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NEWS FLASH

Sociability -- The thirteenth in our series discussing the 13 job related character tendencies.

If you missed, or would like to review, the first twelve articles of this series please click on the newsletter of your choice. These newsletters cover Emotional Energy (18), Stress (19), Self-Esteem (20), Optimism (21), Work (22), Detail (23), Change (24), Courage (25), Direction (26), Assertiveness (27), Tolerance (28), and   Consideration (29).

Sociability

Sociability: '*Bah Humbug*' is a salutation that almost everyone is familiar with and knows what it means. And, everyone knows that Ebenezer Scrooge was not a very sociable or likeable person. However, we also know that Tiny Tim changed all that.

But, can people change that much just because a few ghosts come for a visit? ***Sociability*** is probably the most flexible, or moldable, trait that human beings possess. But, while we may be able to act differently for a short time when people or 'ghosts' are around (personality), our character is not so easily changed. *Personality* is how we act when we know others are looking but *character* is how we act when we think no one is looking. And, therein lies the value of the Simmons Survey—it measures a person's *character*--not their *personality*.

Although *sociability* is the most flexible of the character traits discussed in our hiring and coaching reports, it is still valuable in helping to determine how well a person is going to meet the demands of a particular role in the workplace. There is no ideal level of ***sociability*** except when it is being compared to the needs of a particular role. For example, it would be very difficult for a highly social person to work as a night security guard while it would be more difficult for a person who is uncomfortable around others to work as part of a team.

On the low end of the ***sociability*** scale is the solitary worker. This kind of person could best be typified by a lady on the reality program, *Air Alaska***.** She ran a hunting camp well above the Arctic Circle and only interacted with people when supplies were delivered or hunters came to her camp for a brief period of time. Most of us could not handle that much isolation from

others but she seemed to be very comfortable in her solitary world and, therefore, was well suited for that job.

But, there is unlikely to be a position in most organizations for a person with such a need for isolation from others. There are people who prefer to be left alone and would be very content working in a 'dark corner of the basement' where they seldom had to interact with any other staff members. But, this is unlikely to be the situation in most office settings. Strangely enough, these people can often be very superficially friendly and jovial but, as soon as they have reached their limit of dealing with people, they are ready to go off by themselves and may even retreat to their office and close the door behind them.

This kind of person quickly tires when required to have much interaction with others and, in many cases, they prefer to focus on achieving results rather than on developing relationships in the workplace. In the right job, a person who prefers to focus on results while avoiding others as much as possible might be valuable to an employer. But, many jobs require that an employee is able to build a relationship with others in order to be most effective. For example, the best leaders are able to gain their subordinates' respect while also being able to develop a favorable relationship with them in order to get the best from them.

The people at the other end of the social spectrum have a strong need to be around others. They are usually outgoing, friendly, and easy for others to like. This likeability can be invaluable in a worker but a need to be liked can actually interfere with a person's productivity. Quite often, this type of person does not manage their time very well because they are too focused on remaining popular rather than on being a responsible and productive employee.

Any job in any organization likely has an optimal level of *sociability* required for the individual to achieve the greatest level of success. If the individual does not have enough *sociability*, they may try to avoid talking with people or developing enough of a relationship with others to offset any difficulties that arise in the workplace. This is especially important for managers who need to be able to balance being liked with being respected.

The success of most organizations and businesses is largely dependent upon being able to provide good customer service so finding employees that can fulfill this need is of utmost importance. The optimal level of *sociability* for providing good customer service is usually slightly above the midline of the spectrum. This enables an individual to make a good impression on someone with their social abilities while also being able to achieve their job-related objectives. People who fall at the high end of the spectrum tend to waste time interacting with others while those on the low end have trouble

effectively interacting with people. And, both of these extremes may actually turn people off rather than win them over.

When hiring, an employer must keep in mind what is necessary to successfully fulfill the demands of a particular job and which is most important—results or customer service, teamwork or individual contributions. Determining how social a person is can be difficult during a job interview because some people are showing their personality rather than their character. But, the Simmons Personal Survey is like an x-ray that can help employers see the true person, or the *character* of the person, sitting across the desk during an interview.

On the lighter side - God grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway, the good fortune to run into the ones that I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference.

Again, to view the previous newsletters please click here.

Health and Happiness!

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