

**YOUR
COMPLETE
GUIDE TO**

UNDERSTANDING THE LINK BETWEEN PERSONALITY & SAFETY

An introduction to using personality risk assessments to hire, train and develop safer employees.

Introduction

Sitting in a classroom one day, surrounded by safety committee members from numerous local companies, a fellow classmate adamantly proclaimed "people are flawed" when asked to describe why a particularly unfortunate individual ignored safety rules and lost his life in a wood chipper. I've discovered that this is a common theme among the safety community:

People make mistakes. What are you going to do?

The fact is, there is something that can be done about common mistakes and human error is not always random. In fact, human error is predictable. Workers and their supervisors can be taught to use *Safety Self-Awareness* to minimize the risk of certain personality traits causing individuals to commit unsafe acts. It's been done in many leading organizations and it can be done in yours too.



UNDERSTAND
PEOPLE
REDUCE
RISK

Understanding Personality

For decades, social scientists have been able to link personality to relationships, career planning, work styles and more by using tools, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, to better understand their "default" actions and reactions to the world around them. Only recently has personality been linked to safety in identifying how certain personality types are naturally more "safety-oriented" than others.

"Everybody has a default personality. Some call it hard-wiring," says Stephen Race, **TalentClick**'s Co-Founder and expert in personality risk assessment. For over 17 years he has designed, developed and implemented assessments with industry leading companies in Construction, Oil & Gas, Manufacturing, Mining & Resources and more.

Regarding safety and risk management, Jim Lake, President of Ainsworth Engineered Forest Products adds, "Understanding how personality affects behavior is key in impacting real change in workers and reducing the overall incident rate."

Race was the brain trust behind **TalentClick**'s industry leading safety assessments used to measure the inherit safety risk posed by individual workers' personalities, such as **Safety Quotient™**. He says that workers with higher-risk personalities can be identified by assessing them on five dimensions.

Resistant: "Higher-Risk" individuals may disregard authority and rules and be resistant to feedback. "Lower-Risk" individuals tend to willingly follow guidelines, follow training and are compliant with rules.

Irritable: "Higher-Risk" individuals may become annoyed by others especially when under stress. "Lower-Risk" individuals tend to be less irritable and are easily able to control their emotions when under stress.

Anxious: "Higher-Risk" individuals may panic or freeze when faced with unexpected safety-sensitive situations and may feel unsure about their abilities. "Lower-Risk" individuals tend to be confident and are steady and calm under pressure.

Distractible: "Higher-Risk" individuals seek stimulation and variety, and may be easily distracted. "Lower-Risk" individuals are less likely to seek stimulation and are able to stay focused and alert.

Impulsive: "Higher-Risk" individuals tend to seek excitement, enjoy taking risks and may underestimate possible negative consequences of their actions. "Lower-Risk" individuals do not seek excitement and tend to carefully evaluate their options before making decisions.

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BUILDING SAFETY SELF-AWARENESS

Any experienced safety professional knows that the work does not stop at identifying the hazards. Once the workers' higher-risk personality traits are identified, the next step is to build awareness of the hazards and develop safer behaviors through a combination of training, personalized coaching, and self-coaching.

TRAINING



Course material should focus on teaching individuals to recognize when they're about to make a personality-related mistake. Management or Supervisor level courses should focus on clear communication and guided learning for helping subordinates build their own *Safety Self-Awareness*.

PERSONALIZED COACHING



Coaching should take into account the individual differences of the employee in both the way coaching and communication is addressed as well as the content of each session. With a thorough understanding of the employee's personality risk factors, a Supervisor can impact positive change in a worker's behavior.

SELF-COACHING



Guided with the knowledge of one's own personality risk factors and the support of a fully trained coach, the employee can begin a journey to build *Safety Self-Awareness*. A helpful tool in facilitating the *Safety Self-Awareness* process is a personal action plan that outlines goals and milestones for behavioral improvements over time.

An effective program will use all three methods to build safety self-awareness and maintain lower-risk at-work behaviors.

Personality in Action

One Northern Alberta, Canadian construction site has benefitted from understanding the link between personality and safety for over 3 years now and has achieved tremendous results.

THE CHALLENGE

High profile incidents were damaging the firm's reputation in the industry and with the general public, leading to lower revenues and significant distraction for corporate team.

ACTION TAKEN

Phased integration of **Safety Quotient™** *Personality Risk Assessment* starting with pre-hire screenings and graduated to full integration with comprehensive *Safety Self-Awareness* Training.

THE RESULT

Combined with other initiatives, the site has achieved a 59% reduction in recordable incidents from the beginning of Phase 1.

FROM THE SITE MANAGER TO HIS SUPERVISORS:

"Safety Quotient™ helps us recognize potential behaviors and, more importantly, can help us mentor our workers. There are pieces of information discussed in the Participant and Employer sections that can help recognize potential at-risk behaviors and, by increasing our awareness of them and consciously correcting unsafe behaviors, we will reduce risk."

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