

2.7: Exercises

Ethical Dilemma

You are applying for the job of sales associate. You have just found out that you will be given a personality assessment as part of the application process. You feel that this job requires someone who is very high in extraversion, and someone who can handle stress well. You are relatively sociable and can cope with some stress but honestly you are not very high in either trait. The job pays well and it is a great stepping-stone to better jobs. How are you going to respond when completing the personality questions? Are you going to make an effort to represent yourself as how you truly are? If so, there is a chance that you may not get the job. How about answering the questions to fit the salesperson profile? Isn't everyone doing this to some extent anyway?

Discussion Questions

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of completing the questions honestly?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of completing the questions in a way you think the company is looking for?
3. What would you really do in a situation like this?

Individual Exercise

Changing Others' Perceptions of You

How do other people perceive you? Identify one element of how others perceive you that you are interested in changing. It could be a positive perception (maybe they think you are more helpful than you really are) or a negative perception (maybe they think you don't take your studies seriously).

- What are the reasons why they formed this perception? Think about the underlying reasons.
- What have you done to contribute to the development of this perception?
- Do you think there are perceptual errors that contribute to this perception? Are they stereotyping? Are they engaging in selective perception?
- Are you sure that your perception is the accurate one? What information do you have that makes your perceptions more valid than theirs?
- Create an action plan about how you can change this perception.

Group Exercise

Selecting an Expatriate Using Personality Tests

Your department has over 50 expatriates working around the globe. One of the problems you encounter is that the people you send to other cultures for long-term (2- to 5-year) assignments have a high failure rate. They either want to return home before their assignment is complete, or they are not very successful in building relationships with the local employees. You suspect that this is because you have been sending people overseas solely because of their technical skills, which does not seem to be effective in predicting whether these people will make a successful adjustment to the local culture. Now you have decided that when selecting people to go on these assignments, personality traits should be given some weight.

1. Identify the personality traits you think might be relevant to being successful in an expatriate assignment.
2. Develop a personality test aimed at measuring these dimensions. Make sure that each dimension you want to measure is captured by at least 10 questions.
3. Exchange the test you have developed with a different team in class. Have them fill out the survey and make sure that you fill out theirs. What problems have you encountered? How would you feel if you were a candidate taking this test?
4. Do you think that prospective employees would fill out this questionnaire honestly? If not, how would you ensure that the results you get would be honest and truly reflect their personality?
5. How would you validate such a test? Describe the steps you would take.

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