

WITH GREAT TALENT COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

Far too many talents – particularly the innovative and creative talents – slip through the cracks in the business community, sports halls and schools because their motivation escapes us. Rather than understanding what drives them, we force these round pegs into square holes, stripping away their motivation until their talent is lost entirely. In order to prevent a devastating loss of talent, leaders must acquire deep insight into both what motivates their employees and what constitutes the best settings for various types of talents.

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Realizing your true talent requires constant, persistent effort. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. With zero persistence even the greatest talent will amount to nothing. On the other hand, a significant persistent effort can compensate for relatively modest talent. A persistent effort requires motivation, especially when work is simply not fun. Most leaders are well aware that one of their most important management tasks is to motivate employees. Yet they often fall short of this goal – perhaps because they misjudge the complexity of the task. If so, the archetype model can be a very useful tool.

The archetype model – the basis for motivation

The archetype model is based on Helle Hedegaard Hein's theory of archetypes. Each of the four different archetypes has a distinct motivational profile: The Prima Donna, the Introverted Performance Addict, the Extroverted Performance Addict and the Pragmatist.

Archetype means the basic form – in this context, the basic form of motivation. Each archetype therefore describes a person's primary driver. At work, some tasks always feel more motivating and meaningful than others. These are the source of our

strongest and most motivating kick. Other tasks are within our skill set, but not terribly exciting. They give us a moderate kick. And some boring tasks may even drain our motivation. They give us no kick at all – quite the opposite. Motivation is therefore something we experience to different degrees and from different sources. Each archetype has a primary driver that is unique to that archetype. Each archetype also has a secondary driver that may be shared with other archetypes.

In other words, we can certainly find employees behaving as different archetypes, but one should take care not to confuse behaviour with motivation. What is important is a person's feeling of motivation – not the exhibited behaviour – and it's the primary driver that leads to the strongest possible feeling of motivation (the primary kick) that identifies the archetype. Consequently, leaders should not try to determine employees' archetypes based on their behaviour. Instead, they should focus on their kick stories, as these are the key to decoding a person's archetype.

Talented archetypes are pressured by culture

Often, norms in society will lead people to pursue or adopt a certain archetype, but all archetypes should be considered equal – the archetypes will not indicate where to find the greatest talents. However, as motivation and the realisation of talent are linked, employees tend to develop their greatest talents in areas that also motivate them. Thus, employees who are motivated by cracking tough nuts often excel at out-of-the-box thinking, whereas employees with competitive mindsets who strive to gain recognition from their surroundings are especially skilled at creating visible, measurable results.

Talent does not materialise out of thin air, however. It emerges in a specific setting – and at a workplace, this setting is determined by the corporate culture and management practices, such as annual performance appraisals, bonus programmes, appreciative inquiry, etc. The workplace setting will often favour certain archetypes, as they appeal to one particular motivational profile, whereas other archetypes can feel the setting not only does not feed their motivation, but may even drain their motivation.

Consequently, workplaces unwittingly create working environments that favour some archetypes while other archetypes are left out in the cold. This can cause a devastating loss of talent.

Thus, the archetype model can be used to understand how to efficiently unfold the various archetypes' talent, and how to create supportive environments for all kinds of talent, thus nipping any potential loss of talent in the bud.

higher purpose. Rare as the Prima Donna kick may be, the existential kick is so strong that the glow shines on for a long time and when the Prima Donna recalls the original kick, it can ignite an existential mini-kick.

Prima Donnas' kick stories

A core aspect of Prima Donnas' kick stories is that they rarely focus on personal triumphs featuring the Prima Donna as the hero. The kick stories usually have an outward focus and typically involve e.g. a particular citizen, a specific customer or a group of people for whom the Prima Donna made a difference.

The existential Prima Donna kicks are not necessarily contingent on success. Prima Donnas are not driven by success in the traditional sense. Their kick stories may even involve what other people would consider failures, provided the effort made a difference for the higher purpose. In fact, Prima Donnas are often very humble in relation to the higher purpose. However, they are often misunderstood and wrongly perceived of as arrogant and ego-centric.

Behaviour patterns

This archetype has gained its name because Prima Donnas can occasionally behave in ways that others may perceive as hysterical, ego-centric and arrogant.

Prima Donnas are not individualists in a negative sense of the word. They can easily be good team players who can find meaning from a joint effort. However, it is important to understand that the Prima Donna's responsibility for the cause is personal responsibility that cannot be delegated.

If Prima Donnas feel that people they rely on at work are not demonstrating the same determination or obligation to raise the bar, their personal sense of duty will take over and demand that they themselves take responsibility for the higher purpose. Sometimes they are visibly irritated when others are unwilling to aim for the highest standard. This may lead to a feeling of loneliness and a sense that others are letting the higher purpose down.

If you think a Prima Donna employee is behaving in an arrogant, condescending or ego-centric way, it is important to see past their behaviour and understand that they are in fact trying to defend the higher purpose. Prima Donnas have a lot at stake. If Prima Donnas are thwarted in their attempts to achieve the highest standard, they will not only feel demotivated – they will also feel a loss of existential meaning and at the same time

feel that they are forced to let down the higher purpose, and they will react strongly to those two feelings.

Introverted Performance Addicts

Introverted Performance Addicts are competitive people whose motivation direction is introverted. Thus, they focus mainly on a subjective background and inner life and show less interest in the outer world, where the aim is to outperform others.

While Introverted Performance Addicts may be competitive, they do not necessarily define competition as striving to outperform others. Introverted Performance Addicts are driven mainly by continually performing better than themselves.

Their secondary driver involves cracking tough nuts, i.e. solving an almost impossibly difficult task or finding the missing piece of an extremely complex puzzle. When they succeed in cracking a tough nut they get a strong kick from their newly won sense of mastery and from the internal satisfaction of setting a new highest standard. The glow of the kick is fleeting, however, as the bar is soon raised even higher in the pursuit of greater challenges as the level of difficulty must be constantly increased. Thus, Introverted Performance Addicts' primary driver is to continually perform better than themselves.

The primary kick might resemble the Prima Donnas' kick since they both strive for extremely high standards, but whereas Prima Donnas' kicks are linked to the highest level of existential meaning, Introverted Performance Addicts' kicks are associated with an almost ecstatic feeling of having outdone themselves.

Introverted Performance Addicts' kick stories

Introverted Performance Addicts' kick stories often evolve around the process and the sensuous impressions in the process of succeeding with a complex and difficult task. They rarely evolve around the feeling of the sweet taste of victory.

When it comes to their secondary driver, Introverted Performance Addicts (and Prima Donnas for that matter) often harbour nerdy passions. Attracted by technical details that can help refine their technique and improve their ability to crack tough nuts, they often adopt an analytical approach to their work, constantly considering what works and where improvements are required. Accounts of the analytical part of the work can often be part of their kick stories as well.

Behaviour patterns

Due to the introverted part of their personality Introverted Performance Addicts often need to apply their analytical skills in undisturbed contemplation and prefer spaces where they can work alone. They are often accused of being antisocial loners, but in fact they like to take part in social activities, provided the event is voluntary and does not interrupt their thought processes. When in the process of cracking a tough nut, the last thing they need is noise, interruptions and meetings.

Like Prima Donnas, Introverted Performance Addicts are attracted to tasks that require them to venture outside of their comfort zones. Prima Donnas and Introverted Performance Addicts are tension-seeking archetypes. On the one hand, getting their kicks requires them to step outside of their comfort zones. On the other hand, stepping outside your comfort zone often leads to a feeling of inner tension that makes you want to escape the discomfort. This is the reason why Prima Donnas and Introverted Performance Addicts occasionally appear to be expert procrastinators.

In terms of behaviour Introverted Performance Addicts and Prima Donnas resemble each other closely. They both have a tendency to procrastinate before slipping into deep concentration – and from that moment they both detest disruptions and interruptions. The determining difference between the two lies in their primary drivers. If you get your primary kick from serving a higher purpose, you are a Prima Donna. If your primary kick comes from cracking increasingly tough nuts, you are an Introverted Performance Addict.

Extroverted Performance Addicts

Extroverted Performance Addicts' primary driver is to perform better than others. Competitive and extroverted by nature, they direct their attention to the outside world and use objective success criteria as benchmarks. Whereas Introverted Performance Addicts strive to be in sync with themselves, Extroverted Performance Addicts prefer to be in sync with their surroundings. In terms of competition, this means they measure their performance against formal goals and objectives such as key performance indicators, performance goals etc. Consequently, the success criteria of the outside world are integrated with their own success criteria and performance objectives making them skilled and dedicated high performers.

In a performance-based environment, Extroverted Performance Addicts are often perceived as easier to deal with, since they are more likely to accept the predefined success criteria than define their own criteria like Prima Donnas and Introverted Performance Addicts tend to do.

Extroverted Performance Addicts draw energy from their surroundings and from measuring themselves against others. They are addicted to competing with others and thrive when their competitors pressure them, breathe down their neck or threaten to overtake them. The boost of energy this provides prompts them to further enhance their performance.

Extroverted as they are, they get their primary kick from creating extraordinary, measurable results, but without external recognition for their outstanding performance their kick feeling is incomplete. Recognition from peers and managers is key to Extroverted Performance Addicts' kicks, and they will drive themselves (and their surroundings) crazy if they feel robbed of well-deserved external recognition.

Extroverted Performance Addicts set themselves extremely ambitious goals – often because they are attracted by achievements that no one else has accomplished. These high ambitions translate into an archetype that is very loyal to goals and develops a clear focus on future goals without easing up until the goal is achieved. They navigate mainly via definable successes, since without a clearly defined goal, it is impossible to determine who reaches the finish line first.

Extroverted Performance Addicts' kick stories

Extroverted Performance Addicts' kick stories often feature accounts of their performance measured against formal success criteria. They will put themselves at the heart of the story, and other people's recognition of their performance is often emphasized. Yet, their drive to compete with others is only part of the story. They also compete against themselves and this can cause confusion because they share some traits with Introverted Performance Addicts. Extroverted Performance Addicts' secondary driver is to perform better than themselves since personal progress is the means to performing better than others. In other words, they are competing with others as well as themselves but although their secondary driver may be strong it basically serves to ignite the primary driver.

Behaviour patterns

Extroverted Performance Addicts are extremely ambitious and goal-oriented. If they are unable to achieve the desired outcome, they will be sorely disappointed, and often their disappointment will be outwardly directed and take on the form of anger and deep frustration. They have a high, extroverted energy level but as with the other archetypes it is important to look past their exhibited behaviour and look for the

underlying reason why they get upset. It is important to remember that the energy vented by frustrated Extroverted Performance Addicts is also the energy that creates extraordinary, extremely ambitious results. Without that energy, there would be no results whatsoever.

Pragmatists

Pragmatists' primary driver is to do good work. Like Extroverted Performance Addicts, Pragmatists align their own success criteria with the outside world but are nowhere near as competitive and ambitious as the Extroverted Performance Addicts.

Pragmatists are equilibrium-seeking people who focus on balance in life which limits their degree of sacrifice and investment in work. Their talent may be great but their perseverance to manage that talent is not as strong as is the case for the other archetypes.

When Pragmatists set out to do good work they define their success criteria based on clear external guidelines on what constitutes good work. These guidelines must be clearly defined and reflect a shared consensus on the nature of good work. As a consequence, Pragmatists often use standards, standard operating procedures or evidence-based methods as guidelines for their work.

Pragmatists execute defined strategies very loyally and are often very conscientious and dutiful. Pragmatists have no problem acting autonomously within the framework of a clearly defined strategy, but when thrown into more exploratory work, they will need frequent feedback and reassurance that they are meeting management's expectations.

Pragmatists need clear borders between work and private life. When they are off duty, they need to be entirely off duty. As their need for balance is so distinct, the character of their primary kick differs from that of the other archetypes. Rather than a kick as such, Pragmatists often describe their kick as more of a fundamental satisfaction, a feeling of continuously doing good work and remaining in constant balance. Their kick is nowhere near as powerful as the other archetypes' kicks but due to its extended nature it lasts longer.

Pragmatists' secondary driver is to contribute actively to the work community. You will often find Pragmatists on party committees or deeply engaged in planning social events, doing random acts of kindness or bringing cake to work to add to the overall happiness at work.

Pragmatists' kick stories

Pragmatists' primary kick stories are rarely particularly explicit or detailed. Rather than answering questions about their greatest kick, Pragmatists generally find it easier to answer questions about what characterises a good day at work or a good period in their work life. However, they have no trouble finding examples of their secondary kicks, i.e. episodes when they managed to contribute to the work community.

Much like the Prima Donnas, Pragmatists love the thought of making a difference for a higher purpose but Pragmatists do not feel the same degree of personal responsibility to the cause as Prima Donnas do, and they are not willing to sacrifice anywhere near as much for the sake of the higher purpose.

Behaviour patterns

Pragmatists can be puzzled and irritated by colleagues who do not value work community to the same degree as them and this can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. Pragmatists also insist on compliance with rules and standards. Prima Donnas and Introverted Performance Addicts, particularly, can perceive Pragmatists as sticklers for detail and procedural policemen.

Pragmatists ensure efficiency, productivity and stability. They are also often the ones who hang up notes with self-invented "procedural guidelines" for their colleagues in order to make sure the workplace runs smoothly.

Nine-to-Fivers – a demotivational type

The archetype model provides a description of four different archetypes with four distinctly different primary drivers. Leaders at every organizational level should see to it that all employees get their primary archetypical kicks often enough to drive momentum. Primary kicks drive fun, interesting and meaningful tasks, but they are also the source of perseverance when work is boring, uninspiring and cumbersome.

If a person does not get primary kicks sufficiently frequently, the consequence will be serious demotivation along with so-called frustration regression – and that can lead to Nine-to-Fiver behaviour. The Nine-to-Fiver is not an archetype as such, but a behavioural category that describes the behaviour exhibited by demotivated employees.

Frustration regression is often an unconscious compensation strategy. Employees realise that their kicks are missing and end up feeling demotivated. They feel a loss of meaning and happiness as their inner flame is extinguished. This leads to a feeling of

being treated unfairly. And they react to that. Initially, this usually manifests itself as visible dissatisfaction, loud complaints, rolling eyes, sulking, confrontational behaviour, etc.

That is followed by the next phase, typically a period of negotiation when employees try to compensate for the perceived loss of motivation by requesting a bonus, more visible recognition or fringe benefits of little importance. The next phase typically involves a period of resignation, characterised by withdrawal, possibly increased absenteeism, significantly less contribution and apathy.

Finally, these employees end up focusing excessively on maximising their personal contribution–reward balance by contributing less while trying to increase their rewards. This is the reason why this behaviour is called Nine-to-Fiver behaviour, but managers should bear in mind that the Nine-to-Fiver is not an archetype as such. Nine-to-Fiver behaviour is a symptom of serious demotivation and frustration regression and is often a symptom of an employee not being motivated according to his or her true archetype. In other words, the Nine-to-Fiver should be considered a poorly led employee.

Creative and innovative archetypes often slip through the cracks

Managers are usually very good at creating the perfect work environment for Pragmatists. Annual performance appraisals, appreciative inquiry, value-based management, standards and work-life balance are ideal management tools for Pragmatists. There is also usually plenty of scope for Extroverted Performance Addicts, who thrive on goal setting, management by objectives, KPIs, performance management, bonus programmes and Leadership Pipeline. Talented employees who are either Pragmatists or Extroverted Performance Addicts are therefore usually able to find nurturing settings to realise their talent.

The situation is often far less favourable for Prima Donnas and Introverted Performance Addicts. These two archetypes are by far the most creative and innovative of all the archetypes. They are good at thinking outside the box and they venture far out of their comfort zones in their search for the highest possible standard or a new highest standard. They are extremely intrinsically motivated. They are driven by work itself and the opportunity to immerse themselves and reach the highest standards – perhaps while making a difference for a higher purpose. They are sorely mismanaged by the management practices that work well for Pragmatists and Extroverted Performance Addicts.

Prima Donnas and Introverted Performance Addicts are by no means driven by goal setting and bonuses. On the contrary, they take offense if a manager offers them a bonus or praises them for something less than the highest standard. This can lead to frustration regression – or even worse, so-called crowding out.

Crowding out means that the use of extrinsic motivators undermines intrinsic motivation to the extent that employees lose their passion for the job that they previously loved. This can lead to major problems with retaining otherwise generous talents, and since the loss of talent is primarily within the innovative and creative talents, the result is not only loss of talent but also a devastating loss of innovation and creativity.

By now it should be clear that there are plenty of reasons why leaders should take an interest in what drives their employees and how the different archetypes should be led. Subsequently, leaders should show an interest in how to best create ideal settings for all kinds of employees to avoid a loss of talent. Another important aspect of leadership involves exploring the leader's own archetype, as it is easy to fall into the trap of projecting your own archetype into the leadership of the other archetypes. The result is leaders who excel at managing their own archetypes but also risk causing demotivation, frustration regression and crowding out when it comes to the other archetypes. This kind of leadership calls for an extremely self-reflected leader who continually reflects on how to be a great leader of all archetypes, how to prevent demotivation, frustration regression and loss of talent and how to establish a leadership and a work environment where all archetypes can thrive.