

e-interpersonal; introducing underlying theory and the circumplex model

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The e-interpersonal profile is based in interpersonal theory (hence its name) and in the circumplex model. This one-pager offers an introduction to both theory and model, and it will help you understand some of the basic concepts of personality profiles and the best current rationale for using them.

Interpersonal theory defines personality as relatively enduring, recurrent patterns of social interaction, which are characteristic of human life (Sullivan, 1953). That is, your life and your social interactions are bound to unfold within groups that you take part in. Sounds reasonable?

Thus, *interpersonal theory* describes essential themes of social interactions (Wiggins & Trapnell, 1996); **Agency**, denoting interaction currencies of status and power, which are granted a person in exchange for his or her applications of dominance; and **Communion**, denoting interaction currencies of acceptance and consideration, which are granted, in exchange for attempts to nurture relationships. In consequence, your personality is shaped by your own presentation strategy, and in turn reshaped by the reaction from your immediate surroundings (Hogan, 1996; McAdams & Pals, 2006; Mead, 1934). Question is what people around you are willing to vouch for? That is, telling a story that you're a potent leader doesn't do much, when your employees disagree, or if you don't have employees to begin with; likewise a story that you are a compassionate team member won't make any sense, if your colleagues don't like you etc.

Researchers in psychology and economics (Buss, 2009; Hogan & Kaiser, 2005; Lawrence & Nohria, 2002) warrant comparison between conditions of early group-living and the ways of contemporary organizations. This may sound absurd, since there are obvious differences (e.g., at least 12.000 years), but then just ask these basic questions, and you will find, that they can be answered by reference to human evolution: "How are decisions made in your company? Are research and development activities integrated with business strategy? How do managers and employees communicate and are they working towards a common goal? Are valued competencies in your workplace properly sustained?"

At e-stimate international we answer these complex questions, drawing on the best available evidence (Rynes, Giluk, & Brown, 2007), and we provide relatively simple tools to understand and to solve them. For example, when the themes of agency and communion are joined they form the *circumplex model*, which is shown in figure 1 (Gurtman, 1991; Wiggins & Trapnell, 1996). The model is well known in science, as well as in several other commercial profiles (Case & Phillipson, 2004). In fact, agency and communion are related to extraversion and agreeableness in the five-factor model of personality (McAdams & Pals, 2006). We specifically acknowledge the circumplex structure in the e-interpersonal profile and the comprehensive five-factor model in the e-fivefactor profile.

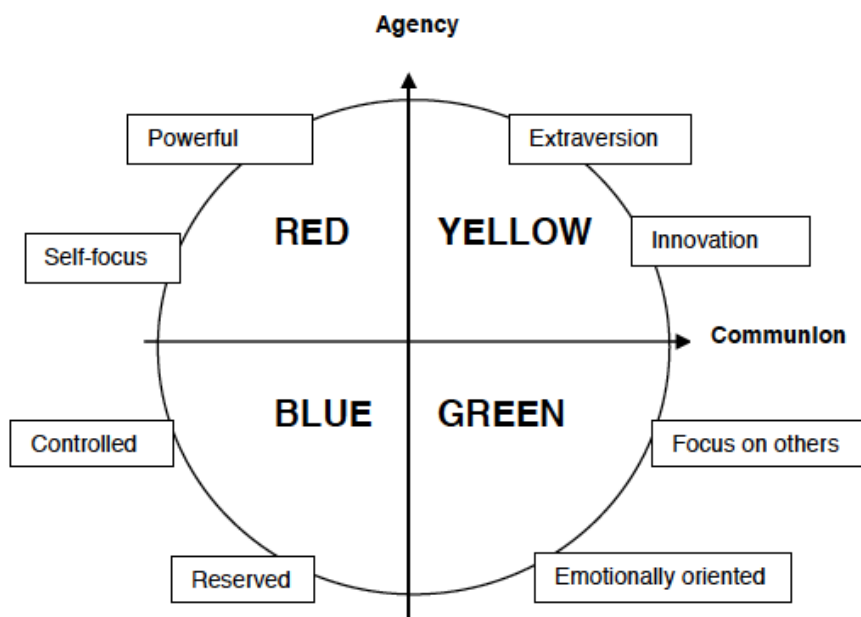
First, e-interpersonal operates in colours, which represent four drivers, that explain your behavior; YELLOW (i.e., high agency and high communion) represents the drive to socialize and comprehend, GREEN (i.e., low agency and high communion), represents the drive to bond and nourish relationships, BLUE (i.e., low agency and low communion), represents the drive to protect and gain competencies, RED (i.e., high agency and low communion), represents the drive to acquire power and status. You probably already have guessed your primary color?

Second, the e-interpersonal profile offers eight differentiated facets (Gurtman, 2009). These facets are Extraversion, Innovation, Focus on others, Emotionally oriented, Reserved, Controlled, Self-focus and Powerful. The specific facets help determine the primary direction and strength in your profile.

In summary, the e-interpersonal profile is based in a scientific approach to understanding social interaction and individual differences as they unfold in the workplace. Using profiles can help you achieve personal as well as team development and understanding, and they can assist in making organizational decisions, such as who to hire and who not to hire. Very often, people will have a good guess of their primary color, but they are often unaware of their differences within both the primary and supportive colors.

Figure 1.

e-interpersonal is based in interpersonal theory and in the circumplex model



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