

Personality conflict



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The purpose of this paper is to identify a personality conflict between employee and employer and how it played a part in my last job as a Library Director. I will also explain at the end of my paper how the Big Five Model supports my research for the decisions I made as a supervisor. Before I moved back to New Hampshire last June, I was living in Iowa; in a little town called Earlham. I had been there two weeks and decided to get a library card. Upon entering the establishment I noticed that they were hiring for a Library Director and two assistants. I needed a job so I inquired about both positions. I filled out the application and within two days I received a phone call from the President of the Library Board to come in for an interview. I went and interviewed and before I knew it, they were hiring me to be the new Library Director. I was ecstatic. I had never worked in a library before and I certainly didn't have a MLS degree, but they hired me because they liked what they saw on my resume and they were very impressed with my answers. I told the interviewers that I was a very hard-working, dedicated, detail-oriented professional. I explained that if I was hired that the library would need a complete overhaul to keep the patrons wanting to come back and use the library. They found my candidness to be very refreshing. My predecessor had just up and left and didn't leave any time for training. The previous assistants didn't stay either. Apparently there were many issues between the last Director and her staff. In order for me to learn everything about a library and keep the library accredited, I had to become certified in Public Library Management. What normally takes three years for someone to accomplish, I did in 9 months! I was very gung-ho. I loved the fact that I was learning something new and I was very interested in learning every aspect about Library Science that I could. I felt that in order for me to run an

efficient library it would have to be structured around what I knew would be an uncomplicated way to shelve current items and archive old ones. The Earlham Public Library needed some revamping and Shay Favata was just the person to do it. I was all set, but now the Library Board needed to hire a couple of assistants to help with the day to day operations of running the library. They hired two other women. Becky and Sherri. Sherri was a very easy going person and had a personality a lot like mine. We were very open and honest with each other. Becky on the other hand had a completely different personality. She was an introvert and very closed minded. I knew instantly that there were going to be work place issues. Usually the Library Director will hire her own staff, but in this instance because of the complete turnover, the Library Board did all of the hiring. My personality type is an ENFJ. As an ENFJ, my primary mode of living is focused externally, where I deal with things according to how I feel about them, or how they fit into my personal value system. My secondary mode is internal, where I take things in primarily via my intuition. ENFJ's are:

- Genuinely and warmly interested in people
- Value people's feelings
- Value structure and organization
- Value harmony, and good at creating it
- Exceptionally good people skills
- Dislike impersonal logic and analysis
- Strong organizational capabilities
- Loyal and honest
- Creative and imaginative
- Enjoy variety and new challenges
- Get personal satisfaction from helping others
- Extremely sensitive to criticism and discord
- Need approval from others to feel good about themselves

This describes me very well. Becky was an ISTJ. ISTJs generally have the following traits:

- Value tradition, security, and peaceful living
- Will work long and hard to fulfill duties
- Can be depended on to follow through on tasks
- Loyal and faithful
- Stable, practical and down-to-earth
- Family-minded
- Dislike

doing things which don't make sense to them • Dislike abstract theory, unless they see the practical application • Natural leaders • Prefer to work alone, but work well in teams when necessary • Extremely observant, they take in facts via their senses and store them internally • Vast, rich inner store of facts which they rely on to understand problems which they encounter in their lives • Profound respect for facts and concrete information • Make decisions objectively, applying logic and rational thinking • Dislike change, unless they are shown it's benefit in a concrete way • Have strong opinions about the way things should be done • Appreciate structured, orderly environments • Have very high standards for their own behavior and the behavior of others • Not naturally in-tune with other people's feelings • Able to accomplish almost anything if they put their minds to it • Community minded " good citizens" This describes Becky very well. Because of the difference in our personalities, it created interpersonal conflict. Our personal values were extremely different and our goals were incompatible. She wanted things done her way and I wanted them done my way. There never seemed to be a middle ground. Becky worked better on her own. She was not a team player in the least. Becky was the type to hold things in and let them build. I'm just the opposite and always put all the cards out on the table. I never would know that anything was wrong with her until she would explode about everything. Some issues would stem from months before and she would never say that anything was bothering her. This made it even more difficult for me to manage her because I never knew if she was upset about anything until the anger came out. When I would try to reason with her about different aspects of the job, she never agreed. She always questioned everything I did. She didn't like the fact that I was younger than her and was

her boss to boot. She had a very difficult time respecting me as an authority figure, let alone as an individual. This of course caused a great deal of emotional distress. It made going to work very uncomfortable. I never knew what kind of mood Becky would be in on a daily basis. I was always on guard with her. Because we worked in a library, issues always arose with Becky about Intellectual Freedom. Intellectual Freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored. Intellectual freedom is important because it is the basis for our democratic system. Citizens must be informed; and libraries provide the ideas and information through a variety of formats to allow people to inform themselves. She didn't agree with the books that I would order for the library. Most of the time I was ordering books that the patrons were asking for; albeit that some of the books were from a "banned books list", but then again, it was what the patrons wanted. One book in particular caught Becky's attention. When she saw what I had ordered, she filed a complaint with the Library Board and tried to have the book banned from our library. The next Board meeting focused on this particular book. I called in the Intellectual Freedom Committee who advocates for the right to freedom of expression. They of course said that the book should remain in the library and saw no reason to remove it. This made Becky very angry because she not only lost the battle she was trying to wage against the book (and me) but she lost the battle to try and control what I was putting into the community library. One week later she had quit because she knew that I was on the verge of firing her. There was absolutely no way that any good would ever come out of this

situation if she were to remain working at the library. Our personalities were just too different for us to ever see eye to eye. The only way we got along was for us to agree to disagree about everything. That is not a healthy work environment. What a relief after she was gone! My stress level had gone down immeasurably and I once again enjoyed going to work not having to worry about what the crisis of the day was going to be. In my opinion, the only way to handle the conflict in this situation was doing exactly what I did. In trying to understand this interpersonal conflict I will put into play the Big Five Model. Factors in the Big Five Model are: Extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability & openness to experience. I felt that I exhibited all of these qualities while Becky did not. I was an Extrovert, Becky was an Introvert. I was agreeable she was not. The only time she agreed on anything was when it was her idea. We both were conscientious. (I'll give her that). I was very stable emotionally, she was not. She had a very controlling spouse and was not happy in her marriage. I truly believe that is why she tried to control things in her work environment. She didn't want me being in charge; she wanted to be in charge, but not have the added responsibility that goes with leadership. I asked her once if she wanted my job. She said that she would take my job if it didn't involve all the administrative duties that went along with it. My retort was " Then stop worrying about how I do my job and pay more attention to how you perform yours." She of course was not happy with that idea. But that was to be expected. Last but not least is openness to experience. She was not open to any new ideas. She didn't like change. In order for the library to run smoothly and function properly, change was inevitable. I managed to take a very chaotic establishment and turn it into a smoothly functioning organization where people could come

and feel comfortable. I am very proud of my accomplishment. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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