

High Potential Trait Indicator (HPTI)— For a Candidate with a Learning Disability



Can you identify leadership potential, using HPTI, for someone with learning disabilities? Heather Stewart, Owner, Sage Transitions recently worked with Jenny, a leadership candidate at a major forestry products manufacturing employer. She is a high potential leadership candidate who has also been diagnosed with dyslexia and a reading comprehension learning disability. Her disability meant that she needed to spend more than an hour to ensure her responses were accurate for the High Potential Trait Indicator (HPTI), about 4 times longer than other candidates.

The employer directly employs thousands of people in North America, and uses the HPTI because it aligns with their priorities to focus on leadership career development and succession planning. The following visual shows Jenny’s results on each trait. Her conscientiousness is recorded as Optimal, for she is on the border of moderate and optimal.

	Low	Moderate	Optimal	Excessive		
	Cons	Adju	Curi	Risk	Ambi	Comp
Jenny	59	47	64	43	49	62

How did Jenny and the manufacturing employer benefit from reviewing and analyzing her HPTI results? Jenny confirmed "that she found the HPTI results accurate, and that they provided her with enhanced self-awareness and a better understanding of her leadership potential, and her strengths and challenges as a leader." It also reinforced how her personality traits can help her adapt to a leadership role and overcome some of the challenges that come with having a learning disability. The employer now has a more detailed description of Jenny’s leadership potential, and methods to train, develop and support Jenny to develop her leadership skills.

Jenny wears many hats: developing and building a dust mitigation process, booking continuing education for plant employees, and fulfilling the health and safety backup coordinator role. In the manufacturing plant dust mitigation is a big health and safety risk. Her employer is committed to reducing dust levels and the resulting risk of fire and explosions. The goal is to increase health and safety for the people who work in the plant, reduce risks caused by dust, and ensure equipment runs longer and better with less dust. These roles require a person with strong conscientiousness and curiosity to continue to learn and adapt processes, systems and training.

Jenny was identified as having leadership potential through a comprehensive process using HPTI and several other measures of potential. Jenny’s role is significant as the employer identifies safety as a key value. This is particularly important with an employer and location where the consequences of unsafe working environments can be very severe.

Jenny's HPTI results and our conversations demonstrate her potential to lead. She is conscientious, curious and wants her team and the employer to succeed. She is engaging, articulate and self-aware, and these characteristics were demonstrable throughout the HPTI discussions. She confirmed that she needed to spend extra time to understand and respond to the assessment. She relied on her conscientiousness throughout the report completion to get everything absolutely right. Her ability to overcome these learning disabilities and use available resources and complete the assessment confirm her HPTI results. She has optimal range scores for conscientiousness and curiosity, with an excessive result in competitiveness. Jenny confirmed the accuracy of the HPTI and the report of her results. During her debrief she identified some areas where her employer's training, development and coaching are supporting her to enhance her leadership competence.

Conscientiousness

Jenny is well-organized and motivated by success. This trait was instrumental in her completion and accuracy of the HPTI. She wants to be efficient in her work, and is aware of the importance of her part in ensuring the health and safety of other employees. Jenny says that she relies on her conscientiousness and curiosity to help find ways to address her learning disability. "I've been teaching myself better reading comprehension by buying a book, then purchasing the audio book too. This way while I was reading if I got stuck on a word, I could listen to the word on the audio book and then go back to reading on my own. Before doing this it would take me at least 6 months or more to read a book. Mostly because I wasn't comprehending it or I was discouraged due to how long it took. In February I read a book within a month and without an audio book in the background".

Adjustment

Jenny may experience some stress, but is able to confidently handle most challenges. She is also positive about the good work that others do. She confirmed that she has received a lot of support from her supervisor and colleagues. She stated that she has built strong relationships in and outside the plant, and this has allowed her to ask for and receive information and support from others, a valuable leadership characteristic in learning to manage any stresses that may arise. She also confirms that a certain degree of stress is reasonable and responsible in her line of work, because the consequences of being careless are severe.

Curiosity

Jenny enjoys learning and is very interested in new ideas and methods. She likes to consider the pros and cons of ideas prior to implementation. She openly shares information, and asks others for their ideas and opinions. In her Safety Advisor and Dust Mitigation roles, Jenny said she reached out to Safety Advisors in other locations to build strong relationships and enhance her confidence in and performance on the job. She seeks out information and establishes networks of colleagues who support each other in sharing their knowledge and skills.

Risk Approach

Jenny says that she is comfortable taking calculated risks, but not confident in having difficult conversations or managing interpersonal conflict. She knows her limits and may avoid situations and personal conflicts. She wants to have, and works hard to build relationships with those around her, and finds it very challenging to confront issues with others. She seeks support from her supervisor and has had some conflict resolution training, and that has given her some information and processes to follow.

Ambiguity Acceptance

Jenny is open to hearing ideas and opinions from others, but wants to move past ambiguity and have stability and structure. She states that she respects others opinions, and wants to hear what they have to say before making a decision. Jenny relies on her conscientiousness to figure out what the problem is, assess whether a solution is needed immediately or in the longer term, and develop a plan that includes listening to others, and evaluating the complexity of the issue.

Competitiveness

Jenny thrives in competitive environments, and likes recognition for herself and her team and colleagues. She seeks to recognize others for their work and achievements. She confirmed that she feels very appreciated at the mill, and is proud of the work she's accomplished. Her competitiveness and conscientiousness drive her to work hard, plan well and seek recognition for her work, and that of her colleagues. She is motivated to win, but says "she wants the win for the mill and with the team".

Summary

Jenny demonstrated strong leadership potential on her HPTI report and in the debriefs. Her optimal conscientiousness and curiosity results combined with excessive competitiveness are foundational in her need to fully understand her work, and her determination to develop and implement plans to ensure that she does her job to the best of her ability. These two results are also instrumental in motivating her to learn new skills, and to find ways to address her reading comprehension disability. Her adjustment and risk approach scores are in the low moderate range, and our conversation suggests she is interested in receiving coaching and support to grow her leadership skills in these areas.

Conscientiousness is the most important optimal trait. Jenny is near optimal on this trait. Her conscientiousness combined with optimal curiosity and excessive competitiveness suggest that she has the potential to work hard, plan well, seek learning and strive to win for herself, her team and for the employer.

Jenny is a young women with learning disabilities who was able to accurately complete HTPI, and demonstrate how her leadership traits confirm her potential to lead. The leadership zones in HPTI are designed to provide a constructive approach to leadership, and to identify areas with optimal traits, and others where training, development and coaching will help a leadership candidate achieve their full leadership potential.