Managing different personality types



As a manager, one of your most important responsibilities — perhaps even more important than overseeing schedules, resources and finances — is managing people. It is your job to help cultivate and maintain a high functioning team. However, like any sample of people, your team is sure to be made up of different personality types — you will have introverts working alongside extroverts and some people who fall somewhere in between. It can be difficult to adapt your management style to suit everyone, but once you recognize that having a diverse range of personalities and working styles on your team is an asset, you will be able to gracefully incorporate everyone's different skills so they complement each other rather than conflict. Here are some ways to go about identifying and integrating these different personalities into your management methodology.

Learn about introverts and extroverts

Take some time to educate yourself about the traits of introverts and extroverts. While it may be commonly understood that introverts are quiet and shy and extroverts are loud and talkative, it is actually a little more complicated than this. Rather than how they act outwardly, what really defines an introvert or an extrovert is what they need to do to recharge, and how they prefer to work. Most introverts need alone time to refuel or recharge and prefer to work alone while most extroverts gain energy in groups and love to think out loud. Learn more about these types here.

Get to know your team

As you have spent a lot of time working with the members of your team already, you probably have a pretty good sense of who might be an introvert and who is likely an extrovert. But sometimes identifying someone's personality type is not so easy; some people work contrary to their natural personality to try to fit into what they believe is an ideal or expected. To really find out what each member of your team is like, talk to them. Ask them what they need, and how they really like to work and feel most comfortable. Do they prefer to spearhead meetings and give presentations, or methodically think through problems and write detailed reports? It can also be a fun and informative exercise to have everyone take a personality test and discuss their results - just be sure to communicate that the results will not have any bearing on how team members are evaluated and that one type is not more desirable than another.

Bring balance to the workday

In addition to maintaining some balance of working collaboratively and working alone, allow for flexibility so that each person can work the way that they know will allow them to reach their potential. This means that if someone knows their best work will be done solo, make space for them to work alone, or if they know they can give their best performance in a presentation, give them the chance to speak up.

When it comes to personality styles in the workplace, diversity is invaluable. Introverts and extroverts both add value to a thriving work environment as their differing styles can actually harmonize each other. Pair an extrovert who is full of ideas they want to express with an introvert who can hear them and spend the time to think them through. The more you know and understand about your team's strengths, the more you will be able to lead with an assured confidence that will in turn allow people to trust you more since you have demonstrated an understanding of and a desire to meet their individual needs.