The Make-up of Corporate Flight Departments

Common characteristics, behavior patterns and expected outcomes.

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Introduction

The included pages are the results of my on-going research into aviation flight department crew behaviors and communications.

I began this research while attending Embry Riddle for my Master's in Aeronautical Science. Fascinated by the many accidents caused by 'Captainitis', I researched personality styles and was fortunate to have dozens of corporate pilots complete my paper survey. I presented my findings at the Corporate Aviation Safety Seminar [CASS] in Orlando several years ago. This research has also served as a basis for portions of my NBAA PDP courses.

At conferences, the results of this research continued to generate a high degree of interest. I have continued to compile my results through my CRM communications sessions to corporate flight departments. Thanks to all flight departments that have allowed me to use their raw data.

The circle on the next page shows the percentage of participants that 'land' in that part of the circle.
The participants included are [in alphabetical order]:

- Chief Pilots
- Directors of Aviation / Operation / Maintenance
- Flight Attendants
- Maintenance Technicians
- Pilots / First Officers
- Schedulers & Dispatchers

A brief article explaining the six 'types' [Commanding Drivers, Enthusiastic Adventurers, High Energizers, Supporting Cheerleaders, Dependable Stabilizers, Analyzing Perfectionists] is on pages 4—5. This article has been published in numerous magazines.
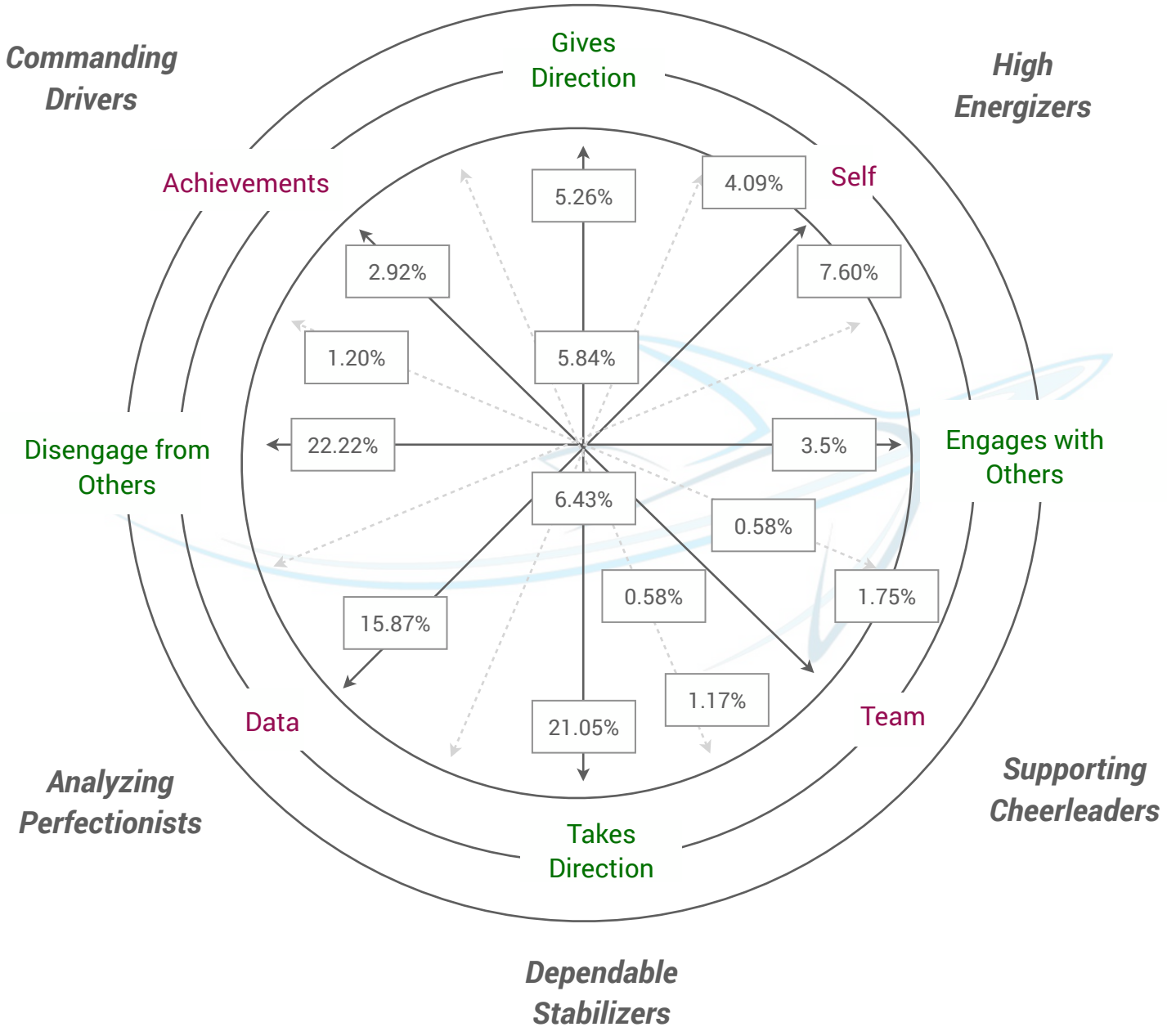
The four tendencies listed in green [takes / gives direction and engages / disengages with others] and the four priorities [self, team, data, achievements] are explained on page 6.

If you are interested in how your flight department compares to the aggregate, see partial details below* and contact Shari at 281.992.4136 for additional information.

*This highly-interactive, hands-on session ranges from 3.5 to 6 hours and includes all members of the flight department. Because of the high level of honesty and 'level-less-ness' involved, the leaders of the flight department may opt out of the group session. If they do, a separate meeting with these leaders is scheduled to review the results and steps they can take to minimize conflict.

Each person gets their own individualized report and a copy of the graphic on the next page with every member of the flight department 'noted'. Strengths, weaknesses, fears and motivators for each group are discussed and debated. This information can be applied to all aspects of communications and understanding behaviors.

Enthusiastic
Adventurers

Commanding
Drivers

High
Energizers

Gives
Direction

Self

Achievements

5.26%

4.09%

2.92%

7.60%

1.20%

5.84%

Disengage from
Others

22.22%

3.5%

Engages with
Others

6.43%

0.58%

0.58%

1.75%

15.87%

1.17%

Data

Team

21.05%

Analyzing
Perfectionists

Supporting
Cheerleaders

Takes
Direction

Dependable
Stabilizers

Can't We All Just Get Along? Understanding Six Workplace Personalities

Managers have the difficult task of overseeing diverse teams in the workplace, and finding ways for them to be as productive, creative and efficient as possible. While this may seem like an impossible task, especially as organizations cut back on resources and spending in an effort to survive the recession, it is not impossible to create harmony in a diverse environment. The key is understanding these different office personality types, and how to motivate them and keep them happily working together.

Each of us has our own natural style of thinking, processing information, problem solving and communicating. Conflict often arises when communication appears to be at a standstill – or when someone has mis-communicated his or her message. By learning to give the other person the information he needs, in the manner he can process most efficiently, you can actually increase productivity and create a more harmonious work environment.

Take a look at the different personality types below; identify your colleagues and direct reports, and use their personality strengths to drive results in your organization.

Commanding Drivers focus on tasks, goals and the bottom line. They take charge and make decisions quickly even if they do not have all the details. Often, they can be blunt, rude, condescending and/or sarcastic – without realizing it. They need the freedom to explore alternative options. They do not prefer to work beside other team members, and will do better on their own or leading the team. They speak loudly and confidently, so you must do the same to keep commanding drivers on task. Have them work on individual projects, whenever possible, and give them accolades on how they took the lead to resolve a challenging situation.

Enthusiastic Adventurers keep their eye on the goal: the very high goal. They have strong egos and are not hesitant about using it to their advantage. They are fast-paced and get restless easily – they need a lot of variety. They also enjoy challenges – either challenges to achieve goals or to accomplish the 'impossible'. Debates and confrontation are an everyday part of life. Often, they use their hands for emphasis while talking or making a point. Assign enthusiastic adventurers to start new projects, particular those that need kick-offs full of excitement. Reward them with public recognition for their work, and praise them in front of others.

High Energizers can quickly become frustrated with others who do not match their pace. Optimists, they have a very outgoing, creative personality, thriving in the company of others, especially in a fun environment. However, their inattention to details can cause them to let things slip through the cracks, especially when under pressure. Their need for change has a direct effect on their leaving partially-completed projects for others to finish. Give high energizers the chance to lead a group meeting, particularly one for brainstorming or motivating. Allow them to share their creative thoughts but rein them in if their conversations go off on a tangent. Reward them with lavish public praise on how they inspired others.

Summary

These three personality types tend to work fast – whether walking, talking or making decisions. They need to be in control of situations. They generally are 'big picture' visionaries and do not work well with details. They have strong personalities with little or no patience; they can quickly become irritated and verbally annoying. They prefer being to the point and focused on the end result. Because of this, it is not unusual for others to perceive them as unfriendly and arrogant.

They may not receive negative feedback very well. They often take a forceful approach, either hostile-like or extremely persuasive. Situations become all about "them" and how weak or soft they appear to others. Black and white thinking prevails; they always have a need to "win." Use these personality types to your advantage by assigning them to work on projects that need a strong dynamic leader. Motivate them in the workplace by giving them bottom line outcomes and let them fly!

Supporting Cheerleaders

Supporting Cheerleaders need to be accepted by the group. They avoid conflict and can't understand why everyone can't get along. They are loyal – to their family and friends and also to their group, to their leader and to the company. They may have difficulty staying focused on both the big picture and the small details. They will handle 'feelings' before they do business. They are the team members that smooth over the ruffled feathers of others. When you first approach them, engage in small talk before focusing on the business reason for the visit or phone call.

Dependable Stabilizers

Dependable Stabilizers enjoy a steady slower pace, and are very team-focused. They need their routines, and the status quo gives them comfort. They are low risk takers, and will see what everyone will do first. They are flexible, and get along well with others. They tend to shy away from conflict and disagreements. Once you give the Dependable Stabilizers tasks to do, you can rest assured it will be thoroughly completed by the due date. They may not respond to a question or request immediately – they will think it through and carefully compose their response. Allow them this time.

Analyzing Perfectionists

Analyzing Perfectionists are introverted, work at a slower pace and prefer to work alone. Cautious by nature, they will check, double check and recheck their figures and conclusions. They tend to analyze and logically walk through mounds of details, information and progressions. If there are any flaws in a program, the Analyzing Perfectionists will uncover them and provide appropriate resolutions. When they express emotions, they more easily express frustration, discontent or disparagement than happiness, excitement or praise.

Summary

These three personality types are more flexible, slower-paced and need step-by-step processes. They seek stability and routine, and usually are not prepared to make a decision on the spot. Their preference is to process information in their own minds, at their own pace. They avoid interpersonal conflict and may become withdrawn and stubborn as their discomfort escalates. They don't see the need for the conversation and would prefer everyone "Just come to work and do their job – then there would be no conflict." Use these personality types to your advantage by assigning them to work on routine or inefficient detail processes or procedures. Motivate them in the workplace by praising their consistency, accuracy and teamwork.

Appreciating the differences each of your team member brings to the table, and the value of their distinctions, makes for a more comfortable work environment for everyone. Let each of them know how you value their strengths, and work with them to use those strengths. This will have a positive impact on your bottom line results.

Character traits and individual priorities

This next section will explain the four character traits in green. The closer someone falls to the words, the more prominent that trait is. The farther away they are, the less influence that will have on their thinking and actions.

Dividing the circle in half with a horizontal line:

- The upper half has character traits of extraverts. They have a need to take charge and give direction.
- The lower half tends to be more introverted — they think things through in their own minds and prefer to take direction from others.

Dividing the circle in half with a vertical line:

- The right half has character traits of engaging with others. They have a strong need to socialize. You know possibly more than you care to know about their personal life.
- The left half tends to be more disengaged — they focus on business, processes and procedures. You probably don't know a lot about their life outside the workplace.

This next section will explain, in purple, what is important to the individual. The closer you fall to the words, the higher priority that has for the individual. The farther away they are, the less thought that will have on their decisions.

Dividing the circle in quarters, offset 45 degrees, at 90 degree angles:

- The upper right section: Self is the basis for nearly all decisions. They like to be the center of attention.
- The lower right section: Team acceptance is key to their productivity.
- The lower left section: Data is an integral part of what they need.
- The upper left section: Achievements, the more challenging the better, are what drives these people.

I used this process when determining percentages:

1. Determined the total number of assessments taken

2. Segregated the results into like groups

3. Added the number in each group

4. Divided #3 by #1 and multiplied by 100

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