"Big Five" Personality Traits

by Sophia

<table>
<tr><td>☰</td><td>WHAT'S COVERED</td></tr>
</table>

How would you describe your personality? As employers, how would we describe the personalities of our employees? Employers can evaluate certain personality traits of prospective employees to find the right fit for particular jobs. This tutorial will provide an overview of the "Big Five" personality traits and their application to business. Our discussion breaks down as follows:

1. The "Big Five" Personality Traits

The **"Big Five" personality traits** are the most prominent of the theories that are used to describe personality traits. They are used to describe humans, as a whole, in terms of psychology. It is another way of looking at hiring and motivation, through the lens of personality traits.

Let's take a look at these "Big Five" traits, what they are and how they are used. First, it's important to understand the definition. The "Big Five" personality traits is a theory on personality which breaks up human personality into five different dimensions:

- Openness
- Conscientiousness
- Extroversion
- Agreeableness
- Neuroticism.

Everybody has some or all of these "Big Five" personality traits. People tend to have a spectrum of the traits, from very high to very low. These can serve as predictors of certain behaviors that a person may exhibit, given particular situations.

These traits are important to employers because they can impact and determine career satisfaction, based on the personality traits that a particular person exhibits.

<table>
<tr><td>⚑</td><td>HINT</td></tr>
</table>

A good way to remember these five traits is by the acronym "OCEAN".

Trait	Description	Low vs. High
	The ability or willingness to	*Low:* People who have low openness might be less receptive to new ideas or less willing to change their mind about things.

Openness	seek out and accept new experiences.	*High:* People with high openness would be considered curious and willing to accept new ideas.
Conscientiousness	The ability to be organized, dependable, and achievement-driven.	*Low:* People with low conscientiousness tend to be more spontaneous, less organized and less self-disciplined. Therefore, if you're looking for people who are spontaneous, then you may want to look at people who have low conscientiousness. *High:* People who have high conscientiousness will be highly organized. They're also going to be much more persistent and reliable.
Extroversion	The ability to enjoy social settings and new interpersonal relationships.	*Low:* People with low extroversion tend to be less assertive and more independent and task-oriented. These are people who buckle down and put their nose to the grindstone. They are not distracted by social situations around them. *High:* People with high extroversion are more likely to succeed in jobs based on relationships, like sales or public relations, for instance. They tend to be more sociable, and they also tend to be more assertive than people with low extroversion.
Agreeableness	The ability to get along with others.	*Low:* People who have low agreeableness tend to be less cooperative. They are more argumentative, suspicious, and can struggle with workplace environments. Therefore, if you're trying to build an employee base that is team-based, then people who have low agreeableness may not fit well in that particular work environment. *High:* People with high agreeableness tend to be more collaborative, and they are quite good with working relationships. They also tend to be more trusting of other people and a lot more forgiving when people accidentally make mistakes.
Neuroticism	A tendency toward stress and emotional instability.	*Low:* People who have low neuroticism will be emotionally stable. They'll be poised, calm, and able to handle stress. If you need employees who are poised, calm, and able to think clearly in high-stress situations, people with low neuroticism would definitely fit the bill. In addition, they would be more happy and successful in jobs that require dealing with a lot of stress. *High:* People with high neuroticism tend to be emotionally unstable and a lot more excitable. They struggle with handling situations that are very stressful. Therefore, is you know a particular job is going to be very stressful and you are considering a person with a personality trait that exhibits high neuroticism, this job may not be the best fit for that employee.

📄 TERM TO KNOW

"Big Five" Personality Traits
A theory on personality which breaks up human personality into five different dimensions: openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism.

☑	SUMMARY

Today we learned about **the "Big Five" personality traits**. We also explored the "Big Five" traits in use examining the characteristics of high and low tendencies within each one of these personality traits: openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (remember the acronym: OCEAN).

Good luck!

Source: adapted from sophia instructor james howard

📄	TERMS TO KNOW

"Big Five" Personality Traits
A theory on personality which breaks up human personality into five different dimensions: openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism.