

TEAMWORK

Handwriting reveals potential for conflict in team members.

No business can avoid team activities as part of their ongoing functionality. The coach has the daunting task of getting existing teams to work harmoniously ultimately to reach higher levels of performance. Harmonious working together implies getting divergent personalities to communicate effectively, complement each other's thinking styles, identifying strengths and weaknesses in each of the members of the team and putting strategies in place to diffuse potential conflict which may undermine the success of the team.

Zeus and Skiffington (2007) define group or team coaching as working with a number of people involved in a common focus, e.g. a project or maintaining the functions of a department.

Groups are made up of divergent personalities and characters and conflict is bound to surface. It is therefore important that the coach is aware of and understands how the various personalities interact where the source of the conflict is likely to be.

On the other hand, too much group cohesiveness can prove counter productive. Janis 1982 in Baron and Byrne 2003, p509 state that 'once groupthink takes hold in a decision-making group, pressure towards maintaining high levels of group consensus overrides the motivation to evaluate all potential courses of action,' and make the best decision. So the coach must be able to manage a certain amount of constructive conflict which is necessary for innovation and change to occur.

Baron and Byrne 2003, state that people in a group situation will take one of three approaches. These include a *cooperative* orientation where they prefer to maximise the joint outcome; an *individual* orientation where they are more concerned about what is good for them; and *competitive* approach where the focus is to force their own wills down on others.

Other factors which cause conflict include communication patterns and personal characteristics. Type A individuals are highly competitive while Type B are less impatient and less confrontational. Type B personalities may find Type A personalities overbearing, while Type A personalities may find Type B personalities' laid back approach infuriating. How can the coach anticipate the potential for conflict? Psychometric tests have their limitations. Psychometric tests cannot tell whether the team member can be relied on to follow through on responsibilities, or whether the team member is over-sensitive to criticism, or whether the team member is likely to treat his colleagues with disrespect, or whether the team member is likely to be argumentative, and many other traits.

But an analysis of handwriting can certainly reveal these aspects of character.

"Handwriting belongs to the field of psycho-diagnostics, the science of applied psychology. (Singer 1993, p 39).

Handwriting can give the coach a very good idea of personality and character. The handwriting analysis identifies aspects of character which will complement each other in team members and areas which may cause conflict and thus undermine the success of the team.

An analysis of a specimen of handwriting of each of the members of a team will give the coach a very sound idea of the type of people s/he is dealing with and how they will interact with each other and why they will interact in the way they do. This knowledge will allow the coach to anticipate the best possible approaches to solving potential conflict amongst them or to facilitate harmonious interaction between quite different personalities. Coaching individuals on the type of communication each responds to most positively, what motivates each one, how to handle those character traits which may cause potential conflict, facilitates effective interpersonal interaction and ultimately cohesive teams.

An analysis of the handwriting shown in Specimen A will reveal that the writer of specimen A may have difficulty interacting in a group situation. However, if one of the other team members is the writer of specimen B below, the writer of specimen A would be encouraged and inspired to do his best as the writer of specimen B is a natural manager and has the ability to inspire and encourage his staff.

Specimen A

It was a pleasure to get better acquainted with the Andersons

Specimen B

growing businesses in the Chicago Metropolitan area. We provide a broad range of products

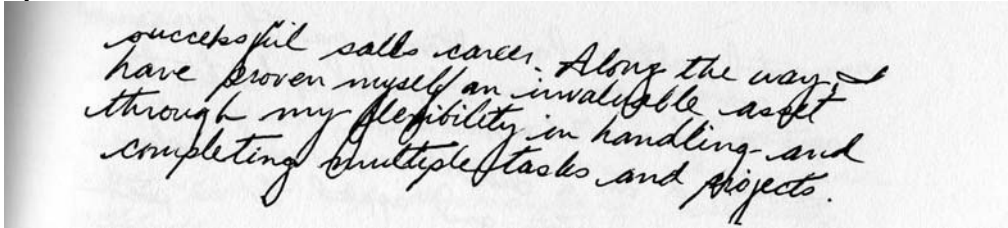
The writer of specimen C tends to micro manage his staff

Specimen C

states she would not accept a position with Hrd Chemical and is emphatic about it

If the writer of specimen D below were to be a subordinate of the above manager, he would experience a great deal of frustration as he has high energy, is quite wilful and knows how to take charge of himself. But he also lacks discipline and tends not to finish what he starts and doesn't enjoy routine.

Specimen D



737 words.

References

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