

Chapter 8



PERSONALITY MAPPING



What's the Trend?

As behavioral measurement tools like gaze tracking build a detailed map of our personalities, multiple industries will be able to use this information to bring likeminded people together and provide more transformative learning and bonding experiences.

For over 70 years the most popular method for assessing personalities was based off a vocational test for children to determine their potential future careers. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) uses four pairs of temperament categories to define everyone with some nuanced version of 16 possible personality combinations. Despite routine criticism, the test has stood the test of time and is still widely used today.

This past year, a new method that started capturing the attention of the business world was developed by former ad agency executive Sally Hogshead based on the seven keys to holding attention from her book *Fascinate* (passion, power, prestige, mystique, alert, innovation, trust). Using these seven principles as the foundation, her latest book *How The World Sees You* uses your responses to a detailed questionnaire to assign

one of 49 different “personality archetypes.”

Each one uses a “primary and secondary advantage” along with an aspirational personality descriptor such as “The Artisan” or “The Trendsetter” to describe a person’s best self, as well as offer tips on how to leverage your archetype. The early popularity of the model is a sign of our longstanding desire to better understand our own motivations and those of the people around us.

As the range of social data on our relationships online grows, and online behavior trackers measure every interaction – we are coming closer to taking the next step in understanding personality that goes far beyond how we might answer questions in a survey in order to have an algorithm place us into a predefined personality category.

This emerging promise of this increasingly detailed *Personality Mapping* will allow us to more deeply understand ourselves, and also allow companies to more efficiently target messages not by demographics or sociographics, but by personality types and behavioral tendencies.

This is not about personalization to the individual – but rather understanding and catering to our personality *type*, which might be very similar to thousands or even millions of others.

Driven by this trend, education will become more valuable as learning is more tailored by personality to maximize its efficiency. Travel and experiences will be built to connect us with like minded individuals who love what we love. And the workplace will see a shift as organizations get better about using personality mapping as a part of motivating teams and the recruiting and hiring process.

So if this map of personality could actually be done – a natural first question to ask is: how close are we to truly mapping anyone’s personality in a deeper way than a four letter descriptor of who we are? To answer that, let’s start with the technology behind this mapping itself and the one thing that much of it is focused on tracking ... our faces.

The Windows To Personality

Thanks to the Hollywood film *Minority Report* – many consumers believe that the main reason for gaze tracking technology is so manipulative

brands of the future can create ads that use your gaze to customize intrusive billboards with eerily personalized offers. Actually, the earliest efforts of gaze tracking had a far more noble ambition.

For example, a 2009 eye tracking study from Scotland on how people perceive threats confirmed the “fight or flight” theory that people’s eyes naturally move more quickly to towards threatening faces and body postures. More recent studies have learned that consistent telltale patterns of eye movements can be used to diagnose conditions like autism or dyslexia in young children. Of course, since that early heritage, the tracking of our gaze and facial features has started to see plenty of commercial applications.

The most well-known example of this came in 2012 when Microsoft patented eye tracking in its Kinect gaming system – and later announced facial tracking advancements that could allow it to target ads by mood and emotion. As this research evolves, the combination of eye tracking and what is now being termed “facial coding” is leading to an interesting potential future where such technology could be used to determine more detailed aspects of our behavior and even to recognize us individually in a crowd based on our facial features or moods.

Of course, this potential for a true Interpol-style big brother execution of facial tracking that could recognize any of us raises plenty of ethical concerns. The real promise of this technology, however, goes beyond fears government monitoring.

If it were really possible to create a full map of personality in any moment, it could open innovation in many industries. Perhaps the most hopeful of them all is the education and learning space ... which could use personality mapping to reinvent the way any child or adult learns a new skill in the future.

The Most Advanced Schools on Earth

In the past several years, one of the fastest growing spaces in education has been massively open online courses (MOOCs), which are helping to augment or replace traditional learning models. As more people go through these courses, the data they are generating about learning is huge.

On educational website edX, for example, over a million people engaged with one of nearly 70 courses across the past two years and all these students generated more than a billion clicks through their activities. On the Coursera platform, the most popular calculus class (lovingly called MOOCulus) features Ohio State math professor Jim Fowler teaching calculus using props like a blow up balloon or stick figure puppets.

But how do we know any of these courses are working? Rather than relying on periodic knowledge testing, the future of learning involves factoring a student's learning personality more heavily into the experience.

The AltSchool in San Francisco is one experiment designed to do exactly that. Founded a year and a half ago by former Google head of personalization Max Ventilla, these set of four schools now use data gathering technology to measure all aspects of student interactions and use the data to make teachers and their lessons more effective.

The school has already raised more than \$133 million in funding and aims to open several more schools in 2016. Another example from the same region is generating even more interest thanks mainly to the man behind it: Salman Khan, founder of Khan Academy.

While it may seem like an odd choice for the creator of the largest and most successful online library for learning to create a real life school – this was always Khan's big ambition. Online learning can only take you so far. And it is no replacement for face to face real life learning. So Khan's new school also uses new open techniques and sophisticated analytics to track each students progress and let them work at their own pace as well.

As quantified learning tools and online classrooms give the ability to collect more data on learning styles, students can continually be segmented into personality based groups that go beyond the usual categories of visual, aural or verbal learners. This new model of learning involves using personality mapping as a critical part of helping education itself to become more useful around any topic.

The same method is also being used to create more opportunities to have travel experiences with people who share similar things based on their personality.

Nerds, Elephant Safaris & Personalized Travel

Just over a year ago, *WIRED* magazine Articles Editor Adam Rogers shared the story of a memorable trip he took on the “nerd cruise” – an annual fan cruise called the JoCo Cruise Crazy, organized by singer-songwriter Jonathan Coulton. The six-year-old cruise is described as a “summer camp for nerds” and attracts passionate fans, geek celebrities like Wil Wheaton and John Hodgman, and over 800 people each year.

Baked into the experience is a powerful trend that is tilting the future of travel towards more memorable experiences tailored perfectly to their personality – no matter how quirky. In fact, brands and professional consultants alike are making this type of travel a commonplace reality.

Leading bespoke travel advisory firm Brown + Hudson is one example. The group redefines what travel can be for their clients by mapping travel experiences to the personalities of the travelers and creating some of the world’s most unique experiences. The world renowned Oberoi Hotels & Resorts group features exotic vacation packages that are customized for a traveler’s personality with everything from elephant safaris to textile printing classes.

In addition to being a conduit to amazing regional experiences like the Oberoi, hotel brands are also stepping up their efforts to become personality-driven creative hubs for travelers seeking more unique and authentic travel experiences. The W hotel brand from Starwood Hotels was one of the earliest pioneers of the modern boutique hotel trend en masse with its runaway success that landed the brand in *Fast Company* magazine recently as one of the “20 moments from the past 20 years that moved the whole world forward.”

More recently over the past year, there has been an explosion in growth among both independent and large hotel group funded boutique properties. The newly launched Proper Hotels group aims to create “hotels that [are] proud emblems of the local culture.” Marriott’s new Moxy brand features 24 hour communal areas and board games, and its EDITION brand aims to create “cultural epicenters” – with early properties planned in New York, London and Istanbul. Hilton has its Curio brand as well as its upcoming Canopy brand dedicated to incorporating

local culture at a lower price tier.

This personality driven trend with boutique hotels is also moving outside of the usual big cities as well. Destination Hotels, for example, opened its first Quirk Hotel in the unexpected market of Richmond, Virginia to early accolades for offering something different in that traditional southern city. Even the W hotel, after introducing the boutique style to large cities, has plans in the coming year to nearly double its properties from a current 47 worldwide to add another 40-plus in development – many of which will be outside of the largest cities and create landmarks of their own.

All of these efforts are driven by a single insight about the business and leisure traveler alike. In a world where consumers are increasingly being tailored to on a more personal level (see my 2015 trend *Everyday Stardom* for more on this point), the travel brands that stand out are the ones that bring their own personality and match it to the personalities of their ideal customers.

The more the industry learns about the personalities of guests and of the cities themselves, the more these experiences will be tailored to bring out the best and most interesting of each.

Programmatic Advertising & The Perfect Pet

The final place where the trend of Personality Mapping also figures prominently is with one of the hottest topics of the past year in the world of marketing – programmatic advertising. The term refers to growing use of automated tools to ensure messages can hit the right people at the right time.

In one recent example, an animal shelter from California used digital targeting to find the perfect pet-owner matches. If you were a single woman who was an avid reader, you saw an ad for a cute cuddly cat. If you were athletic guy who loved hiking, you saw an ad for an energetic Jack Russell Terrier. The campaign was billed as the world's first pet adoption drive driven by programmatic media. It is also a sign of how mapping our personalities through the content we share online will be increasingly valuable for marketers.

Facial coding software from startups like Affectiva and Emotient are offering even more ability to customize messages to personalities. Both are currently used to test potential ad effectiveness and to compare different creative executions.

All this innovation in ad-tech will bring plenty more crossover battles, consolidation, acquisition and the occasional smart integration in the coming year. Over time the industry will eventually see the value in sharing data, consumers will see more messages tailored perfectly to their personality and enticing them to act based on exactly what they love or already want.

Why It Matters

The enormous side effect of all the programmatic efforts at personalization in marketing is the fact that all this data we are collecting on human behavior will finally allow us to create richer and more meaningful maps of human personality – and see ourselves beautifully quantified within them. As Personality Mapping draws complex, nuanced, specific conclusions about the sort of person we are and aspire to be, how we learn and what we believe – industries of all kinds will find new ways to use this data to architect more impactful experiences of all kinds.

Learning will be more effectively catered to individual personalities. Travel will be more immersive and powerful when it takes passions and triggers into account. Marketing can become more uplifting and effective when personality mapping is layered on top. With the positive potential, though, also comes the danger of manipulation.

As organizations of all kinds gain the ability to mine our personality data, publishers could use it to exploit us by creating more sensational media to prey on our worst fears. Marketers could use these insights to push our triggers around insecurities we already have and entice us to spend money to “fix” them. Yet this potential for misuse will not overcome the vast potential for this trend and the brands that use it for good will find new loyal connections to be made with consumers who feel validated by the personal touch offered to them.

Who Should Use This Trend?

Any organization struggling with the potential for how to leverage data to better understand their consumers will find value in this new way of thinking. For brands used to thinking about consumers not in terms of demographics but in terms of personas – this type of thinking will make perfect intuitive sense. For others, the act of thinking in terms of how to group consumers by personality drivers will lead them toward a more nuanced view of their consumers that will inspire more personal messages and effective communications.

How To Use This Trend

- ✓ **Map your audience personality segments** – One of the most valuable ways to think about this trend is in relation to how you can start to segment your audience with personality. As you do, you can start to take a persona driven view where you see the people you most want to reach not in terms of relatively meaningless numbers like age or post code, but in terms of the things they are most passion about and would themselves describe as the beliefs that define them.
- ✓ **Be a convener of personality** – There is a powerful role that organizations can often take as conveners to bring likeminded people together. The up side of having more data on the personality drivers of your audience is that you can decide what common interest or shared belief they all hold and then convene your own gathering based on that. Not only will you be providing a chance for people who share interests and passions to gather (which everyone loves) – but you'll also have a chance to build a deeper connection with the most loyal and engaged personalities who show up as well.