

Behavioral Inclination and Driving Forces for Volunteer Community Leaders

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the behavioral styles and value orientation of individuals who volunteer for community leadership training programs sponsored by Chambers of Commerce (COC) and/or Economic Develop Corporations (EDC). Participants were given the TTI Talent Insights® instrument, which measured behavioral characteristics, motivators and driving forces. Community involvement and education programs appear to be a popular theme with COCs and EDCs. A common approach is the various volunteer community leadership programs. These leadership programs are typically volunteers who, in many cases, go through a formal vetting process. Typically, leadership programs last approximately nine months. This research will demonstrate that individuals who volunteer for such programs tend to be more relational-oriented as opposed to task-oriented. Additionally, the research suggests that, from a values perspective, they are not strongly driven to acquire knowledge, assist others, or to be creative. Interestingly, they are not driven to change their traditional approach to problem solving and their system of living.

Keywords: DISC, Chamber of Commerce, values, driving forces, behavioral styles, community leaders.

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INTRODUCTION

Universities and Community Colleges have been involved with Chambers of Commerce (COC) and/or Economic Development Corporations (EDC) to provide leadership training to volunteer community leadership programs in three major cities in Central Texas. As part of this training, the TTI Talent Insights® instrument, which measures behavioral characteristics, motivators and driving forces, was used to examine the behavioral styles and value orientations of participants in community leadership training programs. Data were collected over a five-year period.

A substantial search of academic data bases suggested that little research, if any, has been conducted to identify the traits and characteristics of those volunteering for community leadership training programs. The purpose of this research was to explore the traits and characteristics of those volunteering for community leadership programs. The research conclusions have potential to identify those who do not fit the existing model of those joining such programs. In other words, how do COCs and EDCs recruit individuals who are not being drawn into leadership training programs.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Volunteer Community Leaders

One estimate suggests that there are over 7,500 Chambers of Commerce (COC) in the United States (Handler, 2013). Many of the COCs are responsible for economic development or work closely with Economic Development Corporations (Lucas, 2013). The three community leadership groups in this research were either sponsored by their respective Chamber of Commerce or Economic Development Corporation (EDC). In cases where the Economic Development Corporation sponsored the leadership training, the COC was closely involved. Volunteer community leadership programs exist under a variety of names. The majority of these programs have some similarity. First, they are volunteers. Participants make application and are evaluated for their fit with the program through a vetting process. Typically, there is a fee charged for participation. Often the fee is paid by the organization for which the participant works.

Volunteer community leadership programs include as an integral part of their training leadership development and gaining an in-depth understanding of the participants' community educational systems, local industry, governmental systems and health care systems. Many of the volunteer community leadership programs run from eight to 10 months. Typically, the programs meet one day per month.

Behavior Styles

The TTI Talent Insights® instrument used in this research categorizes behaviors using a four-dimension model first developed by William Marston (Marston, 1928). The four dimensions in Marston's model are D or Dominance, I or Influencing, S or Steadiness or Supportiveness, and C or Compliance or Conscientiousness (Bonnstetter & Suiter, 2007; Wittmann, 2008; Zigarmi, Blanchard, O'Conner & Edeburn, 2005). Bonnstetter and Suiter (2007) describes the four dimensions follows:

Dominance. The Dominance style of behavior is direct and decisive. These individuals feel that it is important to achieve goals, they do not need to be told what to do, and they set high standards. When projects take too long, they grow impatient. They enjoy competition and want

to win. They are sometimes blunt and come to the point directly. “D” individuals tend to be direct, controlling, risk-taking, pessimistic, judging, extroverted, change-oriented, and fight-oriented.

Influencing. The Influencing behavior style reflects outgoing, optimistic individuals who love to communicate, and are commonly referred to as people persons. These individuals tend to participate in team and group activities; they like the limelight though may not want to lead. “I” individuals prefer to be direct, accepting, risk-taking, optimistic, perceiving, extroverted, change-oriented and flight-oriented.

Steadiness. The Steadiness behavior style shows sympathetic, cooperative behavior. Helping others and fitting in are important to these individuals though they are hesitant to implement change and do not like to be in the limelight. “S” individuals tend to be indirect, accepting, risk-assessing, optimistic, perceiving, introverted, continuity-oriented, and flight-oriented.

Compliance. The Compliance behavior style tends to be reliable and trustworthy. These individuals will plan out a strategy considering all the facts and possible malfunctions, and they prefer to work alone. “C” individuals prefer to be indirect, controlling, risk-assessing, pessimistic, judging, introverted, continuity-oriented, and fight-oriented.

It should be noted that individuals generally are a combination of the four dimensions. However, one or two contribute significantly to one’s behavioral style (Bonnstetter & Suiter, 2007). As pointed out by Bonnstetter and Suiter (2007), there is no one best style. Each style has its strengths and challenges.

The TTI Talent Insights® instrument also lists a Behavioral Hierarchy and ranks 12 behaviors commonly encountered in the workplace. The instrument report ranks the twelve behaviors from strongest to weakest. The elements of the Behavioral Hierarchy are defined below:

- Competitive - Want to win or gain an advantage.
- Organized Workplace - Establish and maintain specific order in daily activities.
- Persistence - Finish tasks despite challenges or resistance.
- Following Policy - Adhere to rules, regulations, or existing methods.
- Analysis - Compile, confirm and organize information.
- Consistent - Perform predictably in repetitive situations.
- Frequent Change - Rapidly shift between tasks.
- Customer-Oriented - Identify and fulfill customer expectations.
- Urgency - Take immediate action.
- Interaction - Frequently engage and communicate with others.
- Versatile - Adapt to various situations with ease.
- People-Oriented - Build rapport with a wide range of individuals.

Driving Forces (Motivators)

Building on the work of Eduard Spranger, Bill Bonnstetter developed and validated the 12 Driving Forces (Motivators) that are part of the TTI Talent Insights® reports. The 12 driving forces and their associated characteristics are (Talent Insights® Management-Staff Sample Report, n.d.):

- Selfless - People who are driven by completing tasks for the sake of completion, with little expectation of personal return.

Harmonious - People who are driven by the experience, subjective viewpoints and balance in their surroundings.

Intellectual - People who are driven by opportunities to learn, acquire knowledge and the discovery of truth.

Intentional - People who are driven to assist others for a specific purpose, not just for the sake of being helpful or supportive.

Structured - People who are driven by traditional approaches, proven methods and a defined system for living.

Collaborative - People who are driven by being in a supporting role and contributing with little need for individual recognition.

Receptive - People who are driven by new ideas, methods and opportunities that fall outside a defined system for living.

Commanding - People who are driven by status, recognition and control over personal freedom.

Altruistic - People who are driven to assist others for the satisfaction of being helpful or supportive.

Objective - People who are driven by the functionality and objectivity of their surroundings.

Instinctive - People who are driven by utilizing past experiences, intuition and seeking specific knowledge when necessary.

Resourceful - People who are driven by practical results, maximizing both efficiency and returns for their investments of time, talent, energy and resources.

The 12 Driving Forces (Motivators) are the “why” behind what we do (12 Driving Forces Manual: Reference Guide, 2016). They move us to action. However, not all of the 12 Driving Forces move us to action. The TTI Talent Insights® Report groups the twelve into 3 categories. The top four are Primary Drivers, the next four are Situational Drivers and the bottom four are Indifferent Drivers (12 Driving Forces Manual: Reference Guide, 2016). The 12 Driving Forces Manual: Reference Guide (2016, p 79) provides the following descriptions.

PRIMARY

The top four Driving Forces create a cluster that moves a person to action most if not all the time. Thus, by focusing on the cluster rather than a single driver, combinations are created that are very specific to the individual. The closer the scores are to each other the more a person employs each driver. When dealing with the Primary cluster, it is important to consider which Primary Driving Force is the most relevant in a particular context.

SITUATIONAL

The middle four driving forces create a cluster of drivers that come into play on a situational basis. While not as significant as the primary drivers, they can influence a person’s action in certain scenarios. In various situations the person may operate based one or more of these Situational Driving Forces.

INDIFFERENT

The cluster of drivers with the lowest scores is the Indifferent Driving Forces Cluster. The person may be unresponsive, not caring either way to some or all of the drivers in this cluster. However, these factors may also elicit an adverse reaction when interacting with people who have one or more of these as a primary driver. (p 79)

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

The research was guided by the following questions:

Research Question 1. Is there a significant difference in the frequency of behavioral style representations of volunteer participants as compared to what would be expected by chance for a random sample of the population?

Research Question 2. Which of the 12 Driving Forces are significantly different between participants volunteering for community leadership programs when compared to population norms?

Sample

Three volunteer community leadership programs were used for this research. All three are located in one of the fastest growing areas in North Central Texas and range in population from 20,000 to 56,000. City growth rates from 2000 to 2010 range from 138% to 241% (CensusViewer, n.d.). The sample consisted of 250 individuals, which consisted of 155 females and 95 males. As part of the leadership development, participants were given the TTI Talent Insights® instrument. Participants then received three to four hours of training in how to interpret their report. Teambuilding and communication were also a focus of the training.

For purposes of this research, two areas of the report were used. First, the Success Insights® Wheel (Figure 1) was used to categorize participants into D, I, S or C (Behaviors Debriefing Guide, n.d.). Data were collected from 250 participants.

The Wheel is a representation of how the D, I, S and C constructs combine or blend. As shown in Figure 1, there is a dot in the upper middle portion of the figure. In the example, this participant is strongly task oriented and somewhat in the middle of the Introverted – Extroverted dimension. For purposes of this research this participant would be labeled a task oriented-extrovert or D. Each participant was placed in the Success Insights® Wheel. While, the TTI Talent Insights® report's Success Insights® Wheel gave participants an indication of their natural and adaptive behaviors, the research only considers the natural. Natural behavior is "a person's behavior, the core, the 'real you' when in your comfort zone or in stress situations" (Behaviors Debriefing Guide, n.d., p. 9).

TTI (2003) reported strong reliability for the Success Insights® Wheel categories. Cronbach's Alpha for the natural dimension of the four parallel scales are shown in Table 1. Thus, the Success Insights® Wheel has demonstrated strong scale construction and reliability with all measures exceeding the standard .70 threshold for reliability statistics.

The second information from the TTI Talent Insights® report was the 12 Driving Forces. Due to changes in the TTI Talent Insights® report, data for only 120 participants (75 females, 45 males) were included in this sample. Figure 2 – Driving Forces (Talent Insights® Management-Staff Sample Report. (n.d.)) is an example of the information provided for each participant. The 12 Driving Forces are present in order of intensity. For example, in Figure 1, the driving force of Selfless has a population norm of 40 on a scale of 0 to 100. This individual scored approximately 82 which is outside on standard deviation (approximately 18 to 60). Selfless would be considered a primary driving force.

The TTI Talent Insights® report also has been evaluated for scale construction and reliability. According to TTI (2017), the Talent Insights® instrument demonstrates strong reliability across the six Motivators that are used to compute the 12 Driving Forces Scores. TTI explains that Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients are reported only for the six Motivator scores because reliability measurements evaluate the internal consistency of the instrument, not the methodology for generating scores. Table 2 summarizes the reliability estimates. These data provide evidence that the instrument that is scored and used to compute Driving Forces scores is internally consistent and reliable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To address the first research question, we examined the characteristics of individuals who volunteer for community leadership programs. Using the Success Insights® Wheel, each of the 250 participants were categorized as a D, I, S or C. The Chi-square test for Independence was computed to examine differences in expected and observed frequencies across D, I, S, C Wheel position. For this analysis X^2 ($df = 3$) = 58.492, $p < .001$. There were 43 participants who fell into the D category, 97 in the I category, 73 in the S category, and 37 in the C. Table 3 Behavioral Wheel Position represents the category grouping.

DISC behavior factors are defined as follows (Vrba, 2008) and shown in Table 4:

Dominance (D). The dominance style of behavior is direct and decisive. These individual feels that it is important to achieve goals, they do not need to be told what to do, and they set high standards. When projects take too long, they grow impatient: they enjoy competition and want to win. They are sometimes blunt and come to the point directly. "D" individuals tend to be direct, controlling, risk-taking, pessimistic, judging, extroverted, change-oriented, and fight-oriented.

Influencing. (I) The Influencing behavior style reflects outgoing, optimistic individuals who love to communicate, and are people persons. These individuals tend to participate in team and group activities; they like the limelight though may not want to lead. "I" individuals prefer to be direct, accepting, risk-taking, optimistic, perceiving, extroverted, change-oriented and flight-oriented.

Steadiness (S). The Steadiness behavior style shows sympathetic, cooperative behavior. Helping others and fitting in are important to these individuals though they are hesitant to implement change and do not like to be in the limelight. "S" individuals tend to be indirect, accepting, risk-assessing, optimistic, perceiving, introverted, continuity-oriented, and flight-oriented.

Compliance (C). The Compliance behavior style tends to be reliable and trustworthy. These individuals will plan out a strategy considering all the facts and possible malfunctions, and they prefer to work alone. "C" individuals prefer to be indirect, controlling, risk-assessing, pessimistic, judging, introverted, continuity-oriented, and fight-oriented.

Overall, the results of the chi-square analysis indicated that the distribution of individuals across the four categories differed significantly from what we would expect by chance if we were to measure a random sample of participants. Thus, our sample has some unique characteristics in that we had higher frequencies of participants in specific categories.

As can be seen from Figure 3, the two largest categories represented in the sample are I and S. These findings suggest that the majority of participants are relational-oriented because the relational orientation is part of both the S and I categories.

Table 5 is a comparison of the Task versus Relational components. These frequency data further suggest that many of the participants in our sample have a strong relational component.

To address the first research question, we computed single-sample *t*-tests to compare the sample mean scores on each Behavioral Hierarchy to the corresponding published population mean. The results of these analyses are shown in Table 6. Participants scored higher in frequent interaction with others, higher in people orientation, and higher in following policy. However, participants scored lower in following-up and following-through.

In an attempt to understand further individuals who volunteer to complete community leadership programs, our second participant sample completed the TTI Talent Insights® report which yielded scores for the 12 Driving Forces. We used information about the 12 Driving Forces to understand how our sample differs from the population. Thus, we addressed our second research question by comparing our sample means to those of the population.

To address the second research question, single-sample *t*-tests were conducted to compare sample mean scores to the reported population mean scores for the 12 Driving Forces. Table 7 summarizes the results. Note that an asterisk (*) denotes $p < .05$. The third column in this table indicates the direction of the difference, if statistically significant, between the sample mean and the population mean.

The data suggest that, when compared to the population, our sample participants possess the following characteristics:

Less intellectually driven – participants are not as driven by opportunities to learn, acquire knowledge and the discovery of truth.

More altruistic driven – participants are more driven to assist others for the satisfaction of being helpful or supportive.

Higher need for structured approaches – participants are more driven by traditional approaches, proven methods and a defined system for living.

More instinctively driven – participants are more driven to utilizing past experiences, intuition and seeking specific knowledge when necessary.

Less intentional driven – participants are not driven to assist others for a specific purpose, but for just the sake of being helpful or supportive.

Less receptive – participants are not driven by new ideas, methods and opportunities that fall outside a defined system for living.

CONCLUSION

Intuitively, it would seem that community volunteers would have a strong inclination towards people. Descriptive data from Table 3 would seem to support that perception with participants having a strong relational component in their behavioral style. This notion also appears to be supported by findings in Table 5 where participants have a higher tendency to interact with others and are more people oriented than the population means. Additionally, Table 7 suggests that participants are more altruistic than the population and, therefore, are driven to assist others just for the satisfaction of being helpful. Furthermore, Table 7 indicated that participants are more intentional to help others just for the sake of helping and less for other purposes.

At the end of the 8-10 month community leadership training programs used in this research, was a group project that benefits the community (e.g., painting, building, gardening and beautification). Participants were free to use their own ideas to create a program. Interviews with the facilitators of community leadership programs indicated that, while the participants could develop these project ideas, they had great difficulty in implementing the ideas. This is supported by the low scores in follow-up/follow-thru (Table 6) with additional low scores in task behaviors (Table 3). Consideration should be given to projects that are more “people” oriented or providing additional help with implementing a project.

Perhaps community leadership programs need more structure and more traditional methods. Table 7 indicates that participants had a higher need for traditional approaches than the population. They are less receptive to new ideas and methods. In fact, they are less driven to learn and acquire knowledge. Early planning for projects could help by giving participants more time to focus on the details and structure of the project. Because those sampled were in a leadership training program, the curriculum could benefit from instruction in creative problem solving and innovation.

Facilitators and planners of community leadership training and development programs should consider the type behavioral styles that would make for a successful community leader. One example would be to assign workgroups and teams with an intentional mix of behavioral styles. Certainly, the findings of this research should be considered, but only as a starting point since little research could be found in this area.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This research was limited to a narrow geographical region. Therefore, more research is needed into the behavioral design and outcomes that includes a broader sample size. Specific behavioral characteristics that makes for a successful community leader should be explored in relationship to expected outcomes. In gathering data from the leadership groups studied, specific and measurable outcomes could not be found beyond some general descriptions of the program purpose. Since little research could be found in the area of volunteer leadership, more general research is needed.

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APPENDIX

Figure 1 – Success Insights Wheel

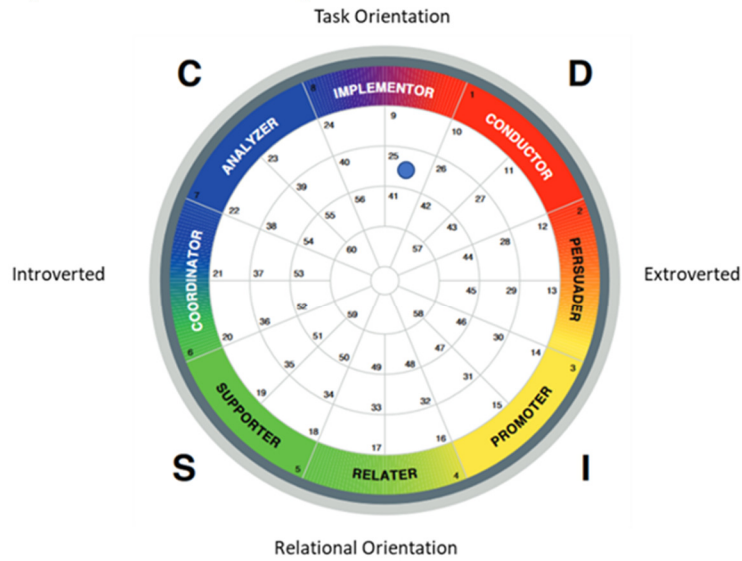


Figure 1 – Success Insights® Wheel

Figure 2 – Driving Forces Example



Figure 2 – Driving Forces Example

I B
B

Figure 3 - DISC Quadrant Sample Distribution

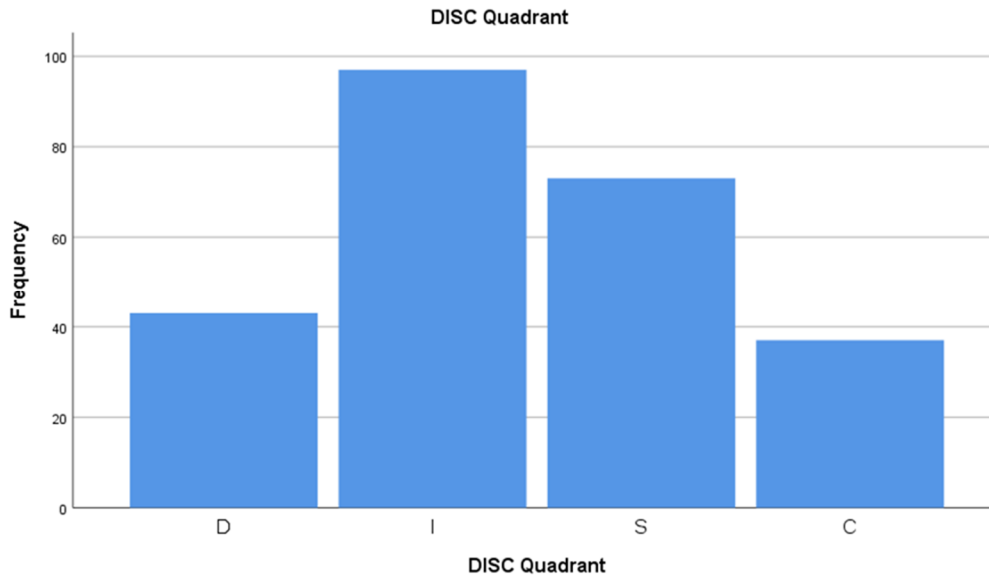


Table 1 - Cronbach's Alpha Statistics for D, I, S, C scales

Scale	Alpha
D - Dominance	.84
I - Influence	.81
S - Steadiness	.72
C - Compliance	.80

J B

S B

Table 2 – Cronbach’s Alpha for Motivators

Motivator	Cronbach’s Alpha
Theoretical	.85
Utilitarian	.82
Aesthetic	.82
Social	.88
Individualistic	.84
Traditional	.83

Table 3 – Wheel Frequency Distribution

Behavioral Category	Frequency	Percent
D - Dominance	43	17.2
I - Influence	97	38.8
S - Steadiness	73	29.2
C - Compliance	37	14.8
Total	250	100.0

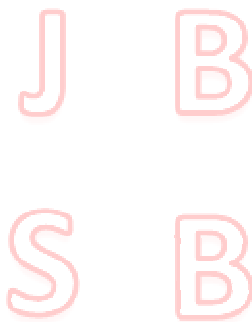


Table 4 – DISC Category Definitions

Behavioral Category	Task Oriented	Relational Oriented	Introvert	Extrovert
D - Dominance	x			x
I - Influence		x		x
S - Steadiness		x	x	
C - Compliance	x		x	

Table 5 – Comparison of Task versus Relational Components

	High IS (both I and S above the Energy Line)	Mixed IS (Either I or S above the Energy Line)	Low IS (neither I or S above the Energy Line)
Frequency	109	130	11
Percentage	43.6	52.0	4.4

J B
S B

Table 6 – Single-Sample t-Test Comparisons of Behavioral Hierarchy – Sample vs. Population

Behavioral Hierarchy	t-test value	Difference
Urgency	$t(249) = 1.206$	None
Frequent Interaction Others	$t(249) = 2.798^*$	Sample scored higher
Organized Workplace	$t(249) = -1.612$	None
Analysis of Data	$t(249) = -1.036$	None
Competitiveness	$t(249) = 0.826$	None
Versatility	$t(249) = 1.049$	None
People Oriented	$t(249) = 3.760^*$	Sample scored higher
Frequent Change	$t(249) = 1.973$	None
Consistency	$t(249) = 0.319$	None
Customer Relationships	$t(249) = -0.863$	None
Follow-up/Follow-through	$t(249) = -3.045^*$	Sample scored lower
Following Policy	$t(249) = 3.359^*$	Sample scored higher

Note: * denotes $p < .05$

J B

S B

Table 7 – Single Sample *t*-tests for Driving Forces Sample Comparison to Population

Driving Force	<i>t</i> -test value	Difference
Intellectual	$t(120) = -4.79^*$	Sample scored lower
Resourceful	$t(120) = -0.47$	None
Harmonious	$t(120) = -1.53$	None
Altruistic	$t(120) = 2.76^*$	Sample scored higher
Commanding	$t(120) = 0.56$	None
Structured	$t(120) = 2.88^*$	Sample scored higher
Instinctive	$t(120) = 4.15^*$	Sample scored higher
Selfless	$t(120) = 0.81$	None
Objective	$t(120) = 1.59$	None
Intentional	$t(120) = -3.25^*$	Sample scored lower
Collaborative	$t(120) = -0.54$	None
Receptive	$t(120) = -3.45^*$	Sample scored lower

Note: * denotes $p < .05$