

Section III

How do you motivate employees to accomplish the organization's goals?

After you have hired employees and assigned them to their jobs, your next major challenge is to create the conditions that will lead to high levels of motivation. Effective organizations have employees who exhibit dependable attendance – coming to work and being on time – excellent performance – having high levels of both quantity and quality performance – and voluntary contributions – contributing spontaneous acts of courtesy, cooperation, self-training, and initiative. Several motivation patterns contribute to these behaviors, including individual rewards, such as base pay and incentives; system rewards, such as benefits and vacations; intrinsic satisfaction, such as job enrichment; internalized values, such as job involvement and organizational commitment; and rule compliance, such as following written policies backed by punishment.

Section III contains five chapters that explain the different methods of motivating employees. Chapter 6 explains perception and how the expectations of others influences behavior. Chapter 7 summarizes the different motivation theories and explains why people tend to do what they expect to be rewarded for doing. Chapter 8 describes the differences between job specialization and job enrichment and explains how jobs can be enriched to stimulate greater levels of motivation and commitment. Chapter 9 explains the principles of evaluating and rewarding performance and describes how compensation systems can be used to motivate employees. Every company should have a complaint procedure to protect employees and a discipline system that protects the organization. Chapter 10 explains how to create and implement programs that balance the rights of individuals and the interests of the company.

Chapter 6:	Analyzing Individual Behavior
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Chapter 6

Analyzing Individual Behavior

Chapter Outline

Perception

- The Perceptual Process
- Perceptual Errors
- Discrimination and Prejudice
- The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

Personality

- Attribution Theory
- Personality Dimensions
- Maslow's Need Hierarchy
- McClelland's Learned Needs Theory

Perception

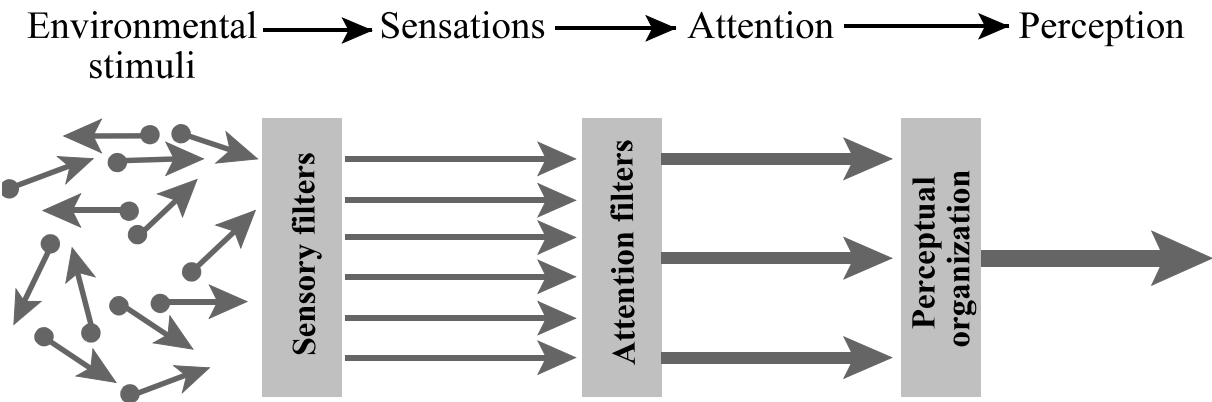
An understanding of perception is important because it has such an enormous impact on understanding individual behavior. No two people share the same reality; for each of us the world is unique. We cannot understand behavior unless we understand why two people observing the same event can honestly see something entirely different. Furthermore, we need to understand that through our perceptions we are not simply passive observers of the drama of life, but active participants helping to write the script and play the roles. The behavior of others is influenced by how you perceive them.

The Perceptual Process

Perception is the process of receiving and interpreting environmental stimuli. In a world filled with complex environmental stimuli, our perceptions help us categorize and organize the sensations we receive. We behave according to our interpretation of the reality we see. What we fail to appreciate is that the reality we see is almost never the same as the reality perceived by others. The perceptual process consists of three major components as shown in Exhibit 6.1: sensation, attention, and perception. These three components are involved in the perception of both physical objects and social events.

Sensations. At any given moment we are surrounded by countless environmental stimuli. We are not aware of most of these stimuli, either because we have learned to ignore them, or because our sense organs are not capable of receiving them. The five major sense mechanisms include sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing. Environmental stimuli only produce sensations on the human body if the body has developed the sensing mechanism to receive them. Whether you are consciously aware of these sensations, however, depends upon the next step in the perception process--attention.

Exhibit 6.1 Perceptual Process



Attention. Although we are capable of sensing many environmental stimuli, we attend to only a very small portion of them and ignore the rest. Numerous factors influence the attention process.

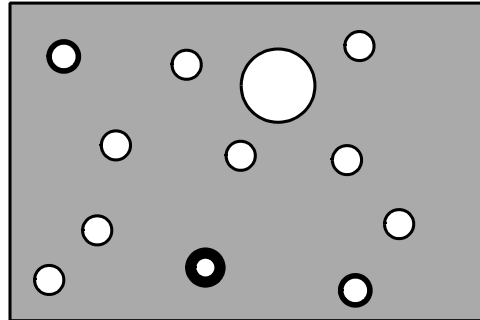
1. *Size.* The larger the size of a physical object, the more likely it is to be perceived.
2. *Intensity.* The greater the intensity of a stimulus, the more likely it is to be noticed. A loud noise, such as shouting, is more likely to get attention than a quiet voice.
3. *Frequency.* The greater the frequency with which a stimulus is presented, the greater are the chances you will attend to it. This principle of repetition is used extensively in advertising to attract the attention of buyers.
4. *Contrast.* Stimuli which contrast with the surrounding environment are more likely to be selected for attention than stimuli which blend with the environment. The contrast can be created by color, size, or any other factor that distinguishes one stimulus from others, as shown in Exhibit 6.2.
5. *Motion.* Since movement tends to attract attention, a moving stimulus is more likely to be perceived than a stationary object. An animated sign, for example, attracts more attention than a fixed billboard.
6. *Change.* Objects are more likely to be noticed if they display some form of change. An object with lights blinking on and off, such as a Christmas tree or sign, attracts more attention than one without blinking lights.
7. *Novelty.* A stimulus that is new and unique will often be perceived more readily than stimuli that have been observed on a regular basis. Advertisers use the impact of novelty by creating original packaging or advertising messages.

Perception. The process of perception involves organizing and interpreting the sensations we attend to. Visual images, sounds, odors, and other sensations do not simply enter our consciousness as pure, unpolluted sensations. As we attend to them, we consciously try to organize or categorize the information into a meaningful perception that will somehow make sense to us.

Although we would like to think of ourselves as open-minded, unbiased, and non-judgmental in our perceptions, the demands of the situation make it impossible; we are forced to draw quick inferences based upon very sparse information. If you were a counselor in a college advisement center and a student came for assistance, you would be required to make rapid inferences based on only limited information.

Your recommendations on course loads and elective classes would depend on your perception of the student's situation.

Exhibit 6.2 The Effects of Size, Intensity, and Contrast on Attention



We tend to categorize people using limited pieces of information and then act on this information, even though most of our inferences have not been confirmed. This process is called making *perceptual inferences* since we are required to diagnose our situation and make rapid inferences about it from scanty clues.

We cannot wait until we have complete information about each individual before we respond to the person. If we waited until we were fully informed about each person's unique personality and problems, we would never respond. Instead, we develop a system of categories based on only a few pieces of information and use this system to organize our perceptions. For example, college students tend to categorize other college students according to sex, marital status, year in school, and major. If you started a casual conversation with another student, your conversation would likely be much different if you thought that student was a married graduate student majoring in engineering rather than an unmarried freshman majoring in sociology.

The process of grouping environmental stimuli into recognizable patterns is called *perceptual organization*. Rather than just seeing the stimuli as random observations, we attempt to organize them into meaningful, recognizable patterns. Some of the principles we use to organize these sensations include these:

1. **Figure-ground.** People tend to perceive objects standing against a background. In a committee meeting, for example, most people see the verbal conversation as figure, and fail to attend to the background of nonverbal messages that may be far more meaningful in understanding the group processes.
2. **Similarity.** Stimuli which have common physical similarities are more likely to be grouped together. Athletic teams wear uniforms to help players recognize their teammates. Some organizations color-code memos to identify messages about the same topic. Some companies that have open floor plans color-code the partitions and other furniture to visually define separate functions and responsibilities. Because of the principle of similarity, the management style of top managers sets the stage for how the feedback and instructions of middle managers will be perceived by their subordinates.
3. **Proximity.** Stimuli which occur in the same proximity, either in space or in time, are often associated together. For example, if you see two people together frequently, you will tend to

attribute the characteristics you learn about one individual to the other until your perceptions become more accurate. An illustration of proximity in time occurs when the boxes in the hall are removed the same day you complain about them. You may assume that your complaints led to their removal without realizing it would have occurred anyway.

4. **Closure.** Since most of the stimuli we perceive are incomplete, we naturally tend to extrapolate information and project additional information to form a complete picture. For example, a pole placed in front of a stop sign may prevent us from seeing the entire eight-sided figure. But since we have seen many stop signs before, the principle of closure causes us to "see" the complete sign. If we watch an employee work for fifteen minutes and complete the first half of a task, and return twenty minutes later to find the task completed, we attribute the entire task to the employee because of the principle of closure. Actually, however, we only saw this person perform half the task, and our inference about the last half may be incorrect.

Perceiving social events and people is more difficult and challenging than perceiving physical objects. If two people disagree about the length of an object, they can measure it. But if they disagree about whether a supervisor was pleased with their work, they may have difficulty verifying which one was right, even if the supervisor's response was filmed. Although the inferences we make about someone's personality should be based upon the behavior we observe, our perceptions are influenced by a variety of physical characteristics such as appearance and how they speak.

The appearance of others influences how we perceive and respond to them, as has been amply demonstrated by the dress-for-success literature. Although many people, especially college students, feel somewhat repulsed by the implications of the research, the data nevertheless show that people who dress in conservative business attire are more likely to be hired, be promoted, make a sale, obtain service, and be treated as someone important.¹ We generally assume that people who are dressed in business suits and uniforms are professional or technical employees performing their assigned functions. Therefore, we tend to respond to them with respect and deference, and willingly comply with their requests. On the other hand, we assume that people dressed in work clothes are lower-level employees, who possess little, if any, authority to tell us what to do. We are more likely to treat them in a discourteous manner.

How people speak also influences our perceptions of them. As we listen to people talk, we make rapid inferences about their personalities, backgrounds, and motives. We notice the tone of voice to detect whether individuals are happy, sad, angry, or impatient. We notice the precision and clarity in the messages communicated to us, and generally assume that a message spoken in a very emphatic and distinct manner is supposed to be carefully attended to. When individuals speak in a particular dialect or accent, we make inferences about their geographic and cultural background. The topics people choose to discuss not only reveal their educational training, but also their personal interests and ways of thinking. In a leaderless group discussion, a female student with a soft, non-assertive voice frequently has difficulty getting the other group members to listen to her ideas. On the other hand, individuals who speak with a distinct, authoritative tone of voice often receive greater credibility than their contributions deserve. A person speaking in less than perfect English may be perceived as unintelligent although they may be fluent in many languages.

We also draw numerous inferences from nonverbal communications such as eye contact, hand motions, and posture. Sitting up straight, looking the other person in the eye, and nodding your head in agreement indicate to other people that you are interested in them, and they will perceive you as being friendly and concerned.

The way we organize and interpret environmental stimuli is also influenced by our own personal characteristics. How we feel about ourselves has an enormous influence on how we perceive others.² When we understand ourselves and when we can accurately describe our own personal characteristics, we can more accurately perceive others. For example, secure people tend to see others as warm rather than cold, and our own sociability influences the importance we attach to the sociability of others. When we accept ourselves and have a positive self-image, we tend to see favorable characteristics in others. We are not as negative or critical about others if we accept ourselves as we are.

Our perceptions are also influenced by our cognitive complexity and our expectations. When we have complex thinking and reasoning structures, we are able to perceive small differences in what we see. **Cognitive complexity** allows us to differentiate between people and events using multiple criteria, and thereby increases the accuracy of our perceptions. Furthermore, we tend to see things that our past experience and personal values have taught us to see. If we are prepared and expecting to see something, we might see it even if it is not there.

McGregor's theory X versus theory Y. An excellent illustration of how a perceptual set influences the behavior of managers is provided by Douglas McGregor's theory X versus theory Y.³ McGregor developed his theory at a time when television commercials were contrasting brand X, the ineffective product, with brand Y, the effective one. According to McGregor, **theory X** represents an outdated, repressive view of human nature that assumes people are lazy, they don't want to work, and management's job is to force or coerce them.

Theory X contains three assumptions:

1. The average human being inherently dislikes work and will avoid it if possible.
2. Because they dislike work, most people must be coerced, controlled, directed, and threatened with punishment to get them to achieve organizational objectives.
3. The average human being prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has relatively little ambition, and wants security above all.

McGregor said employees would behave much differently if managers adopted a different set of assumptions. In contrast to his pessimistic theory X view of human nature, McGregor presented a set of six assumptions which he called **theory Y**:

1. The expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as play or risk. The average human being does not inherently dislike work.
2. External control and the threat of punishment are not the only means of motivating people to achieve organizational objectives. People will exercise self-direction and self-control in the pursuit of objectives to which they are committed.
3. Commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with their achievement. The most significant rewards, the satisfaction of ego and self-actualization needs, can be obtained from effort directed toward organizational objectives.
4. The average human being learns, under proper conditions, not only to accept but to seek responsibility. Avoidance of responsibility, lack of ambition, and an emphasis on security are generally consequences of experience, not inherent human characteristics.
5. The capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity, and creativity in solving organizational problems is widely, not narrowly, distributed in the population.
6. Under the conditions of modern industrial life, the intellectual potentialities of the average human being are only partially utilized.

According to theory X, poor performance can be blamed on the employees' failure to demonstrate initiative and motivation. In contrast, theory Y represented an enlightened view of human nature suggesting that organizational inefficiencies must be blamed on management. If employees are lazy, indifferent, unwilling to take responsibility, uncooperative, or uncreative, these problems indicate that management has failed to unleash the potential of its employees.

These two views of human nature represent significantly different perceptual sets that managers use in perceiving the behavior of their subordinates. McGregor explained how these two views cause managers to behave quite differently in response to organizational problems. In his own writing, McGregor used theory Y to redesign such management practices as performance appraisal, wage and salary administration, profit sharing, promotions, and participative management.

Perceptual Errors

As we observe people and events, we make countless perceptual errors day to day. This section analyzes seven of the most frequent perceptual errors.

Halo effect. The *halo effect* refers to the tendency to allow one personality trait to influence our perceptions of other traits. For example, if we see a person smiling and looking pleasant, we may conclude, as one study found, that the person is more honest than people who frown. However, there is no necessary connection between smiling and honesty. One potentially serious application of the halo effect is when it occurs in a performance evaluation. If one particular attribute, positive or negative, colors a supervisor's perception of other unrelated attributes, the performance evaluation process can be extremely unfair and misleading.

Perceptual defense. Occasionally we face stimuli that are so threatening or embarrassing that we refuse to perceive them. This process is called *perceptual defense*. Information that is personally threatening or culturally unacceptable tends to be ignored unless it is more intense than normal. The process of perceptual defense allows us to ignore events that we are incapable of handling and helps us dissipate our emotions by directing our attention to other objects.

Selective perception. The process of systematically screening out information we don't wish to hear is referred to as *selective perception*. This process is a learned response; we learn from past experience to ignore or overlook information that is uncomfortable and unpleasant.

Implicit personality theories. Based on our interactions with many people, we create our own system of personality profiles and use them to categorize new acquaintances. To the extent that our personality profiles are accurate, they facilitate our ability to perceive more rapidly and accurately. Since everyone is unique, however, our implicit personality theories can serve at best as only a rough approximation for categorizing people. If we continue to observe carefully, we may find that many of our expectations are not correct.

Projection. The tendency to attribute our own feelings and characteristics to others is called *projection*. As with other perceptual errors, occasionally projection is an efficient and reasonable perceptual strategy. If we don't like to be criticized, harassed, or threatened, it is reasonable to assume that others would not like it any better. However, projection usually refers to more than just attributing our thoughts and feelings to others. Instead it is used to describe the dysfunctional process of attributing to others the undesirable thoughts and traits we ourselves possess but are not willing to admit. In essence, we attribute or project onto others the negative characteristics or feelings we have about ourselves. Projection serves

thereby as a defense mechanism to protect our self-concept and makes us more capable of facing others whom we see as imperfect.

First impressions. When we meet people for the first time, we form an impression based upon limited information that should be open for correction on subsequent encounters. Research evidence indicates, however, that first impressions are remarkably stable. In recruiting interviews, for example, it has been found that recruiters form a fairly stable impression of the applicant within the first three or four minutes. Negative first impressions seem to require abundant favorable information to change them and some recruiters are so opinionated they refuse to perceive contradictory information.⁴

Allowing first impressions to have a disproportionate and lasting influence on later evaluations is known as the *primacy effect*. The primacy effect explains why the first few days on the job may have a large impact on the attitudes and performance of new employees. Likewise, the opening comments in a committee meeting may have a lasting impact on the remainder of the group discussion because of the primacy effect.

Stereotyping. The process of *stereotyping* refers to categorizing individuals based on one or two traits and attributing characteristics to them based upon their membership. Stereotypes are frequently based on sex, race, age, religion, nationality, and occupation. Although stereotypes help us interpret information more rapidly, they also cause serious perceptual errors. When we create fixed categories based upon variables such as sex, race, and age and resist looking more carefully to confirm our expectations, we make serious perceptual errors that damage ourselves and others. Perceptual errors due to stereotyping based upon age, race, or sex can be extremely troublesome and have generated extensive research.

Since the passage of the Civil Rights Act (1964), significant progress has been made to reduce the use of stereotypes, particularly in hiring new employees. However, we continue to use stereotypes because they serve a useful purpose and facilitate our rapid perceptions of others. Occasionally these stereotypes are very useful, especially age and sex stereotypes. For example, it is reasonable to guess that older workers are not as interested in new training programs and opportunities for promotion as younger workers, because such differences have indeed been documented. Likewise, it may seem reasonable to think that female employees would be less interested in working overtime, since many women, especially those with small children in the home, find working overtime a particular burden. But, just because these attributes are true in general, does not mean they are true for a particular person. Some older workers may be very excited about a new training program, and some mothers may be very anxious to work overtime. Although it is impossible to confirm all our stereotypes, we should constantly question the accuracy of our perceptions, and maintain a flexible system of categories.

Discrimination and Prejudice

Illegal discrimination on the basis of race, religion, or sex typically occurs because of prejudice, which is defined as an unreasonable bias associated with suspicion, intolerance, or an irrational dislike for people of a particular race, religion, or sex. To understand the nature of prejudice, it is important to appreciate the psychological impact of individuality and uniqueness. The simple fact that one or two individuals differ significantly from other members of the group will cause them to be perceived and treated differently regardless of whether the differences are on the basis of race, religion, sex, or any other visible characteristic. This can best be illustrated by looking at the letters below.

X X x x x X x O x X

If you studied this configuration briefly and then attempted to describe it, you would probably say that it consisted of some big and little X's with an O. Unless you studied it carefully, you would probably not remember how many big X's and little x's there were or how they were arranged in the configuration, but you would probably remember the O and where it was located.

The same process occurs among a group of individuals when one or more individuals differ significantly from the others because of their unique sex or race. They are perceived differently, and they attract more attention regardless of which race or sex constitutes the majority. This perceptual process occurs simply because the minority stands out from the majority. Three perceptual tendencies explain why minorities experience prejudice within the group. These three tendencies are visibility, contrast, and assimilation.⁵

Visibility. When a small percent of the group belongs to a particular category, these individuals are more visible. Therefore, if a committee consisted of one female and several males, it is likely that everyone will remember where the woman sat in the committee meeting, what she wore, what she said, and how she voted. The minority tend to capture a larger share of the awareness within that group.

Contrast. When one or more individuals who are different are added to a group, their presence creates a self-consciousness of the dominant group about what makes the dominants a separate class. Each group defines itself partly by knowing what it isn't. Consequently, a polarization and exaggeration of differences occurs, highlighting the differences between the minorities and majorities. Both groups become more aware of their commonalities and their differences, and group processes tend to accentuate the differences by creating stereotypes to separate the two groups.

Assimilation. The third perceptual tendency, assimilation, involves the application of stereotypes and familiar generalizations about a person's social category. Minority group members are not perceived as unique individuals but as representatives of a particular category. In essence, their behavior is assimilated into a stereotype of how members of their particular group are expected to behave. An illustration of assimilation is when a Japanese business executive who is meeting with a group of American executives is asked how other Japanese executives would react to a particular proposal. The question assumes that all Japanese executives respond alike and that one person can represent them all.

Assimilation and contrast appear to be a function of how much effort people are willing to make to form accurate impressions. While some people challenge their assumptions and seek additional information, others label behavior and ignore uniqueness.

Prejudice and discrimination occur in a variety of settings and range in intensity from very innocent and unintended to very nasty. Some of the most obvious forms of racism and sexism include name-calling and slurs directed toward a specific individual. Such cruel behavior is considered entirely unacceptable in today's organizations; it is both immoral and illegal. Other forms of prejudice and discrimination, however, are much more subtle because the acts are not directed toward a specific individual and are often said in humor or jest. Such behavior, however, is still considered inappropriate. Jokes and other comments that reflect negatively on another person's race or sex are both insulting and demeaning to everyone.

Self-fulfilling Prophecy

An interesting application of biased perceptions is the self-fulfilling prophecy, also called the "Pygmalion effect."⁶ We are not passive observers of our own social worlds, but active forces in shaping those worlds. To an important extent we create our own social reality by influencing the behavior we observe

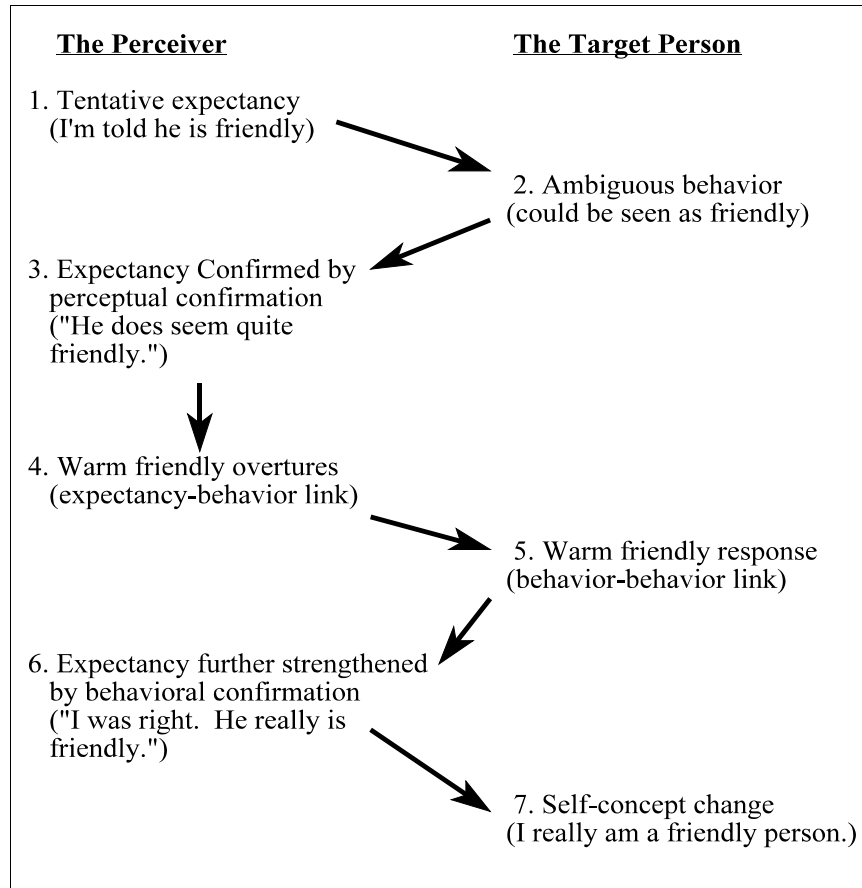
in others. The self-fulfilling prophecy explains how the expectations in the mind of one person about how others should behave are communicated in a variety of ways until these individuals actually behave in the way expected. However, the self-fulfilling prophecy involves more than just one person having strong expectancies that influence the behavior of others. It requires (1) that the expectancies have a particular effect on the behavior of the person holding them, (2) that this behavior in turn have an effect on the behavior of the other person, (3) that the other person's behavior confirms the first person's expectancies, and (4) that the first person view this behavior as unsolicited evidence that the expectancy was right all along. This relationship between the perceiver and the target person is illustrated in Exhibit 6.3.

The self-fulfilling prophecy has been demonstrated in several experiments with both children and adults.⁷ Four elements have been proposed to explain why the self-fulfilling prophecy occurs.⁸

1. **Input.** Individuals who are expected to do well receive better ideas and suggestions than people who are expected to do poorly. As the quantity and quality of information increases, it helps them perform better and communicates a sense of urgency and importance about the task.
2. **Output expected.** Specific comments about how much individuals are expected to achieve help them establish realistic levels of aspiration and higher performance goals.
3. **Reinforcement.** Individuals from whom high performance is expected tend to be rewarded more frequently when they achieve their performance goals. Individuals from whom low performance was expected usually perform poorly and are not reinforced. But even if they perform well, they may not be rewarded because their supervisors feel threatened or irritated that their expectations are disconfirmed.
4. **Feedback.** Managers who communicate high performance expectations typically provide greater feedback. This feedback occurs more frequently and usually contains specific suggestions for improvement.

The self-fulfilling prophecy normally starts when the expectations are planted in the minds of the leader. However, the expectations can also be communicated directly to the actor. The self-fulfilling prophecy has been recommended as a valuable strategy for improving organizational performance. The key is to start the sequence by creating positive expectations in managers and workers about the organization and themselves. These expectations can originate with upper management or a consultant and must be both challenging and realistic. This strategy works best with new beginnings before either the manager or workers have prior expectations about performance.

Exhibit 6.3 A Social Interaction Sequence in Which Both Perceptual and Behavioral Confirmation Create the Self-fulfilling Prophecy



Adapted from Edward E. Jones, "Interpreting Interpersonal Behavior: The Effects of Expectancies." *Science*, Vol. 234, (3 October 1986), p. 43.

When new employees are introduced into an organization, the self-fulfilling prophecy contributes importantly to their career success. Some have argued that the expectations of managers may be more important than the skills and training of the new trainees in determining their success.⁹ An analysis of management training programs suggests that the self-fulfilling prophecy is particularly critical to the success of new managers.

Personality

For many years the basic formula of Kurt Lewin has been used to explain behavior. According to Lewin, behavior is a function of the personality and the environment, as expressed by the formula $B = f_n(P,E)$. This formula suggests that our behavior at any given time is a combination of our unique personality traits and the demands of the environment.

Personality refers to the stable attributes of people that cause them to behave the same way in many different situations. Several personality traits have been demonstrated to influence behavior. However,

research has also shown that situational forces generally exert a much larger impact on behavior than personality factors. Indeed, several reviews of the research literature suggest that correlation coefficients are almost always less than .30 between any measured personality variable and actual behavior.¹⁰ Most people find this quite surprising because they believe the way we behave is a direct reflection of our personalities—friendly people behave friendly and aggressive people act aggressively. However, the evidence indicates that in a friendly environment everyone will be friendly and in an aggressive environment even normally passive individuals will push back when they are pushed long enough.

This research means that the impact of personality on behavior is usually rather small, but it is not insignificant. Occasionally personality factors are sufficiently strong to overcome all environmental forces and over time people have an opportunity to create their own situations that match their personalities. Attribution theory examines how we assign responsibility between external situational forces and internal personality factors. Two important personality theories are Maslow's Need Hierarchy and McClelland's learned Need theory.

Attribution Theory

When we perceive social events, part of the perceptual process includes assigning responsibility for behavior. Are people responsible for their own behavior because of their personal characteristics, or were they forced to behave as they did because of the situation? The assignment of responsibility and the cognitive processes by which people interpret the reasons for their own behavior and the behavior of others is known as *attribution theory*.¹¹

According to attribution theory, the assignment of responsibility stems from our observations of people over time. For example, if we observe a group of people attempting to use a word processor and find that many of them have difficulty getting the printer to function properly, we perceive the problem as being caused by the situation. But if only one person has difficulty with the printer, we attribute the cause of the problem to that individual's personal skills or abilities. Studies on attribution theory have generated the following conclusions:

1. When we observe someone else's behavior we tend to overestimate the influence of personality traits and underestimate situational influences.
2. When we are explaining our own behavior we tend to overestimate the importance of the situation and underestimate our own personality characteristics.

The explanation for these two conclusions is that as actors we are more aware of the differing situations we face and, therefore, we attribute our behavior to these differing situations. But since we are not as knowledgeable about the variety of situations others face, we overlook the situation and attribute their behavior to their personality. This explanation has been confirmed by a study showing that when observers had empathy for another person they were more likely to take the actor's perspective and were better able to notice situational causes for the actor's behavior. Conversely, distant observers only tended to notice personality characteristics.¹²

3. As we observe others in casual situations, we tend to attribute their successes to personality traits such as effort and ability, and their failures to external factors such as the difficulty of the task.

It is not clear why we attribute success to the person and failure to the situation in casual situations, but apparently this tendency does not extend to an organizational setting. In fact, studies of attribution in organizations suggest that the results are the opposite.

4. In evaluating the performance of employees, poor performance is generally attributed to internal personal factors, especially when the consequences are serious.

A study of nursing supervisors found that they were more likely to hold their employees accountable for poor performance as performance problems became more serious.¹³ The behavior of subordinates reflects on their managers; therefore, when subordinates do well, managers are quick to accept partial credit for success; but when problems occur, they are quick to blame subordinates to exonerate themselves.

5. Employees tend to attribute their successes to internal factors and their failures to external causes.

Because of our need to maintain a positive self-image, we attribute our own successes to our personal skills and abilities. When we fail, however, we look for external causes to blame.

Personality Dimensions

Numerous personality traits have been used to explain the differences in individual behavior. Some of the most well-researched traits include the locus of control, self-esteem, and self-efficacy.

Locus of control. The locus of control refers to the degree to which individuals believe that their actions influence the rewards they receive in life. Individuals with an *internal locus of control* believe that the rewards they receive are internally controlled by their own actions, whereas individuals with an *external locus of control* believe external forces such as luck, chance, or fate control their lives and determine their rewards and punishments.¹⁴ If an unexpected opportunity for advancement were presented to two people, the externally controlled individual would probably attribute it to luck or being in the right place at the right time. The internally controlled individual would be more inclined to attribute the opportunity to hard work, effort, and knowledge. As with other personality factors, however, people vary along a continuum and cannot be neatly placed into one category or the other.

Individuals behave differently depending upon whether they believe their rewards are internally or externally controlled. In contrast to externals, internals believe how hard they work will determine how well they perform and how well they will be rewarded. Consequently, internals generally perceive more order and predictability in their job-related outcomes and usually report higher levels of job satisfaction.¹⁵ Since managers are required to initiate goal-directed activity, it is not surprising that they tend to be very internally controlled.

In times of upheaval and disruption, externals generally experience more frustration and anxiety than internals and are less able to cope with the situation. A study of how people responded to a flood following a hurricane found that externals were more concerned than internals about coping with their own tension and frustration. They tended to withdraw from the task of rebuilding and to express bitterness and aggression about the "rotten hand" they had been dealt. Internals, on the other hand, went immediately to the task of acquiring new loans, gathering new resources, and rebuilding their homes and businesses. Obviously, no one could have prevented the storm from happening, but the internals had faith that an active problem-solving response could determine whether the flood would be a conclusive tragedy or only a temporary setback.¹⁶

The locus of control is determined largely by an individual's past experiences. Internals are the product of an environment where their behaviors largely decided their outcomes, while externals experienced futility in trying to set their own rewards. Child-rearing practices are thought to have an important influence on the development of locus of control: an internal locus of control is created by predictable and consistent discipline, by parental support and involvement, and by parental encouragement of autonomy and self-control. Some evidence also suggests that the locus of control can be influenced over a long period of time by the way employees are reinforced at work. At least one study has shown that the locus of control becomes more internal as a result of exposure to a work environment where important rewards are consistently associated with individual behavior.¹⁷

Self-esteem. Our self-concept is presumed to be a particularly human manifestation and refers to our own conscious awareness of who we are. We see ourselves relative to others and form evaluative impressions about our skills, abilities, and behaviors.

Many personality theories discuss self-concept, especially the humanistic personality theory of Carl Rogers. According to Rogers, our self-concept is a collection of the attitudes, values, and beliefs we have acquired about ourselves from our own unique experiences. We form opinions of our behavior, ability, appearance, and overall worth as a person from our own personal observations and the feedback we receive from others.¹⁸

Over time, our accumulated experiences establish our self-concept. This self-concept determines how we feel about ourselves and influences how we respond to others. Individuals with high self-esteem are generally more creative, independent, and spontaneous in their interactions with others. Because of their positive feelings about themselves, they can concentrate on the issues at hand and focus on new and original ideas without being as concerned about how people feel about them. On the other hand, people with low self-esteem tend to feel overly concerned about the evaluations of others, which dilutes their ability to concentrate on problems and to think creatively. Their low self-esteem often causes them to withdraw from the task or social situation.

Extensive research has shown that the behaviors of individuals are consistent with their self-concepts. Students, for example, who see themselves as competent academic achievers quite consistently perform better in school. Individuals with high self-esteem are generally more accurate in their perceptions of social situations.¹⁹

Problems of low self-esteem are often attributed to inadequate positive reinforcement from others. Although low self-esteem people have usually experienced less praise than others, the solution is not to simply give them more praise and recognition. Our self-esteem is greatly influenced by how well we have actually performed. Although the comments of others help us interpret our performance, how well we have actually done has a greater impact on our self-esteem. Therefore, to raise an individual's self-esteem, praise and compliments may not be as effective as actually helping the individual perform better.

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to one's belief in one's capability to perform a specific task. In many respects the concept of self-efficacy is similar to the concepts of self-esteem and locus of control. However, self-efficacy is task specific rather than a generalized perception of overall competence.

Self-efficacy emerged from the research on social cognitive theory and represents an important personality variable that explains variations in individual performance. Several studies suggest that self-efficacy is a better predictor of subsequent performance than past behavior.²⁰ Although knowing how

well people have performed in the past helps to predict their future performance, an even better predictor is knowing how capable they feel regarding a specific task.²¹

Self-efficacy has three dimensions: magnitude, strength, and generality. Magnitude refers to the level of task difficulty that a person believes he or she can attain and is related to the concept of goal setting. Some people think they can achieve very difficult goals. Strength refers to the amount of confidence one has in one's ability to perform and it can be strong or weak. Some people have strong convictions that they will succeed even when they face difficult challenges. Generality indicates the degree to which one's expectations are generalized across many situations or restricted to an isolated instance. Some people believe they can succeed in a variety of situations.

Self-efficacy is a learned characteristic that is acquired by four kinds of information cues:

1. *Enactive mastery*: The most influential stimulus contributing to the development of self-efficacy is enactive mastery, which refers to the repeated performance or practicing of the task. For example, a nurse who has inserted many IV needles should have high self-efficacy in being able to do it again.
2. *Vicarious experience*: Observing the behavior of others (modeling) can almost be as effective as enactive mastery, especially when the person and the model are similar in terms of age, capability, and other characteristics and when the model's behavior is clearly visible.
3. *Verbal persuasion*: In the development of self-efficacy, verbal persuasion is less effective than practicing or modeling; nevertheless, it can be an important source of efficacy information, especially if the source has high credibility and expertise and if there are multiple sources who all agree.
4. *Perceptions of one's physiological state*: Efficacy perceptions are influenced by momentary levels of arousal as illustrated by these statements of athletes--"We were ready for them." "They were really up for this game." "I was mentally prepared," and "He was really psyched for this match."

Efficacy perceptions appear to be self-reinforcing. Self-efficacy influences the kinds of activities and settings people choose to participate in, the skills they are willing to practice and learn, the amount of energy they are willing to exert, and the persistence of their coping efforts in the face of obstacles. People with high self-efficacy tend to engage more frequently in task-related activities and persist longer in coping efforts; this leads to more mastery experiences which enhances their self-efficacy. People with low self-efficacy tend to engage in fewer coping efforts; they give up more easily under adversity and demonstrate less mastery, which in turn reinforces their low self-efficacy.²²

Self-efficacy can predict performance in a variety of settings as long as the efficacy measure is tailored to the specific tasks being performed. Consequently, efficacy perceptions are relevant in many organizational settings, such as employee selection, training and development, and vocational counseling. Employees with high self-efficacy would be expected to respond more favorably to most personnel programs, such as performance evaluation, financial incentive, and promotion programs.²³

Maslow's Need Hierarchy

Abraham Maslow, a clinical psychologist, developed a popular need theory as part of a larger theory of human behavior. From his experience as a therapist and counselor, Maslow formulated a theory that explained human behavior in terms of a hierarchy of five universal needs that were ordered in a hierarchy of importance from the lowest-level basic needs through the highest-order needs.²⁴

1. *Physiological needs.* Physiological needs were the most basic needs in Maslow's hierarchy and included needs that must be satisfied for the person to survive, including food, water, oxygen, sleep, sex, and sensory satisfaction.
2. *Safety and security needs.* If the physiological needs are relatively satisfied, Maslow claimed that safety and security needs would emerge. These needs include a desire for security, stability, dependency, protection, freedom from fear and anxiety, and a need for structure, order, and law. Threats of physical harm, assault, tyranny, or wild animals prevent individuals from satisfying their safety needs and cause them to focus their energies almost exclusively on eliminating these threats.
3. *Social needs.* Originally Maslow referred to this need as the need for belongingness and love. Social needs include the need for emotional love, friendship, and affectionate relationships with people in general, but especially a spouse, children, and friends. Individuals who are unable to satisfy this need will feel pangs of loneliness, ostracism, and rejection.
4. *Ego and esteem.* The need for ego and esteem includes the desire for self-respect, self-esteem, and for the esteem of others, and may be focused either internally or externally. When focused internally, the esteem needs include a desire for strength, achievement, adequacy, mastery, confidence, independence, and freedom. When focused externally this need consists of a desire for reputation or prestige, status, fame and glory, dominance, recognition, attention, importance, dignity, and appreciation.
5. *Self-actualization.* The highest need in Maslow's hierarchy was for self-actualization, which refers to the needs for self-realization, continuous self-development, and the process of becoming all that a person is capable of becoming.

According to Maslow, these five needs are arranged in a hierarchy of importance which he called *prepotency*. Higher-level needs are not important and are not manifest until lower-level needs are satisfied. Once lower-level needs are satisfied, needs at the next highest level emerge and influence behavior. The levels of the need hierarchy are not rigidly separated but overlap to some extent. Thus, it is possible for a higher-level need to emerge before a lower-level need is completely satisfied. In fact, Maslow estimated that average working adults have satisfied about 85 percent of their physiological needs, 70 percent of their safety needs, 50 percent of their social needs, 40 percent of their self-esteem needs, and 10 percent of their self-actualization needs. Although Maslow never collected data to support these estimates, numerous studies have found that lower-level needs are more satisfied than higher-level needs.²⁵

Maslow's theory has been widely adopted by organizations and is frequently used as the foundation for organizational development programs such as participative management, job enrichment, and quality of work-life projects. According to his theory, an organization must use a variety of factors to motivate behavior since individuals will be at different levels of the need hierarchy. A list of the general rewards and organizational factors used to satisfy different needs is illustrated in Exhibit 6.4. Maslow encouraged

managers to be more sensitive to the needs of employees and he called the convergence of management and human relations “enlightened management.”²⁶

Exhibit 6.4 Applying Maslow’s Need Hierarchy

<u>Need Levels</u>	<u>General Rewards</u>	<u>Organizational Factors</u>
1. Physiological	Food, water, sex, sleep	a. pay b. pleasant working conditions c. cafeteria
2. Safety	Safety, security, stability, protection	a. safe working conditions b. company benefits c. job security
3. Social	Love, affection, belongingness	a. cohesive work group b. friendly supervision c. professional associations
4. Esteem	Self-esteem, self-respect, prestige, status	a. social recognition b. job title c. high status job d. feedback from the job itself
5. Self-actualization	Growth, advancement, creativity	a. challenging job b. opportunities for creativity c. achievement in work d. advancement in the organization

Self-actualization. One of Maslow's unique contributions was his description of self-actualization. Self-actualization refers to the process of developing our true potential as individuals to the fullest extent, and expressing our skills, talents, and emotions in the most personally fulfilling manner. Self-actualization is a process, not an end state--individuals do not become self-actualized in the sense that they have finally reached an ultimate goal. Instead they are continually in the process of becoming more and more of what they are uniquely capable of becoming.

In his later writings Maslow suggested that the need for self-actualization could not be gratified or satiated like the other needs. Instead, the need for self-actualization tends to increase in potency as individuals engage in self-actualizing behaviors. Thus, self-actualization is an ongoing process of becoming that is intensified and sustained as people achieve self-fulfillment.

How self-actualization is manifest varies greatly from person to person. Maslow believed each person had a genetic blueprint identifying what he or she was uniquely capable of becoming. In one person self-actualization might take the form of becoming an ideal mother, while others could express the same need athletically, musically, artistically, or administratively. Self-actualization does not require us to be the best in the world, only the best we can possibly be. For example, people expressing their self-actualization athletically do not have to be world-class athletes to develop and enjoy their talents. Fulfillment can also be derived from achieving their personal best performances. Although Maslow said self-actualization could not be defined precisely, he suggested that it was associated with such things as greater freshness of appreciation and richness of emotional reaction, improved interpersonal relations, more democratic values and character structure, increased creativity, a carefully designed system of values, and greater frequency of peak experiences.

McClelland's Learned Needs

Another popular theory for examining behavior is the learned needs theory developed by David McClelland and his associates. This theory is closely associated with learning theory since McClelland believed that needs were learned or acquired by the kinds of events people experienced in their culture. These learned needs represented behavioral predispositions that influence the way people perceive and act in each situation. People who acquire a particular need behave differently from those who do not possess it. McClelland and his associates, particularly John Atkinson, investigated achievement, affiliation, and power, abbreviated “nAch,” “nAff,” and “nPow.”²⁷

The need for achievement--nAch. The most thorough series of studies conducted by McClelland and his associates concerned the need for achievement which they measured with a projective test called the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). This test consisted of showing people a series of pictures and asking them to write an imaginative story about each picture. Their scores measured how many times they referred to achievement-oriented ideas in their stories. McClelland believed that high need achievers would write achievement-oriented stories about people seeking success and striving to accomplish particular goals. His research identified three characteristics of high-need achievers:

1. High-need achievers have a strong desire to assume *personal responsibility* for performing a task or finding a solution to a problem. Consequently, they tend to work alone rather than with others. If the task requires the presence of others, they tend to choose coworkers based upon their competence rather than their friendship.
2. High-need achievers are characterized by *moderate risk taking and goal setting*. They tend to set moderately difficult goals and take calculated risks. Consequently, in a ring-toss game where children tossed rings at a peg at any distance they chose, high-need achievers chose an intermediate distance where the probability of success was moderate, while low-need achievers chose either high or low probabilities of success by standing extremely close or very far away from the peg.
3. High-need achievers have a strong desire for performance *feedback*. These individuals want to know how well they have done, and they are anxious to receive feedback regardless of whether they have succeeded or failed.

In his research on the need for achievement, McClelland found that money did not have a very strong motivating effect on high-need achievers; they were already highly motivated. In a laboratory study, for example, high-need achievers performed very well with or without financial incentives.²⁸ Low-need achievers did not perform well without financial incentives, but when they were offered money for their work, they performed noticeably better. This study does not mean that money is unimportant to high-need achievers. Instead, to them, money is a form of feedback and recognition. When high-need achievers succeed, they look to monetary rewards as evidence of their success.

High-need achievers are characterized by their single-minded preoccupation with task accomplishment. Consequently, the need for achievement is an important motive in organizations because many managerial and entrepreneurial positions require such a single-minded preoccupation for people to be successful. McClelland believed that a high need for achievement was essential to entrepreneurial success. In a series of rather unique and interesting studies McClelland examined the need for achievement among managers in a number of current societies to show that a high need for achievement was correlated with managerial success and economic activity. By examining the literature of earlier

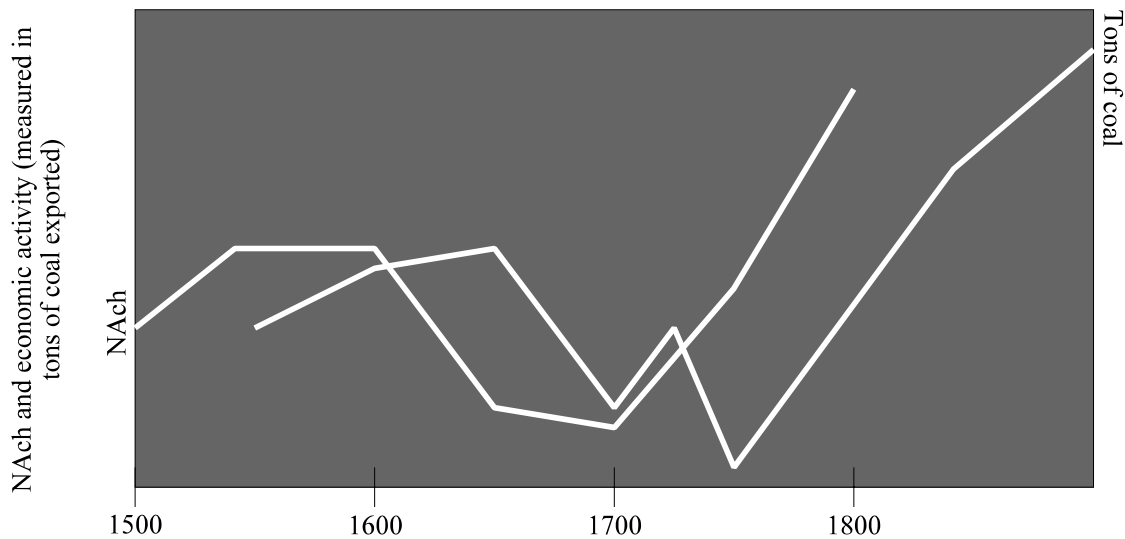
civilizations, McClelland showed that the rise and fall of economic activity was correlated with the rise and fall of the achievement motive.

This line of research is perhaps best illustrated by a study of the need for achievement in England between 1500 and 1850 A.D. To measure the achievement orientation of the English culture, the literature written at various points during this period was analyzed. The need for achievement was measured by counting the number of achievement themes per 100 lines of literature. The measure of economic activity came from historical records showing the tons of coal exported from England. The results, summarized in Exhibit 6.6, show that the rise and fall of economic activity followed the rise and fall of the need for achievement by about 50 years.²⁹

McClelland concluded from his research that the need for achievement, like other personality characteristics, is apparently learned at an early age and largely influenced by child-rearing practices of parents. Children tend to have a high need for achievement if they have been raised by parents who have fairly strict expectations about right and wrong behavior, who provide clear feedback on the effectiveness of their performance, and who help their children accept a personal responsibility for their actions.³⁰

The need for achievement appears to be an important personal characteristic for entrepreneurs. A willingness to take reasonable risks, personal accountability, and a constant striving for goal accomplishment seem to be essential traits for successful entrepreneurs. A review of 23 studies that attempted to link achievement motivation and entrepreneurship found a positive relationship in 20 of the studies.³¹

Exhibit 6.6 The Relationship between the Need for Achievement and Economic Activity in England: 1500 to 1850 A.D.



Source: David C. McClelland, *The Achieving Society*, New York: Free Press ©1967, p. 139. Reprinted with permission.

McClelland argued that economic development and national prosperity were closely related to the need for achievement and recommended that U.S. foreign aid programs to poorer countries focus on raising the need for achievement rather than on providing financial aid. He argued that the achievement motive

could be taught and he explained how to do it. His training focused on four objectives. First, managers were encouraged to set personal goals and keep a record of their performance. Second, they were taught the language of achievement – to think, talk, and act like people with a high achievement motive. Third, managers were given cognitive or intellectual support – they were taught why the achievement motive was important to success. Fourth, they were provided with group support – a group of budding entrepreneurs met periodically to share success stories. In short, the managers were taught how to think and behave as entrepreneurs with a high achievement motive. Their new success-oriented behavior was reinforced verbally, intellectually, and through peer group influences.

Following this model, McClelland conducted a training program for fifty-two business executives in Hyderabad, India. Six to ten months after the course, many executives had doubled their natural rate of entrepreneurial activity. These findings have important implications for efforts to assist underdeveloped nations because they suggest that beyond giving economic aid lies a greater need to instill the achievement motive in the population.³²

The need for affiliation – nAff. The need for affiliation is defined as a desire to establish and maintain friendly and warm relations with other individuals. In many ways the need for affiliation is similar to Maslow's social needs. Individuals with a high need for affiliation possess these characteristics:

1. They have a strong desire for approval and reassurance from others.
2. They have a tendency to conform to the wishes and norms of others when they are pressured by people whose friendship they value.
3. They have a sincere interest in the feelings of others.

Individuals with a high need for affiliation seek opportunities at work to satisfy this need. Therefore, individuals with a high nAff prefer to work with others rather than to work alone, and they tend to have good attendance records. Evidence also indicates that individuals with a high nAff tend to perform better in situations where personal support and approval are tied to performance.³³

The implications for organizations are fairly straightforward. To the extent that managers can create a cooperative, supportive work environment where positive feedback is tied to task performance, individuals with a high nAff will be more productive. Such an environment allows individuals with high nAff to satisfy their affiliation needs. Conversely, individuals who have a low need for affiliation should be placed in positions where they can work independently since they prefer to work alone.

The need for power – nPow. The need for power has been studied extensively by McClelland and others.³⁴ This need is defined as the need to control others, to influence their behavior, and to be responsible for them. Some psychologists have argued that the need for power is the major goal of all human activity. These people view human development as the process by which people learn to exert control over the forces that exert power over them. According to this view, the ultimate satisfaction comes from being able to control environmental forces, including other people. Individuals who possess a high need for power are characterized by:

1. A desire to influence and direct somebody else.
2. A desire to exercise control over others.

3. A concern for maintaining leader-follower relations.

Individuals with a high need for power tend to make more suggestions, offer their opinions and evaluations more frequently, and attempt to bring others around to their way of thinking. They also tend to seek positions of leadership in group activities, and their behavior within a group, either as leader or member, is described as verbally fluent, talkative, and sometimes argumentative.

In his research on the need for power, McClelland describes “two faces of power.” The need for power can take the form of *personal power*, in which individuals strive for dominance almost for the sake of dominance, or *social power* in which individuals are more concerned with the problems of the organization and what can be done to facilitate goal attainment. Individuals with a high need for personal power tend to behave like conquistadors or tribal chiefs who inspire their subordinates to heroic performance, but they want their subordinates to be accountable to the leader, not to the organization. Individuals with a high need for social power, however, satisfy their power needs by working with the group to formulate and achieve group goals. This method of satisfying power needs is oriented toward achieving organizational effectiveness rather than satisfying a self-serving egotism.³⁵

Power needs are especially salient when the time comes for an entrepreneur to step aside and place the direction of a company under the control of a successor. Entrepreneurs high in personal power have more difficulty relinquishing control than those who are high in social power. A study of succession planning among entrepreneurs found that social power entrepreneurs are likely to have less trouble turning over their positions of power to someone else than will entrepreneurs who need personal power.³⁶

McClelland argues that the need for social power is the most important determinant of managerial success. Although a high need for achievement may be necessary for entrepreneurial activity, most managerial positions in today’s corporate world require managers who have a strong need for social power. Successful managers also need to have a relatively high need for achievement, but achievement is not as important for corporate managers in large corporations as it is for entrepreneurs.

Although individuals with a high need for social power tend to be more effective managers, McClelland provides some evidence suggesting that these individuals pay a fairly high price for their success in terms of their own personal health. McClelland measured the need for power among a group of Harvard graduates and followed their careers over a twenty-year period. He found that 58 percent of those rated high in nPow either had high blood pressure or had died of heart failure.³⁷

Discussion Questions

- 1 Explain the concepts of perceptual inferences, stereotyping, and projection and explain how they are both good and bad? Provide illustrations of them from your own experience.
- 2 How does the self-fulfilling prophecy occur and how large a factor do you think it is in determining the success of new employees? Describe a time in your life when the self-fulfilling prophecy impacted your behavior.

- 3 Describe the locus of control and apply it to your life, i.e., are you more internally or externally directed? How would you expect internals to respond differently than externals to each of these organizational events: a job enrichment program, a profit-sharing plan, a management development program, and a union election?
- 4 Describe the concept of self-actualization and explain its meaning in Maslow's theory of motivation. Apply it to your career: what do you think you have the unique capacity to do or become?
- 5 How is the need for achievement learned, and what impact does it have on behavior? How would you rate your personal level of achievement orientation? What experiences have contributed to your need for achievement?

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