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Columnist

Professional Development

Managing the Controlling Worker

If you have workers who thrive on controlling people and situations, who are extremely competitive, who have a “my way or the highway” attitude – then you’re dealing with someone high in the Individualistic value (and/or the Dominant behavioral style). If you understand what it means when someone has this as their highest value, you can manage them very effectively.

Individualistic Value: A Passion for Power. High Individualistic workers are passionate about having power in all areas of life. Above all, they want personal power, influence, and renown. They want to do things their own way and want respect from and stature in the eyes of others. They may push the envelope in situations where winning is desired.

General Characteristics. Here are some qualities you’ll notice in workers high in the Individualistic value. They:

- Have a strong desire to be their own person
- Like freedom in their own work area
- Bring a lot of energy that needs to be put to good use
- Are comfortable being in the limelight and enjoy demonstrating their uniqueness or creativity

Value to the Organization. Here are some of the strengths of workers with the high Individualistic attitude. They:

- Have the ability to take a stand and not be afraid to be different in either ideas or approaches to problem solving
- Bring creative ideas to the table
- Are not afraid to take risks
- Enjoy making presentations and are generally perceived as engaging speakers

Keys to Managing and Motivating. Here are tips on how to get the most out of these strong-willed people:

- Allow them freedom to make their own decisions about how an assignment should be completed.
- Be open to new ideas they offer and realize they don't always follow standard operating procedure.
- Let them develop an idea and run with it for awhile before making a judgment call.
- Remember they desire independence from team organization and protocol.
- Give them opportunities to make presentations either within the organization or to the public.
- Understand they experience strong feelings of accomplishment in being recognized for completing tough assignments in a creative way.

Training and Professional Development. When you train these workers, keep in mind their learning should be linked to:

- Providing enough creative space for them to express their uniqueness
- Allowing for some experimental or non-routine types of options
- Enhancing their ability to make a special and unique contribution to the team

Continuous Quality Improvements. Areas in which those high in the Individualistic value may need coaching and mentoring:

- Need guidance in being aware of the needs of others and of the job parameters and protocol
- Reminders that their good ideas aren't the only good suggestions
- Need help learning to listen more and speak less

The best way to retain good workers high in the Individualistic value is to appreciate their high energy and recognize their strong desire to "be their own person." Give them freedom to do things their own way whenever possible, but don't allow them to dominate others on the team.

Management performance software determines the attitude, behavior, and personality type of employees and job applicants. Annette Estes is a Certified Professional Behavioral and Values Analyst, Coach, and Consultant. She is a professional speaker and author of the book, *Why Can't You See it My Way? Resolving Values Conflicts at Work and Home*. Annette won Matrix Awards in 2004-05 for her columns in *The Easley Progress*. The Estes Group is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year. Contact Annette at Annette@CoachAnnette.com

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