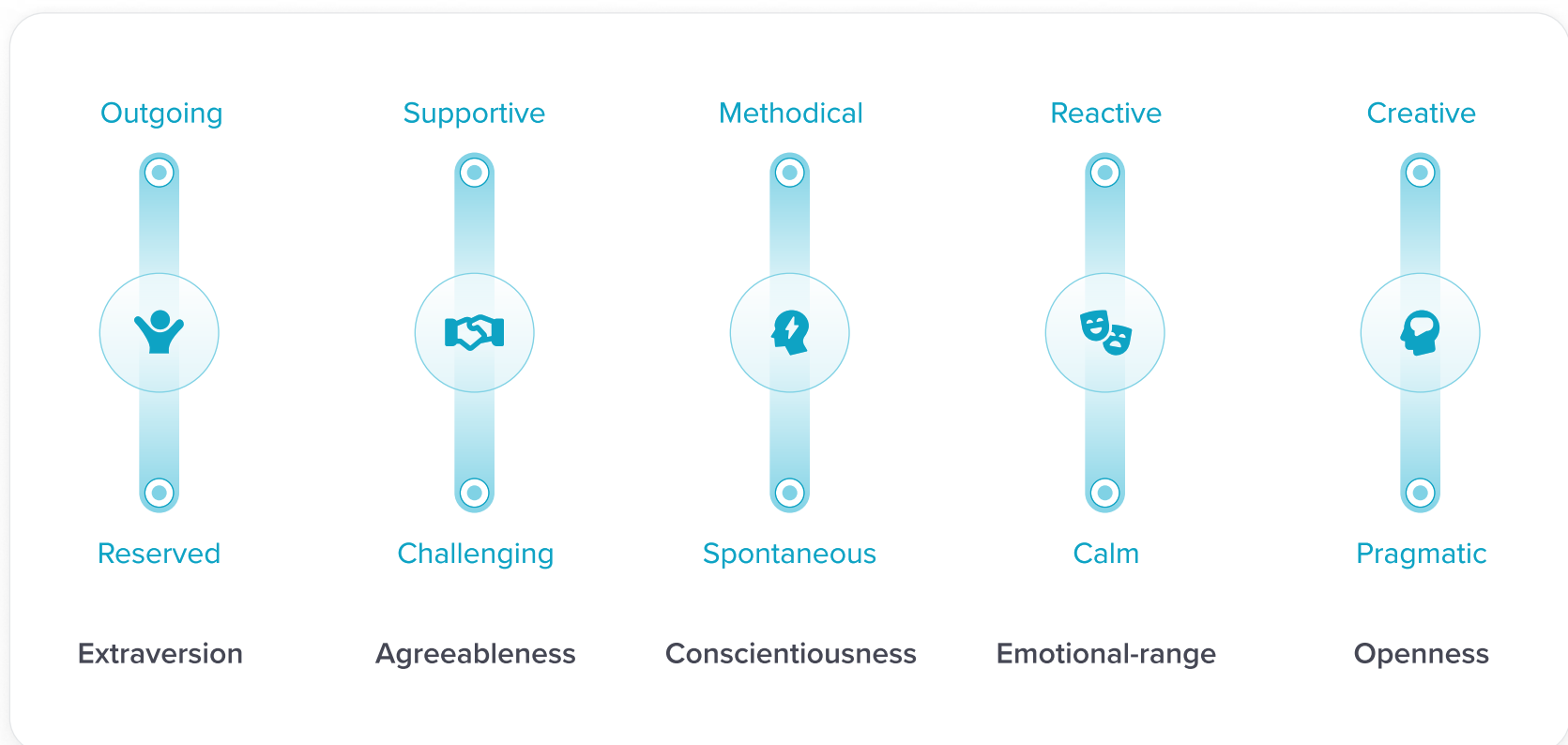# The Science Behind Wisnio

Learn more about the decision science and psychological frameworks Wisnio tools are based on.

Content

The Big 5 Personality Theory: Understanding Personality Dynamics Within a Workplace

Introduction to the Big 5 Personality Theory

Outgoing	Supportive	Methodical	Reactive	Creative
Reserved	Challenging	Spontaneous	Calm	Pragmatic
Extraversion	**Agreeableness**	**Conscientiousness**	**Emotional-range**	**Openness**

The "Big 5" theory, the Five-Factor Model, categorises personality traits into five broad dimensions. These dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for understanding individual differences in behaviour, motivations, and interpersonal interactions within the workplace.

As the most robust and widely used personality framework in academic studies, the Big 5 personality model (also referred to as the Five Factor model) was developed by Costa and McCrae in the 1970s. Since then, their model has been used by millions of people and consistently demonstrates high construct validity and test-retest reliability across cultures, ages, and genders.

The Five Personality Traits of the Model

Openness
Characterised by curiosity, creativity, and openness to new experiences.

Conscientiousness
Characterised by diligence, organisation, and dependability.

Extraversion
Characterised by sociability, assertiveness, and enthusiasm.

Agreeableness
Characterised by altruism, trust, and cooperativeness.

Emotional Range
Characterised by emotional stability, anxiety, and moodiness.

How Different Personalities Thrive

Understanding different personalities is key in the workplace. The Big Five personality traits—Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Emotional Range—each have their own strengths and areas for improvement. Importantly, there's no "good" or "bad" set of traits; recognising each person's strengths and weaknesses helps us see where they naturally excel and where they might need more support from their teammates.

Understanding these personality traits allows us to make the most of everyone's natural abilities, improving how we work together as a team. Insight into people's personalities doesn't just help individuals improve; it makes the whole team stronger and more effective.

Extraversion

Sociability, assertiveness, and enthusiasm

Reserved	0 ——————— 100	Outgoing
More comfortable than most when working in a reserved and formal environment	— **Friendliness** +	Good at building strong personal relationships with colleagues and business partners
Better when working on individual tasks or with a small group of people	— **Gregariousness** +	Enjoys attending networking events and building relationships with many people
Likes to generate consensus rather than direct others	— **Assertiveness** +	Assuming a leadership role in groups comes naturally
Focuses deeply and brings things to completion before taking on new assignments	— **Activity-level** +	Strong at initiating new projects and working on many things at the same time
Great at working in a more stable and predictable environment	— **Excitement Seeking** +	Likes working in a highly dynamic environment and can push others to take on exciting new challenges
Can cope well in a serious environment where people are focused on getting things done	— **Cheerfulness** +	Keeps the team spirit high and energises others

Agreeableness

Altruism, trust, and cooperativeness

Challenging

0 — 100

Supportive

Challenging	Trait	Supportive
Strong at evaluating people's intentions in a rational manner	— Trust +	Builds a trusting and supportive work environment
Comfortable with breaking rules or procedures if it's required to achieve goals	— Morality +	Promotes open communication in the group and helps enforce high moral standards
Works well in a competitive environment where people take personal responsibility	— Altruism +	Considerate and willing to assist others in need of help, and creates a more collaborative team environment
Doesn't need much support and guidance; willing to confront others when needed	— Cooperation +	Great at seeking out guidance and feedback and likes to avoid interpersonal conflict
Confident and strong at promoting their skills and abilities	— Modesty +	Gladly lets other people stand out and take credit for accomplishments
Makes objective and rational decisions about people without getting distracted by emotions	— Sympathy +	Demonstrates empathy and compassion, always considering the human aspect in decisions.

Conscientiousness

Diligence, organisation, and dependability

Spontaneous

0 — 100

Methodical

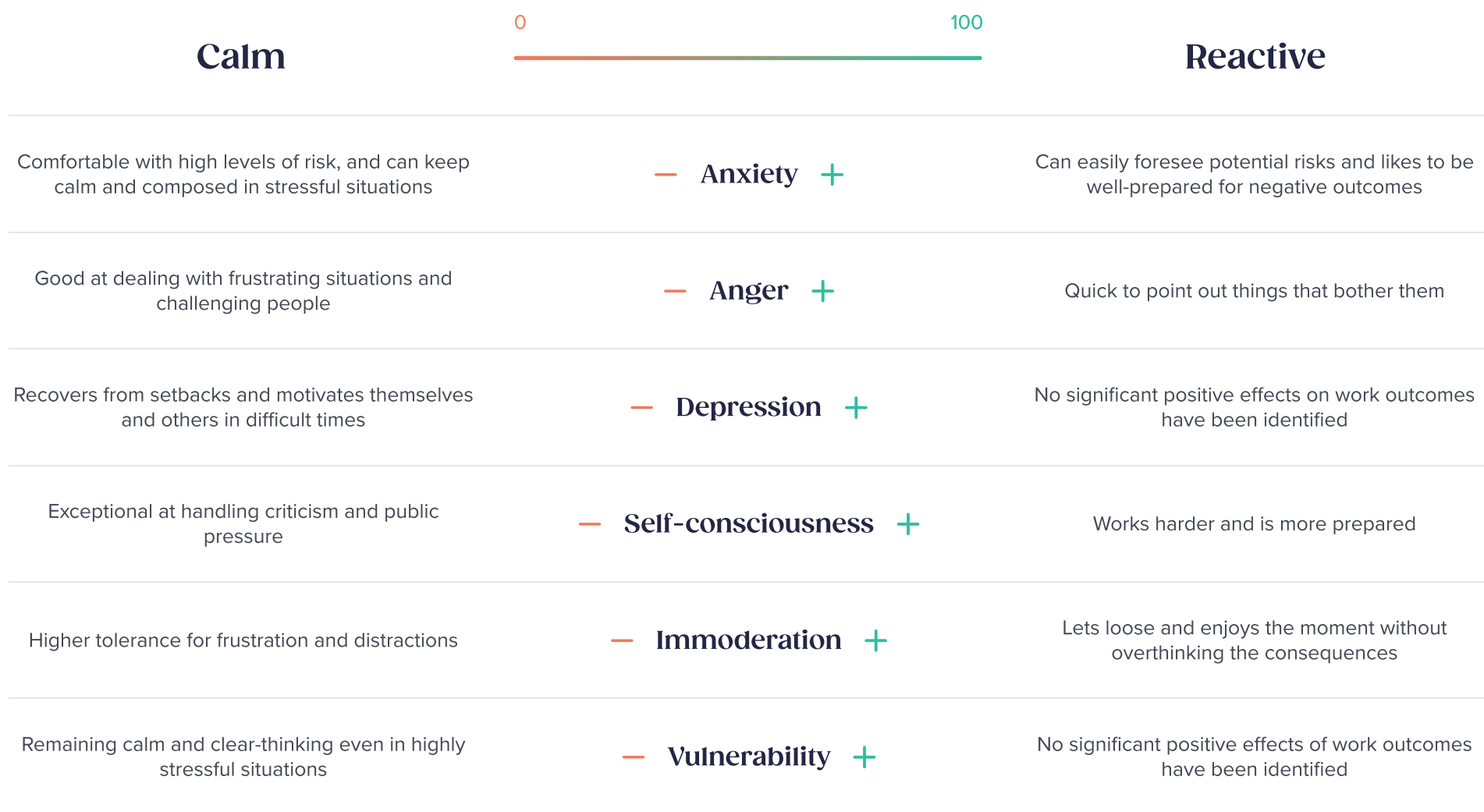| Spontaneous	Trait	Methodical
Considers the big picture and looking for the most straightforward solution	— Self-efficacy +	Accomplishes challenging goals and gets things done to a good and acceptable standard
Keeps things loose and open to change and prefers spontaneity to rigorous planning	— Orderliness +	Establishes plans and procedures and keeps things organised
Relies on their own judgement rather than the expectations of others or a sense of obligation	— Dutifulness +	Dutiful and likes to adhere strictly to ethical principles and a sense of obligation when making decisions
Sets achievable goals and doesn't overthink the expectations of others	— Achievement Striving +	Helps others set ambitious goals and push harder to accomplish them
Adapts and makes better decisions when things are changing fast	— Self-discipline +	Great at working on complex problems
Acts spontaneously and makes snap decisions when necessary	— Cautiousness +	Strong at making complex decisions that have a significant long-term effect

Emotional-range

Emotional stability, anxiety, and moodiness

Calm

0 — 100

Reactive

Calm		Reactive
Comfortable with high levels of risk, and can keep calm and composed in stressful situations	— **Anxiety** +	Can easily foresee potential risks and likes to be well-prepared for negative outcomes
Good at dealing with frustrating situations and challenging people	— **Anger** +	Quick to point out things that bother them
Recovers from setbacks and motivates themselves and others in difficult times	— **Depression** +	No significant positive effects on work outcomes have been identified
Exceptional at handling criticism and public pressure	— **Self-consciousness** +	Works harder and is more prepared
Higher tolerance for frustration and distractions	— **Immoderation** +	Lets loose and enjoys the moment without overthinking the consequences
Remaining calm and clear-thinking even in highly stressful situations	— **Vulnerability** +	No significant positive effects of work outcomes have been identified

Openness

Curiosity, creativity, and new experiences

Pragmatic

0 — 100

Creative

Pragmatic		Creative
Solves a problems in an analytical and deliberate manner	— **Imagination** +	Comes up with unconventional and imaginative ways to solve problems
Good at evaluating things from a purely practical perspective	— **Artistic interest** +	Great at working on projects that require lots of creativity and a strong sense of aesthetics
Would rather work on practical and logical problems than emotional issues	— **Emotionality** +	Adjusts well to new environments and interacting with other people
Can cope with routine better than most people	— **Adventurousness** +	Seeks out new experiences and unconventional ways of doing things
Narrowly focuses their energy on limited topics and prior areas of expertise	— **Intellect** +	Looks outside of their main area of expertise and deals with intellectually challenging problems
Relies on proven methods and the traditional way of doing things	— **Liberalism** +	Challenges authority and convention, well-equipped to work with a diverse team

The Role of Personality in the Workplace

In the workplace, each person's unique blend of these traits influences their approach to tasks, how they interact with colleagues, and overall job performance.

The behavioural characteristics of each individual in the work context show how they prefer to behave, and reveal their most natural and comfortable behaviour. Over time, people can also adapt learned behaviours, meaning they can choose to act differently if the situation demands it, even though they might not feel comfortable doing so. By understanding your team's existing personality composition, you can identify gaps or areas where additional diversity in personality traits could benefit the team. Understanding where you need additional diversity helps you select candidates whose characteristics complement the current team, fostering a more balanced and effective team dynamic.

For example, a highly agreeable team might benefit from the fresh perspectives of someone more challenging to avoid the team compromising too much to prevent conflicts. Or a team lacking in conscientiousness might benefit from someone strong in that trait to improve the team's focus and drive.

While certain traits may be desirable, maintaining a balance and diversity of personalities within a team is crucial to fostering creativity, innovation, and effective problem-solving. Beyond role-specific considerations, personality traits significantly influence how well a candidate fits the broader organisational culture. This alignment affects the individual's performance, well-being, and engagement at work.

For instance, let's say their assessment indicates that the candidate is much more extroverted than the rest of the team and prefers a less serious work environment. While this diversity can be beneficial, it's important to assess whether the nature of the role and the current team's working environment is conducive to welcoming someone who might significantly alter the culture.

How Can I Use Personality Insights in Hiring?

Consider the current fit and the potential for growth and development.

Understanding a candidate's personality can help identify areas for future development and how they might respond to different management styles or team environments.

It's important to use personality assessments as one part of a comprehensive evaluation process, ensuring decisions are not based solely on personality data. This helps avoid biases and provides a holistic view of the candidate's fit.

✅ Do:

- Seek diversity in specific areas to enhance team performance.
- Utilise the data to understand the candidates' working styles.
- Address potential challenges during the interview (e.g., if the nature of the job suggests the candidate might struggle with certain tasks).
- Employ the data to familiarise yourself with the new hire. While diversity is beneficial, understanding each person's behavioural preferences is crucial for seamless teamwork.
- Recognise that each trait's extremes have their own strengths and weaknesses. No trait is inherently better than another; they simply differ and excel in various contexts.

❌ Avoid:

- Avoid jumping to conclusions, such as assuming introverted individuals are not suited for sales roles, and refrain from excluding candidates based on such assumptions. If any concerns arise, discuss them with the candidate first.
- Be cautious if the team is very homogenous. While it may seem enjoyable to work with
- similar individuals, there's a high risk of groupthink and reduced performance due to behavioural blind spots.
- Do not base the hiring decision solely on personality.

The Schwartz Theory of Universal Values: Recognising Core Values and Their Impact on a Work Performance

Introduction to the Schwartz Theory of Universal Values

The Theory of Universal Human Values, created by Shalom H. Schwartz, is a cornerstone in social and cross-cultural psychology for understanding human values across cultures. Developed in 1992 and originally identifying ten value orientations, Schwartz and colleagues refined this to 19 values in 2012, presenting them as part of a circular motivational continuum. These values are not just beliefs but are deeply tied to emotions, guiding individuals in selecting or evaluating actions, policies, and people in their lives and workplaces.

Values act as motivational constructs, representing the goals individuals strive to achieve and guiding behaviour towards what is worthwhile. Unlike norms and attitudes, which are situation-specific, values are abstract goals that transcend specific actions and situations, providing a framework for behaviour across various contexts. Each person prioritises these values differently, creating a unique value system that influences their decisions and actions. This hierarchy of values is what distinguishes an individual's value system from attitudes or norms.

For values to influence behaviour, they must first be activated and deemed relevant to the situation at hand. Values that are considered important are more readily activated and thus have a stronger influence on behaviour. This activation is particularly likely when faced with decisions with significant implications or when important values might be compromised. The relevance of a value in a given context enhances our awareness of it, guiding us to choose actions that align with our value system.

Values also dictate how individuals perceive and respond to the potential outcomes of their actions. High-priority values, which are closely tied to one's self-concept, trigger automatic affective responses to actions that either threaten or support these values. This process influences not only how individuals perceive their environment but also how they plan and execute actions that align with their values.

Values Circle: Compatible and Conflicting Values

The refined values theory is based on the assumption that values form a circular motivational continuum. The values on the continuum are based on their compatible and conflicting motivations - expressing self-protection versus growth, and personal versus social focus.
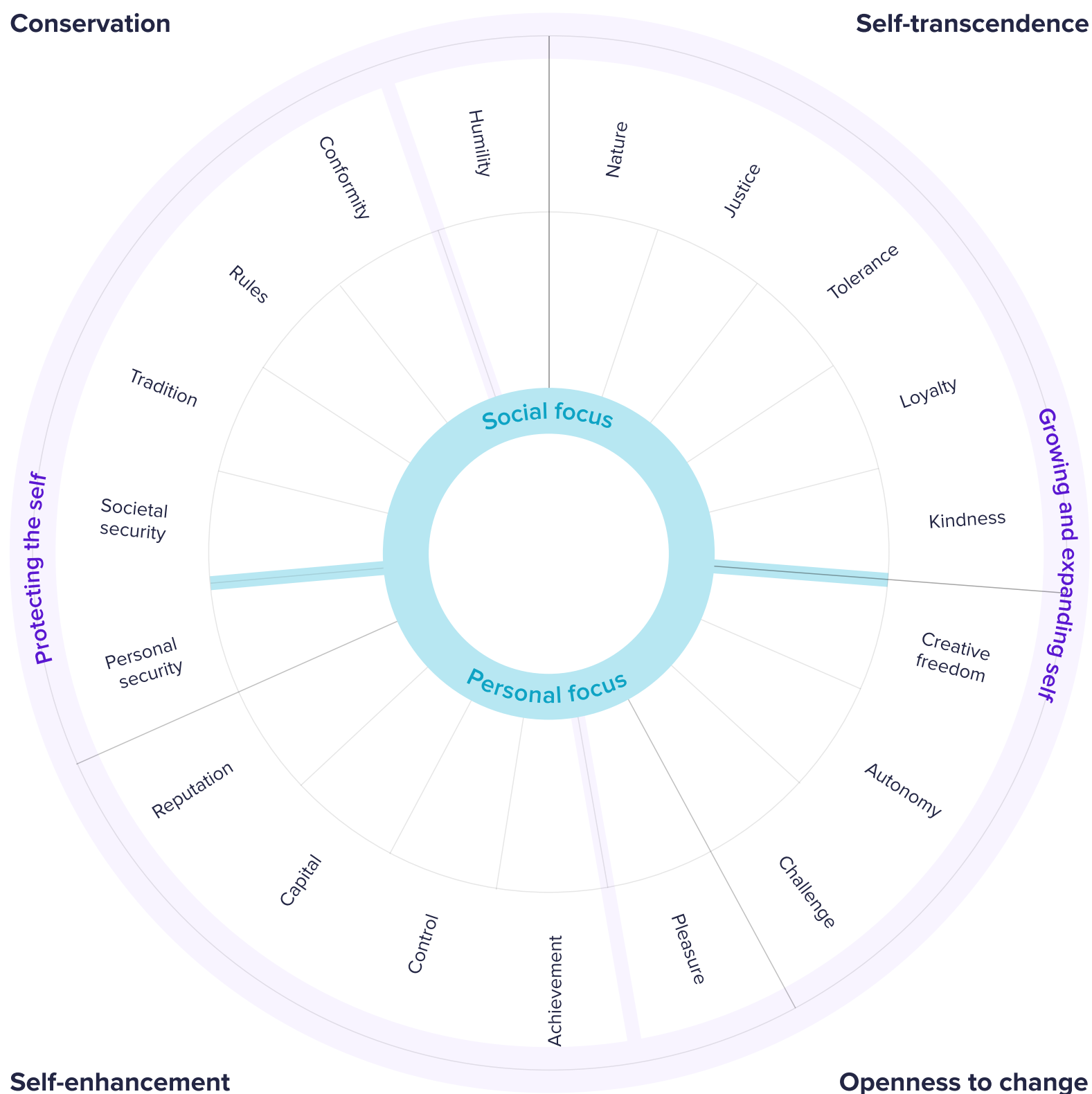
In one part of the circle, you have values of protecting the self, like staying safe (personal security). Then, as you move around the circle, you start to see values about personal growth, such as learning new things and pushing your limits.

In another part of the circle, values are focused on how we relate to other people and the world around us. Some of these are about putting others first and being a good community member, which is the social focus.

The closer any two values are on this circle, the more harmoniously they can work together. For example, wanting a constant challenge (a growth value) can go hand in hand with being creative (another growth value). They're neighbours on the circle because they both involve expanding your horizons.

However, some values might be on opposite sides of the circle because they have conflicting motivations. For example, if having a lot of creative freedom is important, then rules and tradition have less space in your life. Or if someone values having a lot of control, then they probably don't care so much for humility, as this won't help them achieve control.

Openness to Change

Openness to Change values underscore an individual's drive to pursue intellectual and emotional interests through innovative and adaptive approaches. These values foster a work environment that thrives on flexibility, innovation, and a willingness to explore uncharted territories.

Here's how these values manifest in a work setting:

Creative Freedom

In a workplace context, it's an atmosphere where employees feel empowered to explore new ideas and solutions. This value nurtures innovation and adaptability, allowing teams to tackle challenges with fresh perspectives and inventive strategies.

Autonomy

Autonomy in the workplace is about giving employees the space and authority to guide their own tasks and make decisions. Autonomy supports personal and professional growth, driving employees to excel and take initiative, which can benefit the organisation's productivity and creativity.

Challenge

Valuing challenge involves encouraging employees to push beyond their comfort zones and tackle demanding projects. This value instils a culture of resilience and perseverance, where employees are motivated to engage deeply with their work and pursue excellence. A workplace that embraces challenges sees obstacles as opportunities for growth and learning, leading to continuous improvement and sustained employee engagement.

In essence, Openness to Change values cultivate a dynamic, innovative, and inclusive organisational culture. Managers who embrace these values demonstrate a readiness to consider employee suggestions, delegate responsibility effectively, and involve everyone in decision-making processes.

This approach leads to the development of more horizontal organisational structures, where employees have defined roles but are also given the freedom to independently contribute to the organisation's success.

Self-Transcendence

Self-Enhancement values in the workplace revolve around the drive for personal success, control, and enjoyment. These values influence managerial behaviours and the quality of interactions within teams.

Here's how these values manifest in a work setting:

⭐ Pleasure

Valuing pleasure in the organisational context means creating a work environment that prioritises the enjoyment and well-being of employees. This could involve integrating more social activities, flexible work options, and initiatives that make work more enjoyable.

Achievement

The value of Achievement emphasises the importance of setting and accomplishing goals at an individual level and across the organisation. Managers who prioritise achievement are likely to foster a culture of cooperation and collaboration, ensuring that all members of the organisation work together towards common objectives.

Control and Capital

Power values, Control and Capital, underscore the significance of having authority over resources, decisions, and direction. In a balanced organisational context, this does not necessarily translate to autocracy. Instead, it involves strategic leadership where decision-making is clear, and resources are efficiently allocated. Managers who wield their power wisely can inspire respect and ensure that the organisation operates smoothly by navigating through challenges effectively.

Reputation

The value of Reputation involves building and maintaining a positive image. In an organisational context, this can mean self-image as well as the overall organisational image. This value can drive efforts to achieve excellence, ethical standards, and community engagement, contributing to a strong organisational identity and pride. A focus on reputation encourages employees and managers alike to uphold the highest standards in their work and interactions, enhancing the organisation's standing both internally and in the wider community.

In essence, self-enhancement values, when integrated thoughtfully into the workplace, can lead to a dynamic and high-achieving environment. These values guide the behaviour of managers and employees alike, shaping the way goals are set and achieved, how pleasure and well-being are integrated into work, and how power is exercised and balanced. Ultimately, these values contribute to a workplace where individuals are motivated to excel, take pride in their work, and enjoy their contributions to a larger purpose.

🌱 Self-Enhancement

Self-transcendence values involve going beyond one's own self-interest to support the well-being of others and the environment. These values shape a workplace culture that is inclusive, ethical, and community-oriented.

Here's how these values manifest in a work setting:

🌱 Nature

Valuing Nature involves a commitment to preserving the natural environment, which can translate into organisational practices that prioritise sustainability and environmental responsibility. This reflects a broader Universalism value, which emphasises the importance of treating all individuals and communities with respect and fairness, encouraging diversity, and fostering an inclusive workplace where every employee feels valued and heard.

⚖️ Justice

The value of Justice is reflected in workplaces where equality, fairness, and protection are represented. It involves establishing transparent policies and practices that ensure everyone is treated fairly and equitably, from hiring and promotion to daily interactions. A justice-oriented culture encourages managers to advocate for fairness and equality within the organisation and the broader community and supply chain.

🌐 Tolerance

Emphasising Tolerance in the workplace means fostering an environment where differences are tolerated and valued as a source of strength and innovation. This includes accepting and understanding diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and ideas, which enrich the organisational culture and contribute to more creative and effective problem-solving.

🤝 Loyalty

In the workplace, the value of Loyalty translates to reliability and trustworthiness, creating a stable and secure environment where employees feel confident in their roles and their relationships with one another.

🤍 Kindness

In the workplace, the value of Kindness is about actively contributing to the well-being of colleagues and ensuring a supportive and empathetic workplace where people are motivated to look out for each other.

In summary, self-transcendence values guide behaviour towards creating a workplace that is productive, nurturing, and ethical. These values encourage leaders to prioritise the welfare of their employees, involve them in key decision-making processes, and establish genuine connections that enhance their well-being.

Conservation

Conservation values focus on maintaining stability, tradition, and adherence to established norms and expectations. These values contribute to a workplace culture prioritising order, reliability, and societal security.

Here's how these values manifest in a work setting:

Conformity

Valuing Conformity involves adhering to rules and norms that ensure smooth and predictable interactions within the organisation. This translates to employees enjoying following established procedures, respecting authority, and maintaining harmonious relationships in the workplace. Conformity helps in creating a structured environment where roles and expectations are clear, minimising conflicts and enhancing efficiency.

Rules

Valuing Rules means appreciating a consistent framework governing employee behavior and organisational processes. This includes clear policies, codes of conduct, and standardised procedures that everyone is expected to follow.

Tradition

Tradition values emphasise respect for cultural heritage, established practices, and long-standing organisational rituals. In a workplace setting, this can involve honoring company history, upholding legacy practices, and celebrating traditional events or milestones. By valuing tradition, organisations foster a sense of continuity and identity, which can strengthen employee loyalty and commitment.

Social Security

The value of Societal Security is about creating a safe and stable environment, both within the organisation and in its interactions with the broader community. This involves implementing measures that protect employees' well-being, such as health and safety protocols, job security policies, and community engagement initiatives. A focus on societal security ensures that the organisation contributes positively to social stability and is seen as a reliable and responsible entity.

In summary, conservation values guide behavior toward creating an orderly, reliable, and secure workplace. These values encourage leaders to prioritise the stability and well-being of their employees, adhere to established norms and practices, and foster a sense of continuity and respect for tradition.

The Role of Values in the Workplace

Understanding and respecting universal human values can significantly impact hiring, team building, and organisational culture in the workplace.

For hiring managers, this means looking beyond skills and experience to consider how a candidate's values align with the company's culture and goals. A values-based approach to hiring supports the development of a cohesive, motivated, and productive workforce.

For leaders and managers, acknowledging the power of values in influencing behaviour is crucial for effective team building, conflict resolution, and leadership strategies. Encouraging a workplace where values are openly discussed, understood, and aligned can lead to more motivated, committed, and cohesive teams. Ultimately, by embracing the significance of values in shaping behaviour, organisations can foster a work environment where both individuals and the company can thrive.

When team members share similar values, it fosters a stronger sense of unity and belonging. This can lead to improved communication and collaboration, as team members are more likely to be driven by similar motivations and understand each other's perspectives.

Aligning values helps minimise conflicts. Disagreements may still occur, but they are less likely to escalate and more easily resolved when team members have a fundamental values-based understanding.

If the team and/or candidate assessment reveals values that might not align with the rest of the organisation, it is recommended to address potential challenges as soon as you can. Having some differences doesn't immediately suggest that the team can't work together, especially if both parties are aware of these differences. Discussing such situations can help prevent future conflicts.

Employees whose personal values align with the values of their team and organisation tend to be more motivated and engaged. They find more meaning in their work, contributing to higher job satisfaction and productivity. Teams that share a common set of values are likely to find it easier to make decisions, as these values provide a consistent framework or lens through which options can be evaluated.

While core value alignment is important, diversity in how values are prioritised and expressed can enrich a team. Hiring managers should recognise the benefits of diverse perspectives and experiences that align under the umbrella of shared core values. Consider how a candidate's values might complement or disrupt the current team dynamics.

How Should I Use Universal Values Insight When Hiring?

Look beyond immediate needs to consider whether a candidate's values suggest they will remain a good fit as the organisation evolves. For example, if the organisation is going through directional changes, consider which values would support the change. Candidates whose values align with the anticipated direction of the team and organisation are more likely to be successful in the long run.

✅ Do:

- Understand the core values of the team, with which you would expect some alignment from the candidates.
- If there are differences in values, discuss them during the interview to assess whether collaboration would be possible or uncomfortable.
- Consider whether introducing different values is necessary to help the organisation go through the desired change.
- Post-hiring, use information about the candidates' values to create a motivating work culture.

❌ Avoid:

- Even though our values shape how we see the world, there is no right or wrong set of values. Keep that in mind, and don't judge the candidate, even if it's hard to understand their set of values.
- Not every value has to be aligned, and not every difference in values means people can't work together. Interviewing should always be the final method to evaluate a possible collaboration.
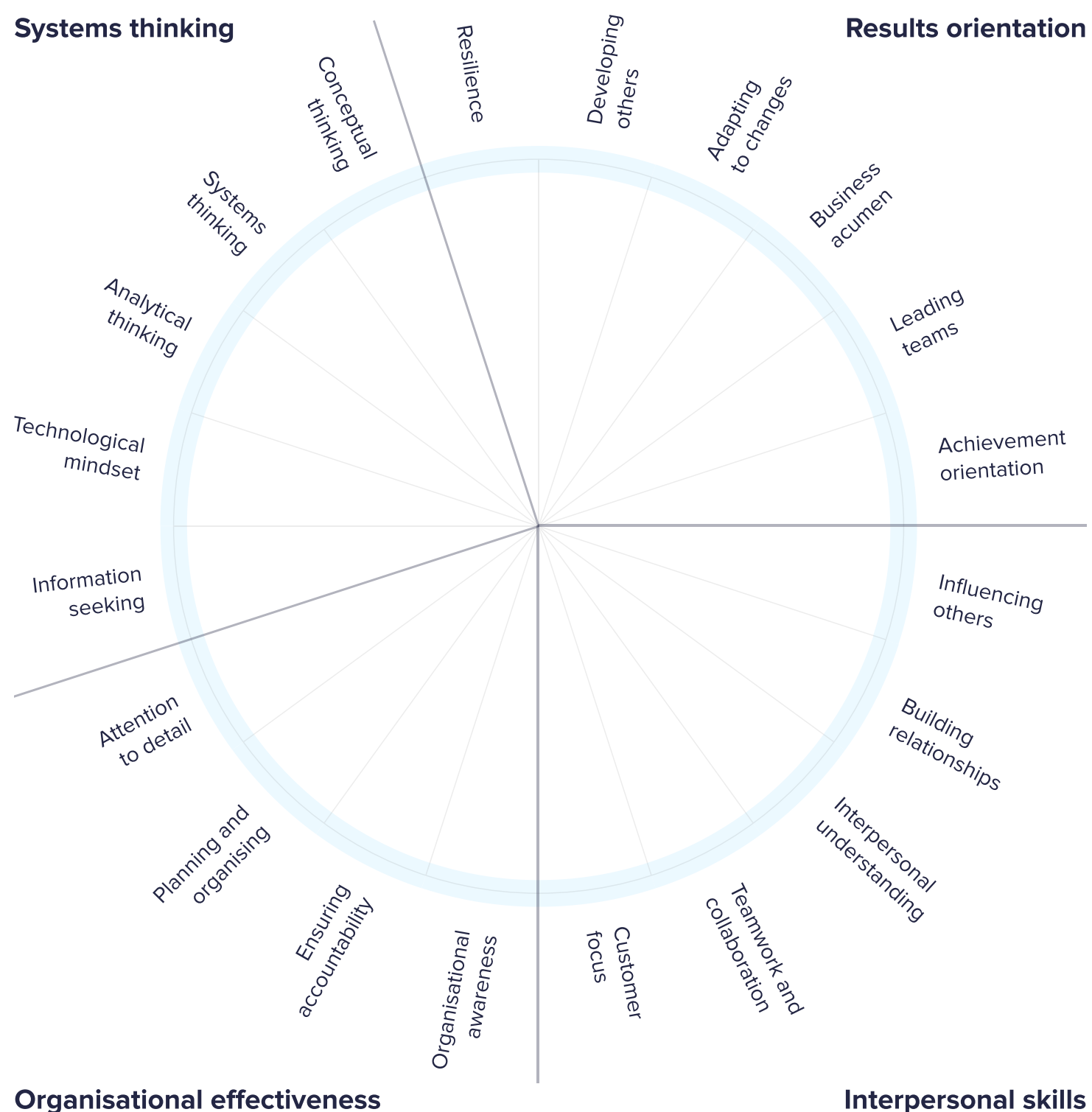
The Leadership Competencies: Why Competencies are Important and How to Assess Them

In 1993, Lyle Spencer and Signe M. Spencer published their research in the book "Competence at Work". In it, they defined competencies as the underlying characteristics of people that indicate behaviours or thought processes that lead to superior job performance.

Wisnio's Leadership Competency Library consists of 20 leadership competencies. Leadership competencies, as delineated by Spencer & Spencer, encompass a range of skills, behaviours, and attitudes that contribute to effective leadership.

The significance of leadership competencies in organisations cannot be overstated. In an era marked by rapid change and complexity, the success of an organisation hinges on its leadership's ability to navigate challenges, inspire teams, and drive innovation. Leadership competencies serve as a blueprint for identifying and developing leaders who can thrive in such environments.

Wisnio's Leadership Competency Library

The Wisnio leadership competencies belong to four main categories: interpersonal skills, results orientation, systems thinking, and organisational effectiveness.

Interpersonal skills

◉ Interpersonal understanding

Understands the unspoken or partly expressed feelings, goals, and needs of others, and can relate to culturally diverse groups.

A person who is highly skilled at this:
- Works effectively with individuals with different backgrounds and perspectives.
- Deliberately involves different people to leverage the benefits of diversity.
- Perceives the moods and feelings of others and responds appropriately.

◉ Customer focus

Desires to help or serve others, discovers the needs of clients or internal end-users, and takes action with the customer in mind.

A person who is highly skilled at this:
- Gathers insights from external or internal customers and takes action to meet service standards.
- Proactively monitors customer feedback and satisfaction to provide solutions that exceed expectations.
- Anticipates and addresses customers' long-term needs with creative and customised solutions.

◉ Building relationships

Develops and maintains friendly relationships and builds networks that help achieve current or future professional goals.

A person who is highly skilled at this:
- Develops strong working relationships with key stakeholders.

- Regularly engages in activities to expand their professional network.
- Establishes long-term friendly relationships to gather intelligence and identify new opportunities.

👥 Teamwork and collaboration

Shows a genuine intention to be part of a team and works cooperatively with others towards collective goals and results.

A person who is highly skilled at this:
- Shares responsibility and seeks advice and support to deliver results.
- Promotes and facilitates collaboration to improve overall team performance.
- Commits to long-term initiatives and coordinates collaboration across the organisation.

🌐 Influencing others

Inspires, influences or impresses people in an honest and respectful manner to gain support and commitment, or have a specific impact on others.

A person who is highly skilled at this:
- Uses various techniques to negotiate and convince others.
- Finds common ground between multiple stakeholders with different agendas.
- Rallies support by involving experts and developing compelling arguments.

Systems thinking

🧩 Conceptual thinking

Identifies underlying issues, puts pieces together to see the big picture, and applies conceptual reasoning to develop new ideas and unique responses to problems.

A person who is highly skilled at this:
- Sees patterns and similarities in information and uses these observations to analyse new situations.
- Distils the meaning and importance of complex data and presents key points in an understandable way.
- Develops new concepts based on contextual information.

✚ Strategic thinking

Understands industry trends, develops future-oriented scenarios, articulates a compelling vision, and links strategic goals to daily work.

A person who is highly skilled at this:
- Understands organisation strategy and aligns activities with long-term company goals.
- Anticipates emerging trends and is able to articulate possible future scenarios.
- Develops complex strategies and communicates them effectively.

🔍 Information seeking

Makes an effort to gather information to satisfy their curiosity and desire to know more and to enhance their skills and abilities by systematically acquiring and sharing knowledge.

A person who is highly skilled at this:
- Conducts independent research to gain a deeper understanding of relevant topics.
- Experiments with different data collection methods to gather necessary information.
- Involves others in systematic research efforts to bridge information gaps.

⠿ Analytical thinking

Understands a complex and ambiguous problem by breaking it apart into smaller pieces and analyses information in a logical and methodical manner.

A person who is highly skilled at this:
- Uses logical thought processes to draw conclusions and identify patterns in data.
- Demonstrates an in-depth understanding of analytical techniques and information modelling.
- Applies complex analytical frameworks to identify and share solutions.

▢ Technological mindset

Understands technological trends, demonstrates skills in using modern technologies, and applies technical solutions to increase efficiency or solve problems.

A person who is highly skilled at this:

- Experiments with new technology and demonstrates the value of doing so to others.
- Seeks ways to improve performance and internal efficiency with new technologies.
- Drives the adoption of new technologies among team and organisation members.

Result orientation

👥 Leading teams

Demonstrates a desire to lead, takes on a role as a group leader, builds a strong team identity, and settles disputes without escalation.

A person who is highly skilled at this:

- Aligns people behind a compelling vision to build a strong team identity.
- Delegates decision-making appropriately, ensuring that common goals are achieved efficiently.
- Is able to settle disputes, viewing them as opportunities for growth and mutual learning.

📄 Developing others

Encourages professional and personal growth, plans and uses effective developmental activities, and supports others to meet organisational or career goals.

A person who is highly skilled at this:

- Shares advice and offers guidance to help others achieve and exceed their goals.
- Identifies learning opportunities for others and offers support through coaching and mentoring.
- Identifies long-term developmental needs and uses multiple techniques and methods to develop others.

💪 Resilience

Keeps emotions under control, maintains high-performance levels under pressure and recovers quickly from setbacks and disappointment.

A person who is highly skilled at this:

- Maintains a positive outlook in stressful situations.

- Recovers quickly from setbacks and maintains composure when faced with adversity.
- Views challenges and negative experiences as learning opportunities.

👤 Business acumen

Understands business and competitive situations, evaluates the impact of business decisions, and is quick to take advantage of new business opportunities.

A person who is highly skilled at this:
- Considers multiple aspects of the business when planning and making business decisions.
- Proposes new ideas and takes action to advance organisational goals.
- Acts on a deep knowledge of the marketplace and presents this data to others.

🔄 Adapting to changes

Works effectively while adapting to changing environments, circumstances, and relationships. Copes well with ambiguity and unclear outcomes.

A person who is highly skilled at this:
- Accepts change as a constant and feels comfortable in uncertain situations.
- Views change as an opportunity for learning and quickly shifts behaviour to match shifting goals.
- Able to make effective decisions with minimal inputs and unclear outcomes.

🏆 Achievement orientation

Sets challenging goals, looks for ways to improve performance, and takes calculated risks to exceed the standard of excellence.

A person who is highly skilled at this:
- Develops challenging goals and commits to achieving desired outcomes.
- Systematically identifies and gathers resources needed to achieve personal and professional goals.
- Takes entrepreneurial risks to create something novel.

Organisational effectiveness

⋯ Attention to detail

Monitors and checks work or manages information to reduce uncertainty in the surrounding environment and is driven to ensure order, quality, and accuracy.

A person who is highly skilled at this:
- Monitors details in organisational processes and outputs to ensure quality results.
- Applies various methods to monitor and improve the quality of other's work.
- Develops and implements complex systems to organise information.

📋 Planning and organising

Plans and prioritises work for themselves and others, manages time and resources to maximise productivity, and ensures that work is completed efficiently.

A person who is highly skilled at this:
- Develops project plans and manages time to increase efficiency.
- Monitors plan execution using methods that maximise productivity.
- Manages all aspects of long-term planning, developing workflows to ensure successful implementation.

🔨 Ensuring accountability

Provides direction confidently, communicates performance expectations, insists on high performance, and holds people accountable.

A person who is highly skilled at this:
- Communicates goals and reinforces a sense of responsibility.
- Monitors progress against expectations and uses multiple methods to drive performance.
- Applies performance measures to gather feedback and monitor progress.

🏢 Organisational awareness

Understands and can work effectively with complex power dynamics, policy, and processes in organisations and their environment of stakeholders.

A person who is highly skilled at this:

- Navigates comfortably in organisational structures, involving relevant decision-makers to enforce change.
- Recognises key decision-makers and obstacles and adapts accordingly to encourage action.
- Takes ownership of long-term organisational problems and gathers support to implement solutions.

The Role of Competencies in Hiring

Evaluating candidates' competencies during the hiring process is crucial for several reasons. Competencies provide a reliable indicator of an individual's potential for future performance. By evaluating these competencies, you can make informed predictions about how well a candidate is likely to perform in a specific role.

Understanding a candidate's competencies can also help you identify development and training areas. This ensures that employees not only start well but also have the potential to grow and adapt to changing job requirements over time.

Competencies can be aligned with the organisation's strategic goals and values, ensuring that the individuals hired are capable of contributing to the organisation's long-term success.

How Should I Use Competency Insights When Hiring?

The Wisnio position mapping tools allow you to choose three must-have, important-to-have, and good-to-have competencies that the candidates should have to exceed in this role.

It's crucial to remember that the tool does not assess the candidate's competency levels but shows their self-confidence in those competencies. This data should be only used to understand what areas need future discussions. Competencies should be evaluated through behavioural interview questions while interviewing the candidate.

✓ Do:

- Use competency data to understand what requires further discussion.
- Ask behavioural questions to evaluate the candidate's competencies during the interview.
- Choose competencies considering both the needs of the role and the potential gaps in the current team.

✕ Avoid:

- Do not exclude a candidate solely based on their self-confidence regarding the competencies.
- Do not make a hiring decision based on this data alone.

The reliability and validity of psychometric instruments

This white-paper is written in collaboration with Jüri Allik, a Professor of Experimental Psychology, Tartu University. He is a Foreign Member of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters[1], Academia Europaea[2], and the Estonian Academy of Sciences[3]. His works have been cited in 29016 publications[4].

Evaluating the quality of psychometric instruments

All good instruments for measuring personality traits are long. For example, MMPI-3 (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory version 3) consists of 567 questions. The personality questionnaire NEO-PI-R/3 (NEO Personality Inventory Revised or version 3) includes 240 questions. The questionnaires measure several traits at the same time (for example, NEO-PI-R/3 measures 30 different personality traits that are divided into five clusters or dimensions. There are several parallel questions with approximately the same meaning for a reliable measurement of each trait. For example, in NEO-PI-R/3-s, each trait is measured with a sub-scale that has eight parallel questions. There is a good reason for the number of items because they are needed for the consistency and authenticity of these measurements.

Each measurement instrument—typically a scale consisting of multiple questions or items— is characterised by two main properties: reliability and validity.

Reliability

Reliability characterises how consistently something is measured or, in other words, how small is the measurement error. For example, if we want to evaluate the reliability of a bathroom scale, we might weigh ourselves two or three times. If the result is different every time, then the scatter of the results shows the measurement error. If the variance - a measure of scatter - is small or doesn't exist at all, we can conclude that the scale is reliable, giving us the same results on each occasion.

Similarly, the best way to test the reliability of psychological instruments is repeated measurement. This is called *test-retest reliability.* If the measurement is repeated in a couple of days or weeks, then we must assume that the trait we intended to measure has not changed during this relatively short time interval. For example, repeated testing with an average 2-year interval resulted in an average correlation of .66 for the 30 sub-scales of NEO-PI-R-i (Kallasmaa, Allik, Realo, & McCrae, 2000, Table 1). Another example, the Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), which consists of 10 questions. The two-week test-retest reliability of this instrument was .84 (Pullmann & Allik, 2000, Table 2). Approximately the same test-retest reliability can be assumed for NEO-PI-R/3 sub-scales if the re-testing interval is no longer than one or two weeks.

As repeated testing is time-consuming, a more convenient method is to calculate a scale's ***internal consistency.*** The best-known formula is ***Cronbach's alpha***, which is the mean correlation between questions or items (Cronbach, 1951). The higher the correlation between items, the higher reliability of this instrument. For example, the average Cronbach's alfa for the NEO-PI-3 sub-scales is .76 (Costa & McCrae, 1992, Table 5). There is the Spearman-Brown prediction (also prophesy) formula relating Cronbach alpha to test length used to predict the reliability of a test after changing the test length. This formula tells us that there is no better option for the increase of scale reliability than increasing the number of items.

If this alpha value of .76 looks modest for someone, then it is necessary to warn that higher reliability can be attained often by artificially bloating up the scale. For example, it can be done by including items with very similar meanings. Thus, it might be good advice to avoid both very low and high alphas.

Validity

Validity characterises how well a scale measures what was ***intended*** to measure. It is possible to have a scale with high reliability (very small measurement error) but low validity. Thus, an exemplary Cronbach alpha is not a guarantee that we are measuring something that was required or planned.

For instance, if a bathroom scale shows the same measure every time, but the result is considerably different than the actual weight, then it is measuring something else with high precision. However, in the world of weighing machines, we can always buy a new scale which satisfies our demands. It is much more complicated with a psychological measurement where we do not have explicit units of measurement (think about the "unit" of neuroticism, for instance) or etalons. In practice, we are compelled to use incomplete solutions relying on the best scale that is currently available for a measure of a trait we are interested in. For example, if someone creates a new personality measure, the results can be compared to NEO-PI-R or its latest version, NEO-PI-3 (McCrae, Costa, & Martin, 2005). In the textbooks, it is typically called ***concurrent validity.***

However, the lack of objective standards or units of measurement can be compensated in several ways. For example, knowing that the measurable trait causes certain phenomena, we can check if these consequences co-exist with measured traits. This is called ***predictive validity***. For example, it is known that depression (the neuroticism sub-scale, N3: Depression in NEO-PI-R) predicts suicidal thoughts and attempts. Consequently, the predictive validity of N3-e would assume a correlation between the intensity of suicidal thoughts and the high number of suicidal attempts among people who rate high in N3: Depression.

Another form of predictive validity is an ***agreement between the ratings*** of two judges, usually a person and somebody who knows her or him well. If a person's self-ratings allow us to accurately predict the ratings of another informant—a relative, partner, colleague, or friend—then this is one of the best validity indicators. The agreement between self-other ratings is the necessary condition for assuming that we are dealing with the same existing characteristic, not with phantasies in somebody's head. Agreement or consensus between judges is one of the best criteria for the validity of personality judgements (Allik, De Vries, & Realo, 2016). Although the agreement between

two opinions is not guaranteed that they are true - it is possible to agree on what is totally untrue—agreement in the description of personality is very often a sign of their reality.

If the situation with the validity of psychological measurements looks desperate, it is useful to remind the history of the length measurement. The first measures of length were body parts like the foot or forearm. To level the individual differences, the average of measures of twenty randomly selected persons was typically used. An important step to eliminating subjectivity was defining the meter as a part of the meridian (one-tenth of the millionth part from the length of a meridian from the equator to the North Pole). The standard platinum rod of the equivalent length is still held in Paris. The latest way for defining a unit of length is by measuring the time it takes for light to cover this distance in the vacuum. As we still do not have the standards for neuroticism or extraversion, human psychology is still somewhere on the level of the length measurement when feet (about 0.3 m) and cubits (0.533 m) were the main units of length.

Until we haven't invented the standards yet, it is most reasonable to examine all measurement results with common sense and decide if these are in accord with our understanding of the phenomena we want to measure. If the results are consistent and they fit well to our best knowledge, then we may have a modest level of confidence that we succeeded in measuring what was desired and planned.

Quality of instruments used on the Wisnio platform

The science of measuring different psychometric characteristics of individuals and evaluating the quality of such measures has not changed significantly in decades, and well-documented and comprehensively researched instruments are publicly available.

In spite of that, the usefulness of such instruments in predicting work-related outcomes has been modest at best (Zell, Lesick et al., 2021). In our experience, the main limiting factor is not that the available instruments are of low quality (although this is often the case) but rather how these instruments are used.

Leadership assessment is often the final element of the hiring process, and in most cases, only the chosen candidate is asked to participate in an assessment centre. The outcome of that assessment centre describes certain characteristics of the candidate and sometimes points out a few potential risk factors or personal development areas. In most cases, those findings are in no way connected to the job context or the characteristics of the team they will be working with. As the hiring decision is typically already made by that time, this information might help with onboarding and development in the future but typically has little to no impact on the quality of the hiring decision.

Considering the above, our focus has not been on trying to incrementally improve the quality of psychometric instruments but rather on making the data useful and actionable for practical decision-making purposes. Therefore, Wisnio uses publicly available and extensively researched and validated psychometric instruments - Shalom Shwartz's Questionnaire of Universal Human Values and the IPIP120 Personality Inventory.

Reliability of the instruments

The values inventory (based on Schwartz's refined values theory) has a mean Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.70 (SD = 0.08) measured across 49 cultural groups. For the four higher-order values, the mean Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient is 0.84 (SD = 0.03) (Schwartz & Cieciuch, 2022).

The personality inventory is based on IPIP120, which is a shortened and simplified version of the NEO PI-R. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of the 30 personality facets range from 0.63 to 0.88, with three facets with a reliability coefficient of less than 0.7 (Johnson, 2014). For the five main dimensions, alphas range from 0.87 to 0.90, with a median of 0.88 (Maples, Miller, Carter, 2014).

Validity of the instruments

IPIP120 is designed to approximate NEO PI-R and measure largely similar constructs with a simplified instrument. Correlations between IPIP120 and NEO PI-R facets are over 0.66(Johnson, 2014). Correlations between self-other ratings of IPIP-NEO scales (0.38 to 0.58) indicate that IPIP-NEO scales are working as well as the original, longer scales (Johnson, 2014). Detailed comparison tables between IPIP-NEO and other popular instruments based on the Five Factor Model (including Hogan HPI, HEXACO, MPQ, NEO PI-R) can be found on the International Personality Item Pool database (https://ipip.ori.org/, 21.02.2022).

The relationship between Big Five personality characteristics and different aspects of job performance and work-related behaviours has been studied extensively, and meta-analysis consistently indicate that each Big Five trait is a valid correlate of performance (Zell & Lesick, 2021). Similarly, hundreds of primary studies and several meta-analyses have been conducted on team effectiveness and how personality diversity and values similarity impacts team processes, engagement, and outcomes. A comprehensive literature review on the topic is published by Mathieu et al. (2008).

Salom Shwartz's theory of Universal Human values has been repeatedly validated in numerous controlled studies in over 80 countries (Schwartz, 2017). Over the 40 years since the publication of the original theory, it has been cited in more than seventeen thousand scholarly articles. Various validation methods are used for this, such as importance ratings of values, direct similarity judgment tasks, pile sorting, and spatial arrangement and even for how the values of other people, such as family members, are perceived.

The value theory makes two claims to universality. First, people in all cultures recognise the same set of basic values. Second, these values form the same circular motivational continuum in all cultures (Schwartz, 2017). It has also been shown that people can assess other people's values whom they know well accurately (Dobewall et al., 2014). Self-other agreement in four higher-order values (median r = .47) and six culture-specific value factors (median r = .50) was proved substantial. Therefore, other ratings of personal values can be used to validate and complement self-report value measures.

Summary

The psychometric qualities of instruments incorporated on the Wisnio platform are of high quality - their validity and reliability are proven in numerous controlled studies, which are publicly available. Based on that, we can ensure that the instruments measure the characteristics they intend to measure and that they do so consistently. Based on numerous meta-analyses, we know that the characteristics evaluated by Wisnio help to predict performance, tenure, work engagement, and several aspects of team cohesiveness and collaboration. The strength of those relationships - meaning the predictive validity of such instruments - depends mainly on how the data is used. Measuring irrelevant details with a high degree of accuracy is less useful than developing a robust understanding of relevant data. Due to that, Wisnio is designed to ensure that psychometric data is viewed in the context of a specific team and job and that the information is used constructively.

References

1.   Allik, J., De Vries, R. E., & Realo, A. (2016). Why are moderators of self-other agreement difficult to establish? Journal of Research in Personality, 63, 72-83.

2.   Costa, P. T., Jr., & McCrae, R. R. (1992). Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R) and NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) professional manual. Odessa, Fl.: Psychological Assessment Resources.

3.   Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. Psychometrika, 16(3), 297-334.

4.   Dobewall, H. et al (2014). A comparison of self-other agreement in personal values versus the Big Five personality traits. Journal of Research in Personality, 50.

5.   International Personality Item Pool, https://ipip.ori.org/, 21.02.2022.

6.   Johnson, J. (2014). Measuring thirty facets of the Five Factor Model with a 120-item public domain inventory: Development of the IPIP-NEO-120. Journal of Research in Personality, 51.

7.   Kallasmaa, T., Allik, J., Realo, A., & McCrae, R. R. (2000). The Estonian version of the NEO-PI-R: An examination of universal and culture-specific aspects of the Five-Factor Model. European Journal of Personality, 14, 265-278.

8.   Maples, J.; Miller, J.; Carter, T. (2014). A Test of the International Personality Item Pool Representation of the Revised NEO Personality Inventory and Development of a 120-Item IPIP-Based Measure of the Five-Factor Model. Psychological Assessment, 26-4.

9.   Mathieu et al (2008). Team Effectiveness 1997-2007: A Review of Recent Advancements and a Glimpse Into the Future. Journal of Management, 34-3.

10. McCrae, R. R., Costa, P. T., Jr., & Martin, T. A. (2005). The NEO-PI-3: A More Readable Revised Neo Personality Inventory. Journal of Personality Assessment, 84(3), 261-270.

11. Pullmann, H., & Allik, J. (2000). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale: its dimensionality, stability and personality correlates in Estonian. Personality and Individual Differences, 28, 701-715.

12. Schwartz, S. H. (2012). An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values. Online Readings in Psychology and Culture, 2(1).

13. Schwartz, S.H. (2017). The Refined Theory of Basic Values. In: Roccas, S., Sagiv, L. (eds) Values and Behavior. Springer.

14.   Schwartz, S., Cieciuch, J (2022). Measuring the Refined Theory of Individual Values in 49 Cultural Groups: Psychometrics of the Revised Portrait Value Questionnaire. Assessment 29-5.

15.   Zell, E.; Lesick, T. (2021). Big five personality traits and performance: A quantitative synthesis of 50+ meta-analyses. Journal of Personality, 2021 1-15.

_____

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finnish_Academy_of_Science_and_Letters

[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academia_Europaea

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estonian_Academy_of_Sciences

[4] https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=xaxV8_8AAAAJ&hl=en