Leadership Temperament Types at the Polk County Sheriff's Office

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Abstract

As part of a Total Quality Leadership initiative, the executive leadership in the Polk County Sheriff's Office determined the need to implement leadership training within the organization at the middle, senior and executive management levels of the organization. As part of the leadership training curriculum, an instrument was used to identify the personality traits and temperaments of these groups. The instrument used is the Personal Style Inventory (PSI) based on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator instrument. The results were compared to research concerning temperament style impact on management and leadership profiles. The implications for the agency are explored in this research.

Introduction

The past twenty-five years have seen broad and critical changes in the Polk County Sheriff's Office (PCSO). The agency has grown from a "two hundred man department" to an agency of two thousand members diversely reflective of the community it polices. The Polk County Sheriff's Office is now the eighth largest law enforcement jurisdiction in the state of Florida. (Florida Sheriff's Study, Michael F. Morris, Pensacola Junior College, 1996) The agency has experienced dramatic changes in its elected officials, personnel, resources and technology. The greatest influence affecting these changes has been that the Sheriff is an elected official and in the past twenty-five years there have been five different sheriffs serving in the office. The most significant change has been the dramatic increase in the number of members now in the Sheriff's Office. Therefore, the establishment of a progressive and futuristic leadership with both the identification of best practices and enhanced skill development has become a necessary focus to ensure the agency's advancement into the future.

The Polk County Sheriff's Office has initiated an effort to transform the agency from a traditional, autocratic, top-to-bottom run organization to a flexible, participative and empowering organization. Employment of the strategies and techniques of Total Quality Management at every level of the organization has become the cornerstone of this process. It is recognized that productive effective leadership styles for all personnel in line supervisory, middle management, senior management and executive leadership positions are a fundamental need in such an effort; currently, curricula have been developed and implemented for supervision and senior management that stresses leadership skills.

Leadership Philosophy

Two primary resources were utilized to give foundation and structure to the PCSO's organizational leadership philosophy. The first is The Leadership Challenge (Kouzes & Posner, 1995) which details "five best leadership practices" identified through extensive empirical research. The five best practices and ten commitments are:

PRACTICES   **COMMITMENTS**

Challenging the Process	1. Search out challenging opportunities to change, grow, innovate and improve.
	2. Experiment, take risks and learn from the accompanying mistakes.
Inspiring A Shared Vision	1. Envision an uplifting and ennobling future.
	2. Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to their values, interest, hopes and dreams.
Enabling Others to Act	1. Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust.
	2. Strengthen people by giving power away, providing choice, developing confidence, assigning critical tasks and offering visible support.
Modeling the Way	1. Set the example by behaving in ways that are consistent with shared values.
	2. Achieve small wins that promote consistent progress and build commitment.
Encouraging the Heart	1. Recognize individual contributions to the success of every project.
	2. Celebrate team accomplishments regularly.

The TQManager (Schmidt & Fennigan, 1993) was the initial source for leadership philosophy and development.   This work has been used to create a foundation for understanding, developing and implementing leadership skills for all agency members.   Its concepts are incorporated in the infrastructure through management examinations.   "Five key competencies" are identified in this work which underscore the PCSO leadership philosophy. The competencies are:

- Developing relationships of openness and trust.
- Building collaboration and teamwork.
- Managing by fact.
- Supporting results through recognition and rewards.
- Creating a learning and continuously improving organization.

Because the organization is committed to further strengthening its leadership philosophy, several strategies have been devised to deepen knowledge and practices.   One such strategy has been to gauge the personality and temperament types of leadership to increase understanding of dominant leadership styles within the organization.

Temperament Types and Leadership

The effect of personality and temperament type on leadership style has been the

focus of much research (Keirsey & Bates, 1978; Kroeger & Thuesen, 1992). As part of the PCSO's effort toward leadership development and organizational knowledge, all leadership and management of the PCSO were administered the Personal Style Inventory (PSI) (based on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator instrument) (MBTI) to determine personality and temperament types. Self-knowledge and awareness is critical to strengthening positive leadership skills and increasing understanding of how certain styles affect practices and competencies. Such assessments allow for growth and development in a non-invasive environment. Additionally, gauging the organization's leadership profile also adds to organizational knowledge, particularly in times of change as in the PCSO's current effort to create a more participative and flexible culture within which Total Quality Management is practiced.

Questions raised are:

- What are the definitions of personality traits and temperaments as outlined by the PSI?

- How do temperament types affect leadership styles?

- What is the overall profile of personality/temperament types of the PCSO's leaders?

- Is there a particular type that is common or dominant in the agency?

- What are the effects or benefits to the organization of these types?

- How might the dominant temperament types affect the implementation of the Total Quality Management effort?

Personality/Temperament Types Defined

To apply "type watching" (Kroeger & Thuesen, 1992) the terminology must be defined. These definitions of personality and temperament types were primarily established by the work of Myers (1962) and Keirsey and Bates (1978). It was believed that preferences of individuals describe individual preferences in four dimensions:

1) orientation to other people - Extroversion vs. Introversion

2) how information is gathered - Sensing vs. iNtuitive

3) how information is processed - Thinking vs. Feeling

4) how information is acted upon or decision making - Judging vs. Perceiving.

An individual is usually dominant on one end of the spectrum for each dimension; these letters combine into 4 letters for a personality type (i.e., ESFP, ENTJ). There are a total of sixteen 4- letter categories that generally describe everyone.

Based on the four letter preference indicators, individuals can be grouped into smaller more general temperament styles (four temperament types). This is a way of generalizing the overall styles of people and how they react and conduct themselves in groups both similar and dissimilar to them. The temperament type also has an effect on an individual's preferred leadership and management style. The four temperament styles are: Sensing-Judging (SJ/Guardians), Sensing-Perceiving (SP/Artisans), iNtuitive-

Thinkers (NT/Rationals), iNtuitive-Feelers (NF/Feelers) (Keirsey & Bates, 1978).

The following are descriptions of the temperament styles according to Kroeger and Thuesen (1992):

SJ/Guardians: SJs gather information in a practical and realistic mode (Sensing), to which they prefer to give organization and structure (Judging). SJs' purpose in life is to belong to meaningful institutions and they are the foundations and backbone of society.

SP/Artisans: SPs data collection is practical and realistic (Sensing) like the Guardians, to which they bring spontaneity and flexibility (Perceiving). This combination makes them the original "now" generation. Their Sensing grounds them in the reality of the moment, and their Perceiving keeps them open for other ways of dealing with that reality.

NF-Idealists: NFs look at the world and see possibilities (iNtuition) and translate those possibilities inter- and intrapersonally (Feeling). They eat, sleep, think, breathe, move, and love people.

NT/Rationals: NTs gather data consisting largely of abstractions and possibilities (iNtuition), which they filter through their objective decision-making process (Thinking). Their driving force, in their never-ending quest for competence, is to theorize and intellectualize everything.

Leadership Styles and Temperament Type

SJ/Guardians:
Strengths - The SJ easily does those things which create stability in the system. They are decisive and enjoy the decision making process. The SJ understands the value of organizations as they exist and tries to conserve the organizational values. They understand policy and honor its intent. They are persevering, patient, work steadily with realistic ideas with how long a task will take, seldom make errors of fact, tend to be outstanding at precision work and can be counted on to follow through on commitments. Before an SJ takes action, they will weigh the consequences and will try to see the practical effectiveness of the decision. They possess and admire common sense. They are orderly and admire this in others. They will be on time and on schedule.
Weaknesses - The SJ may be somewhat impatient. If projects are delayed by complications, they may be inclined to decide issues too quickly and at times may not notice new things that need to be done. They are excellent at preserving the effective procedures of an organization but also may preserve less successful rules and regulations by not taking the time to examine them for results. They may not be as responsive to the changing needs of an organization that may be desirable especially in times of rapid change.

SP/Artisans:
Strengths - The SP is practical in every sense of the word. They deal with concrete problems in an expeditious manner. They can observe a system and see how it actually works, find where breakdowns and errors are occurring and figure out the corrections needed very rapidly. Under the SP leader change will be easy, as they can adapt easily to new situations. They welcome and seek change.

Weaknesses - The SP leader might be reluctant to pay attention to theory and may be impatient with obstructions. They do not like the unfamiliar and may react negatively to change that they themselves have not brought about. The SP lives fully in the immediate moment and has difficulty remembering commitments and decisions of the past. Current demands preempt anything else and leaves the SP leader in a position of being somewhat unpredictable to their colleges and their subordinates. When there is nothing to troubleshoot or negotiate, the SP may become rigid.

NF/Idealist:

Strengths - The leadership style of the NF is marked by personal charisma in commitment to the people they lead. They usually have a tongue of silver and communicate through caring speech and enthusiasm. They are sometimes gifted in seeing the possibilities of both the institution and the people with whom they work and focus intuitively on their strengths. They excel in working with and through people and as the head of a democratically run organization allow the contributions of all members of that organization to surface. They usually are comfortable in unstructured meetings.
More often than not, the NF is accurate about the organizational climate. They tend to be patient with complicated situations and can wait for the right time to move forward.
They can be extraordinary as the head of an organization, the visible leader who speaks well for the organization itself and for the people in it. They often have an unusual store of energies although this would seem to come in bursts powered by a new enthusiasm. Yesterday's projects, at that point, may not receive needed attention.

Weaknesses - The NF leader may find that other people's priorities eat much of their time because they are so responsive to interpersonal transactions - and in deed, seek them out. The NF tends to be very generous with their time even to the point of neglecting obligations outside of the organization, neglecting necessary recreational time. They desperately need to schedule renewal time for themselves if they are not to have their energies drained to the point where they are unproductive and immobilized.

NT/Rationals:

Strengths - The NT or visionary leader is the architect of change. They are interested in the principles on which the organization is built or is to be built. If the SJ is the pessimist, the NT is the skeptic. They question everything and base answers on laws and principles. They are able to see the dimensions and actions of systems as if possessing x-ray vision and so can plan and construct capably. Characteristically, the NT is able to see how the needs of the immediate system interlocks with those of other systems within the total structure. They see the interworkings of the system itself and the long- and short-range implications of events.

Weaknesses - The NT is involved in the creative process. They have enormous drive but once their castle is designed, they are more than willing to allow someone else to take over execution and construction. As a result, they may find that their designs and plans were not carried out to their satisfaction. They seldom blame others for any failures, only themselves (Keirsey & Bates, 1978).

<u>Research Significance</u>

The significance for personality and temperament typing within the agency is important for individual self-assessment in identifying strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, the agency's use of this assessment is an excellent technique for an organizational leadership profile to be developed. Clearly, an increased awareness and understanding of current leadership styles will aid in the agency's effort to promote Total Quality Management and the associated leadership philosophy.

Methods

The Personal Styles Inventory (PSI) instrument was administered to the current members of the PCSO who are assigned positions in executive and senior leadership, middle management and line supervision. An outside professional consultant administered the PSI instrument developed by Champagne and Hogan (1977) in a classroom setting in seven separate sessions with approximately thirty people attending each session. The instrument consists of 32 questions related to individual preferences in four dimensions: orientation to others, information gathering, information processing and action upon information (decision making).

Preference indicators are weighted by the participant which results in a dominant preference in each of the four dimensions. The combined preferences result in one type of the 16 possible personality types. Tie-breaker questions were given to participants with even scores on a dimension. Participants were then placed into leadership temperament types (SJ/Guardian, NT/Rational, SP/Artisan, NF/Idealist) according to their personality types.

The PCSO results were compared to the study by Kroeger and Thuesen (1992) which detailed the distribution of management/leadership by personality and temperament types. The PCSO results were also compared to the general population distribution by Keirsey and Bates (1978).

Results

The data collected (PSI results) concerning the personality and temperament types of 181 managers in the PCSO was gathered during the period of April-October, 1997. Table 1 details the 16 personality types of the group.

The temperament types of the PCSO are:

SJ	Guardian	133	73.5%
NT	Rational	1	6.1%
SP	Artisan	19	10.5%
NF	Idealist	18	9.9%

A study conducted by Kroeger & Thuesen (1992) reported the personality and temperament types of a sample group of line supervisors, middle, senior and executive management. Results of this survey are shown in table 2.

Table 1
Personality types of Polk County Sheriff's Office

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
60	22	3	5
33%	12.2%	1.7%	2.8%
ISTP	**ISFP**	**INFP**	**INTP**
6	4	3	1
3.3%	2.2%	1.7%	0.6%
ESTP	**ESFP**	**ENFP**	**ENTP**
4	5	8	1
2.2%	2.8%	4.4%	0.6%
ESTJ	**ESFJ**	**ENFJ**	**ENTJ**
31	20	4	4
17.1%	11%	2.2%	2.2%

Table 2
A sample of line supervisors, middle managers and senior executives

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
3236	226	109	1433
26.2%	1.8%	.9%	11.6%
ISTP	**ISFP**	**INFP**	**INTP**
464	55	108	474
3.8%	.5%	.9%	11.6%
ESTP	**ESFP**	**ENFP**	**ENTP**
329	87	149	835
2.7%	0.7%	1.2%	6.8%
ESTJ	**ESFJ**	**ENFJ**	**ENTJ**
2790	239	160	1623
22.7%	1.9%	1.3%	13.1%

The temperament types of the groups in Kroeger and Thuesen's (1992) study were:

SJ	Guardian	6491	52.7%
NT	Rational	4365	35.4%
SP	Artisan	935	7.6%
NF	Idealist	526	4.3%

A comparison of results between the Kroeger & Thuesen (1992) study and the PCSO study reveals dominance of the SJ/Guardian temperament type in both. However, the SJ/Guardian temperament type in the PCSO is decidedly more dominant (73.5% versus 52.7%). Additionally, the NT/Rational group in PCSO is markedly lower than in Kroeger and Thuesen's (1992) study (6.1% versus 35.4%). Another interesting finding is that the distribution of NFs in the PCSO (9.9%) is actually higher than findings in Kroeger and Thuesen's study (4.3%).

Keirsey and Bates (1978) reported that the distribution of temperament types in the general population is:

SJ	Guardian	38%
NT	Rational	12%
SP	Artisan	38%
NF	Idealist	12%

Compared to the general population, this suggests that the PCSO has small numbers of SP/Artisan types in its leadership ranks. Although this is consistent with studies of other leadership/management groups, it is noteworthy.

Discussion

Member Impact

Typically people group themselves by their perception of their own personalities and how well they get along with like personalities. It is also true that expectations are developed based on styles and traits. The fact that SJ/Guardians are the dominant temperament group in the PCSO is not unexpected. The SJ dominance may be indicative of past and present hiring and promotional practices based on subjective evaluations by leadership using their own similar personality traits. The SJ has reverence for tradition and preserving the same in the organization. This is certainly not unexpected in a law enforcement organization nor the fact that this type is the dominant temperament.

This may reveal a challenge to the agency as to the effectiveness and rate of acceptance regarding implementation of current Total Quality Management/Leadership practices. A particular concern is that SJs have a tendency to be more resistant to change than other temperament types. SJs are not necessarily an impediment but because of their enormous numerical dominance and tendency to resist change, it is notable.

A clear explanation for the lack of NT/Rationals may be difficult to provide. One

explanation may be that because of the historical political environment of the agency, retention and tenure has been based on surviving changes in the administration every four (4) years. It may be that SJs are much more suited to this type of environment. One attribute of the NT/Rationals are that they are long term visionaries. It may be that this particular attribute has not been compatible with the aforementioned political climate relative to four (4) year terms of the Sheriff. It is also true of the NTs that they are great starters of programs and initiatives but are quite willing to allow someone else to take over the continuation of programs and initiatives created by them. However, this observation is not intended to be conclusive or definitive at this point. But, clearly the absence of the NT type in leadership can significantly influence long-term planning and visioning requisite in TQM initiatives.

The distribution of SP/Artisans in the findings presents an irony given the previous references to the volatile political environment in which the leadership works. The SP is noted for their abilities as "trouble shooter" or "diplomat" (Keirsey & Bates, 1978).   One would certainly tend to believe that the attribute of a diplomat would, by that description, seem extremely compatible and be a "good fit" for the agency. However, SPs are also known for their flexibility and their openness concerning people and their ideas. Again, traditionally the agency has operated by very conservative and regimented standards which may be in conflict with the openness and flexibility of the SP/Artisan. Nevertheless, the distribution of the Artisan style of leadership at the PCSO is consistent with the findings of Kroeger & Thuesen (1992).

Likewise, the distribution of the NF/Idealist leader in the PCSO is also rather consistent with the findings of Kroeger & Thuesen (1992). In fact, the percentages of this charasmatic, people-oriented type is actually higher at the PCSO. Because the nature of law enforcement is rooted in public service and requires some degree of "people skills," this finding is not surprising.

Organizational Impact

Areas within the organization that might benefit from the use of the MBTI or PSI are:

- Job screening, hiring and placement.
- Trainer selection.
- Self-awareness in preparation for promotion and advancement
- Selection for special assignment or work on special projects teams.

The use of the MBTI/PSI as an external evaluation tool in any of these processes should be handled carefully because of the subjectivity that might be attached to its use. The instrument is not intended to be the absolute authority in determining the complete adequacy of an individual in an assignment. The key descriptors are "preference" and "indicators".

However, an area for future study at the PCSO is the impact of dominant personality/leadership temperaments on alignment with achieving the agency's goals of implementation and maintenance of Total Quality Management (Leadership). Clearly the benefits   of   appropriately   using   personality/temperament   typing   are   enhanced

organizational functioning.

A logical "next step" or initiative by the agency may be the implementation of Kouzes & Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) to measure the awareness and effectiveness of applied leadership skills. Once leadership practices are understood and applied by leaders within the organization, the use of the Leadership Practices Inventory enables individuals and groups to measure their own effectiveness in the application of best practices. The LPI instrument is a compilation of questions and statements which are designed to measure the understanding, application and effectiveness of the five (5) best practices. "The Leadership Practices Inventory was developed through a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative research methods and studies (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). The LPI currently contains thirty statements; six statements measure each of the five leadership practices. Both a Self and an Observer (previously labeled "Other") for the LPI have been developed. Participating individuals first complete the LPI-Self and then ask five or six people who are familiar with their behavior to complete the LPI-Observer. The LPI-Observer is voluntary, however, and generally anonymous. Typically, the instruments are returned directly to the researchers or seminar facilitator. The LPI takes approximately eight to ten minutes to complete, and it is capable of being either self- or computer-scored.

The agency has the opportunity to utilize Kouzes and Posner's LPI by incorporating it into the curricula of such training programs as the Management Training and Evaluation Program and other leadership development curricula.   Such actions would further strengthen the current TQM implementation and enhance organizational leadership skills. Likewise, continued research and development concerning personality profiles of the organizational leadership will enhance the organization's Total Quality Leadership initiative.

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