficult projects. Teams that do well win a two-day trip to Las Vegas, where Liemandt also encourages the recruits to take risks. The objective of Liemandt's corporate boot camp is "to develop creative people who work well in teams, adapt to swift changes in customer demands—and take chances." Liemandt maintains that nothing "brings a group of people together like risk."

Discussion Questions

1. Using the various personality characteristics discussed in this chapter, how would you describe Joe Liemandt's personality?

2. What perceptions have you formed of Joe Liemandt? How do you think your perceptions are affected by characteristics of you as the perceiver and Liemandt as the perceptual target? To what extent have the barriers to social perception influenced your view of Liemandt?
3. Which barriers to social perception influence Joe Liemandt's attitudes and behavior? Explain your answer.
4. Suppose that you were offered a job at Trilogy. Given the information contained in the case, would you be inclined to accept the job offer? Explain your answer.

SOURCE: This case was written by Michael K. McCuddy, The Louis S. and Mary L. Morgal Professor of Christian Business Ethics and Professor of Management, College of Business Administration, Valparaiso University. This case was developed from material contained in J. Maloney and E. Brown, "So You Want to Be a Software Superstar," *Fortune* (June 10, 1996): 104-111; J. McHugh, "Holy Cow, No One's Done This!," *Forbes* (June 3, 1996): 122-128; E. Ramstad, "High Rollers: How Trilogy Software Trains Its Recruits to Be Risk Takers," *The Wall Street Journal* (September 21, 1998): A10-A11.