In this paper, it is argued that whilst relationships exist between personality and occupation no evidence confirms the existence of a managerial personality. Personalities distribute evenly across occupations and industries. The challenge before human resource managers is to recognise and build upon the strengths of all personality types.

Personality and Occupation
Implications for Human Resource Management

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A wag once said that personality is what personality tests measure. Most of us believe that we have 'a personality' and that 'it' affects most aspects of our behaviour. Yet there is widespread disagreement about the fundamentals of personality. Even experts cannot agree about its nature and measurement. Some believe personality represents an individual's underlying biological tendencies and is largely inherited. Others believe that personality is the product of conditioning and is acquired through socialisation. For some personality does not exist at all, it being a convenient label for game-playing: a metaphor which exists only in the heads of people. Yet personality is measured and assumptions made about its relationship to managerial performance and leadership.

The Two Faces of Personality

We can think of two personalities: the biological personality (1) and the attitude personality (2).

Personality 1 is anchored in biological predispositions and is probably inherited to a significant degree. This personality is assessed by physiological means, such as hormone analysis (Spillane, 1985).

Personality 2 is the psychologists' personality: it is the product of attitudes and is measured by questionnaires. The second personality is more dynamic because attitudes can be changed. It is apparent that people reveal a consistent pattern of attitudes which guide behaviour in different times and places. Personality 2, therefore, is represented by different attitude sets such as sociability, aggression, optimism.

When researchers assess Personality 1 they are forced to take into account evoking conditions. When they assess Personality 2 they rarely do. For this reason and the fact that questionnaires are easily distorted, Personality 2 has been found to be an imperfect predictor of work performance.

Views of Personality

Personalities 1 and 2 represent the structure and consistency of human behaviour. Whilst personality traits vary from person to person, they are pervasive and affect most aspects of human behaviour. The assumption that Personality 1 is, in part, determined by physiological or neurological structures suggests that behaviour is somewhat consistent over time and situation. Others prefer the view that personality 2 is nothing more than collections of attitudes and is therefore everchanging.

The difficulty in arriving at a view of personality is compounded by the way personality is measured. The personality questionnaire measures attitudes and values and not biological predispositions. Yet we rely on questionnaires to measure personality. More seriously, when personality questionnaires are used in situations where strong vested interests exist, for example in job selection, faking is so widespread that results are invalid. This is revealed in studies which find that correlations between attitude measures and workplace behaviour are either not significantly different from zero or are very small (Mischel, 1968). This has led many researchers to conclude that 'personality' is merely the product of attitudinal response to hypothetical social situations invented for questionnaires.

However, since the days of the ancient Greeks, there has been a view that personality is stable and enduring (Personalities 1 & 2). Personality, therefore, is difficult to change because it depends on biological factors which partly determine behaviour patterns.

This view has received considerable support from H. J. Eysenck (1977) who believes that personality is largely determined by heredity. He suggests that two major dimensions of personality — extraversion/introversion, neuroticism/stability — depend on physiological structures.

Eysenck has shown that emotional individuals tend to have labile emotions — emotions that are easily aroused and which persist longer than would be customary in the average individual. This lability is the product of the autonomic nervous system which is concerned with a variety of unconscious behaviour patterns, such as beating of the heart, breathing. Insofar as the autonomic nervous system is concerned with stress reactions (fight and flight responses) on the one hand, and with peaceful, relaxed existence on the other hand, emotionality represents an important personality factor in the understanding of managerial behaviour, particularly in stressful work environments and occupations.

Eysenck believes that extraversion/introversion

is similarly based in biological structures. This personality type appears to be a product of the central nervous system which is concerned with perception and voluntary activity. Extraverts are characterised by lower levels of brain arousal than introverts: they are stimulation seekers. Extraverts, therefore, orient their behaviour towards change, stimulation, activity, risk-taking. However, they pay a price in terms of poor concentration and frequently lack persistence in problem-solving.

Personality and Management

In the field of management there has long been a view that extraverts perform better than introverts and that stable managers are more effective then emotional managers. These assumptions are often built into many selection interviews and performance appraisal systems. This view is as old as the ancient Greeks who believed that there was a 'leadership personality' and that it was the stable extravert.

I believe that we have worked with this myth for too long. The Greeks were wrong. There is no leadership personality. And the continuing search for the ideal personality in management serves only to misdirect our attention from the crucial variable — *performance.* Managers concerned with better human relations, communication and team-building have been deceived by the views of those who argue that a leadership personality exists and can be identified by personality appraisals. As a result countless performance appraisal systems use personality as a major criterion of managerial effectiveness. That this myth lingers is an indictment of those who know better but continue to peddle these views for diverse reasons. Management consultants are among the worst offenders as they continue to subject people to appraisals which cannot predict work performance, even if the answers provided are valid.

The value of personality appraisals is their ability to provide feedback to people who wish to learn more about themselves. This learning depends on the removal of vested interests and duress from the test environment; which means in practice, that feedback is available to testees but not to others. Peter Drucker (1979, p.230) was aware of these problems when he wrote: "The main purpose of psychology is to acquire insight into, and mastery of, oneself . . .Using psychology to control, dominate and manipulate others is self-destructive abuse of knowledge. It is also a particularly repugnant form of tyranny."

Why Study Personality?

Why, then, should we study personality?

There are three main reasons. First, the study of personality enables managers to gain insight into and mastery of themselves. Second, it enables managers to understand the difference between the behavioural styles of their colleagues and to gain some appreciation about the ways different personalities interact. Third, the scientific study of personality enables managers to base predictions about work preferences on something more than 'intuition' or bias. For example, introverts tend to prefer work which requires attention to detail, whereas extraverts dislike this form of work.

The personality perspective is a useful way of studying human (and managerial) behaviour because it enables researchers to quantify certain consistencies in attitudinal patterns and to assess relationships with work-related variables, such as occupation. Personality questionnaires and the perspective which spawned them have earned their place in the scientific study of human behaviour due to their ability to generate testable hypotheses about *groups* of individuals in *general* social situations provided data are provided anonymously.

The Four Personality Types

The effects of personality on work preferences are best understood when the two dimensions (extraversion, emotionality) are considered jointly. For example, emotional individuals will display different patterns of behaviour, depending on whether they are introverts or extraverts.

Emotional Introverts

The combination of introversion and emotionality leads to behaviour described as anxious, reserved, pessimistic, fearful, inhabited and shy. Examples of such behaviour at the workplace include procrastination, inability to take risks, conformity, conservatism, concern for security and predictability in life, excessively deferential behaviour towards superiors, lack of job mobility and a reluctance to seek out new challenges. In Australia, banking, insurance administration and the public service attract large numbers of these people, many of whom seek out such jobs for their security, predictability and conservatism. In banking, for example, young people entering the profession are over-represented in this personality type (Spillane, 1985). Emotional introverts seek out certain industries and stay with them for long periods of time, often for their entire working lives.

A positive feature of this personality, apart from job stability, is that it encourages people to develop the capacity to be self-sufficient. Since they are relatively inhibited in risk-taking and in their relations with others, they have to learn to be self-sufficient in order to achieve their goals. Further, introverts with a moderate level of emotionality can be very productive in jobs requiring concentration, persistence and hard work.

Stable Introverts

Stable introverts present as careful, thoughtful, controlled, reliable and calm. They generally prefer jobs that provide stability, challenge, little distraction and where concentrated effort and persistence are required and rewarded. They are often found in research and development departments, computer programming, finance. Their ability to maintain satisfactory relations with others generally reflects their interests rather than their abilities. Often they prefer to work alone, do not like to be interrupted and do not respond favourably to job rotation.

Technical experts (sometimes called 'boffins' by their managers) are often stable introverts. Their lack of response to their managers' overtures or to organisational policies often reflects their personal priorities, which are directed more to the job at hand than to distracting influences around them. For this reason they are best left to do their jobs as attempts to embroil them in wider organisational issues (social clubs, status concerns) invariably create in them feelings of frustration. Managers often complain that they lack interpersonal skills and need training in human relations. However, it is more likely that they find such concerns boring and prefer to be left alone to get on with a challenging job.

Stable Extraverts

Stable extraverts are usually assertive, adaptable, sociable and carefree individuals with a 'she'll be right' approach to life. They are optimistic risk-takers who crave change and adventure. They can easily socialise and maintain interpersonal contacts although they are often judged to be flippant, cheeky, and unreliable when confronted by difficult tasks. Their optimism produces in their more sober managers reactions of disquiet and beliefs that they are not overly conscientious. For some stable extraverts this judgement is accurate. Many do not take their work (or lives) seriously. Authority figures often invite their disapproval and scepticism. However, for many stable extraverts, their optimistic and carefree behaviour may disguise a genuine commitment to the job and organisation. It is often a source of disappointment that they find themselves rated negatively on 'conscientiousness' and 'motivation' at appraisal interviews. They claim, with some justification, that such ratings reflect the personality of the raters as much as their own job behaviour. It is undoubtedly true that more sober, conservative managers are prone to rate displays of cheerful optimism in the face of adversity as a sign of poor motivation.

Whilst studies have shown that stable extraverts do not enjoy or seek tasks requiring persistence, concentration, they are an important entrepreneurial group and provide many organisations with the risk-taking behaviour needed to expand and diversify into new markets. A general rule in the management of stable extraverts is that they require more structure than do stable introverts. Management by objectives, target-setting, incentives often provide evidence of the degree to which they are motivated to perform.

Emotional Extraverts

Extraverts with high levels of emotionality are generally described as impulsive, aggressive, excitable, touchy, temperamental and hyperactive. They frequently act impatiently with others and may be judged to be rude, irritating and boorish. This personality also predicts accident-proneness in industry and amongst drivers of buses and motor-cars (Eysenck, 1965).

Large numbers of emotional extraverts are to be found in the transport industry, in the retail, insurance (sales), electronics industries. When under stress, emotional extraverts generally become irritable and aggressive. This can have positive and negative outcomes. For example, their impulsiveness and erratic risk-taking may, on some occasions, change the status quo that inhibits innovation in organisations. However, early successes are often followed by excesses and their aggressive impulses need to be channelled by competent managers. This is often a difficult task as emotional extraverts tend to personalise interchanges with their managers and challenge their authority. The rule for emotional extraverts is that managers would be advised to confront them firmly and restrict their impulsive outbursts by using the rules and regulations of the organisation to bring them under a measure of authority. However, it should not be forgotten that when their unstable personalities can be directed to positive causes, they can be a major force for change and innovation in organisations.

Personality and Occupation

It is often suggested that extraverts are the best candidates for leadership as they demonstrate the optimism and risk-taking characteristics of the extravert and the emotional control and cool decision-taking of the stable personality type.

In order to investigate this belief it is necessary to measure the personalities of a large number of community leaders. Business managers represent one example of community leaders and a partial test of the leadership proposition can be achieved by sampling managers from the Australian private sector to see whether a discernible pattern emerges.

Table 1
PERSONALITIES OF VARIOUS MANAGERIAL GROUPS

E = 18%	EMOTIONAL	E = 37% *
M = 18%		M = 12% *
B = 43% *		B = 19% *
T = 7% *		T = 37% *
S = 8% *		S = 35% *
X = 18.8%		X = 28%
INTROVERTED		EXTRAVERTED
E = 0% *		E = 45% *
M = 34% *		M = 36%
B = 20%		B = 18% *
T = 22%		T = 34%
S = 17%		S = 40% *
X = 18.6%	STABLE	X = 34.6%

E = 22 entrepreneurs (average age 40 years) — various areas of operation
M = 400 senior managers (average age 49 years) — various industries
B = 450 bank managers (average age 48 years) — four banks
T = 72 transport industry managers (average age 46 years) — two companies
S = 105 sales managers (average age 46 years) — various industries.
N.B. Data collected on ananymous basis during research projects or at management education programs around Australia (1978 — 1984).

Differences between groups is statistically significant ($x^2_{12} = 211.33$, $p < .0005$)

* = significantly different from within quadrant means ($p < .05$).

The results suggest the possibility that industries and occupations attract and retain different personality types. It is evident that there is no managerial personality. Rather specific job functions demand a variety of skills many of which are possessed by all personality types.

The distribution of personality types across industries suggest another possibility: that industry stereotypes are important in the choice of jobs. For example, many bank managers will admit their main reason for joining and staying with a bank is job security. This concern for security is more prevalent among emotional introverts. The transport industry, on the other hand, offers the prospect of change, risk-taking and activity which is favoured by emotional extraverts.

The most senior group of managers studied was evenly divided between extraverts and introverts. However, 70% scored less than the population average on the measure of emotionality. Interestingly, 82% of the entrepreneurs samples are extraverts and 55% have above-average levels of emotionality.

The distribution of entrepreneurs is significantly different from within quadrant means ($p < .001$) except in the emotional introvert category. The low proportion of senior managers who are emotional extraverts is striking ($p < .001$). Emotional extraverts may find it too difficult to control themselves in the diplomatic atmosphere of the boardroom. This contrasts with the energy required for entrepreneurial activities. Whilst entrepreneurs may lack diplomacy, are often forthright, irreverent, have little tolerance for red tape they generate new ideas and are a source of dramatic change. For this reason it is necessary to have people around them who can build on their strengths, evaluate their ideas and encourage their eccentricities. Regrettably, these people are frequently rejected by more diplomatic executives and shunted into backrooms or field-jobs where they find it more difficult to make a contribution to organisational policy (Spillane & Borthwick, forthcoming).

While many senior executives believe that they possess entrepreneurial qualities, the reality is quite different (Spillane, 1984). Managers who work their way through the organisational hierarchies of big companies are rarely entrepreneurial; their style is different. Often innovation gives way to control; creativity surrenders to conformity; expertise is subordinated to status.

Australian managers (not entrepreneurs) have not fared well in the research literature. England (1975) found they place low value on profit maximisation, organisational growth, personal achievement, competition and risk-taking. Byrt & Masters (1965) argue that Australian managers tend to be dependent on government, lacking in boldness and initiative, conservative, non-aggressive. Spillane (1980, 1984) found them to be more externally-orientated, and compared with their U.S. counterparts, less self-assured, less decisive, less mature, less achievement motivated, more security motivated. Values supported by Australian managers reflect concerns for diplomacy, team spirit, company loyalty and the defence of managerial prerogatives (Lansbury & Spillane, 1983).

The differences between the personalities of Australian managers and entrepreneurs highlights the gap between corporate executive and entrepreneurial styles. If further research upholds the picture of Australian managers as more concerned with getting along with each other than with contribution, they might do well to remember Peter Drucker's quip: If people perform, they earn the right to be disagreeable.

The challenge before us is to build on the strengths of all those who are willing and able to make a contribution and to learn that *all* personality types have contributions to make, although the ways in which they make them will differ.

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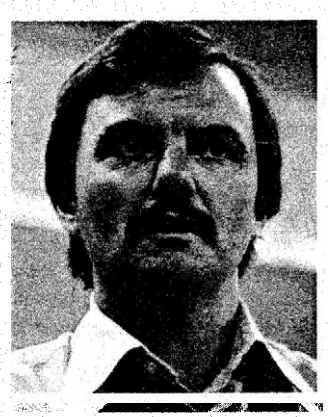

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