



# Business Chemistry : **How Personalities Matter to CFOs**



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As a CFO, dealing with a variety of stakeholder personalities is inevitable. How we interact with others, more often than not, determines the success rate of achieving our goals. If this piece of fact about relationship complication bothers you, then worry no more!

## Chemistry - a social science

Carefully designed by Deloitte in cooperation with scientists, Business Chemistry is meant to mend the flaws of those personality tests readily available at the click of a mouse. It is a system that uses computational techniques to offer data-driven insights into personalities rather than just a single test. Without too many types, too many acronyms, nor irrelevant information, easy-to-remember results are displayed with a sophisticated structure emphasising behavioural cues in a business environment.

Deloitte CFO Insights (2013) stated that Business Chemistry consists of four dominant elements which are the Driver, the Pioneer, the Integrator and the Guardian. They all bear distinctive characteristics along with strengths and potential blind spots as below.

Element	General description	Strengths	Blind spots
The Driver	They are analytical thinkers with intellectual creativity. To them, experimentation is more appealing than theorisation. They are assertive and assume leadership readily	They are practical and decisive. Their task-orientation attitude helps them organise projects and people to get things done neatly	They may neglect people factor and others' needs. Drivers - both consciously and subconsciously - tend to expect others to be like them. They can sometimes impose a huge workload on themselves
The Pioneer	They are people of ideas. What they love about business is the exploration of possibilities and redefining the status quo. Pioneers hardly do the same thing in the same way. They are spontaneous and often enjoy being active with others	They are flexible and adaptive to new environments. They are also supportive and upbeat. Their enthusiasm boosts the whole group's spirits in time of hardship	Pioneers are bored by routines and impatient. Their fun-loving attitude can distract them from duties. They may ignore practicalities to pursue their own ideas
The Integrator	Integrators appreciate harmony in their environment and are determined to create it. They spend time considering everyone's opinions and smoothing problems out	They are empathetic, warm-hearted and cooperative. Attuned to others' emotions, they are highly sociable and can facilitate the rest of the group. They help to settle conflicts and raze down collaboration obstruction	Focusing on harmony and conflicts, Integrators can get off their tasks too much and miss the deadlines. Also, they sometimes find themselves stuck in the middle of issues or overloaded because they know not how to say 'no'
The Guardian	In favour of clear and certain reality, interested in cause and effect, they can be reluctant to unproven ideas. They are also the data-unlockers in your group and can organise facts using logical methods. They usually think things over before making decisions	They can analyse complicated information and get to the core of problems by providing structures. They are also able to see patterns in things around then develop explanatory perspectives. Guardians are consistent people who follow what should be done logically and steadily	Their concentration on data can cause them to overlook other sources of information. Moreover, they tend to be too cautious and resistant to changes for fear of instabilities

Figure 1: Four dominant elements in Business Chemistry

These elements are a perfect tool to explore **who you are**. They even show you the frame of **who you are dealing with**. However, applying the answers into reality is another story to tell.

Long story short, mastering the elements can help you to connect personally and more importantly, break down assumptions about how people should be treated. According to Deloitte CFO Insights (2013), you will shift from the Golden Rule (treat others as you wish to be treated) to the Platinum Rule (treat others as they wish to be treated). Such recognition can trigger a huge beneficial change in a business environment – if you know how to make it happen.

## One-on-one basis

Personal relationships are what links people from different background. Whether an organisation is fully effective or not heavily depends on how healthy these relationships are. Then again, such connections are intrinsically self-developed and uncontrolled by any specific regulations. This causes the so-called complication and unpredictability bugging anyone involved.

To weed out such a nuisance from CFOs' daily concerns, Deloitte CFO Insights (2013) also advised how each element should be attended to.

Element	General description	Interaction tips
<b>The Driver</b>	They are analytical thinkers with intellectual creativity. To them, experimentation is more appealing than theorisation. They are assertive and assume leadership readily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep your composure and behave casually</li> <li>• Be brief and directly to the point</li> <li>• Give Drivers respect and recognition of their achievements and abilities</li> <li>• Be assertive and fight for your perspectives</li> <li>• Take advantage of their leadership nature by encouraging them to lead events or take initiative</li> </ul>
<b>The Pioneer</b>	They are people of ideas. What they love about business is the exploration of possibilities and redefining the status quo. Pioneers hardly do the same thing in the same way. They are spontaneous and often enjoy being active with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be as lively, energetic and optimistic</li> <li>• Consider their ideas, use their creativity and develop their talents</li> <li>• Talk about freedom and adventure</li> <li>• Wake up - Be bold</li> <li>• Emphasise on imaginative materials</li> <li>• Let them be in the spotlight</li> </ul>
<b>The Integrator</b>	Integrators appreciate harmony in their environment and are determined to create it. They spend time considering everyone's opinions and smoothing problems out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be sensitive and sincere</li> <li>• Listen with your ears – eyes – and heart</li> <li>• Make eye contact</li> <li>• Think contextually and long term</li> <li>• Balance ideas with emotions</li> <li>• Offer support</li> <li>• Mention people factor</li> </ul>
<b>The Guardian</b>	In favour of clear and certain reality, interested in cause and effect, they can be reluctant to unproven ideas. They are also the data-unlockers in your group and can organise facts using logical methods. They usually think things over before making decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give ascertained information, avoid anything vague</li> <li>• Keep your composure and stay calm</li> <li>• Plan things ahead and follow them</li> <li>• Details please!</li> <li>• Get ready for questions</li> <li>• Be aware of risks and how to minimise them</li> </ul>

*Figure 2: How to interact with each element*

The odds and sods above are believed to help you gain advantage in personal relationships at work. However, that is just a foundation step in workplace communication. Our ultimate goal is to optimise it to enhance team structure.



## One-on-multiple basis

Organisations are also about individuals cooperating to achieve the agreed common goal, which requires harmony and mutual rapport. As leaders, CFOs are the ones to operate the whole financial mechanism and coordinate all components to make sure it runs smoothly from inside to out.

Usually when it comes to team management, senior staff are puzzled. Hardly has anyone specialising in finance been through leadership training. They direct their team based on either their inborn ability or experience, which can cause team inefficiency and performance inconsistency. Applying personality elements can help fill the gap!

If there was a business environment dictionary, “workplace” would be the best example of “diversity”. One of the most exact benchmarks to measure the competency of a good leader, therefore, is the ability to take advantage of the miscellaneous to fully utilise the workforce. How?

This can only be done if one knows how to “intentionally leverage one’s own differences in a way that is complementary to someone else’s tendency” (Deloitte CFO Insights, 2013). To be more specific, leaders should show their team members the blind spots each individual can’t see then provide them with covers. Providing covers here means supporting A by assigning a task in his/her weakness to B and suchlike. If this is done thoroughly within the whole team, all members will get to do something in their specialities. Team advantage created. Work efficiency boosted.

To realise the concept, we should first do a team analysis. Questions to be considered include:

- What are my team elements?
- How can I make use of those elements to promote team coordination and, on a broader context, organisational engagement?

Or when facing a particular job, CFOs should start with:

- What elements does this job require? Which one does my team already have?
- Is each member’s element compatible with his/her duties?
- How does each element evaluate the job process?

The last question is especially important. Each person has his/her own perspective, which leads them to approach a certain issue differently. Similarly, how they evaluate the common work diverges. It is this discrepancy that perfects the whole process.

Now that you have already had your team profile at hand, let's explore the catalysts strengthening each element.

Element	Blind spots	Coverage required	Best partner
<b>The Driver</b>	They may neglect people factor and others' needs. Drivers - both consciously and subconsciously - tend to expect others to be like them. They sometimes can impose a huge workload on themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't let them take on too much work.</li> <li>• Make them discuss problems thoroughly with others before deciding</li> <li>• Ask them to listen and think about others' viewpoints</li> <li>• Save them from diplomatic tasks</li> <li>• Train them about tact and diplomacy in leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pioneers will input fresh and innovative ideas for them to consider</li> <li>• Integrators help them pay more attention to people around.</li> <li>• As Drivers make quick decision, Guardians can point out the underlying risks</li> </ul>
<b>The Pioneer</b>	Pioneers are bored by routines and impatient. Their fun-loving attitude can distract them from duties. They may ignore practicalities to pursue their own ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present details they ignore</li> <li>• Constantly remind them of deadlines and subtle implications of actions</li> <li>• Assign them creative tasks rather than repeated ones</li> <li>• Train them about time management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drivers can help tie down their elusive thoughts and keep things move forward</li> <li>• Integrators consider their ideas seriously. The team, thereby will not miss any brilliant suggestions.</li> <li>• Guardians can either realise their ideas or tell them which one is not going to work</li> </ul>
<b>The Integrator</b>	Focusing on harmony and conflicts, Integrators can get off their tasks too much and miss the deadlines. Also, they sometimes find themselves stuck in the middle of issues or overloaded because they know not how to say 'no'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help them to prioritise their tasks</li> <li>• Give them specific deadlines and frequent reminds</li> <li>• Steer them away from people conflicts sometimes</li> <li>• Train them about time management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drivers help them to speed up and think less about personal matters at work.</li> <li>• Pioneers' optimism and energy can cheer them up when they are stuck in resolving conflicts.</li> <li>• Guardians guide them to see the core of problems and reason out conflicts</li> </ul>
<b>The Guardian</b>	Their concentration on data can cause them to overlook other sources of information. Moreover, they tend to be too cautious and resistant to changes for fear of instabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell them to explore other sources of information, especially social ones</li> <li>• Explain how necessary and useful changes are, using proven facts and illustrations</li> <li>• Engage them in planning phases, especially risk management</li> <li>• Encourage them to meetings and brainstorming sessions to be more open-minded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drivers can urge them to move on when Guardians are still preoccupied with how reliable something is.</li> <li>• Pioneers can offer Guardians new concepts and inspire them.</li> <li>• Integrators provide them with thoughts about other people and connect them with everyone</li> </ul>

Figure 3: How to team up all elements



While providing covers is crucial to team perfection, it is not enough. A full team management package also includes training. This step is usually disregarded due to the workload each staff has to carry. However, most people may fail to realise that spending a little time for constant training can help relieve their workload in the long run, because they learn to delegate tasks more reasonably and to cooperate more harmoniously. As leaders, CFOs should be the one in charge of organising training sessions with instructors specialising in teamwork, not just some general orientation or teambuilding activities. Additionally, measuring team performance periodically can help identify then improve team weaknesses.

## Back-end profits reaped from Business Chemistry

As Barry Smith (2010) has pointed out, everyone benefits from discovering their own elements. Getting to know your natural strengths, you are more inclined to work in the field of your inborn advantage. This will give you energy and enjoyment. Likewise, your elements tell you, pretty clearly, what your shortcomings are and also the potential blind spots. Consequently, you can avoid those jobs in your innate weaknesses and thereby shun frustration. Being aware of your own blind spots is even more useful, for you will be able to control your reactions, rather than behave subconsciously like before, in a particular case. Moreover, your personal relationships will be better nurtured as you come to accept somebody else's nature, knowing that their difference can be a valuable resource.

Elevating to a business level, mastering this "social science" makes people ooh and aah at how charismatic a leader and efficient a team player you are, because your communication tactics are more focused and effective. For example, now you notice presenting a certain financial issue must be varied according to the audience. If they are primarily Drivers, a presentation with a one-page summary and focusing on overall impacts will be more appealing (Deloitte CFO Insights, 2013). In addition, leveraged human resources is a convincing evidence of strong leadership when you can exactly match people to the tasks in their advantage.

All in all, better alignment, stronger engagement, deeper understanding of perceptions and greater credibility within your role are why Business Chemistry matters.



## About TRG International

TRG International—a Gold Channel Partner of Infor—is an independent provider of IT business solutions, and supports thousands of users in 70 countries. Clients range from small domestic companies to large global multinationals in both the public and private sectors.

Our activities focus on enabling business and people to perform better.

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