

The TalentSmart Study

In the mid-1990s a man named Travis Bradberry, cofounder of an organizational consultancy firm named TalentSmart, became curious about the following question: “**Is there a quality that any person can use to his or her benefit to be more successful in life?**” The TalentSmart study is an ongoing search for the answer to this question but the short answer is yes! **That quality that any person can use to his or her benefit to be more successful in life is SELF-AWARENESS.**

I will briefly summarize how Travis and his crew at TalentSmart “stumbled” upon this answer but first let me give you the demographics of the TalentSmart study.

Demographics of the TalentSmart Study	
TalentSmart study participants	500,000
Continents	All 6 inhabited continents
Countries	133 countries (27 in North America, Central America and the Caribbean; 13 in South America; 39 in Europe; 20 in Africa; 31 in Asia; and 3 in Australia)
Gender	51% male and 49% female
Age	18 – 93 years old
Occupation	15 unique areas (sales, marketing, finance, accounting, operations, customer service, human resources, organizational development, learning, IT/IS, engineering, manufacturing/production, business development, research and development, and unemployed)
Job Title	7 classifications (individual contributor, supervisor, manager, director, executive, senior executive/VP, and CEO)

If you would like to learn more about the TalentSmart study yourself see Travis Bradberry’s book, *The Personality Code*, published by G.P. Putnam’s Sons, New York, 2007 (go to “Appendix B: Behind the Scenes of the TalentSmart Study”). It is a book about the TalentSmart IDISC personality profiler, a modernized interpretation of William Marston’s original [DISC system](#).

Travis and his crew at TalentSmart, during their research, became aware that people possess three distinct qualities – (1) **intelligence or IQ**, (2) **emotional intelligence or EQ**, and (3) **personality**. Each of these qualities can be measured in a person but one can’t be predicted on the basis of another. IQ is the least flexible of the three and, short of a brain injury, is basically fixed from a very young age. Put another way, people are as smart as they are going to be from a very young age and, therefore, measuring and working to improve a person’s IQ isn’t very effective. For that reason the TalentSmart study didn’t measure IQ. But it did measure, the next piece of the puzzle, EQ.

Emotional intelligence is a person’s ability to recognize and understand emotions, as well as a person’s skill at using this awareness to manage him or herself and relationships with others. Of the three distinct qualities – IQ, EQ, and personality – emotional intelligence is the only quality that is flexible and readily learned. Because of this flexibility and changeability, emotional intelligence skills

are called “soft skills.” The 4 prevailing emotional intelligence soft skills are: (1) self-awareness, (2) self-management, (3) social awareness, and (4) relationship management. Doing extensive research, TalentSmart found an additional 22 soft skills they wanted to measure for their TalentSmart study, bringing the total to 26. TalentSmart developed a scientifically-sound 155 question survey to assess the critical aspects of each of the 26 soft skills. With IQ excluded and the 26 EQ soft skills being measured by way of their 155 question survey, personality was the final piece of the puzzle to consider.

In the TalentSmart study, TalentSmart measured personality using their TalentSmart IDISC personality profiler. Like the original DISC self-assessment and my [DISC Self-Assessment](#), they used 112 personality trait adjectives and paired them into 28 groups of four to create a forced choice, where the assessment taker must choose the one adjective that best describes his/her behavior and the one that least describes his/her behavior. Through an extended series of statistical analyses, TalentSmart factor-analyzed 123,000 possible personality configurations and condensed them into 14 unique personality types, where each personality type was significantly distinct from the others. Other authors, myself included, have condensed these possible personality configurations into 15 unique personality types. According to TalentSmart, personality is considered a stable style because it is inflexible. It is composed of stable traits that identify the essence of a person’s unique persona. A person’s personality can’t be predicted on the basis of his/her IQ or EQ. The TalentSmart study showed that personality can’t predict job performance or life satisfaction. Some of every type had good and some of every type had bad job performance. Likewise, some of every type were satisfied with life while some of every type were unsatisfied with life.

The most important finding so far in the ongoing TalentSmart study is this: **Fully understand your particular personality type, because the key to success is SELF-AWARENESS.**