

Personality is the differentiator says Lascaris

By [Reg Lascaris](#)

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CV 'manufacture' has become a parity market for those with some work experience and some tertiary education as many unsuccessful but well-qualified job applicants may have discovered. As in any parity market, the key for those doing the selling is to find a differentiator, a factor that sets apart Candidate A from B, C and D.

Recent developments worldwide suggest the magic ingredient is individual personality. When objective factors cancel themselves out, you are left with subjective factors like energy levels, confidence, get up and go, concern for others, enthusiasm and empathy.

This sounds wishy-washy until you consider organisational and marketing trends.

We live in a world where new products can be copied within a few days. Pricing advantages can be wiped out in hours. When keen prices and strong product features and benefits are a given, you are left with only one opportunity to excel ... the quality of human relationships.

This explains the global growth of Customer Relationship Marketing.

Human personality and the can-do attitude of the team become crucial drivers of the bottom line as staff members interact with existing and potential customers. Brand personality (as reflected by the personalities in the team) helps to unlock the lifetime value of loyal customers who feel they belong.

Teamwork

A few years ago, economies through automation were regarded as the sure-fire route to bottom line success. Countless US firms invested in automatic telephone answering systems.

Soon disembodied voices across corporate America were inviting callers to press '1' for this and '2' for that, while depression of the hash- or star-sign could route you back and forwards for eternity. Customers simply hung up and changed their brand preferences. Now the same companies that invested in automated rigmarole are going back to human beings.

Within organisations, rigid hierarchy has been replaced by relaxed teamwork.

Balanced team composition requires different personality types. The techno boffin has to be given a regular reality-check

by a down-to-earth type focused on here and now. The introspective dreamer has to be brought out of his or her shell by the outgoing, social mixer.

HR specialists, psychologists and other specialists are increasingly consulted by large organisations to determine the company's Corporate DNA and whether it's appropriate to a fast-changing market.

One recent study by a leading HR consultant focused on operations in Johannesburg, Dubai and Istanbul. Each operation's character was assessed and recommendations made for cultural or personality shifts.

The South African business was described as a Driver/Communicator company exhibiting self-confidence, a talent for risk-taking, pressure to achieve, apparent lack of concern for others, impatience, impulsiveness and charm. For optimum performance, a little less ego and more sensitivity was recommended.

The Dubai operation had a Planner/Communicator style. People were more patient and obliging, thought of others more than themselves and were careful planners, loyal, enthusiastic and persistent. They needed to work smarter.

The Istanbul business fell into the Analyst/Planner category. It set high standards and was adept at implementing policy. The collective feel was gentle, cautious, restrained and perfectionist. To get more out of the job they needed to have more fun.

Corporate DNA

In all cases, a key requirement when recruiting new people was a good personality fit within the current office style or a placement that would contribute to the desired shift in the DNA.

Unleashing individual contributions across a well-balanced team is not only the objective of employers; it is also top of the agenda for designers of office space.

Modern office interiors often include pause areas where people can chat, relax and interact because team morale and the office vibe are essential to success.

Some companies are trying to create workplace communities within their buildings as a community-feel brings out the best in people and keeps them productive.

The TBWA\Chiat\Day ad agency in Los Angeles is modelled on a Greenwich Village neighbourhood in Manhattan, complete with streets, cars, parks, baseball court and homes. The focus is on the agency's brand personality... and this has to be reflected in the personality of the personnel.

In the old industrial era, process was king. But modern economies are driven by the service sector and a customer service ethic. In this environment, morale and scope for individuality are crucial if the team is to be properly motivated.

Switched-on employers therefore look beyond the CV. Talent and personality are the major requirements. To be specific, these employers are searching for talented performers with a personality that matches the current or the desired corporate image.

So, make sure your CV is up to par, but to really stand out you must showcase the inner you. Let that bubbly personality bubble over once in a while - it could be a good career move.

ABOUT REG LASCARIS



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