

CHAPTER 1

Personality Mapping for Managers: A Deep-Dive into Self-Awareness

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ABSTRACT

In a rapidly changing world, where the focus has shifted from bricks and machines to people, managers are required to deliver on organisational objectives while also planning for and managing people at both the individual and the team level. A manager's temperament significantly influences leadership style, communication and decision-making. This paper explores what personality mapping means for managers and how it can strengthen their self-awareness. Personality mapping helps managers identify their own personality characteristics and behaviours and, most importantly, the areas in which they can grow. The authors also argue that, when used as a tool for self-reflection, personality mapping can help young adults become more ethically minded and more aware of their own self-perceptions. By being self-aware, managers can lead better, manage their teams more effectively and handle a wide range of work-related situations with greater confidence. I believe that anyone who sets out to manage others should first understand his or her own personality.

Keywords: Personality mapping; Self-awareness; Managerial effectiveness; Big five; Leadership development.

1.0 Introduction

Changes in technology on a global scale and changes in employee expectations have radically changed the way the managerial role is defined in the modern organisation. Now, in addition to planning, organizing, and controlling the work of others, managers are also expected to be effective people managers, work effectively with cross-functional teams, and create an environment conducive to quality work. As a result, interpersonal skills and self-awareness have become as important as technical and functional skills in management positions.

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While completing my internship, it was quite apparent that managers who were conscious of their strengths and limitations resolved team conflicts more promptly and drew the best out of their team members more easily. One of the most influential factors in effective management is self-awareness, which helps managers recognise their strengths and limitations as well as the work preferences, interests and stressors that shape how they make decisions and interact with a team. I also observed that managers who understood why they acted as they did tend to be more discerning and more accommodating towards what their team expected of them and of the project itself.

Personality plays a large part in how managers think, react and lead. Various personality characteristics influence leadership style, stress management, motivation and adaptability in the workplace. Managers who understand their own personality patterns become better at managing themselves and at controlling their responses to a variety of organisational situations. This awareness, in turn, enhances their ability to lead team members and achieve organisational goals.

2.0 Concept of Personality

Personality refers to the enduring inner qualities that influence how people view situations, engage with others and respond to their environment. These attributes are formed by a combination of inherited ability, personal history and social influences. In a managerial context, personality helps explain why managers differ in leadership, communication and decision-making behaviour, and in the way they cope with stress. We all need to appreciate the distinction between personality and behaviour. Personality characteristics include stable traits such as introversion, confidence, emotional stability and openness to new experience. Although these characteristics influence behaviour, they do not determine it. Behaviour refers to an individual's observable actions, which vary according to the situation, the organisational culture and the requirements of the job. Personality therefore forms the foundation, while behaviour is moulded by circumstances.

Another critical aspect of personality is its stability and individuality. Personality characteristics tend to remain stable over time, particularly in adulthood, which makes behaviour reasonably predictable. Each person, however, possesses a distinct combination of traits, so no two personalities are alike. This is why managers in the same organisation respond differently to the same situation, pressure or conflict. Drawing on my own experience of group projects, I recognise that my behaviour is a function not only of personality but also of group dynamics; this is precisely why self-awareness matters.

Personality is central to managing in organisations. It influences leadership effectiveness, working relationships, communication style and the way conflict is handled. When managers understand their own personality as well as that of others, it becomes easier

to adapt their leadership style and to build relationships in which everyone feels involved. Understanding personality therefore forms the basis of personality mapping for managerial development.

3.0 Personality Mapping: Meaning and Tools

Personality mapping is a systematic method that helps managers recognise their characteristic traits, behavioural patterns and motivators. Understanding oneself offers far greater advantages than simply learning about the various personality types. A personality map helps a manager identify individual strengths and development needs, leading to greater effectiveness as a leader, a communicator and a team manager. It is therefore essential for managers to carry out a self-assessment in order to understand their own personality and working style, how they project themselves to others and how they make decisions.

A growing number of organisations now use personality assessments as part of leadership development, training and talent management, matching individual style and ability to the most suitable roles. Such assessments can also improve resilience and balance at the team level and help identify emerging leaders.

Personality mapping can also give managers insight into their own stressors and stress-induced patterns of behaviour, and can identify emotional triggers and blind spots that affect their relationships with others. When personality assessments are used correctly to identify individual strengths, weaknesses and competencies, they support employee development, enhance team effectiveness and improve the overall productivity of the organisation.

A wide range of personality assessment tools is available for personality mapping in organisations, among which the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is one of the most frequently used. The instrument classifies people according to their preferences for introversion or extraversion, thinking or feeling, and judging or perceiving. Such categories help leaders gain insight into their natural tendencies and into how those tendencies shape their leadership style and communication.

Another widely used tool is the Birkman Method, which takes a more in-depth look at the underlying needs, motivations and stress responses that shape how individuals behave. The model allows managers to understand not only their typical patterns of behaviour but also how unmet needs can result in counterproductive and potentially damaging conduct. By providing such insight, it helps managers regulate their emotions effectively and develop a more situational approach to leadership.

The Big Five personality model is also widely employed within the organizational context. It describes individual personality across five fundamental dimensions: Openness

to experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Emotional Stability. Although it is often used for research purposes, the Big Five personality model provides an organized and empirical approach to interpreting personality-based constructs that are associated with managerial competency. I acknowledge my own bias here: I find the MBTI both valid and useful, largely because I am a planner who likes things to be organised. In general, when used judiciously for managerial purposes, personality maps are accurate enough to add real value to a manager's journey of self-awareness and personal development.

4.0 Behavioral Styles and Managerial Interaction

Behavioural styles are the observable ways in which individuals communicate, respond to work situations and interact with others. These styles arise from underlying personality characteristics and shape how managers lead teams, handle disagreement and make choices. An understanding of different behavioural styles helps managers appreciate that people may view the same situation and yet respond to it in their own distinct way.

Managers encounter a range of behavioural styles in organisations: task-focused, relationship-based, analytical and action-oriented. Each style has its own strengths and limitations. Some individuals, for example, approach an assignment in a carefully planned and well-prepared manner, whereas others prefer to work "on the fly" and expect their colleagues to do the same. When managers learn to recognise the differences in style among the people they supervise, their ability to delegate and to assign duties improves. A manager's own style also has a considerable impact on how he or she leads and communicates with team members.

When managers communicate only in the way that comes naturally to them, difficulties frequently arise. When they are able to adapt their style to that of the team member they are addressing, comprehension improves, stress is reduced and working relationships become more effective. This ability to match communication styles also supports the development of a more collaborative, inclusive and diverse leadership culture.

Self-reflection about one's own managerial behaviour is equally important. Every manager has a natural set of behaviours; once these are recognised, the manager can judge when that style is effective and when it needs to be varied. This awareness enables them to intentionally modify their leadership style, control emotions more productively, and react mindfully to various work-related issues.

In short, an understanding of behavioural styles increases the effectiveness of managerial relationships and of leadership itself. Matching communication and leadership techniques to different behavioural types prevents misunderstanding and improves teamwork.

5.0 The Importance of Self-Awareness for Managers

Self-awareness is one of the most critical qualities of an effective leader. It is the capacity of managers to recognise their own emotions, personality, values and behaviour, and to draw on that understanding in their interactions with others. Leadership also relies on integrity. Leaders must manage the changing nature of their relationships with employees and navigate the complexities of their roles in an increasingly diverse workplace. Leaders who understand themselves well know how to use their personal attributes at work, and they also recognise how their vulnerabilities can create problems for themselves and for others, for instance when difficulty in regulating emotions becomes a source of stress. By understanding their strengths and weaknesses and using that knowledge to guide their conduct, leaders can avoid actions that damage their own performance or that of their team.

Studies show a high degree of correlation between emotional intelligence and self-awareness, particularly in relation to self-regulation and empathy. By being aware of what triggers their emotions, leaders can respond calmly and constructively, relieving at least some of the stress they experience. By regulating their emotions effectively, leaders are able to show empathy towards their employees, to understand how their own behaviour affects employees' performance and to appreciate their employees' differing viewpoints. Self-awareness is key to decision-making and managing people. When managers understand their biases, they are less likely to make rushed, emotionally driven decisions and more likely to take time to think through the options available to them. As their self-awareness grows, managers also become more effective communicators, provide more meaningful feedback and adapt their leadership style to the specific needs of their employees and teams. This heightened self-awareness improves a leader's ability to lead and ultimately contributes to long-term career success. In my own experience, understanding my emotional responses has helped me make better decisions and work more productively and collaboratively with others.

6.0 Practical Applications in Organizations

Personality mapping has many uses in the workplace, particularly in improving the productivity of managers and teams. Its main purpose is leadership development: when managers know their personality traits, they can make better use of their strengths while working on their weaknesses. With a fuller understanding of their own personality, managers can develop leadership styles that have a more positive effect on their teams. They are also better able to recognise unproductive behaviour patterns and to modify their management style as the needs of the team change. Personality mapping can also be very helpful in forming teams. By having a clear understanding of each team member's

characteristics and behaviours, managers are better able to help team members communicate and work together more effectively. When a manager understands how complementary strengths within a team fit together, it becomes far easier to distribute work assignments, avoid confusion and build teams that cooperate well. Such understanding helps the manager develop resilient, high-performing teams that work through challenges more quickly. A second benefit of knowing one's own personality and that of others is the ability to manage conflict more effectively. Managers who understand the differences between individual employees are better able to recognise potential conflict and manage disagreements constructively. By understanding how they and their teams work together, managers can adjust their own behaviour to ensure that work is completed and that relationships remain healthy. For my part, I believe these insights from psychology will help me build more cohesive and motivated teams in future managerial roles.

Personality mapping also assists with role fit and career development. Matching individual strengths, interests and preferences to suitable roles can enhance both employee performance and job satisfaction. Development and coaching programmes can then be tailored to these personality insights to support targeted learning and continuous development.

On the whole, personality mapping gives manager's practical information on how to become better leaders, form stronger teams, reduce conflict and align employee skills with organisational goals. When used intentionally, it is a valuable means of improving both individual and organisational effectiveness.

7.0 Limitations and Ethical Considerations

While personality mapping has become widely accepted in management development, it is important to recognise its limitations and the ethical issues associated with it. One of the greatest concerns is the possibility of labelling people solely on the basis of the results of a single assessment. Such labelling can lead to stereotyping, which restricts an individual's capacity for personal growth and flexibility.

Such labels can also shape managerial expectations and result in prejudiced appraisals and judgements. By recognising the limits of personality mapping, using it to support managerial development and ensuring equal opportunity for all employees, organisations can create an environment that fosters growth through diversity and inclusion.

A further constraint is the potential for bias in personality measurement devices. Many such tools are developed within particular cultural or social contexts and are not necessarily sensitive to cultural variation in values, communication style and behaviour. Personality characteristics may therefore be interpreted differently across cultures, which can lead to biased and unfair judgements about an individual's merit and ability,

particularly in multicultural or global organisations. Excessive dependence on personality mapping tools is a further concern. Although such tools provide useful indicators, they are not a substitute for sound managerial judgement or for a comprehensive assessment of an individual. Human behaviour is dynamic rather than static and varies with the work context, the culture of the organisation and the individual's experience. Relying solely on test results may overlook these important factors.

Personality mapping should therefore be applied responsibly and ethically as a developmental tool, rather than being treated as a final verdict on an individual.

8.0 Conclusion

Leadership requires a clear understanding of how personality—both your own and that of your team members—affects the way you work and the way you lead. Developing self-awareness means viewing all aspects of personality as a single, integrated profile. Understanding how your personality shapes your behaviour, and how that behaviour in turn affects others, gives you far greater control over your own responses and a stronger influence on those of your team.

When self-awareness is combined with the insights offered by personality profiling tools, managerial effectiveness improves markedly. Managers who understand their own biases and those of their team members are able to build trusting relationships, strengthen teamwork and make better-informed decisions, all of which lead to a more productive workplace. When they approach problems with empathy and manage conflict constructively, they create a more positive working environment.

New managers should draw on self-awareness and personality mapping in order to develop more effectively in their roles. As organisations grow more complex in a global economy, a manager's understanding of different personality types and their potential will help in developing talent, creating supportive working environments and achieving the right fit for long-term success. Personally, I believe the results of my own personality map can guide not only how I operate professionally but also how I build my wider leadership toolkit. Self-awareness has become a “must-have” for the present-day manager.

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