

UKG

What's Your Work Personality?



Introduction

Working life has been on a transformative journey in recent years. As the turbulence brought on by the pandemic finally subsides and the working world attempts to settle into a different shape, business leaders are now met by a variety of challenges, from labour shortages and mass layoffs to geopolitical unrest and economic uncertainty.

We are now seeing a shift in where people prefer to work, their preferences in how they communicate with colleagues and, on a deeper level, what motivates them. In this new future of work, people's needs are widely varied, and the modern employee has higher expectations than ever for the employee experience.

The task of managing people through this evolving phase of work cannot be underestimated, and unforeseen circumstances have historically had long-lasting impacts on the way people approach work from both sides. To address these changes, UKG commissioned a market research project to analyse the five main personality types and garner insights into how they like to work best.

We wanted to gain an even better understanding of the workplace of today and what employees want and need.

Our research attempts to answer five crucial questions about the make-up of the modern workforce:

- How do people like to work?
- Where do people prefer to work?
- How do they work with other people?
- What type of management are they most receptive to?
- What is HR technology's role in helping to improve the employee experience?

With the support and assistance of behavioural psychologist Donna Dawson, this whitepaper explores the people that make up the UK workforce and supports managers on how to get the best out of them. Dawson has more than 25 years' experience specialising in personality and behaviour and is an expert in explaining how a person's behaviour and choices reflect back on their personality.

Dawson analysed the survey data and identified five personality types that are commonly found across teams, departments and businesses. She shared her analysis on what makes them tick, as well as advice on how to create a working environment in which all of these personalities can thrive.

Readers will better understand how to build a work environment and culture that aligns with different personality types, improving employee experience and performance.

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Methodology

As part of UKG's research into this topic, a survey was conducted in collaboration with Censuswide that sought responses from 2,000 UK workers between 14.02.23 - 16.02.23. Respondents were asked a series of questions and asked to select the response that most suited their own working life and personality.

The results were then analysed with the support of behavioural psychologist Donna Dawson to determine the five key personality types and determine their key traits, features and working style.

Demographics

The demographics of the 2000 respondents are an important consideration when analysing the results of the survey. The differing circumstances of people will often indicate their preferred working styles or may give clues about why people answered the way that they did.

In the same vein, it's valuable to analyse where age might affect survey results. Generational differences may mean that people prefer to work collaboratively while others prefer to work independently. Those working in busier towns and cities may also have similarly distinguishing features.

In our survey, the majority of those contacted were female, aged between 25-34, living in London with one pet and no children. That said, large members of other groups were also surveyed, with 28% of respondents aged between 35-44 and 35% with no pets at all.

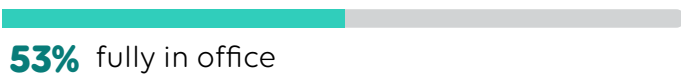
Here is a full breakdown of the survey respondents:

Gender



61% Female

Working circumstances



5% fully at home

3% fully in a shared workspace

38% hybrid

Age



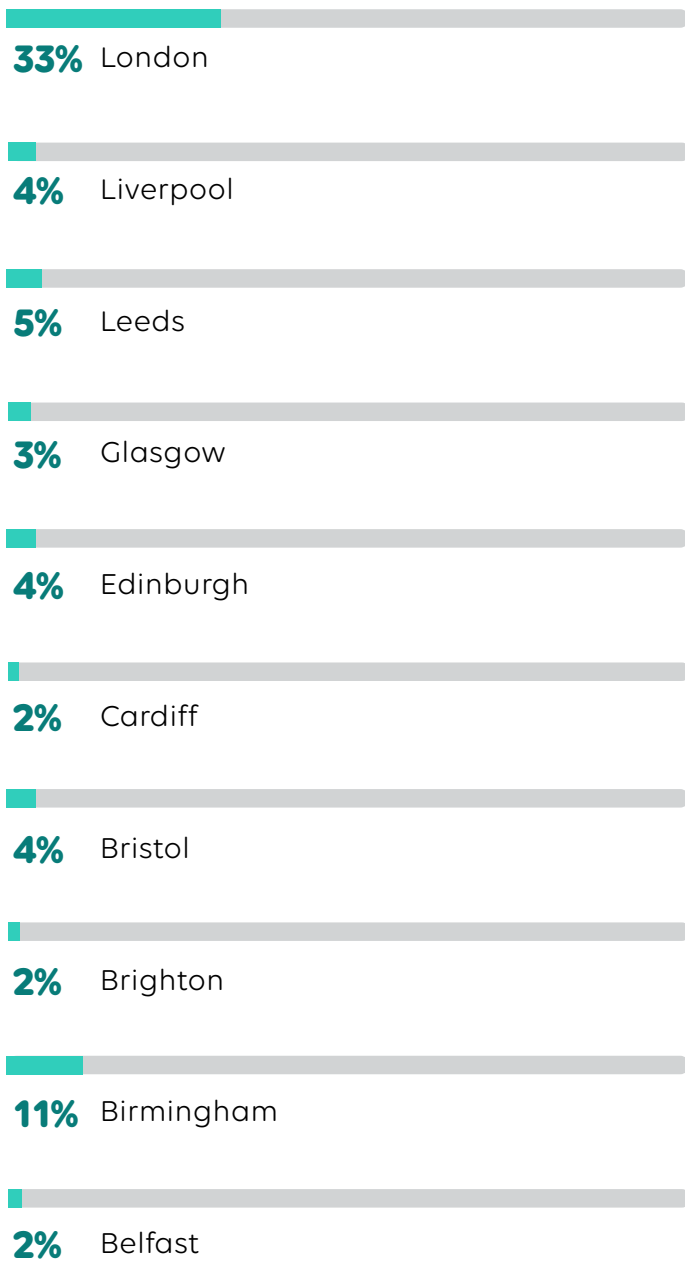
30% 25-34

29% 35-44

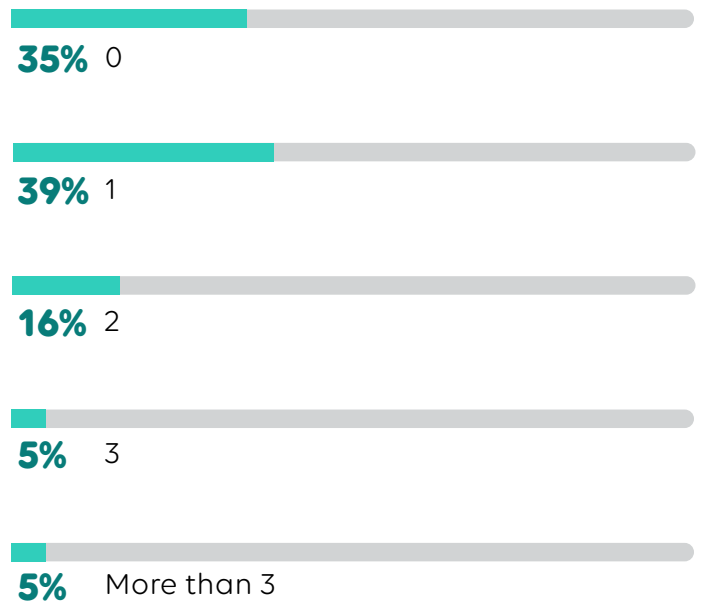
17% 45-54

9% 55+

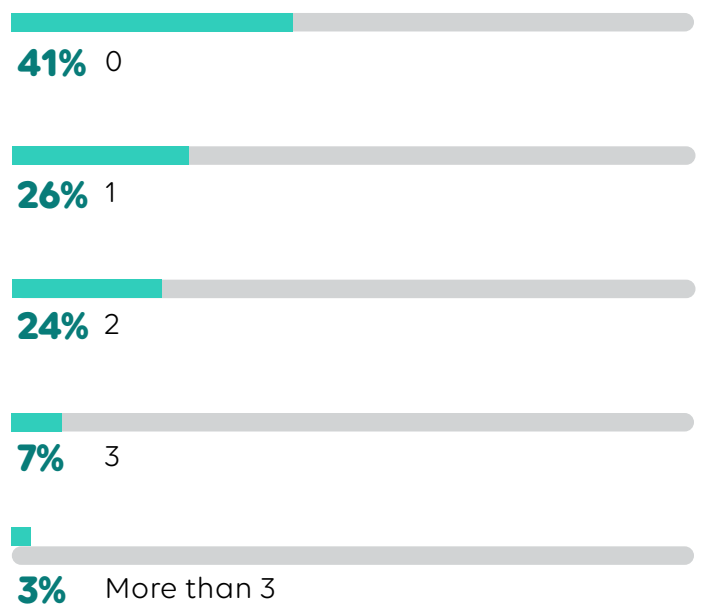
Closest city



Pets



Children



Personality types

1. The Go Getter



Who are they?

Just 9% of survey respondents were a Go Getter personality type. The Go Getter is outgoing and energetic with a high level of self-belief. Examples of the Go Getter in popular culture include Ben Francis, co-founder and CEO of sports clothing brand Gymshark or Michael Jordan, athlete turned businessman and the face of the world's most popular trainer.

According to psychologist and workplace expert Donna Dawson, in a work setting, the Go Getter is known for their competitive and results driven nature. They work well in environments where success is tangible and measured easily.

They are very hard-working, persevering, and persistent – often to the point of being workaholics. They are single-minded and focused on their goals both day to day and in their long-term career.

According to our survey data, the Go Getter is the least common personality type.

How to get the most out of the Go Getter

Tips for managers

The Go Getter works best when the rules and rewards of what is expected are clear and pre-determined. This way, they can easily measure their level of success and achievement against a set standard. Creating direct and tangible feedback is useful to support Go Getters and get the best out of them.

Communication with Go Getters should be short and to the point so that any words of advice are actionable. They have a preference to be communicated with via instant messaging platforms and services such as Teams and Slack, as these are useful tools for passing on information quickly.

Supporting growth at work

The best way to support the growth of a Go Getter is by exposing them to new opportunities and new experiences. Pushing them outside of their comfort zone can be key to their development.

Our survey data found that the Go Getter typically likes to make decisions quickly when pushed, so encouraging them to be more analytical and patient in their decision making or seeking external support can be a good first step in their development.

Similarly, the Go Getter expressed a desire to work alone rather than in a team but asserted that they would be willing to work collaboratively should their ideas be supported by other colleagues. Encouraging the Go Getter to work with others and be open to the value of external ideas and visions can be a key area for their development.

Virtual vs in person

According to our survey data, the Go Getter excels when working both in person or virtually but with the caveat of enjoying independent work so that they can power their own development, agenda, and careers.

Supporting this employee by utilising feedback forms that can be completed virtually at a time that works best for them can be a good way to find out where their needs aren't being met and where they may benefit from further support.

Donna Dawson: "This personality is outgoing and energetic, with a single-minded focus on the goals that they need to achieve. To get along with this personality type, managers must set clear targets and give them the steps to achieve those goals. Show them how to develop a distinct competitive advantage and tell them what you expect the results will be. They are linear thinkers, and they just want to get going."

2. The Visionary



Who are they?

The Visionary has a similar level of drive and determination as the Go Getter, but this energy is put into discovering new ideas and possibilities or finding a new solution to an age-old problem.

In popular culture, the Visionary is best embodied in the people that are famed for their ground-breaking ideas. Good examples include Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple and pioneer of the smartphone, or James Dyson, who continuously creates products that set aside traditional design principles in favour of unique and innovative ones.

According to Donna Dawson, these people are innovators who are bursting with creativity and have a passion for adventure. They always seek the bigger picture, leaving the details and hard graft for others to sort out.

Our data revealed that the Visionary makes up 14% of survey respondents.

How to get the most out of the Visionary

Tips for managers

The Visionary is particularly receptive to feedback. Of all our workplace personality types, they are the only type that truly welcomes all feedback, citing that it can help in the formulation of ideas. This means when working with the Visionary, it counts to take the time to be as detailed as possible during one-to-one meetings and appraisals.

They also prefer communication to be in-person and enjoy back and forth discussions that establish and explore the best course of action.

Margin for error

While clearly hungry to use their bold ideas to shape the bigger picture, the Visionary can find that they fall short when it comes to detail. Our survey revealed a creative spark in these people, so much so that they can often neglect to notice the finer details of work. It's crucial therefore that managers can support and guide the Visionary to take the time to take stock of the details.

This is exactly why they work best in companies where the structure is flexible and the atmosphere is relaxed, giving them the freedom to express themselves. Visionaries are clear that exchanging ideas is the best way to get the most out of their talents, so people managers should seek to foster situations that can spark new ideas, where the Visionary can take charge and drive innovation.

There's no 'I' in team

It's no secret that teamwork really does make the dream work here. The Visionary works effectively in brain-storming sessions, sitting around a table and bouncing ideas off their colleagues.

That said, there's a lingering need for alone time to allow them to process high energy idea generation sessions. It's therefore no surprise that Visionaries have expressed a need to work in environments where they can be both stimulated by the interaction with colleagues and can also process this at a time that suits them.

Donna Dawson: "This personality type has the same energy and drive of the 'the Go Getter', but it is motivated by something very something different: discovering new ideas and possibilities or finding a new angle for an old idea. Managers must show them how their success can be achieved in a clear and concise way to help them understand the details that they are often hazy on."

3. The Negotiator



Who are they?

21% of respondents fall into the Negotiator personality type, and according to our survey data, this is the most common personality type in the workplace.

The Negotiator is typically a "people person", someone who can empathise with others and see both sides of a situation. Real-world examples of the Negotiator include former prime minister of South Africa, Nelson Mandela and Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres.

Psychologist and workplace expert Donna Dawson says that, in a working environment, the Negotiator has a reputation for being reliable, down-to-earth, easy-going and supportive. They are naturally diplomatic, and are often called upon to mediate, providing their measured advice to help people meet in the middle.

How to get the most out of the Negotiator

Tips for managers

As the Negotiator is the most common personality type in the workforce, it's essential that people managers understand how to work with, support and guide people who identify in this category.

Of all the personality types, the Negotiator is the most flexible and adaptable, as they like to go with the flow. As a result, they thrive in a fast-paced work environment, where staff work closely alongside each another to complete tasks.

To get the most out of the Negotiator, managers should always suggest a collaborative approach to work, where they have the chance to communicate with colleagues and brainstorm ideas. Where the Visionary commands, the Negotiator bridges the gap between thoughts and helps bring a levelled, balanced approach to idea generation.

Because the Negotiator is so comfortable working as a team player, they're also likely to bring the best out of their colleagues. Managers should make sure to take advantage of this strength, pairing Negotiators with less sociable or less confident team members so they can have a positive impact where it's most needed.

Supporting growth at work

While the Negotiator brings many great qualities to a team, it's important to push the Negotiator out of their comfort zone and encourage them to make decisions for themselves, rather than always operating as part of a team to get the job done.

Our survey found that Negotiators only make decisions once they have all the facts and also rely on others for advice when pushed to make a snap judgement. To support their development, the Negotiator should be given the confidence to have strength in their convictions and be encouraged to make decisions for themselves under pressure.

Our results also revealed that the Negotiator prefers working as part of a team over working alone. Allocating individual tasks to employees with this personality type will ensure that they are a well-rounded individual that is equally adept in both a group environment and when relying solely on their own initiative.

Working environment

The results of our survey showed that the Negotiator felt most comfortable in a shared workspace and was least likely to want to work in an isolated environment. Some Negotiators did indicate that they preferred to work collaboratively at all times, and this was because they enjoyed the collective opportunities that a group environment creates. So for the majority of Negotiators, giving them the opportunity to work in co-working spaces or implementing regular team days is a good way to ensure they're feeling their best.

This preference aligns with the findings that the Negotiator thrives in a team environment. Encouraging employees to venture into the office and creating a lively workplace environment will get the best out of the Negotiator and build a culture that matches their personality type.

Donna Dawson: "This personality type is a "people person". They are someone who can empathise with others and will see both sides of a situation. To get along with this type, keep asking them what they think, and encourage them to write things down, as this helps them to focus. Where possible, always suggest a collaborative approach at work."

4. The Thinker



Who are they?

14% of respondents were classified as a Thinker. This personality type is usually introverted and reserved, with an analytical and logical approach to working. Well-known examples of this personality type include Facebook founder and current Meta CEO, Mark Zuckerberg and Microsoft founder, Bill Gates.

Donna Dawson believes that the Thinker usually prefers to opt for a methodical approach to tasks and has a high level of attention to detail. They are modest and rarely shout about their achievements but often possess a high level of intelligence and are skilled problem solvers.

How to get the most out of the Thinker

Tips for managers

The Thinker likes to be in control of their own tasks and schedule. Unsurprisingly, our survey data shows that they feel most comfortable when taking on solo projects. Managers should accommodate for this preference and be careful not to overload the Thinker with collaborative projects and group activities.

Managers can benefit from the Thinker's methodical approach by asking them to review established processes to see how they could be improved. Because of the Thinker's logical way of thinking and solving problems, they can often spot inefficiencies or bottlenecks that are slowing down current processes.

Our survey outlines that the Thinker enjoys clearly defined processes that help them organise their thoughts. Managers should ensure that they are providing clear, consistent process guidance so Thinkers can complete a task to their best ability, and should offer detailed instructions when Thinkers ask for help.

Supporting growth at work

Our survey data revealed that the Thinker generally feels neutral towards work colleagues and may only have a few they consider friends. To support their growth, employees with this personality type should be encouraged to put themselves forward for group projects and interact with the wider team.

Soft skills are becoming increasingly important across virtually all industries. So while there's significant value in technically minded employees, people managers should encourage Thinkers to upskill and nurture their interpersonal skills, as well as problem-solving skills, to focus on building strong relationships with colleagues who benefit their current work and their career beyond.

The survey also shows that the Thinker responds well to both positive and negative feedback and can learn from both. Regular and honest feedback will highlight the areas where they can improve and Thinkers will pay close attention to any guidance they receive, looking to implement any proposed changes to improve their performance.

Flexibility, agility and autonomy

Overwhelmingly, the Thinker prefers to work independently, more so than any of the other personality types. The Thinker works best when they have time and space away from meetings and group discussions.

Flexibility is the key to supporting this type of employee, and they should have relative freedom when it comes to choosing when they work collaboratively and when they need time to knuckle down, without being given the option to completely isolate themselves.

If the Thinker is working independently, it is important they still receive regular feedback to support their development, as this is an integral aspect of how they grow and improve.

Donna Dawson: “This personality type is usually introverted and reserved, with an analytical and logical approach to things. To get the best out of this type, don’t be pushy or over-enthusiastic. Discuss the numbers or the logical outcome of something, and give them as much information, context and detail as possible.”

5. The Executive



Who are they?

14% of survey respondents were classed as the Executive. Executives operate within a company as they do in their own life: based on principles such as fairness, justice, and a strong sense of what’s right and wrong. Real-world examples of the Executive include American author, attorney and former First Lady, Michelle Obama and former New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern.

Donna Dawson asserts that in a work setting, the Executive is conscientious, hard-working, and organised, with a tendency to compare all activities to a company ideal, which can often be a problem for co-workers. They appreciate

structure and standards, and struggle to stray from the norm. To this end they are generally not as innovative in their approaches to tasks but are steadfast, consistent and thrive on quality.

How to get the most out of the Executive

Tips for managers

The Executive works best under clearly defined and pre-determined conditions. Our survey data revealed that the Executive believes established processes and rules give the workplace structure and help them thrive. Therefore, managers can optimise the performance of this personality type by ensuring they have set guidelines for completing tasks and are not given ad hoc work to figure out for themselves.

Managers should also ensure the Executive feels that the work they are doing is for the greater good of the company or work team. It can help to explain the rationale behind a task they have been asked to complete, which allows them to better understand the reasoning behind their role and how it directly benefits the performance of the business.

Supporting growth at work

The Executive is often a results-driven individual who is willing to sacrifice personal relationships to deliver success for the business. Employers can support the growth of this personality type by helping them to understand that a happy and harmonious work culture is also highly valuable to the business, and cultivating personal relationships across teams is important. It may also be beneficial to ensure that the Executive doesn't overwork themselves, and they should be encouraged to step away from work to be productive and engaged during work hours.

Our survey findings also highlight that the Executive prefers to tackle unfamiliar tasks by consulting more experienced managers or colleagues. So that they develop independent decision-making skills, the Executive should be encouraged to take the initiative and first try and complete a task on their own before consulting a more senior staff member.

It is important that the Executive is pushed to work on and develop problem-solving skills and is able to innovate and be creative when asked to overcome unforeseen challenges. The only way these capabilities can be nurtured is by taking on individual tasks and operating without the immediate support of a manager or wider team.

Putting in the ground work

The Executive favours working in a bustling and busy environment, as they believe work belongs in the workplace. Managers should ensure they always have the option to contribute their thoughts and ideas when they need to and ensure they feel they are being heard.

When the Executive is in a group environment, managers should encourage them not to view colleague relationships as purely transactional, but instead encourage them to try to form bonds with team members who they interact with regularly.

Donna Dawson: "This personality type operates within a company as they do in their own life, on a set of principles and on the basis of what is "right". Managers should show them how proposals are in line with what is traditionally done. Make proposals that will serve the greater good of the company or work team, and are fair and honourable."

Conclusion

Overall, the results of our survey demonstrate that to meet the evolving needs of the modern worker, working life must now be more malleable than it has ever been. It must fit neatly around responsibilities such as caregiving and people's wider interests and hobbies, as well as playing to people's strengths, skills and ambitions.

The results highlight that people are incredibly complex and varied, which will come as no surprise to people managers. But taking steps to further understand how people work best and how to get the most out of them can be crucial to productivity and the employee experience.

Technology's role amid all of this has been driven by new generations entering the workforce with different levels of technology literacy, influenced by its capabilities and an upbringing that has been ingrained with technology. It is inevitable that as time progresses, technology's position in the workplace will grow as workplace leaders leverage its potential.

As it stands, technology's ability to support the five personality types is largely in the hands of the managers who deploy it. Modern workforce management and HR service delivery solutions for example, can tailor dashboards and communications to fit the needs and wants of each and every employee, and give employees the autonomy to manage their own career development, and design their job on a day-to-day or week-by-week basis.

Paramount to this is that first both employer and employee have a clear understanding of what these needs and personality types are. Take our online test [here](#).

About UKG

At UKG, our purpose is people. We strongly believe that culture and belonging are the secret to success. By championing great workplaces and building lifelong partnerships with our customers, together we demonstrate what's possible when organisations invest in their people. Our Life-work Technology approach to HR, payroll, and workforce management solutions is enabling more than 75,000 organisations across every industry around the globe to anticipate and adapt to their employees' needs beyond just work. To learn more about one of the world's leading HCM cloud companies, visit ukg.co.uk.

About Donna Dawson

Donna Dawson is a psychologist specialising in Personality and Behaviour (BA Hons, MSc), who has gained her credentials at the prestigious Brandeis University (Massachusetts, USA), Manchester University (England), and Goldsmiths College, University of London. She covers a wide variety of subject matter to explain how a person's behaviour and choices reflect back on their personality, including money habits, food choices, colour preference, and other lifestyle choices.

Donna has appeared on 'This Morning', BBLB ("Big Brother's Little Brother"), Channel Five News, BBC World News, BBC News 24, London Tonight and Sky News, The Heaven and Earth Show, The Wright Stuff, BBC Radio Five Live, and BBC Radio Wales.



Our purpose is people

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