Refine What Defines You

the professional
expressions of
Challengers
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The Power of Knowing a Personality Profile

This guide highlights some of the most common or prominent characteristics of Challengers. Use it to:

- Recognize their natural inclinations, expectations, and potential to contribute unique value.

- Watchout for unintended consequences or dysfunctional behavior prompted by unhealthy situations.

Archetyping is a framework that recognizes consistent patterns in complex human characteristics and uses that to predict natural inclinations.

Identifying and understanding archetypes provides a simple way for individuals to both understand and communicate how they approach and interact with others.

This helps pair the right individuals with the right roles and responsibilities, and facilitates more productive interactions between people.

Archetypes helps articulate preferences or abilities and can reveal interests or abilities waiting for the right opportunity to appear.

This guide answers the question:

How can I position Challengers to be more successful?

This guide highlights 12 common expressions of Challengers organized by 3 broader domains:

- **Accountability:** They keep everyone responsible for what they say and do

- **Comfort with Discomfort:** They see pain tolerance as a powerful tool to both contribute & grow

- **Focus:** They tend to be all-in or all-out

Every strength has the potential to manifest as a weakness…and greater strengths can become greater weaknesses. Use this insight to identify and guide individuals away from the following situations:

- **One-Dimensionalism:** Having a singular or inflexible approach that becomes a limiting constraint.
- **Tunnel Vision**: Being unwilling to acknowledge the value of contradictory views or approaches
- **Regression under Stress**: Retreating to destructive behaviors to cope with a difficult environment.
- **Static Stance**: "Just how I am" becomes an excuse to stop developing, growing, evolving or improving.

The composites created by archetyping are rarely a perfect summary of an individual. Consider diving deeper into individualized trait-based profiling. This puts the same data through a more precise model that assesses the individual fit of over 400 traits to identify the few that most define one's thinking style, emotional intelligence and behavioral inclinations.

Combining the simplicity of archetyping and the detail of trait-based profiling can provide the clearest picture of what type of work environment an individual needs to thrive and how they like to approach their responsibilities.

How to utilize the archetype results:

Archetyping is a framework that recognizes consistent patterns in complex human characteristics and uses that to predict natural inclinations.

A clear understanding of archetypes provides a simple way for individuals to both understand and communicate how they approach and interact with others.

This helps pair the right individuals with the right roles, and it facilitates more productive interactions between people.

THE PREDICTIVE POWER OF KNOWING YOUR PERSONALITY

Consider how the insight revealed in this report can be applied in each of the following areas:

1. Speak a Common Language: While archetyping should never be used to over-simplify or stereotype individuals, it provides a quick and widely-understood framework to gain an initial indication of who someone is, a description of their defining characteristics and a prediction of how they will approach work. Use this as a solid starting point to discover ways to realize greater value, navigate interpersonal dynamics and anticipate potential conflicts between personalities or styles.

2. Self-Awareness: Having better labels or descriptions can help articulate personality dimensions that may be easily overlooked, under-appreciated or even misunderstood. Knowing dominant archetypes provides a new way to view and communicate professional expressions, including how different profiles approach making decisions, solving problems, completing tasks and interacting with coworkers.

3. Self-Improvement: Studying the benefits & drawbacks of archetypes makes sure more of the former and less of the latter are experienced. Look for hidden elements that may be dormant capabilities just waiting for the right opportunity to be expressed or developed.

4. Better Coworker Interactions: *Archetype Expression Reports* save time and frustration by revealing details about how a personality prefers to make contributions...and what might be viewed as negative reactions or consequences when the work environment becomes dysfunctional.

5. Better Role Placement or Career Planning: The roles individuals have on a team or the career path they are pursuing today may not be a good long-term fit for their personality or dominant traits. Pursuing different roles or reassigning responsibilities that better combine individual interests and abilities may position the group for greater success and satisfaction. *Person | Position Fit Reports* can be used to provide detailed indicators of how well an individual fits the personality requirements of a role.

example

This summarizes a strength of Challengers…
a way they can make a positive and unique contribution to work.

This describes a watchout to avoid when Challengers get in an unhealthy environment or state of stress…causing this strength to malfunction in negative ways or create undesirable side effects.

GUIDANCE

This provides advice to keep strengths positive & productive…
while preventing or resolving any negative manifestations.

Challengers are guided by an underlying sense of fairness or justice and will struggle to navigate environments where evidence suggests either of these may not exist.

Beyond the moral or ethical, this includes the expectation that rewards should be earned through working smarter or harder, not political manipulation or luck.

Challengers will seek to preserve this environment, with the expectation of getting a fair share of the spoils from it.

Fairness can be subjective, and Challengers are smart enough to act on opportunities that gain them a little extra fairness.

Of course, Challengers are still human and they are less likely to push for fairness that puts them at a significant disadvantage or distributes rewards in a manner that shares significantly less with them.

GUIDANCE

Even if not necessary, it will be advantageous to make sure Challengers understand how business priorities have been established.

Ideally, giving Challengers the opportunity to provide input and feel like they influenced business priorities can go a long way to gaining their commitment to delivering those priorities.

Skipping this engagement may prompt distraction or descent in the future when efforts begin to faulter or perceptions of unfairness creep in.

Challengers thrive in an environment designed to help everyone rise to the challenge, not settle to the lowest common denominator.

They will expect to have access to the best possible tools, use of effective operating procedures, and coworkers willing to adapt.

Few organizations are able to have all the best tools, and few coworkers will be as adept and adaptable as Challengers want them to be.

In a sense, the greatest challenge a Challenger faces is overcoming an environment unable to rise up to meet their challenge.

In frustration, Challengers can stop trying to build an army of coworkers to join them in battle, and just start pushing them out of the way so they don't slow down the forward progress.

In pursuit of the mission, Challengers can be dangerously unaware of the damage their strong personality can have on others.

GUIDANCE

Challengers need to have accurate expectations.

While it may do little to change reality, don't deny when inadequate tools, poor procedures or resistant coworkers are working against desired change or improvement.

An honest assessment is a healthy first step.

While it can be viewed as a distraction, make sure Challengers respect the concerns or sensitivities of coworkers, even if they do not view them as justified, and hold them accountable for any destructive friction or collateral damage they cause.

Challengers like to be in control, but can find it equally satisfying to follow someone that has demonstrated even more capability to handle that control.

Challengers don't need to be the primary decision-maker or be in control when they have confidence that others can do both.

Capability can be a subjective assessment and Challengers don't always do it accurately.

They can make the mistake of empowering some beyond their abilities or discounting the skills of others based on limited or incorrect perceptions.

Challengers will use lack of control as an excuse, or point to the person in (the most) control as the one accountable for the failure.

While they will seek to learn and improve from failure, immature Challengers will also ensure they do not take an unfair share of blame.

Mature Challengers will accept more accountability (even when it isn't justified), accepting it as punishment for their personal failure to have identified and prevented the broader failure.

GUIDANCE

While Challengers feel comfortable being in control, it is even more important that they don't feel the sensation of BEING CONTROLLED.

In other words, the best way to control a Challenger may be to convince them that you're not trying to.

As long as the Challenger has demonstrated they are qualified, direction should be given only to the extent that it provides advice or guidance, and does not artificially restrict the Challenger's options for completing their tasks.

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Challengers believe that with the right tools, preparation, intelligence, stamina and endurance, anything can be accomplished.

When others get discouraged by what they see as impossible, a Challenger gets energized to prove it is possible.

Challengers can pick battles that are beyond their ability to win or are not worth fighting.

GUIDANCE

Challengers need to be reminded that just because something can be done doesn't mean it should be.

Offer to help them prioritize their battles.

If they don't welcome the help, ask to understand how they've approached their priorities so an appropriate challenge can be presented to the Challenger.

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To a Challenger, discomfort is evidence of progress, and satisfaction is often proportionate to the sacrifice it required.

Success is measured both in the form of accomplishments, and the learning & growth acquired along the way.

Many Challengers will agree that power or peace are only possible when others know they are willing to pursue significant conflict to get them.

At a certain level of discomfort or resistance, others will conclude a path should not be pursued…or at least alternates should be seriously considered.

Challengers can be unaware that the more they thrive on discomfort, the more others around them suffer.

GUIDANCE

Comfort with discomfort is a unique skill that most organizations would benefit from having more of.

Coach Challengers to be aware of and sensitive to the fact that most people around them will have different definitions of what causes discomfort, and different (most likely lower) thresholds for how much they can tolerate.

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Experience has taught Challengers that confrontation is often the most direct path to progress or growth.

This includes the benefits to challenging the existing power structure when one finds themselves with little of their own formal power.

With this knowledge, conflict becomes a satisfying and enjoyable experience (not a necessary evil) as it is evidence that progress is actually being made.

Without the right context or perspective, coworkers can interpret the actions of Challengers as disrespectful.

They need to be prepared for the intensity Challengers bring and not view questions or disagreement as personal attacks.

This can be complicated by the fact that Challengers will sometimes intentionally create conflict to test how others handle it.

They can underestimate the insult and anger prompted by relatively minor irritation they view as entertaining experiments.

GUIDANCE

To create a healthy environment, managers will need to find the common ground where Challengers can push the organization forward while not exceeding the tolerance others are willing to afford them.

Closely monitor any indicators that the Challenger is developing the need to be right at all costs or others perceive this need to always be right.

Help them understand how to manage this before it threatens to become a barrier to what they're trying to accomplish.

To a Challenger, conflict is connection (Challengers connect through conflict), but their attempts at intimacy can feel intimidating to others.

What a Challenger views as a lively, productive interaction can be interpreted by others as aggressive and abrasive.

In fact, a "great" conversation from the perspective of a Challenger might be described as "exhausting", "overwhelming", "aggressive" or "combative" by others.

Challengers can be extremely polarizing…behaviors that inspire some to think new ways and achieve accomplishments they never thought possible can devastate the self-esteem and confidence of others.

GUIDANCE

Challengers need to regularly be made aware of how strong their personality appears to others.

They need to practice repackaging the same message to be palatable to different people.

Taking opportunities to apologize, appear vulnerable and taking time to be completely open to others' questions (without immediately formulating a robust response) can pay huge dividends by bonding the way most non-Challengers like to bond.

Challengers have great endurance.

They would rather be over-committed than under-committed.

They would rather deal with work that is a little too challenging versus a little too easy or boring.

They often push forward when others would step back, which can lead to amazing breakthroughs, but potentially exhaust others forced to march alongside them.

Challengers can get themselves into situations where they are faced with work that is testing their limits in both the volume and the difficulty.

The hard-charging nature of a Challenger can come at the cost of neglecting rest and self-care that are an essential part of one's physical and mental health.

Many Challengers both perpetually undervalue the rejuvenating effects of a little relaxation, and are less likely to justify it based on all the things they're trying to accomplish.

GUIDANCE

Build expectations of rest into a Challenger's workload. Hold them accountable for regularly taking time to catch their breath or unplug.

This may range from scheduling time to socialize with coworkers, limiting night- or weekend-work, or forcing the use of vacation days.

Most important, ask them to monitor their productivity or progress after these breaks so they can recognize when tangible gains more than offset what they might otherwise think was lost to the downtime.

Challengers look for fact or truth to guide their path.

Early progress will be measured based on how available information guides an objective assessment of situations, and informs a clear plan of attack.

Over time, Challengers will look for equally objective (often numeric) evidence that effort has established durable advantage, potentially in the form of reduced variation or fewer unknowns that deliver predictable & repeatable results.

Challengers will struggle in environments where decisions are made based on limited or highly subjective support and success is measured with highly subjective criteria or evidence.

GUIDANCE

Managers need to help Challengers come to terms with the fact that business does not operate in a world of perfect information.

Data is often flawed or missing, and personal bias is never completely removed.

Engage in open conversation about these disconnections and entertain ways to bridge that gap.

Challengers are prone to take extreme positions.

There are things they will choose to care nothing about and other things they will care too much about.

This can lead to causing conflict on both ends of the spectrum, as people or topics can become neglected or fixated on.

Others can find it equally frustrating when a Challenger finds it impossible to take a position on a topic that doesn't interest them ("seriously, you must have some preference for where we go for lunch")...and struggles to budge from their position on a seemingly trivial topic that has piqued their concern ("I'm not interested in helping unless we follow my precise process").

GUIDANCE

While Challengers may be unlikely to change their underlying attitude, work to improve their awareness of social cues and how presenting a more moderate viewpoint makes it easier to find common ground.

This is not about asking a Challenger to compromise their core beliefs or greater vision, but to find inconsequential ways to be agreeable today so others are more likely to be agreeable in the future when it really matters to the Challenger.

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When a Challenger lacks a worthy purpose or pursuit, a substitute will be found.

While they are not interested in aimlessly wasting their time, they will usually error on the side of engaging in activity that is ultimately unproductive over inactivity that accomplishes nothing.

Unfortunately, this mentality can occasionally resemble a chaotic race being run to the wrong finish line.

Misguided intensity can be far more costly to an organization than most Challengers realize.

GUIDANCE

Challenge Challengers to critically evaluate how activities tie to productivity, and how selectively pursuing fewer priorities can be more effective than attempting to tackle too many at once.

Challengers often maintain a small, tight circle of trusted friends where they can let down their defenses while remaining very guarded with the rest of the world.

Challengers secretly struggle with an underlying expectation of being let down (unintentional disappointment) or betrayed (intentional deceit).

Events that heighten concern for either of these can become self-fulfilling, as almost any project or organization has examples of poor performance or conflicting interests.

This causes a Challenger's 'circle of trust' to be quicker to contract than to expand.

GUIDANCE

While management and coworker relationships can be productive outside this circle, having someone in management that is able to penetrate it will facilitate open communication and coaching that leads to faster professional development.

This is critical to ensure the Challenger isn't in a defensive mode set to challenge the coaching and not consider its validity.