

Does your personality fit your network? It could be damaging your success at work

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Your personality must fit with your network in order to be trusted and successful, new research from UCL School of Management

(<https://www.mgmt.ucl.ac.uk/news/does-your-personality-fit-your-network-it-could-be-damaging-success-work>) and Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, reveals. Otherwise, your friendships might clash with your job.

A common situation at work is to have two sets of friends who are not friends with each other. Both sets demand time, attention, and even favouritism from the person in the middle, known as the friendship broker. These expectations put pressure on the broker who must respond with whatever personality resources he or she has available. Some people are able to call upon personality resources that are well adapted to the goal of maintaining trust among their separate and potentially conflicting sets of friends.

Other people find themselves unable to maintain trust as they move between different cliques.

According to professors Martin Kilduff from UCL School of Management and Stefano Tasselli from Erasmus University brokers maintain trust if they exhibit low blirtatiousness, i.e., they are relatively slow to speak what's on their mind, and high self-monitoring, i.e., they are adept at presenting themselves appropriately to quite different groups of people.

"But this diplomatic personality style – somewhat reserved, but able to present different faces to different people – is not likely to preserve trust if the individual is playing a role in just a single clique rather than dancing between the demands of different cliques," says Kilduff. "Indeed, the personality style best adapted to the situation of interacting at work within a single group of friends is quite different: a talkative, true-to-one's-self forthrightness is likely to maintain trust.

"Friendship brokers who flexibly and guardedly manage their individuality facilitate interconnection across cliques; but for those people whose friends are all within a single clique, it is self-revelation and authenticity that is expected."

The researchers used questionnaires to collect data concerning over 1000 friendship pairs at a critical-care unit of a hospital and at a two-year business school master's degree program. The paper is accepted and awaiting publication in the Academy of Management Journal.

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For more information, a copy of the study, or to speak to Professor Martin Kilduff, please contact Stephanie Mullins at BlueSky PR on smullins@bluesky-pr.com or call +44 (0)1582 790 706.