

Why data-driven personalised management is the next frontier in accelerating productivity



It's no secret that a productive, engaged workforce is the lifeblood of an organisation.

The benefits are clear: Highly engaged workforces can increase profitability by as much as 21% and enjoy 17% higher productivity.

But with workforces more dispersed than ever and burnout levels soaring, walking the line between productivity and wellbeing has never been more important.

How can leaders get the best from their people while keeping them

engaged, satisfied and thriving?

The answer lies in your data.

By understanding your employees' individual profiles — their personalities, preferences, motivations and natural abilities — leaders can tailor their management approaches to work with these strengths and start to supercharge productivity.

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Productivity in our new remote reality

The traditional view of workplace productivity is that in-person equals performance.

The shift to remote and hybrid models of working has challenged this assumption - and the room is divided when it comes to which is more effective.

In a 2022 Microsoft study, 54% of leaders said productivity has been negatively impacted since the shift to remote work.

Only 12% have full confidence that their team is productive outside the office.

And yet, 80% of employees in the same study said they are "just as", if not "more", productive since the shift to remote.

Regardless of who is right, this gap in perception poses a problem.

Study after study has found that the overwhelming majority of people want flexibility built into the workplace. A 2022 McKinsey report found that if offered the chance to work flexibly, 87% of workers would take it and Gartner's research found only 17% of employees would opt to go back on-site full-time.

Smart leaders, who are aware of the massive skills shortage and the rising cost of recruiting new talent, are listening to what their people want.

As hybrid work becomes normalised and entrenched in our working lives, traditional one-size-fits-all approaches to managing people have become outdated and ineffective. Gartner calls the management approaches of 2019 "ill-suited" for the workforce of 2023.

Data holds the key to many of the challenges leaders face in boosting productivity in remote settings. But we're not just talking about monitoring employees' output levels or measuring hours spent online. It goes beyond that.

By gaining a deep understanding of our employees' working styles, motivations, skills and strengths, we can empower them to become more productive, motivated and high-performing individuals and team members - wherever they may be working.

This data-driven, personalised approach to managing people is the next frontier in workforce management, and it's revolutionising the way we look at managing people.

The power of personalisation

In the consumer world, the power of personalisation to drive engagement - and sales - is well known. McKinsey's Next in Personalization 2021 Report found companies that build better customer intimacy outperform their competitors. According to the report, fast-growing organisations drive 40% more of their revenue from personalisation than their slower-growing counterparts.

Product recommendations, personalised content, and customised promotional offers are being widely used to create tailored experiences and build connections with customers. If you've flicked through your Netflix recommendations or seen a Spotify playlist pop up, you've experienced personalisation in action.

In 2023, personalisation is building momentum beyond the world of customer experience.

The financial services industry is exploring personalisation to provide customised investment advice and financial planning services, and precision medicine is a growing trend in healthcare, allowing doctors to provide more targeted and effective treatments.

In a workplace setting, personalisation has an important role to play in improving employee experience and productivity. Many organisations are adopting personalised learning experiences, which are thought to be more effective than one-size-fits-all approaches. Personalised employee portals are helping people navigate to the right information faster. And tailor-made career development plans are helping fast-track potential talent through organisations.

The future of personalisation in the workplace is personalised management - using data to understand individual employees' aptitudes, learning styles, and personality traits. Using this data, organisations can build a picture of their employees' preferences, strengths and motivations to create more tailored management approaches. And in the process,

For example:

★ Do they enjoy new experiences or tend to gravitate to the familiar?

more productive, high-performing teams.

- * Are they highly self-motivated or do they need help to stay on task?
- * Are they natural problem solvers or do they prefer to get into the nitty gritty of execution?
- * Are they visual learners or do they prefer to hear instructions?
- ★ Do they work better in groups or by themselves?

Understanding these areas has immense benefits for organisations, managers and employees alike.

Key benefits of personalisation include:

Organisations: Build higherperforming teams



By helping people lean into their preferred working and communication styles, skills and abilities, organisations can benefit from a more productive, engaged workforce. A Harvard Business Review report found that companies that used psychometric testing during the hiring process had a 5% increase in productivity compared to those who did not use these assessments.

Organisations can also save time and money by using psychometric testing to identify top talent. According to a study by the International Journal of Selection and Assessment, psychometric testing is effective in identifying individuals with high potential and can reduce both hiring costs and time-to-hire.

Leaders: Improve connection and workforce effectiveness



By building a comprehensive picture of each individual in their team, managers can offer more targeted approaches to supporting, motivating and developing their teams.

Personalisation can also help managers create more cohesive, responsive and connected teams. Recognising people as individuals and valuing them for their unique skills and contributions can not only boost engagement and job satisfaction, it can also create strong bonds between managers and employees - a crucial element of success in the modern hybrid workplace.

Employees: Gain greater personal insight to accelerate growth



By gaining insight into their strengths and areas for improvement, employees can fast-track their professional growth - providing insights into how they work best, what types of tasks they're best suited for and explore avenues they hadn't previously considered.

Job satisfaction is boosted as people feel valued and recognised for their unique contributions. And by building greater awareness of our own preferences, biases and abilities, we in turn consider how others might differ, which can create more open and inclusive workplaces.

Cracking the code: Using data to understand your workforce

Data can tell us almost everything we need to know about how to enable workforce productivity, how to adjust management based on the environment and what individuals need to thrive. We are fortunate to have an abundance of it. However, knowing what data to draw from and how to interpret it is the difference between drowning in data and using it to your advantage.

What data can we draw on to better understand our employees?

From psychometric tests to mapping skill-based competencies, there is an abundance of options, but here are the ones we use and recommend.



1. Psychometric testing

The Big 5 and DISC

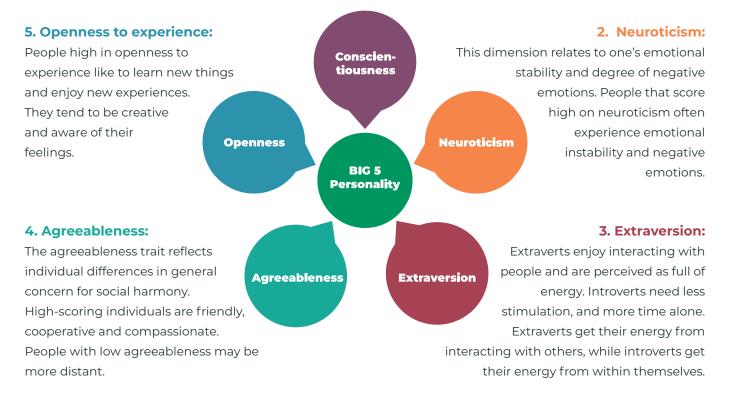
Psychometric tests are a standard and scientific method used to measure an individual's mental capabilities and behavioural style. In a workplace setting, they can help assess temperament, underlying leadership potential and help people understand how they are perceived by others.

There are multiple personality tests in the market including the popular Myers-Briggs, DISC, The Big 5 and Gallup strengths finder assessments. Our preferred method of psychometric testing is a hybrid of The Big 5 and DISC.

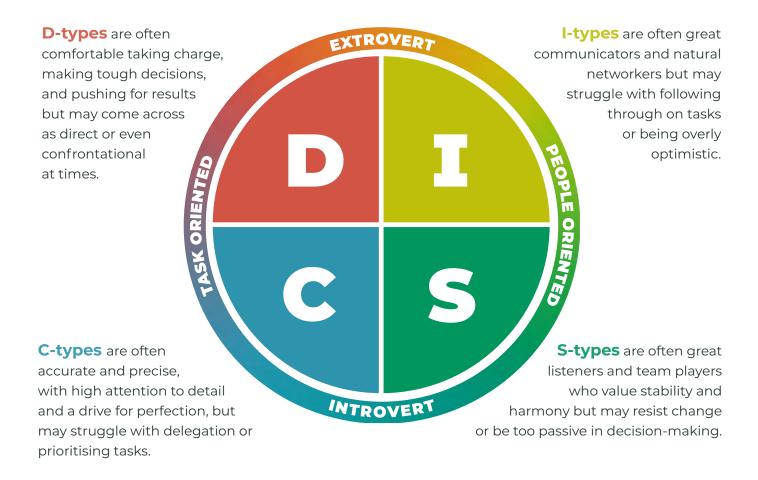
The Big 5: These five factors are widely recognised as the overarching five traits that account for all other personality traits.

1. Conscientiousness:

Conscientiousness is related to the way in which people control, regulate and direct their impulses. High scorers are reliable and prompt.



DISC is an assessment tool that measures and categorises people's behavioural traits into four main types: Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness (DISC).



Psychometric tests can help managers identify individuals who are good at communicating, working collaboratively and managing stress effectively. By understanding an employee's personality traits, managers can better understand how to motivate and engage them, leading to improved job satisfaction and reduced turnover rates.

These types of tests have become increasingly popular among companies to attract and retain top remote talent. According to a survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 18% of HR professionals use personality tests for hiring, and 38% use them for development and training purposes.

And though psychometrics provide critical insights into what makes an individual tick, remember – it's just one piece of the puzzle when it comes to understanding how to build workforce productivity.

2. Aptitude testing

Aptitude tests are designed to identify a person's natural ability to learn and master a new skill quickly, relative to their peers. In the workplace, understanding someone's aptitude can help accurately assign them a task, career path or a training program that rewards their strengths.

The results of an aptitude test are divided into 7 components:



Recognition memory is the ability to recognise previously encountered events, objects or people. It is the ability to distinguish between novel and familiar objects or places and is central to recall or plan future behaviours. Memory is important for reasoning and the guidance of decision making and behaviour.



Abstract reasoning measures the ability to identify the underlying logic of a pattern and then determine the solution. It is the best indicator of fluid intelligence and the ability to learn new things quickly. This is the purest form of mental ability and is least affected by previous education or achievements.



Spatial reasoning is the ability to mentally manipulate shapes in 2-Dimensions, or to visualize 3-Dimensional objects presented as 2-Dimensional pictures. Tests involve solving mazes, finding hidden figures and the mental rotation and transformation of shapes.



Language usage measures the ability to detect errors in grammar, punctuation and capitalisation. It is strongly related to crystallized intelligence. Language predicts success in positions where written language ability is important, such as technical writers, consultants and management.



Verbal reasoning measures verbal analytic skills, the ability to understand analogies, identify critical information, logically derive conclusions from written facts or data and follows detailed written instructions. It also assesses basic verbal measures including vocabulary, verbal fluency, spelling and grammar.



Digital symbol coding assesses skills related to information encoding and decoding, abstract reasoning, sequencing and the ability to perceive part-whole relationships. The coding aspect requires participants to answer questions based on a set of rules and decoding requires the ability to understand the logic behind the coding pattern and then apply this logic.



Numerical reasoning uses arithmetic and data interpretation questions while assessing numerical reasoning. Arithmetic reasoning assesses the ability to solve arithmetic/math word problems and the ability to use numbers in a logical and efficient way. Data interpretation measures the ability to interpret, analyse and draw logical conclusions based on numerical data.

These tests can help managers identify remote workers who are quick learners, analytical thinkers, and have strong problem-solving skills. This information can be used to assign tasks that are best suited for the worker's skill set, leading to improved productivity, job satisfaction, and reduced turnover rates.

3. Archetypes

ecific traits

Archetypes are personality type models incorporating an individual's specific traits and characteristics. Archetypes describe set patterns in human behaviour and can help categorise people based on what they enjoy doing, what they're skilled at and their personal values and abilities.

Drawing on the psychometrics framework outlined earlier, we've created our own three unique Archetypes under which people identify.



1. Doers



2. Creatives



3. Translators

Doers are the worker bees of the three Archetypes. They like to get things done and strive in process-driven, structured environments.

They enjoy being able to execute and deliver on tasks, projects, and other responsibilities and can become hyper-focused on they're working on.

The flip side to Doers are the Creatives. They're the big ideas people, craving solutions to a problem and being able to think through the consequences, as well as the second and third-order effects.

They think outside the box, typically have less resistance to change, and don't necessarily need structure or process to operate efficiently.

Translators are a hybrid
Archetype, sitting between
Doers and Creatives. They're
an essential component of any
team as they're able to discuss
and understand the ideas of
a Creative and translate them
into executable actions for
the Doer.

The ability to look at a task, delegate the appropriate activities, and then bring all those puzzle pieces together to create a final product is what makes Translators so valuable.

Based on their understanding of Archetypes, managers can adjust their management style to better suit the needs of individual employees. For example, Doers will often thrive in a remote environment if provided clear goals, outcomes, checklists, targets, and structure, while Creatives often need to be guided back to the topic at hand to harness their ideas and remain focused.

4. Learning styles

Learning styles continues to be a hot topic among the academic, psychological and neuroscience communities. There are a variety of different versions, theories and proven models that are popular and valid. One thing they all agree on is that individuals learn in different ways - often in multiple ways.

There are seven learning styles:



Visual (spatial)

Someone who prefers using pictures, images, and spatial understanding. By presenting information spatially and with images, the person is able to utilise their visual memory to learn.



Auditory (musical)

Someone who prefers learning using sound and music. Auditory learners prefer to hear something in order to learn and commit to memory by saying it out loud.



Verbal (linguistic)

Someone who prefers using words, both in speech and writing.



Interpersonal (social)

Someone who prefers to learn in groups or with other people, both verbally and non-verbally. Interpersonal learners are both good listeners and communicators.



Intrapersonal (solitary)

Someone who prefers to work alone and use self-study and focuses best without the distraction of others.



Kinesthetic (physical)

Someone who prefers using their body, hands and sense of touch. Learning happens when a person physically carries out an activity.



Logical (mathematical)

Someone who prefers using logic, reasoning and systems. Logical learners easily recognise patterns and connect concepts.

Learning style assessments help managers understand how workers process and retain information. For example, some individuals may prefer visual aids, such as white boards, so managers of remote visual learners should explore digital tools like Miro that provide this experience to support learning.

By understanding the learning style of each person, managers can tailor their training and development programs to cater to each individual's needs, leading to better engagement, higher retention rates, and improved job performance. This should be applied at the very beginning of an employee's journey into an organisation with tailored onboarding.

5. Skills mapping

Knowing what employees are capable of – or where gaps exist – is crucial to ensuring individual and organisational success. The Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA) is a globally recognised digital skills model that is used to assess, develop and manage the skills of an organisation's workforce. It provides a common language for describing digital skills and helps organisations identify skills gaps and map competencies.

SFIA is organised into six skill categories which are then broken into seven levels of responsibility:



Strategy and **Development and Delivery and** architecture implementation operation Change and Relationships and People and skills transformation engagement Levels of responsibility Level 2 Level 3 Level 5 Level 6 Level 7 Level 1 Follow Assist Enable Ensure, advise Initiate, Strategise, **Apply** influence inspire, mobilise

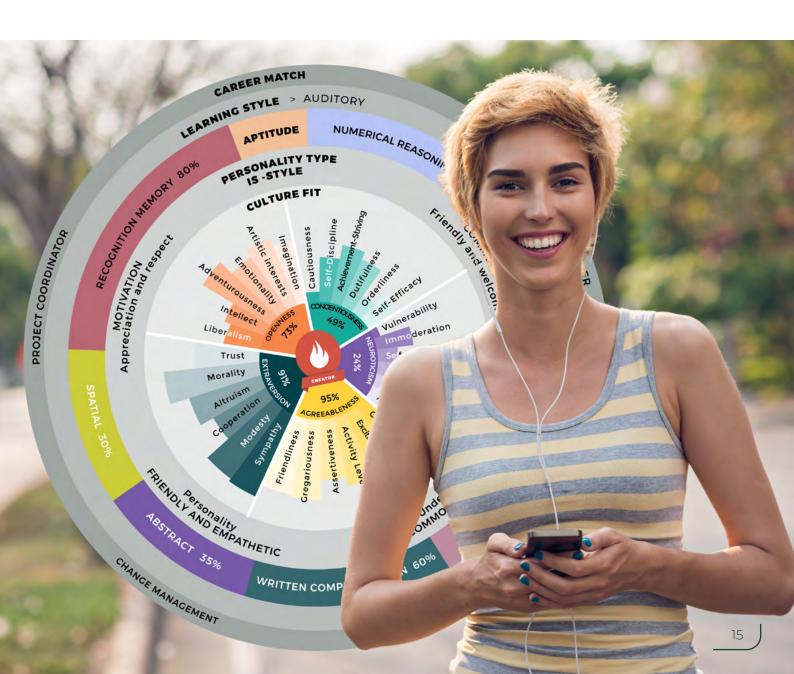
SFIA is a valuable tool to help diagnose productivity issues. If a manager clearly understands which skills are required for a position – and if an individual has them or not – it becomes easier to figure out if productivity issues are environmental (due to hybrid/remote working conditions) or simply a skills gap.

Managers can then work with the individual to build the capabilities needed, or address other issues regarding productivity. Organisations are also using SFIA on a larger scale, to map skills across their entire workforce so they can identify if there are skills gaps, productivity issues or opportunities for employees to upskill to be more effective.

Connecting the dots

When you combine these data points, you can start to build a complete picture of your individual employees and broader team or workforce - pinpointing skills and abilities, learning styles, personality types, and communication preferences. Once you have a clear profile, managers essentially have a blueprint for the best way to connect, motivate and inspire individuals to perform to their potential.

In the following pages, we've presented two individual case studies to show you how this data comes together. We also provide insights into how you might adapt management styles based on individual preferences to increase productivity and engagement.



Case study

Pason Chen

Position:

- * Software Engineer
- * Full-time remote employee
- * Financial Services

Archetype:

* Doer

When managing a Doer like Jason, it's important to help them understand that others may need to talk things out to understand the goals the team is working towards or spend more time on the journey to find a solution.

Doers won't shy away from longer or more difficult solutions if they're able to get a sense of progression and achievement. They appreciate clear goals, outcomes, checklists, targets and structure so they know exactly what they're working toward for a sense of achievement.

Jason's results confirm that he typically requires low supervision and is well-suited to remote work environments. However, it's still important to have clearly defined KPIs and systems that allow tasks to be tracked.



Jason's Big 5 profile

Conscientiousness - 97%

Those with high conscientiousness are a good fit for remote work as they are motivated to see tasks done to completion without constant supervision. That said, staying across their key areas of focus is important as they tend to be very task-focused.

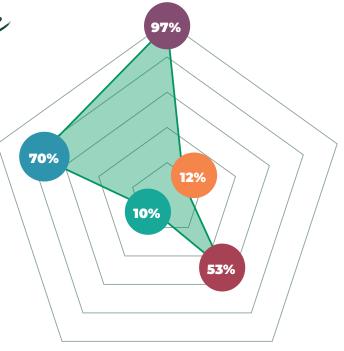
Conscientious employees like Jason may also have a tendency to overwork, so encourage them to maintain a healthy work-life balance by taking breaks, disconnecting from work after hours, and setting clear boundaries between work and personal life. While working remotely may be perceived as enabling work-life balance, it may be important to remind conscientious employees to switch off after hours to avoid burnout.

Conscientious employees are often driven by personal and professional growth, so providing them with remote professional development opportunities such as virtual training, online courses, or virtual conferences, will help them feel engaged and motivated.

Neuroticism - 12%

Transparency is important for those with high neuroticism, so regular check-ins and information-sharing sessions are crucial to ensure they're not excluded from information shared in the office. Jason's scores also reveal a high level of anxiety, making it important for his managers to regularly check in to proactively manage workload-associated stress.

Neurotic employees respond favourably to feedback on their work and acknowledgement of their accomplishments. When remote, use virtual recognition platforms or video conferencing for team meetings.



Extraversion - 53%

An extraversion score of 53% makes this individual an ideal candidate for hybrid work as they have the ability to engage and collaborate with colleagues and also recharge and focus when they're working remotely.

Agreeableness - 10%

Low scores on agreeableness and low trust levels are important for a manager to be aware of. Transparency is key to getting buy-in and alignment with this individual and they need to understand and trust the decision-making process behind the request. Individuals with low agreeableness tend to work best independently. While they may not seek out feedback, having regular discussions on their performance can help to build trust and improve their work output.

Openness - 70%

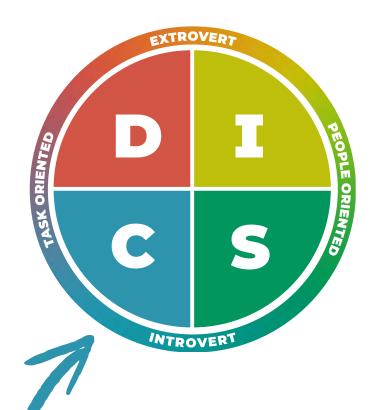
With a high level of openness, this person is capable of accepting new ways of working and redefining traditional approaches. If flexible working is important to this individual, the data suggests they are capable of adjusting their own behaviours and expectations to make it work.

Jason's DISC type C-Style

Cs are well-suited to remote environments as they work well autonomously. However, they still like to play an active role in a team - so facilitating virtual team meetings is important.

A lack of information, unclear roles, and little or no planning period will cause Cs to withdraw and shut down - so managers need to provide clear guidance on what's expected in a remote environment.

Flexibility is crucial for Cs, who like to be in charge of their work life. If kept to a regimented schedule, they will quickly lose momentum. To get the most out of Cs, managers should be as flexible as possible with timings and schedules.





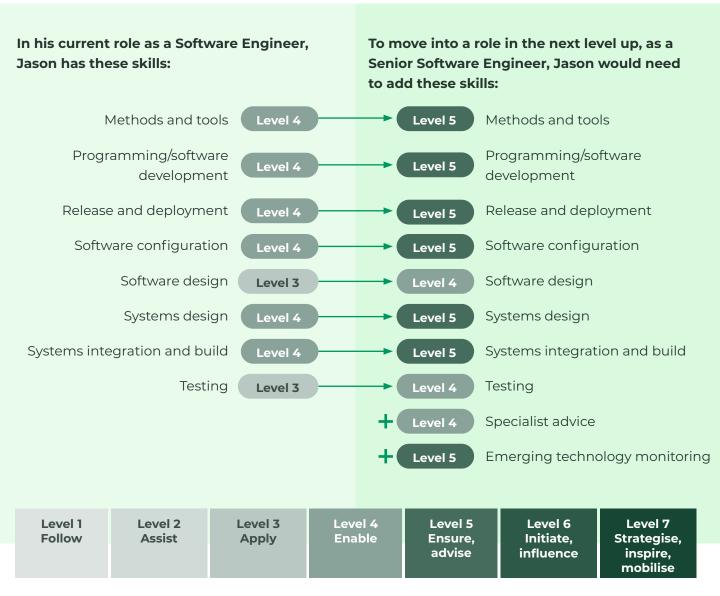
Skills mapping

Current vs future



SFIA defines the requirements for every role in your organisation by a globally standardised scoring system to ensure you maintain a fair and consistent measure of skills and competencies within your workforce.

By mapping Jason's core skills and competencies against a consistent framework, you can clearly understand whether a performance issue is a result of environmental challenges or a skills gap. This empowers managers to adopt a targeted approach to addressing the problem.





Levels are based on SFIA mapping and specify the level of skill and depth of knowledge required.



Erika's Big 5 profile

Conscientiousness - 57%

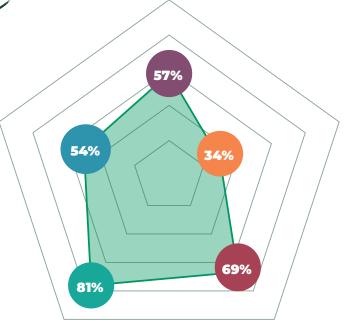
Erika is relatively conscientiousness, however it's not a defining trait and therefore ensuring she remains motivated should be a key focus of her manager. Set clear expectations around deadlines and quality standards, and provide regular feedback to help ensure she stays on track. Shared work plans with reminders and checklists are a great tool, particularly when working remotely.

Neuroticism - 34%

People with low neuroticism tend to be calm and stable and less prone to anxiety, which makes them reliable and consistent performers. Recognise and reinforce their strengths in this area to boost their confidence and motivation. While they won't necessarily ask for support, it's important to still provide feedback. People with low neuroticism may be less prone to anxiety or fear of failure, so encourage them to take calculated risks and try new approaches. This can help them continue to grow and develop in their role.

Extraversion -69%

Those with high levels of extraversion can struggle when working remotely as they may feel isolated or disconnected. Hybrid scenarios are typically best, but effective remote work can be supported by engaging with others via virtual channels such as video conferencing, instant messaging, or social media. You can also schedule regular virtual coffee breaks, happy hours or team-building activities. Extraverts also enjoy collaborating with others, so provide opportunities for them to work on team projects, share ideas, and brainstorm new initiatives. Use virtual collaboration tools such as whiteboards, collaborative document editing, and project management software.



Agreeableness - 81%

Highly agreeable individuals tend to be cooperative, empathetic and easy to work with. They are motivated by positive feedback and recognition of their contributions. While people with high agreeableness may be easy-going, it's important to remain clear on expectations. Their reluctance to cause conflict means it may take longer than usual to identify an issue in performance. Encourage them to provide regular updates and express their opinions.

Openness - 54%

Managing someone with average openness requires clear and direct communication, practical solutions, and an understanding of their boundaries and preferences. People with average openness may prefer practical, concrete solutions rather than abstract or theoretical concepts. When discussing ideas or solutions, emphasise the practical benefits and real-world applications. Finally, encouraging curiosity and providing context can also help increase their engagement and motivation to perform.

Erika's D18C type

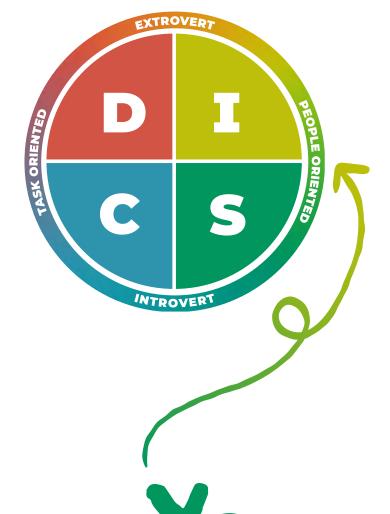
IS-Style

In order to feel completely at ease, IS/SI-personalities need to know that they are appreciated, respected, and liked by those around them. They are motivated by this positive attention so managers should find opportunities to offer praise and encouragement and help facilitate connections with other team members.

IS-types welcome small talk, so managers should allow time for small talk unrelated to the task at hand, ensuring they point out any common connections or interests.

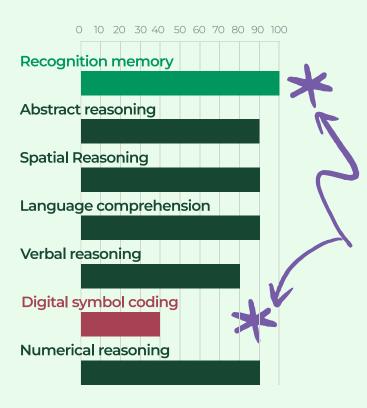
When IS-personalities encounter a great deal of stress, they often become over-accommodating. Because they find it hard to engage in conflict, when a difficult situation arises they become less active and more passive to the ideas and feelings of others. This is important for managers to be aware of so they can tackle these issues head-on.

IS-personalities will naturally gravitate towards opportunities to share and teach, so managers should look out for any opportunities to allow them to use this natural inclination.





Erika's aptitude



Erika's aptitude test results can provide her manager with valuable information about her performance by helping them better understand her strengths, weaknesses, and potential for growth in specific areas.

Erika's recognition memory score is very high, which suggests she has strong memory abilities and is able to accurately recall and recognise previously encountered information. This is a helpful trait for roles that require a high degree of attention to detail, such as data analysis – her current position. Any issues around performance wouldn't be around her ability to learn or thrive in this career. Conversely, her digit symbol coding score is below average which indicates she may have difficulty quickly processing visual information.

Erika's learning style

Interpersonal



Interpersonal learners have a strong social style and communicate well with people, both verbally and non-verbally. They prefer learning in groups or classes, or like to spend much one-on-one time with a teacher or an instructor. Learning is heightened by bouncing thoughts off other people and listening to how they respond. To get the most out of this individual, managers will need to facilitate opportunities for group learning.

Because they prefer to work through issues, ideas and problems with a group, interpersonal learners need plenty of collaboration time to get the best results.

Skills mapping

Current vs future



SFIA enables Erika and her manager to understand her current skills and responsibilities, while also implementing and managing a long term career plan.

It also allows her manager to ensure Erika has everything she needs to succeed within the organisation. By combining Erika's aptitude, learning style, archetype and personality traits, Erika's manager is able to ensure she is in the right position, and has the resources and working environment she needs to grow within the organisation.

In her role as a Data Analyst, Erika currently To move up a couple of levels, to a position as Lead Data Analyst, Erika would need to upskill: has these skills: Business intelligence Business intelligence Level 2 Level 3 Business situation analysis Business situation analysis Level 5 Level 3 Data communication Data communication Level 1 Level 3 Data modelling and design Level 2 Level 4 Data modelling and design Data outputs, products or Data outputs, products or Level 1 Level 3 services services Data visualisation Level 4 Data visualisation Level 3 Identify research questions Identify research questions Level 1 Level 3 Integrate data Integrate data Level 1 Level 2 Programming/software Programming/software Level 2 Level 3 development development Subject matter expertise Subject matter expertise Level 1 Level 3 Visualise data Visualise data Level 1 Level 2 Data management Level 4 Database design Level 3 Statistical data analysis Level 3 Level 1 Level 2 Level 4 Level 5 Level 6 Level 3 Level 7 **Follow** Assist **Enable** Initiate, Strategise, Ensure, Apply advise influence inspire, mobilise



Understand your people to unleash your productivity

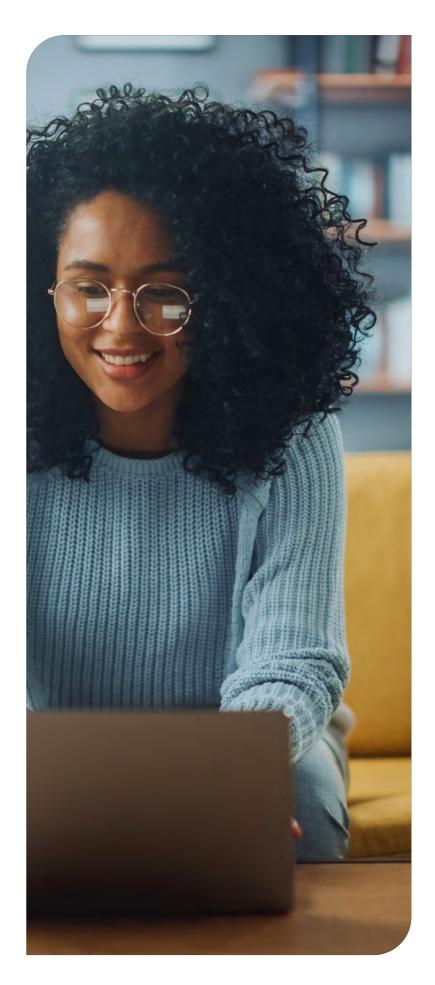
Potential is a data-led employment platform that empowers you to create talent and increase your teams' productivity. It creates an accurate assessment of team productivity and employees' natural strengths, hidden abilities and potential to be successful in a role.

- * Identify the true capabilities existing in your workforce and understand team productivity.
- Increase retention by building engagement through training and internal mobility.
- Make data-driven workforce decisions through aptitude assessment and matching into your skills framework.
- Find alternative sources of talent retrain to retain.
- * Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your HR division.
- * Support your under-employed internal talent groups.

A final note

Shifting from traditional, one-size-fitsall models of management, towards a data-driven individualised approach has immense benefits for everyone involved. By understanding an employee's aptitude, learning style, and personality traits, managers can better understand how to support, motivate, and develop their workforce.

Organisations that embrace this trend are building high-performing teams that are completely in tune with their unique strengths, helping them out-innovate and out-perform the competition.



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