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The Power of Introverts: Why Introversion May be an Asset in the Workplace

With the rise of globalization, today's world is far more diverse and open-minded than ever before, encouraging innovation and change. With more cultures clashing, it is more important than ever to keep up with developments in psychology and human behavior. Tourism and hospitality are impacted by current events such as globalization due to their customer-oriented, seasonal, nonstop nature, so hospitality employees today come from diverse backgrounds. The general assumptions that flight attendants, servers, and housekeepers are women while bussers, chefs, and bellhops are men, however, remain. While it is common to think gender impacts a person's likelihood of success in hospitality, personality types have much more to do with the positions an employee is best suited for, and surprisingly, extroversion is not the only option (Blevins et al., 2022, para. 20).

Personality types are more influenced by genetics than many understand, meaning it is hard if not impossible to change from an introvert to an extrovert (Van Edwards, 2023, para. 9). Although some may think the hospitality industry lends itself to extroversion due to its social nature, introverts have unique skills that this industry needs. In a study by Michael Poh, it was found that introverts have higher levels of arousal, meaning they are more reactive to their environments and tend to be preoccupied with their thoughts (Van Edwards, 2023, para. 18). In the hospitality industry, introverts could introduce more experience-oriented ideas since they are

extremely in touch with how their environment makes them think and feel. Furthermore, introverts tend to be humbler, a trait that is hard to find in hospitality industry professionals (Van Edwards, 2023, para. 19). When introverts demonstrate their thoughtful and introspective nature, they have a positive influence on those around them, inspiring others to think more critically before they speak and learn by observing. Overall, both introverts and extroverts have their strengths and must learn to use them to their advantage since understanding the way others think will only improve the level of service one can provide for their business.

Over the years, there have been hundreds of discoveries in organizational behavior that have helped managers better understand how to satisfy and motivate their colleagues in the workplace, a particularly vital task in service industries where turnover rates are high due to burnout. Personality is a major factor in behavior, making Costa and McCrae's discovery of the Five Factor Model, the big five personality traits of openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (OCEAN) a helpful tool in deciphering any given worker's mindset (Johnson, 2020, para. 18). Openness refers to one's tendencies towards spontaneity and adventure or their preference for routine, conscientiousness refers to impulse and organization, extraversion examines social ability, agreeableness takes cooperation and trust into account, and neuroticism refers to one's likelihood to experience negative emotions (Johnson, 2020, para. 18). Despite the misconception that extraversion is universally positive, since they tend to score higher in extraversion, openness, and agreeableness and low in neuroticism, introverts rank higher in conscientiousness and neuroticism, meaning introverts are more likely to display organized, detail oriented, and risk avoidant personalities (Johnson, 2020, para. 40). In the hospitality industry, where production and consumption of service happens simultaneously and there are hundreds of ways for things to go wrong, an introvert's organized risk management are highly valuable. This is not to say that extraverts do not outperform introverts in relationship

building, job satisfaction, and well-being, however, extraversion has a negative correlation with job performance in roles with attention to detail, organizational commitment, and outcomes where aggressive behavior and bullying can take place (Blevins et al., 2022, para. 21). In hospitality and tourism, many jobs require attention to detail and the social and competitive characteristics of work environments can promote aggressive bullying behaviors. Overall, it is a manager's responsibility to monitor their employees' responses to the workplace environment.

Extraverts are more likely to experience job satisfaction, while introverts tend to have a higher organizational commitment (Blevins et al., 2022, para. 21). When a manager in the hospitality industry is deciding between personality types, it is important to consider extraversion versus introversion as well as OCEAN traits to pick the best applicant for a position. There are many jobs in this industry where extroverts thrive and there are just as many, if not more introverts due to their ability to learn social cues and develop their personability. Some of the best positions for introverts include housekeeping, private chef, data analyst, and digital marketing opportunities (Chagollan, 2019, para. 5). To optimize performance from introverts and extraverts alike, managers must communicate and influence each of their employees in ways that will have the greatest impact by studying their employees' social tendencies. Extraverts who are most often high in extraversion, openness, and agreeableness need a manager to develop their organizational commitment. By involving employees and their families in monthly social events with awards and exciting activities or scheduling career goal meetings, extroverts will develop normative and affective commitment. Contrastingly, introverts with high neuroticism and conscientiousness need managers to help them build job satisfaction, and they are more likely to respond when they are given opportunities to voice their opinions and values via written communication or small group discussions, such as Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). By giving employees options such as individual work versus group work, both personality types will

perceive higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment since they can utilize their strengths. When a manager demonstrates an understanding of all three tiers of personality, including basic traits, personal concerns, and self-narrative, through their words and actions as developed in Dan McAdams's Three Levels of Intimacy theory, a sense of trust is earned, and managers are better equipped to study their employees socially, gauging an employee's feelings towards their life situation and work environment (Mayer, 2011, para. 11). The hospitality and tourism industries have been trying to find ways to lessen the burden of long hours, low pay, emotional taxation, and competition on employees in the fast-paced service industry, and the best way to solve these issues is through knowledge and understanding the implications of these facets on different people.

In conclusion, the dynamic nature of today's globalized world underscores the importance of adapting to diverse environments and embracing the varied talents and personalities within the hospitality and tourism industries. Gender stereotypes persist, but it is essential to recognize that success in these fields is more closely tied to individual personality traits than gender.

Understanding the intricacies of personality, as delineated by the Five Factor Model, is crucial for managers seeking to optimize their teams' performance and satisfaction. Leveraging the strengths of both introverts and extroverts by fostering an inclusive workplace environment allows managers to enhance organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Furthermore, by acknowledging the challenges faced by employees in service industries, such as long hours and emotional strain, and striving to mitigate them through informed management practices, we can cultivate a more fulfilling work environment for every personality.

References

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