

Sample College Student PQC

- No more than 10 hours of TV viewing a week
- Use stairs instead of elevator for four floors or less
- Follow up job contacts within 24 hours
- Stick to one subject when studying, do not hop around
- In bed before midnight on all school nights
- Pay bills on time
- Make a to-do list for the next day before turning in

Too many people overvalue what they are not and undervalue what they are.

—Malcolm Forbes

Focus on Strengths, Not Just Weaknesses

Getting assessment feedback can be humbling, and sometimes even discouraging, so it is particularly important to not focus on just the gaps or weaknesses in your profile. Of course, some focus on weak areas is often appropriate, but it is all too easy to become obsessed with the negative feedback. Indeed, some recent authors have made the case that a “deficit reduction” or problem-fixing approach may actually hinder personal effectiveness.⁴⁴ Rather, they contend individuals are better served by recognizing and building on their strengths and managing rather than obsessively trying to improve, their weaknesses.

Managing a weakness means taking ownership of it and acknowledging it both as a weakness and as part of you. Rather than trying to make it a strength, aim to find ways to minimize its impact on you. Such strategies can include doing it as little as possible, engaging others for whom the characteristic is a strength, and developing and using support systems and tools to compensate (for example, become a zealot for a practical time management system if managing time is a weakness for you). The key point, and the one that is often the most productive, is placing your focus on your strengths and those things you can realistically change.



MANAGEMENT LIVE 1.5

Identifying and Crafting Your Own Personal Brand

Back in 1997, Tom Peters wrote an article in *Fast Company* titled “The Brand Called You.” In the article, he said:

It’s time for me—and you—to take a lesson from the big brands, a lesson that’s true for anyone who is interested in what it takes to stand out and prosper in the new world of work. Regardless of age, regardless of position, regardless of the business we happen to be in, all of us need to understand the importance of branding. We are CEOs of our own companies, Me, Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You. It’s that simple—and that hard. And that is inescapable.

Since that time, the emergence of social media on the Internet has made Mr. Peters’ call to action even more relevant and created a whole industry of personal branding consultants, speakers, and authors. While you may not yet be consciously creating an online presence, you may be surprised to find out what’s already out there on Facebook, Twitter, blogs, or in myriad other places. Many experts agree that online branding is not just for

celebrities (although certain celebrities seem to have practically invented the entire idea). In fact, as part of your efforts to enhance your own personal effectiveness, we challenge you to conduct the following personal-branding exercises.

1. Identify an individual who currently holds a position that you think you would aspire to in 5 or 10 years. This could be a person in your current organization or employed elsewhere. Search the Web for information on this person and write a brief summary of that person's "brand," as expressed in the information you find on the Web.
2. Search and summarize what is on the Internet today about you. You might start with Google and also check out Technorati for blogs and social media sites. Are there persons with the same name as you that come up in these searches? Would others be able to distinguish between you and those people with the same name?
3. If you were to get serious about building an online brand presence, what would you do? What brand would you hope to convey and why? What, if any, social media sites would you use? Would you develop a blog, and if so, what topics would you address and discuss?
4. How would you monitor your personal brand on the Web? Would any measures or sources of information be most useful?

CASE CONCLUDED

The eHarmony Personality Profile questionnaire includes 258 questions that assess three primary personal characteristics: personality, values, and interests. Specific areas assessed include personal lifestyle preferences, communication style, family background, birth order, energy level, intelligence, spirituality, special interests, and future aspirations. eHarmony developed the Personality Profile by first generating a voluminous set of items asking people to report on most anything imaginable. They then had different people look at the items and pare them down, followed by small focus groups, and then larger groups to get some initial estimates of relevance and reliability.

Beyond completion of the questionnaire, eHarmony also requires members to proceed through what they call "guided communication." Guided communication was created because the company suspected that, if left on their own, people would gravitate to the most superficial questions, like sports or activities, but *not* to those issues that eHarmony had determined were most important to sustainable long-term relationships.

Guided communication leads potential couples through a formal process before ever allowing them to communicate directly, and the process is comprised of three distinct activities. First, each member of the pair is asked to choose five easy-to-answer questions from a list provided by eHarmony—and then send their responses to the other member.

Questions such as "If you were taken by your date to a party where you knew no one, how would you respond?" would be followed by multiple-choice answers, like (a) Stay close to my date, letting him/her introduce me; (b) Find a quiet spot and relax alone; (c) Strike out on my own and make friends; or (d) Ask my date if I could skip the event.

Once both parties answer, they move on to the next stage, where they are asked to exchange their personal list of "must haves" and "can't stands." In the final stage, the potential pair are asked to exchange three open-ended questions to allow for more detailed descriptions of respective values. eHarmony provides some sample questions, such as "What person in your life has been most inspirational and why?" or "Tell me about your closest friend. How long have you known them, and what do you like best about them?" But members can also write in their own questions.

Once this exchange is successfully completed, the two parties can move into "open communication." During open communication, the pair can send e-mails to each other, exchange photos, and prepare for their first meeting. A potential couple could then decide when, where, and how to meet in the offline world if they wanted to pursue a relationship. Moreover, at any point in the process, either party can "close" the match and cease any further contact. Given the number of opportunities to drop out, only 20 to 30 percent of matches ended up in open communication.

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