

# Leadership, Assumptions and Reality

Even the best leaders with the best of intentions are guilty of assuming too much. As they see staff members of different genders, ages and racial makeup working side by side, they might think that a specific person fits in a group that wants to multi-task at a fast pace because they are young, while their counterpart from another generation is interested in slowing down.

As we learn from experience, assumptions are often wrong. You may find that young employees may prefer devoting their attention to one workplace issue at a time, while an older co-worker is the multi-tasker. Many things, including life stages, could affect each of them. And leaders change work assignments based on erroneous assumptions, they could end up with a disgruntled employee, a poor performer and unmet goals.

The most effective method of managing diverse employees is to look at each one as an individual and to understand what motivates them. Then, they can be coached appropriately to get the behavior and results desired.

Effective coaches - and leaders are coaches - connect with individuals. Research reveals that individuals typically fall into six different groups that need different things to remain engaged on the job. This is widely relevant because most organizations, especially large ones, typically contain some of each group.

Briefly, the six worker segments include:

1. **Fair and Square Traditionalists**, who make up the largest part of the workforce at 20 percent. They are loyal and traditional as their name implies, and want their work to provide stability and a secure future.
2. **Stalled Survivors**, who represent 19 percent of the workforce. These workers see their jobs as a necessity. It is not the most satisfying part of their lives. These are often younger workers.
3. **Accomplished Contributors**, about 17 percent of the workforce. These loyal players often go above and beyond what is expected. They also place a value on teamwork.
4. **Demanding Disconnects**, 15 percent of our workers. As their name suggests, they are the least satisfied with work and are the least committed to it.
5. **Maverick Morphers**, also about 15 percent of the workplace. These workers are generally young, like excitement, and do not fear taking risks.
6. **Self-Employed Innovators**, about 14 percent. These employees make up the most engaged segment of the workforce and derive personal satisfaction from the job.

To be more successful, leaders will have to study their people more intently than they have ever done before to learn what makes them tick. You are likely seeing these different segments in your school system now, and perhaps may not fully understand the transformation taking place or realize how widespread the changes are. Now that you know, why not take the time to find out what you can do to help your people become more productive?

**The Profiles Performance Indicator** and **Team Analysis** are assessment tools that together can aid you in identifying individual performance characteristics, individual strengths and what characteristics each person possesses that will make them and your teams more effective and efficient. Over time, you and they should experience improved communication, productivity and a more positive work culture that reflects your attention to the most important resource you have – your people!

With Adaptations from Profiles International Inc. CEO Jim Sirbasku's Review of [Go Put Your Strengths to Work: 6 Powerful Steps to Achieve Outstanding Performance](#) by Marcus Buckingham.

