

Spotlight: Adding new people to your enterprise is always a challenge. Determining whether someone will fit into the current culture is one of the most important decisions made through the business day. Human personalities can be measured in five dimensions: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and natural reactions (how calm or sensitive to stress a person is). These dimensions determine how we respond in various situations and be especially indicative of a person's compatibility. Where a person falls on the scale of these five dimensions is not an indication of negative or positive attributes. What is deemed a desirable attribute by one enterprise can be seen by another as highly undesirable. Looking at your enterprise in terms of these five dimensions is the necessary first step.

From the perspective of the enterprise, how important is each dimension? The nature of the enterprise's endeavours will to some degree dictate your answers as will the style of relating you foster. By honestly assessing your current stakeholders, you can see the type of people your enterprise attracts. You can also assess any recent departures in terms of the five dimensions to learn if these people are no longer stakeholders because they did not fit the enterprise's profile.

The outcome from this analysis should be a objective understanding of who are the people that comprise your enterprise. While the intention is to be objective, what you learn may, subjectively, be unsettling. It is possible that the enterprise is attracting stakeholders who do not advance the enterprise towards its goal. In this case, the analysis gives you the opportunity to investigate what can be done differently to attract the stakeholders you are wanting. Whether or not you have the stakeholders you desire, you now have a definition of the enterprise's ideal stakeholder and therefore, a way to filter those people from the masses.

Armed with your enterprise profile, it is time to play matchmaker. A long term relationship is the outcome you desire because the return on investing in people takes some time to mature. Studies show that disparity in financial costs between new and established stakeholders is significant. For this reason alone, being cautious in selecting new stakeholders is important. The human costs are more difficult to quantify and even more significant. Attracting and retaining stakeholders that are good matches with the enterprise is definitely worth the effort.

Recognising that—over the long term—both the individual and the enterprise must benefit through establishing the relationship helps ground any decisions. If you cannot envision a person being a part of your enterprise for a significant length of time, you should question forming any relationship. Any perceived short term gains can quickly be reversed when a relationship is not founded on a steady base. Look beyond the first blush and be honest about the viability of the relationship. Starting a relationship with a stakeholder is easy compared with the effort required to end that relationship, especially if it ends badly.

Musings: Bright, cool, and crisp. With unusually clear skies for almost the entire month, February's weather was extraordinary. The climate always interests me and especially so when we experience unusual weather patterns.

Every morning I awoke wondering if today would be the day that the clouds returned. As the days stretched into weeks, my disbelief continued to grow. What is usually a mostly grey month passed with barely a cloud seen. The collective memory of many life-time West Coasters did not contain a record of a similar event.

Patterns help me get through life. That day follows night and spring follows winter is only true because the cycle repeats itself until I believe that it will happen unerringly. That on occasion, such as is the case this month, the pattern is broken also helps me live my life. I am reminded that the patterns only exist in my mind and that I must be ready for the unexpected.

Facts & Figures: It was a month for the record books! Not only was February unusually dry in Victoria (38.1 versus the average of 107.8 millimetres), almost all that rain fell on two days. On average, only 31% of daylight hours have measurable sunshine during the month while this year, the figure was almost 80% with temperatures on average, two degrees below normal.

Links: In developing ecological awareness, the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, and recycle) provide a great tool. The actions available to reduce what we consume and recycle the waste from our consumption are fairly well laid out. When it comes to reusing that which we no longer have a use for, the options are not as abundant. What do you do with something that is still useful, but no longer suitable? The Freecycle Network™, www.freecycle.org, is a grassroots movement dedicated to finding a home for the stuff you no longer want. With groups established in most communities across the continent, you just post an email in your local group letting the members know what you have to give away. As simple as that your old junk becomes someone's new treasure.