

WHO ARE YOU?

Do other people know you better
than you know yourself?

 HOGAN

How many people know the real you? We recently asked 668 people to rank, on a scale of 1-10, how well their friends, spouse, coworkers, boss and others knew them.



However they answered, respondents do have one thing in common: even the individuals whom they said knew them the least may know them better than they know themselves.

“We have examined thousands of sets of 360° data,” said Dr. Blaine Gaddis, senior manager of product research at Hogan. “Most datasets show the same pattern: people tend to rate themselves favorably across the board, but their employees, peers, and employers tend to have a different view, and most of the time that view is consistent with one another.”

More than causing an existential crisis or inspiring one of hundreds of terrible songs (nobody *understands* me), this lack of self-awareness can also ruin an individual’s reputation and damage his or her career.

WHAT IS REPUTATION ?

To understand how a bad reputation can damage your career, it is important to understand how reputations form. Personality is best understood from two perspectives: personality from the **inside** and personality from the **outside**.

Personality from the inside, called **identity**, is how we think of ourselves and how we want others to think of us – whether we see ourselves as smart, funny, creative, etc. **How we see ourselves is rarely the same as how others see us.** This disparity plays an important role in managing one's reputation.

Personality from the outside, how others perceive an individual, is known as reputation. Reputation developed over thousands of years of human evolution. Early humans depended on the cooperation of the group for survival – to hunt for food, construct shelter, protect themselves from predators, and compete with neighboring tribes. In order to ensure cooperation within the group, it was important to know whom the group could and could not trust.

Gossip developed as a social mechanism where a group could

come to a common agreement about an individual's reputation. Although the nature of society has changed significantly, gossip's function has not. In the 1970s, a group of psychologists found that gossip accounts for 70% of normal conversation.

“Part of every social interaction is telling other people about yourself,” said Dr. Robert Hogan, founder of Hogan Assessments. “From your attitudes and speech patterns to your clothing and taste in music, everything factors into your reputation.”

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

In his 1956 book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, sociologist Erving Goffman observed that competent individuals try to manage the **impressions** that others form of them.

In our survey, we asked participants whether they were a different person at work than at home.



“On the one hand, the 59% who said they are the same at work and at home are correct – our personalities remain stable regardless of the situation,” said Dr. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, vice president of research and innovation at Hogan. “On the other hand, almost everyone tends to self-monitor and modify his or her behavior depending on the situation. So what you’re probably seeing in these results is that 41% of your respondents were more self-aware than the others.”

Not only is self-monitoring common, people who are better at managing their reputation tend to do better in their careers.

Psychologists Martin Kilduff and David Day examined a group of MBA graduates through the first five years of their careers. Their article, “Do Chameleons Get Ahead?” published in the *Academy of Management Journal*, details the results. Kilduff and Day found that individuals who scored high on a measure of self-monitoring – the extent to which individuals are sensitive and responsive to interpersonal cues and situational appropriateness – were more likely to change employers, move locations, and achieve promotions than their low-self-monitoring counterparts.

THE BRIGHT SIDE

Bright-side personality describes how other people are likely to perceive us when we are **actively self-monitoring** and at our best.

Bright-side personality can be described in terms of seven dimensions:

Adjustment: seeming emotionally stable and stress tolerant

Ambition: seeming energetic, forceful, and competitive

Sociability: seeming extraverted and gregarious

Interpersonal Sensitivity: seeming perceptive, tactful, and tolerant

Prudence: seeming self-controlled, honest, and dependable

Inquisitiveness: seeming creative, aesthetically sensitive, and cultured

Learning Approach: seeming achievement oriented and valuing education

“Where we fall on each of these seven dimensions of bright-side personality describes how people are likely to see us most of the time, our normal personality,” said Dr. Jeff Foster, director of the Hogan Research Division.

However, the more time people spend in a situation or group of people, the more likely that they will let their

guard down. Eventually, your dark side appears.

“There is a honeymoon period when new employees are monitoring themselves very carefully,” Foster said. “After a while, however, we become complacent or start to experience the pressure of daily work. When we are not actively monitoring our behavior, our dark-side personality tends to emerge.”

THE DARK SIDE

Dark-side personality describes a group of characteristics that can be strengths under normal circumstances, but, **when individuals aren't self-monitoring,** can become reputation-ruining interpersonal flaws.

Dark-side personality can be described in terms of three interpersonal styles:

Moving Away From Others – These individuals react to conflict by moving away from others. They tend to be alert for signs of criticism, rejection, betrayal, or hostile intent. When they detect a threat, real or otherwise, they lash out.

Moving Against Others – These individuals react to conflict by moving against others. They expect to be liked, admired, and respected. They resist acknowledging their mistakes, often by blaming others, and are unable to learn from experience.

Moving Toward Others – These individuals react to conflict by moving toward others. People in this group want to please figures of authority. They are easy to supervise and popular with their bosses, but tend to side with authority rather than sticking up for their subordinates.

“Dark-side characteristics are the ones that emerge when you’re ‘being yourself’ – when you stop self-monitoring,” Foster said. “Even though they only tend to show up in times of increased stress or pressure, they can be **extremely damaging** to your reputation.”

BAD REPUTATION

Why does reputation matter?
Researchers at the Max Planck
Institute for Evolutionary Biology
conducted an experiment in which
they used **standard game theory**.

In the experiment, two people interact, and each has the option of competing or cooperating. If both cooperate, both win; if one competes while the other cooperates, the selfish person wins even bigger.

In this study, participants were provided information regarding the other person's reputation as either selfish or cooperative. As expected, if a person expected to interact with someone with a reputation for selfishness, he or she would behave selfishly, but if a person expected to interact with someone with a reputation for cooperation, he or she would tend to cooperate.

The real news in the study, however, concerned a particular wrinkle. In some cases, researchers would provide the participants with both data regarding the other person's performance and a description of that person's reputation. Participants invariably trusted the reputation rather than the data.

A bad reputation can do more than put a crimp in your social calendar; it can affect your job performance:

With your employees – More than half of people currently in leadership positions will fail, most often because they are unable to build and maintain a high-functioning team. If you have a reputation for micromanaging or being emotionally volatile, your employees will be less likely to trust and follow you.

With your coworkers – The ability to form productive relationships, or interpersonal skill, is critical in the modern workplace. A bad reputation can make your coworkers weary of dealing with you, which will hinder your performance.

With your boss – As the previously discussed study showed, your boss is more likely to pay attention to your reputation than your performance data. A bad reputation can keep you from getting a raise or a promotion.

SELF- AWARENESS

For most people, there is an important disparity between **identity** and **reputation**. This disparity causes them to overestimate their strengths, ignore feedback, deny their shortcomings, and, ultimately, damage their reputations.

“The key to success is bringing your identity in line with your reputation,” said Chamorro-Premuzic. “Showing people objective data regarding their reputation – through personality assessments, 360° feedback, or otherwise, can give them a realistic view of how others view them, which they can use to adjust their behavior.”

About Hogan

Founded in 1987, Hogan Assessments pioneered the use of personality assessment to improve workplace performance. Hogan’s assessment solutions help businesses reduce turnover and increase productivity by hiring the right people, developing key talent, and evaluating leadership potential.