

PERSONALITY, LEADERSHIP, AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

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THE SCIENCE OF PERSONALITY®



Defining Leadership

- Leadership usually defined in terms of persons in charge.
- Who gets to the top of large, hierarchical, bureaucratic, male-dominated organizations?
- Think about human origins....and warfare.
- Leadership should be defined in terms of the ability to build and maintain a high performing team.
- Leadership should be evaluated in terms of the performance of that team.



The Contexts of Leadership

- Leadership is more important in certain contexts than in others—sometimes people need to be left alone.
- What might these contexts be?
- Consider the next slide.



CONDITIONAL LEADERSHIP MATRIX

**IS THE FOLLOWER FREE
TO DEFECT
FROM THE GROUP?**

YES

NO

LEADERSHIP IRRELEVANT AND DEFECTION LIKELY	LEADERSHIP ESSENTIAL TO PREVENT DEFECTION
LEADERSHIP IRRELEVANT: NORTH KOREA	ENGAGEMENT ESSENTIAL TO PREVENT ALIENATION

NO

YES

**IS THE FOLLOWER
NEEDED?**



Conditional Leadership Matrix

- If followers are free to defect and their services aren't needed, the group resembles a political rally—and leadership is irrelevant.
- If followers are not free to defect and their services aren't needed, the group resembles a prison population—and leadership is irrelevant.
- If followers are free to defect and their services are needed, the group resembles a political party—and leadership is crucial.
- If followers are not free to defect and their services are needed, the group resembles a business unit in a modern organization—and engagement is crucial to prevent alienation.



Leadership and Engagement

- Leadership is important when follower participation is needed and they are free to defect.
- If followers are NOT free to defect, they must do as they are told.
- In this situation, leadership is needed to create engagement and avoid alienation.
- *“When people fear their government, there is tyranny; when the government fears its people, there is liberty” Thomas Jefferson*



This Presentation

This presentation concerns four topics:

1. What is engagement?
2. Why does it matter?
3. How do you measure it?
4. How do you encourage it?



Trait, State, or Behavior?

- Engagement has been around in the HR community for years.
- Macey and Schneider (2008) introduced engagement to the academic I/O community.
- They note that “engagement” has been defined in three ways:
 1. As a trait
 2. As a state
 3. As a set of related behaviors



Trait, State, or Behavior?

Trait Engagement

Representative traits:

Initiative seeking

Positive affectivity

Conscientiousness

State Engagement

Representative feelings:

Involvement

Commitment

Empowerment

Behavioral Engagement

Representative behavior:

Taking initiative

Organizational citizenship

Role expansion

*Adapted from: Macey, W. H., & Schneider, B. (2008). The meaning of employee engagement. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 1*, 3-30.*



Trait Engagement (Observer's view)

- Calling individual differences in engagement a trait makes engagement the employees' problem.
- Obviously some people are more readily engaged than others.
- But the trait view removes engagement from the organizational context—where it belongs.



State Engagement (Actor's view)

- State engagement is marked by:
 - ◆ High levels of energy and persistence at work
 - ◆ Positive affect and involvement in work
 - ◆ Enthusiasm and pride in the work
 - ◆ A sense of empowerment at work
 - ◆ Finding the work meaningful—it provides a sense of purpose

Adapted from: Schaufeli, W. B., Salanova, M., Gonzalez-Roma, V., & Bakker, A. B. (2002). The measurement of engagement and burnout: A confirmative analytic approach. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 3, 71-92.



What Engagement is NOT - I

- Engagement is not “job satisfaction”
 - ◆ Measures of job satisfaction correlate positively with measures of self esteem and negatively with measures of neuroticism.
 - ◆ Unlike engagement, job satisfaction is a trait. Unhappy people rarely like any job.



What Engagement is NOT - II

- Engagement is not “job involvement”
 - ◆ Job involvement concerns attitudes toward a specific task or job independent of the broader organization
 - ◆ Job involvement concerns task outcomes rather than organizational outcomes
 - ◆ People can be involved in a task without being engaged in an organization.



What Engagement is NOT - III

- Engagement is not “organizational commitment”
 - ◆ Commitment is like a cognitive pledge of allegiance to an organization.
 - ◆ Engagement involves positive affect.
 - ◆ People can be committed to jobs in which they are not engaged—professional soldiers in Afghanistan.



Defining Engagement: Kahn

- Kahn (1990) defined engagement in the context of role theory.
- In role theory, interaction is where the action is.
- Peoples' roles shape their identities
- People can only take part in an interaction if they have a role to play.
- Jobs are the roles people play in organizations.
- The concept of role distance is important and related to engagement

Kahn, W.A. (1990). *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 33, pp. 692-724.



Defining Engagement: Kahn (cont.)

- Kahn suggests that:
 - ◆ Self and role “exist in some dynamic, negotiable relation in which a person both drives personal energies into role behaviors and displays the self within the role.”
 - ◆ Such role expression “fulfills the human spirit” at work.
 - ◆ Disengagement represents the “decoupling of the self from the work role.”



Distilling Kahn

- Kahn defines engagement in terms of four components:
 - ◆ Cognitive (role is consistent with identity)
 - ◆ Emotional (person likes the role)
 - ◆ Physical (person will work at the role)
 - ◆ Existential (role provides meaning)



Engagement: A Psychological State

- Employee engagement is a relatively persistent psychological “state” associated with behaviors beneficial to an organization.
- Employee engagement is a function of how people are treated by management.



Why Does Engagement Matter?

- We have defined engagement.
- Why should anyone care?



Management and Business Unit Performance

Gallup researchers have established 4 facts:

1. Managerial behavior directly affects employee engagement.
2. When engagement is high, positive business results follow.
3. When engagement is low, negative business results follow.
4. The link between managerial behavior and business results is mediated by staff engagement.



Good Management and Corporate Profitability

- Bloom and Van Reenen (2007) studied management practices at 732 medium-sized companies in the U.S., France, Germany, and the UK.
- The companies that used good management practices were more profitable.
- Good management creates engagement.
- Senior management determined whether good management practices were used.
- They replicated these findings in Asia (N=4000 companies).



Why Should Anyone Care About Engagement?

- Engagement is the “g” factor in organizational life.
- It is correlated with (predicts) every important business outcome.
- It predicts individual and unit outcomes.
- It is a composite of several factors, no one of which is crucial.



What Does this Mean?

- Managerial behavior affects employee engagement.
- Employee engagement drives business results.
- Good managers are good for business.
- Bad managers are bad for business.
- It is worth looking more closely employee engagement.



Assessing Engagement

- If a concept is real, it can be measured.
- Engagement can be measured
- The two most widely used measures are:
 - ◆ The Gallup “Q12”—a holistic measure
 - ◆ The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale—a components-based measure



The “Gallup Q12”

1. I know what is expected of me at work.
2. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my job right.
3. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
4. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
5. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.
6. There is someone at work who encourages my development.
7. At work, my opinions seem to count.
8. The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.
9. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.
10. I have a best friend at work.
11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.



The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale

Scale 1: Vigor

1. At work, I feel bursting with energy.
2. At my job, I feel strong and driven.
3. When I get up in the morning, I look forward to going to work.
4. I can continue working for very long periods of time.
5. At my job, I am very tough mentally
6. At my work, I can push on, even when things do not go well.

Note: Items are rated on a 7-point frequency scale from “Never” to “Always, every day.”



The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale

Scale 2: Dedication

1. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.
2. I am enthusiastic about my job.
3. My job inspires me.
4. I am proud of the work that I do.
5. My job is challenging.



The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale

Scale 3: Absorption

1. Time flies when I am working.
2. When I am working, I forget everything else around me.
3. I am happy when I am working hard.
4. I feel deeply involved in my work.
5. I become completely absorbed in my work.
6. When not at work, I often think about my job.

Adapted from: Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Salanova, M. (2006). The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 66, 701-716. See also www.schaufeli.com



Where Does Engagement Come From?

- Employee engagement comes from the relationships between managers and individual employees.
- Remember Red Auerbach, legendary coach of the Boston Celtics?
- How do you motivate a team? One player at a time.



Where Does Disengagement Come From?

- Employees typically list the following as “obstacles” to engagement:
 - ◆ Their boss or supervisor—the most frequently cited obstacle
 - ◆ Lack of control over their work
 - ◆ Bad decisions by upper management
 - ◆ Poor teamwork
 - ◆ The company
 - ◆ Office politics
 - ◆ No accountability
- How should these be understood?



Bad Managers: Barriers to Engagement

- What is the base rate of bad managers in the corporate world?
- We estimate it to be between 50% and 75%.
- When organizations hire and promote bad managers, they alienate employees and undermine their own financial interests.



Enhancing Engagement

- Kahn (1990) proposes three “psychological conditions” that enhance engagement:
 - ◆ Meaningfulness
 - ◆ Safety
 - ◆ Availability
- In addition, a sense of being paid fairly fits in here--somehow.



Personality and the Precursors of Engagement

- Employees find work meaningful when they know how it fits with the larger picture.
- Employees feel “safe” when they believe they can express themselves.
- Employees are “available” when they feel their contributions are valued.
- Employees perceive “justice” when they think they are paid fairly.
- Supervisors and managers create these conditions.



Leadership and Engagement

- Good leadership fosters engagement.
- Effective leaders:
 - ◆ Establish a vision
 - ◆ Set expectations about performance
 - ◆ Communicate effectively
 - ◆ Make good decisions
 - ◆ Manage priorities
 - ◆ Manage people correctly
 - ◆ Create a positive work environment
- Personality predicts these managerial behaviors



Personality Factors Influencing Engagement

- Certain personality characteristics make employee engagement difficult:
 - ◆ Negative affectivity: unhappy people won't engage
 - ◆ Skepticism: paranoids won't engage
 - ◆ Capacity to interact with others: introverts won't engage
 - ◆ Willingness to share the spotlight: selfish people won't engage
- Personality predicts these employee characteristics.



Four Generalizations

Leadership research over the past few years leads to four robust generalizations:

1. Personality defined in terms of the FFM predicts rated leader performance.
2. The personality of a manager predicts a manager's leadership style.
3. Leadership style predicts team or unit performance.
4. The link between leadership and unit performance is mediated by staff morale.



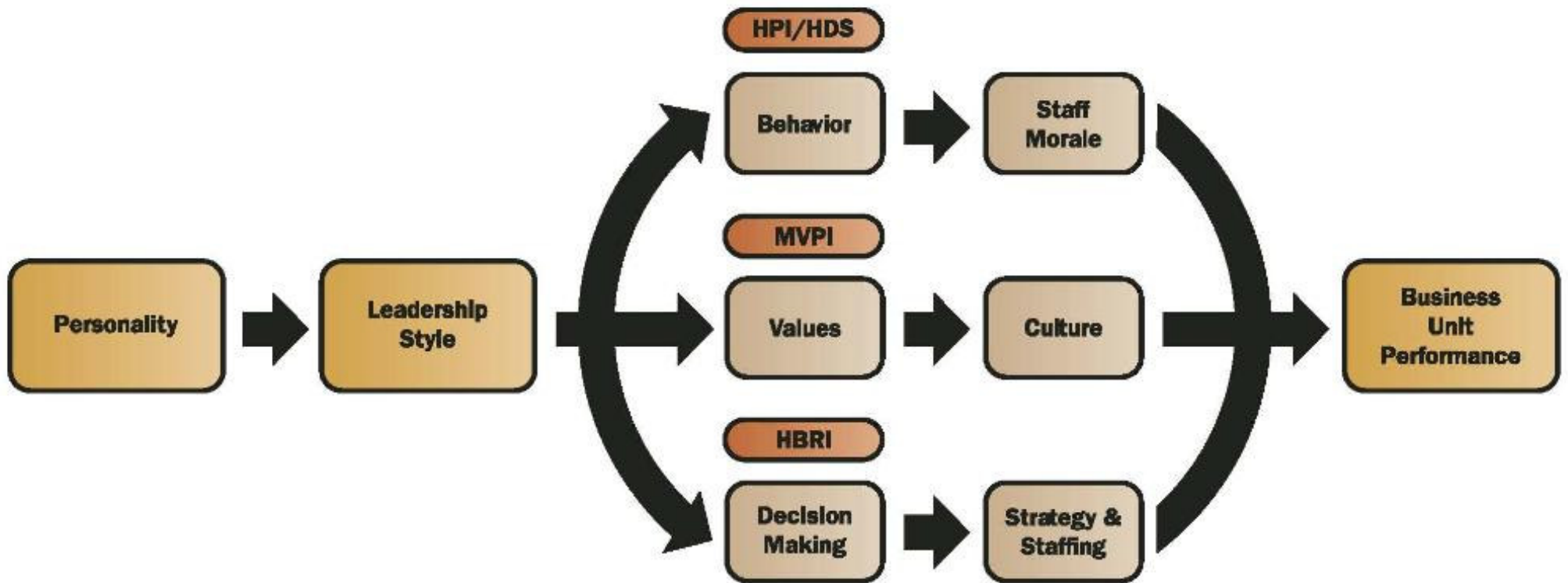
Leadership Value Chain

The next slide shows the links between personality, leadership, organizational dynamics, and business unit performance.

We call this the “Leadership Value Chain”.



Hogan Leadership Value Chain





Leadership Value Chain

- Psychologists study the upper loop, which concerns behavior (how people are treated), which translates into morale.
- Sociologists and anthropologists study the middle loop, which concerns values (what gets rewarded or punished) which translates into culture.
- Business schools study the bottom loop, which concerns decision making (about staffing and strategy) which translates into the processes that facilitate or degrade engagement.



Buying Engagement

- Organizational Development consultancies sell packaged “employee engagement” programs.
- Implication: engagement can be created from the outside.
- Employees view such programs as “play acting” on the part of management—unless management continues to encourage engagement after the consultants leave.



Buying Engagement (cont.)

- True engagement must be grown from the top down
- To create an engaged (and less cynical) workforce, senior management must foster a culture that values engagement.
- Assessing personality and values at all organizational levels can facilitate this process.



Last Thoughts 1: A Distinction

- It is useful to distinguish between being engaged in your profession and in your organization.
- It is possible to be engaged in one, the other, or both.
- This creates an interesting two by two table.



Last Thoughts 2: It Matters

- Management needs to pay attention to engagement rather than profits.
- Paying attention to engagement will create better profits.
- A 2005 report by the Corporate Leadership Council shows that:
 - (a) retention of high potentials is crucial for the future; and
 - (b) engagement is crucial for retaining high potentials.



Last Thoughts 3: Specifics

- To take engagement seriously requires a radical rethink of how managers treat their staff.
- Adversarial relations (US Postal Service) are out.
- Generic models of management are out.
- Remember Red Auerbach.



Last Thoughts 4: Engagement and Socioanalytic Theory

- Remember William Kahn and role theory?
- Socioanalytic theory is modern role theory.
- Socioanalytic theory suggests that people need social acceptance, status, and meaning.
- Engagement is defined as feeling accepted and empowered by management, and having a meaningful job.
- Theory and practice come together here.



Last Thoughts 5: Engagement is an Ideal

- Few jobs will allow complete engagement; it is an ideal state.
- It is an ideal worth pursuing—it feels good to be engaged.
- Freud defined maturity as the capacity *zu lieben und zu arbeiten*.
- I take that as agreement.



Last Thoughts 6: Marx and Alienated Labor

- Marx argued that employment in a capitalist system is inherently alienating.
- Engagement is the opposite of alienation.
- Engagement potentially reconciles Marx's (valid) critique of capitalism with the requirements of modern employment.



Last Last Thought: Engagement not Self-Actualization

- Theories of OD from WWII to the present depend on the concept of self-actualization.
- The concept of self-actualization is fundamentally unscientific.
- Engagement is the thinking person's alternative to self-actualization.

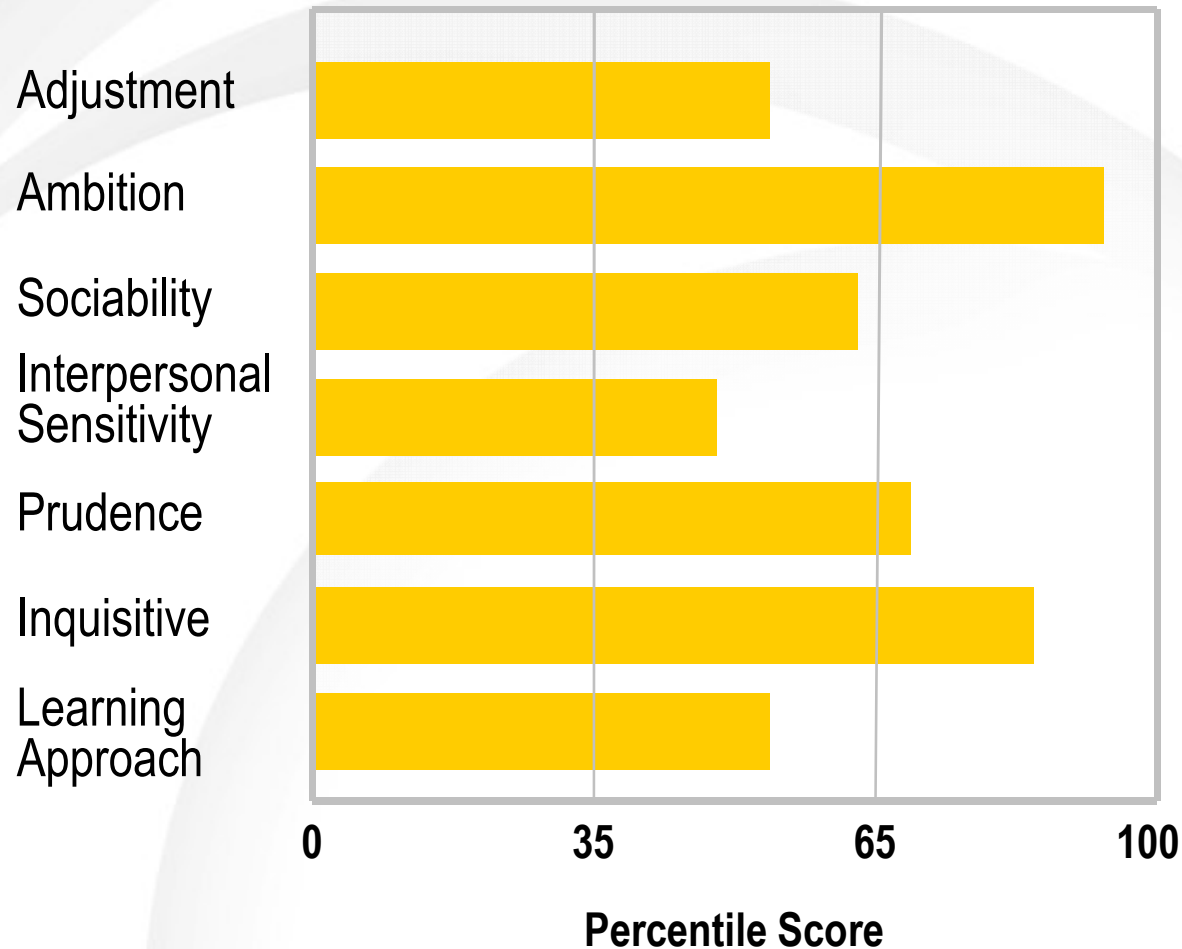


Is That All There Is?

- In his book, *The Pleasures and Sorrows of Work*, the popular philosopher Alain de Botton notes:
- “Seeking intrinsic satisfaction from work is futile—being busy is all that should be promised, and you find your own way from there.”



An Effective Leader Personality



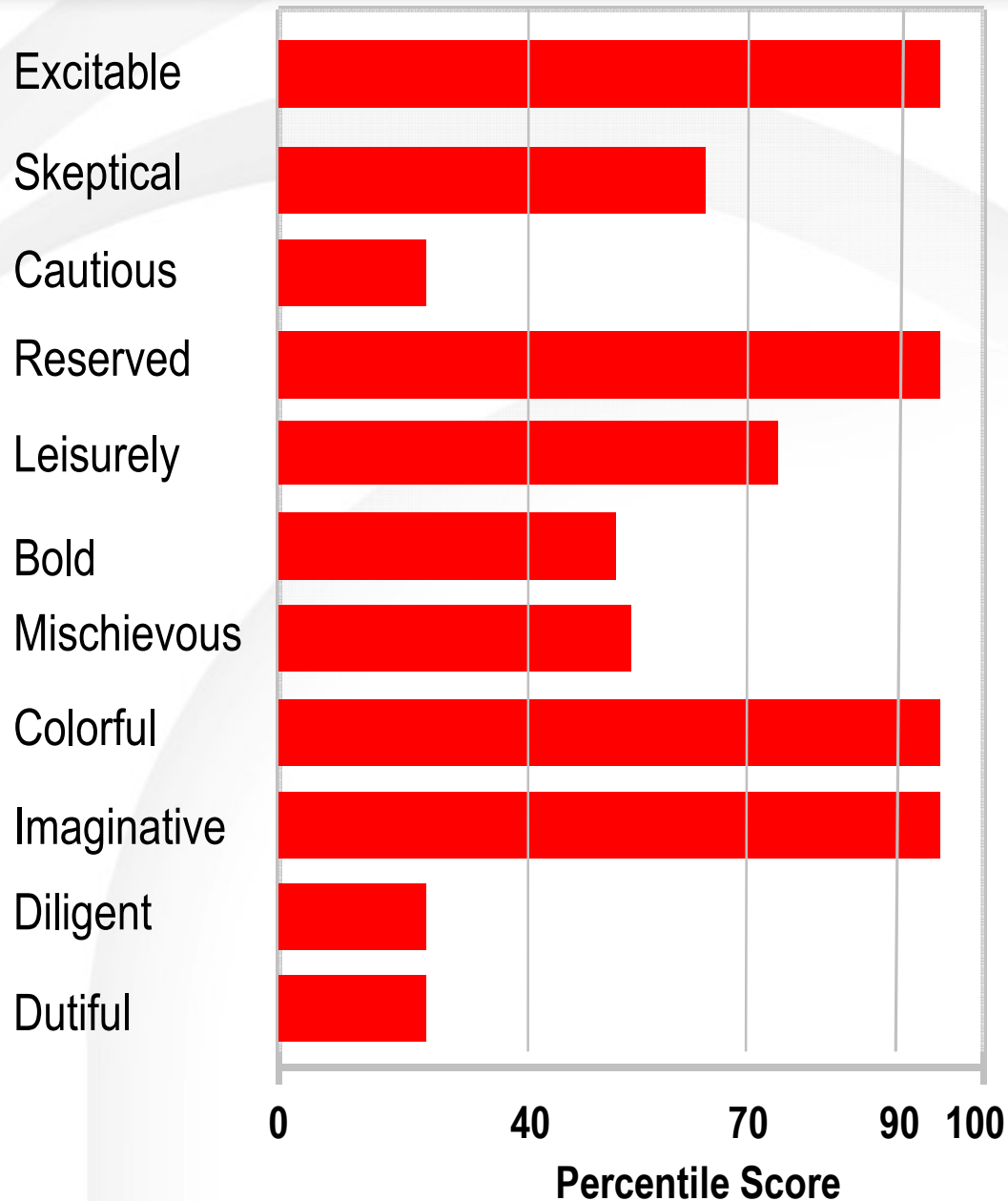
This is an “effective leader” profile on the Hogan Personality Inventory.

Effective leaders are:

- Confident but not cocky (Adjustment)
- Ambitious
- Conscientious but not rule-bound (Prudence)
- Creative, strategic thinkers (Inquisitive)



A Toxic Leader



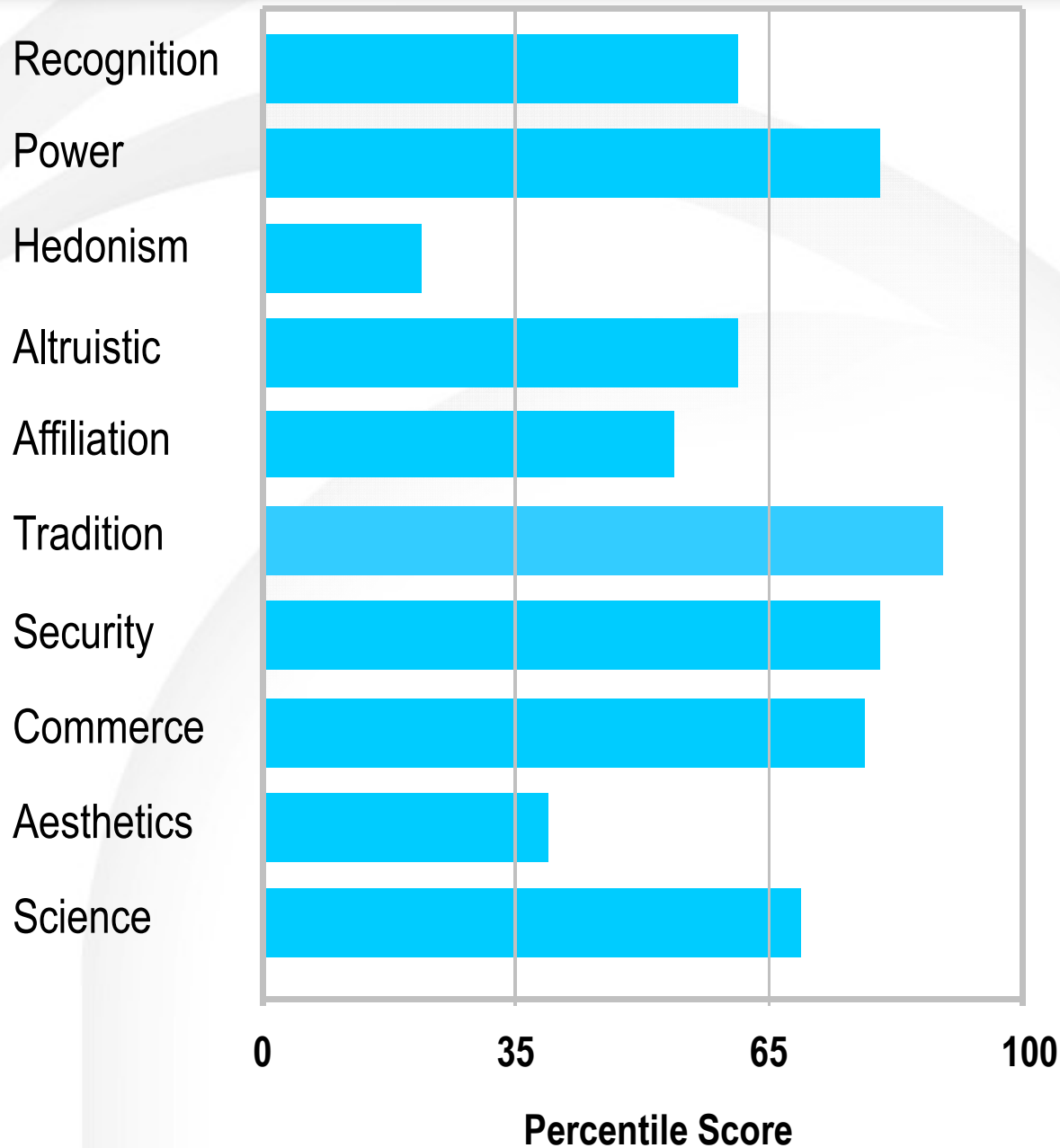
This is the profile of a leader who is unpredictable, cold, attention-seeking, and “eccentrically creative.”

This person will create an “unsafe” environment, and care little about what employees think.

This profile is common among senior managers



Leader Values



Leader's values create team culture by determining what is rewarded .

This is the MVPI profile of a leader who values achievement and financial success (Power and Commerce). He/She is no nonsense (low Hedonism), favors "top-down" management (high Tradition), is risk averse (high Security) and no fun.