Understanding the Chapter: What Do I Know?

1. What are the Big Five personality dimensions?
2. What are four personality traits managers need to be aware of to understand workplace behavior?
3. How is emotional intelligence defined?
4. How do you distinguish values from attitudes and behavior?
5. What is the process of perception?
6. What are four types of distortion in perception, and what is the Pygmalion effect?
7. What are three work-related attitudes managers need to be conscious of?
8. What are four types of behavior that managers need to influence?
9. Explain the two dimensions of diversity.
10. What are six sources of stress on the job?

Management in Action

Steve Jobs's Personality & Attitudes Drove His Success

This case is based on an interview of Steve Jobs by Walter Isaacson, the author of the 2011 book Steve Jobs.

His saga is the entrepreneurial creation myth writ large. Steve Jobs cofounded Apple in his parents' garage in 1976, was ousted in 1985, returned to rescue it from near bankruptcy in 1997, and by the time he died, in October 2011, had built it into the world's most valuable company. Along the way he helped to transform seven industries: personal computing, animated movies, music, phones, tablet computing, retail stores, and digital publishing. . . .

When Jobs returned to Apple in 1997, it was producing an array of computers and peripherals, including a dozen different versions of the Macintosh. After a few weeks of product review sessions, he'd finally had enough. "Stop!" he shouted. "This is crazy." He grabbed a Magic Marker, padded in his bare feet to a whiteboard, and drew a two-by-two grid. "Here's what we need," he declared. Atop the two columns, he wrote

"Consumer" and "Pro." He labeled the two rows "Desktop" and "Portable." Their job, he told his team members, was to focus on four great products, one for each quadrant. All other products should be canceled. There was a stunned silence. But by getting Apple to focus on making just four computers, he saved the company. "Deciding what not to do is as important as deciding what to do," he told me. "That's true for companies, and it's true for products."

After he righted the company, Jobs began taking his "top 100" people on a retreat each year. On the last day, he would stand in front of a whiteboard (he loved whiteboards, because they gave him complete control of a situation and they engendered focus) and ask, "What are the 10 things we should be doing next?" People would fight to get their suggestions on the list. Jobs would write them down—and then cross off the ones he decreed dumb. After much jockeying, the group would come up with a list of 10. Then Jobs would slash the bottom seven and announce, "We can only do three."

Focus was ingrained in Jobs's personality and had been honed by his Zen training. He relentlessly filtered out what he considered distractions. Colleagues and family members would at times be exasperated as they tried to get him to deal with issues they considered important. But he would give a cold stare and refuse to shift his laserlike focus until he was ready. . . .

Part of Jobs's compulsion to take responsibility for what he called "the whole widget" stemmed from his personality, which was very controlling. But it was also driven by his passion for perfection and making elegant products. He got hives, or worse, when contemplating the use of great Apple software on another company's uninspired hardware, and he was equally allergic to the thought that unapproved apps or content might pollute the perfection of an Apple device. It was an approach that did not always maximize short-term profits, but in a world filled with junky devices, inscrutable error messages, and annoying interfaces, it led to astonishing products marked by delightful user experiences. Being in the Apple ecosystem could be as sublime as walking in one of the Zen gardens of Kyoto that Jobs loved, and neither experience was created by worshipping at the altar of openness or by letting a thousand flowers bloom. Sometimes it's nice to be in the hands of a control freak. . . .

After the iPod became a huge success, Jobs spent little time relishing it. Instead he began to worry about what might endanger it. One possibility was that mobile phone makers would start adding music players to their handsets. So he cannibalized iPod sales by creating the iPhone. "If we don't cannibalize ourselves, someone else will," he said.

John Sculley, who ran Apple from 1983 to 1993, was a marketing and sales executive from Pepsi. He focused more on profit maximization than on product design after Jobs left, and Apple gradually declined. "I have my own theory about why decline happens at companies," Jobs told me. They make some great products, but then the sales and marketing people take over the company, because they are the ones who can juice up the profits. "When the sales guys run the company, the product guys don't matter so much, and a lot of them just turn off. It happened at Apple when Sculley came in, which was my fault, and it happened when Ballmer took over at Microsoft."

When Jobs returned, he shifted Apple's focus back to making innovative products: the sprightly iMac, the PowerBook, and then the iPod, the iPhone, and the iPad. As he explained, "My passion has been to build an enduring company where people were motivated to make great products. Everything else was secondary. Sure, it was great to make a profit, because that was what allowed you to make great products. But the products, not the profits, were the motivation. Sculley flipped these priorities to where the goal was to make money. It's a subtle difference, but it ends up meaning everything—the people you hire, who gets promoted, what you discuss in meetings."

Caring deeply about what customers want is much different from continually asking them what they want; it requires intuition and instinct about desires that have not yet been formed. "Our task is to read things that are not yet on the page," Jobs explained. Instead of relying on market research, he honed his version of empathy, an intimate intuition about the desires of his customers. He developed his appreciation for intuition—feelings that are based on accumulated experiential wisdom—while he was studying Buddhism in India as a college dropout. "The people in the Indian countryside don't use their intellect like we do; they use their intuition instead," he recalled. "Intuition is a very powerful thing—more powerful than intellect, in my opinion." . . .

Jobs's (in)famous ability to push people to do the impossible was dubbed by colleagues his Reality Distortion Field, after an episode of *Star Trek* in which aliens create a convincing alternative reality through sheer mental force. An early example was when Jobs was on the night shift at Atari and pushed Steve Wozniak to create a game called Breakout. Woz said it would take months, but Jobs stared at him and insisted he could do it in four days. Woz knew that was impossible, but he ended up doing it.

Those who did not know Jobs interpreted the Reality Distortion Field as a euphemism for bullying and lying. But those who worked with him admitted that the trait, infuriating as it might be, led them to perform extraordinary feats. Because Jobs felt that life's ordinary rules didn't apply to him, he could inspire his team to change the course of computer history with a small fraction of the resources that Xerox or IBM had. "It was a self-fulfilling distortion," recalls Debi Coleman, a member of the original Mac team who won an award

one year for being the employee who best stood up to Jobs. "You did the impossible because you didn't realize it was impossible."

One day Jobs marched into the cubicle of Larry Kenyon, the engineer who was working on the Macintosh operating system, and complained that it was taking too long to boot up. Kenyon started to explain why reducing the boot-up time wasn't possible, but Jobs cut him off. "If it would save a person's life, could you find a way to shave 10 seconds off the boot time?" he asked. Kenyon allowed that he probably could. Jobs went to a whiteboard and showed that if five million people were using the Mac and it took 10 seconds extra to turn it on every day, that added up to 300 million or so hours a year—the equivalent of at least 100 lifetimes a year. After a few weeks Kenyon had the machine booting up 28 seconds faster. . . .

During the development of almost every product he ever created, Jobs at a certain point "hit the pause button" and went back to the drawing board because he felt it wasn't perfect. That happened even with the movie *Toy Story*. After Jeff Katzenberg and the team at Disney, which had bought the rights to the movie, pushed the Pixar team to make it edgier and darker, Jobs and the director, John Lasseter, finally stopped production and rewrote the story to make it friendlier. When he was about to launch Apple Stores, he and his store guru, Ron Johnson, suddenly decided to delay everything a few months so that the stores' layouts could be reorganized around activities and not just product categories. . . .

Jobs was famously impatient, petulant, and tough with the people around him. But his treatment of people, though not laudable, emanated from his passion for perfection and his desire to work with only the best. It was his way of preventing what he called "the bozo explosion," in which managers are so polite that mediocre people feel comfortable sticking around. "I don't think I run roughshod over people," he said, "but if something sucks, I tell people to their face. It's my job to be honest." When I pressed him on whether he could have gotten the same results while being nicer, he said perhaps so. "But it's not who I am," he said. "Maybe there's a better way—a gentlemen's club where we all wear ties and speak in this Brahmin language and velvet code words—but I don't know that way, because I am middle-class from California." . . .

It's important to appreciate that Jobs's rudeness and roughness were accompanied by an ability to be inspirational. He infused Apple employees with an abiding passion to create groundbreaking products and a belief that they could accomplish what seemed impossible. And we have to judge him by the outcome. Jobs had a close-knit family, and so it was at Apple: His top players tended to stick around longer and be more loyal than those at other companies, including ones led by bosses who were kinder and gentler. CEOs who study Jobs and decide to emulate his roughness without understanding his ability to generate loyalty make a dangerous mistake.

"I've learned over the years that when you have really good people, you don't have to baby them," Jobs told me. "By expecting them to do great things, you can get them to do great things. Ask any member of that Mac team. They will tell you it was worth the pain." Most of them do. "He would shout at a meeting, 'You asshole, you never do anything right,'" Debi Coleman recalls. "Yet I consider myself the absolute luckiest person in the world to have worked with him."

FOR DISCUSSION

1. How would you evaluate Jobs in terms of the Big Five personality dimensions?
2. How would you evaluate Jobs in terms of the five traits important to organizational behavior? Explain.
3. What were Jobs's attitudes about effective leadership? Use the three components of attitudes to explain.
4. Do you believe that Jobs's personality and attitudes affected the workplace attitudes and behaviors of Apple employees? Explain.
5. What factors were causing stress for Jobs? Explain.

Source: Excerpted from W. Isaacson, "The Real Leadership Lessons of Steve Jobs," Harvard Business Review, *April 2012, pp. 93–100.*

Legal/Ethical Challenge

Should Airlines Accommodate Overweight People?

Traveling on an airplane can be extra difficult for overweight and tall people. Boeing's 757 standard seat width is 17 inches, while Airbus's is 18 inches wide. Given individual differences in hip width, this can be a problem, particularly for women. This issue was investigated by the Civilian American and European Surface Anthropometry Resource Project