


Personality and Performance  
in the Healthcare Industry

Robert Hogan  
Hogan Assessment Systems



THE SCIENCE OF PERSONALITY™

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Psychological Paradoxes of Health Care: I

Health Care is a curious industry because:

- It sells technical solutions to client problems
- The client problems are stress-related but the solutions are bio-medical engineering—there is a mismatch.
- People who enjoy solving technical problems are very different from people who like to help others—there is a mismatch.
- Hence the paradoxes.

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Psychological Paradoxes of Health Care: II

- Clients can't evaluate the technical quality of the care they receive.
- They can only evaluate how they are treated.
- Clients' satisfaction with how they are treated predicts their satisfaction with the care they receive.
- In the U.S., the principal cause of malpractice suits is rudeness—rude doctors get sued for malpractice.
- Patient-centered care is essential, not optional.

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### History of Service Orientation: I

- Maryland General Hospital 1978.
- A staff member at the Emergency Room reception was rude to a stressed client and created a riot.
- People were injured, the police were called, the hospital was sued.
- The hospital Vice President called us to fix the problem.
- He wanted to run his hospital like Disneyland, where clients are treated with respect....

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### History of Service Orientation: II

- We asked the supervisors of a large group of hospital staff to rate them for "service orientation."
- We developed the psychological profile of "service oriented" hospital personnel.
- We have data for over 1,000,000 people from a variety of industries showing that service oriented staff treat clients with respect—regardless of the industry.
- When clients are treated with respect, good business results follow.

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### Comparative Validity

Validity concerns how well a test predicts an outcome. Here are some comparisons:

Coronary surgery and 5 year survival	.08
Antihistamines and reduced snoring	.11
Ibuprofen and pain reduction	.14
Smoking and lung cancer within 25 years	.08
Service Orientation and performance	.36

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### Holistic Thinking about Employee Selection

- There is more to good performance than being service oriented.
- Some service oriented employees are delinquent.
- Some may not observe safety rules.
- Some may react poorly to pressure.
- We prefer to think in terms of “basic employability”.
- This includes: (a) service orientation; (b) safety; and (c) resilience—ability to handle stress.
- It is cheap and easy to screen job applicants for these three characteristics.

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### Organizational Culture

- Organizational culture reflects the values of senior management—in the best case.
- At the level of the employee, organizational culture is created by the values of the supervisors.
- Supervisors who don’t value service create rude staff behavior.
- Supervisors who don’t value safety create careless staff behavior.
- Bad managers alienate even the best employees, who then perform poorly.

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### Leadership and Business Unit Performance

***An important meta-analysis (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002) shows five important things:***

1. The personalities of managers directly influence employee satisfaction.
2. When employee satisfaction is high, positive business outcomes result.
3. When employee satisfaction is low, negative business outcomes result.
4. The link between leadership and unit performance is mediated by staff morale.
5. People don’t quit organizations, they quit their boss.

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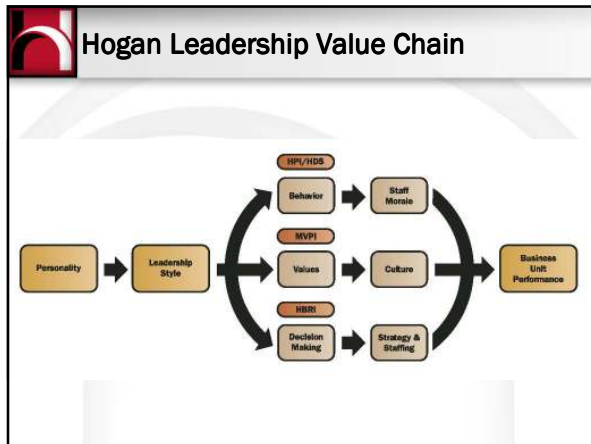
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- ### Good Management in the Health Care Industry
- Hospitals and Universities have a lot in common.
  - The star employees are smart, highly educated, and often pampered.
  - The staff and the customers (patients and students) are treated with indifference.
  - The principles of good management and effective leadership are largely ignored.
  - Good management involves using modern methods of personnel selection and development—at all levels in the organization.
  - Well run organizations are more profitable—and the staff is happier.

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