

# The Importance of Values at Work



## The importance of values at work: MAPP (Managerial and Professional Profiler) – 36 years on

A significant amount of research has focused on the relationship between personality traits and job performance. Indeed, today it would be considered unusual not to assess personality and behaviour when evaluating a candidate's suitability for a senior executive role. Typically, such assessments will, at best, include personality questionnaires, or at worst, rely on an unstructured interview.

Curiously, however, less attention has been paid to the interaction between work-related values and workplace behaviours. With extensive experience in senior executive assessment, KCP began its pioneering work on integrating both personality and values assessments in 1988. The result of our efforts was MAPP – the Managerial and Professional Profiler.

In this brief paper, we share the insights we have gained regarding values in the workplace.

### Distinguishing between personality traits and values

There is a general consensus that personality consists of stable, enduring and endogenous characteristics that define the patterns of interaction of the individual with the environment. Traits appear to be heritable and are essentially innate. They can be considered as the “nature” aspect of behaviour.

Values are also stable (although rather more susceptible to malleability in the face of experience) but they are learned concepts that act to provide standards in the choice of behaviour in an evaluative way and permit the justification of one's behaviour. Importantly, values are hierarchical so strongly held beliefs and preferences will tend to trump other values that are less strongly held. For example, someone who is strongly altruistic may jeopardise their own safety in order to help others if their value for security is low. They can be considered as the “nurture” aspect of behaviour.

### Theoretical models of values – Schwartz

The literature exploring the relationship between personality traits and values predominantly references the work of S H Schwartz – The Schwartz Theory of Basic Values (1992, 2006, 2012).

Schwartz postulated that we all have numerous values that speak of what is important to us in life. These values will have greater or lesser importance to different people. Something that is important to me may not be to you.

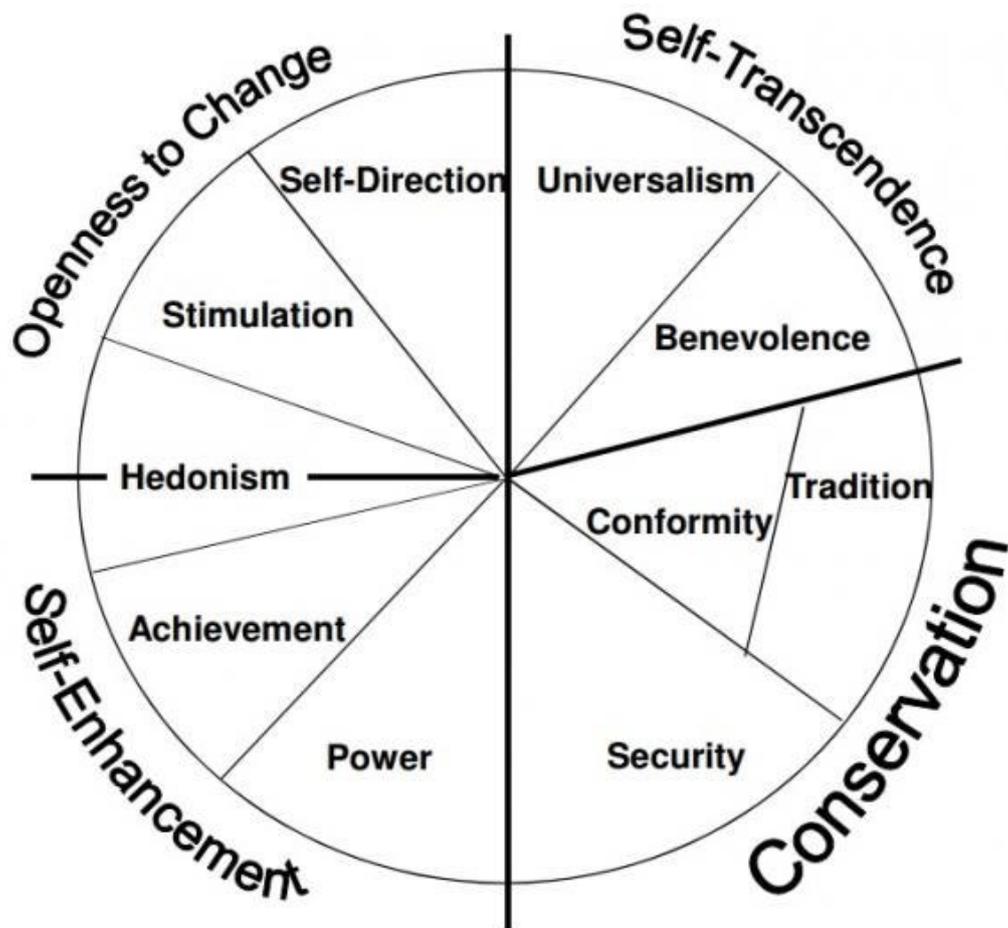
His theory suggests that values have **six** main features:

- Values are beliefs that are linked inextricably to emotion. If someone has a high value for "power" they will feel happy when they have it. If they don't have "power" they may feel hopeless and despairing.
- Values consist of desirable goals that motivate/provoke action. People will actively pursue goals that are in line with their values.
- Values transcend specific actions and situations. A value can be relevant at home, at work, in business or politics, and with both friends and strangers. Schwartz (2012) points out that "this feature distinguishes values from norms and attitudes that usually refer to specific actions, objects, or situations."
- Values act as standards. We decide what is good or bad, right or wrong, should or should not be done in line with what is important to us. Generally, this process is unconscious rather than thought about unless particular actions or judgements are in conflict with other values that we hold.
- Values are ordered by importance relative to one another. We have a hierarchy of values that are characteristic of ourselves. Is security more important to me novelty and new experiences?
- The *relative* importance of multiple values guides action. Specific behaviours have implications for different values thus it can be necessary to make compromises when selecting a particular course of action.

With the above features in mind, Schwartz proposed a model of ten basic values:

- **Self-Direction**  
Autonomy, control, independent thought and action.
- **Stimulation**  
Novelty, excitement, new challenges.
- **Hedonism**  
Pleasure, sensualism, enjoyment, indulging self.
- **Achievement**  
Personal success in line with prevailing cultural norms.
- **Power**  
Control or dominance over others.
- **Security**  
Safety, stability, freedom from threats
- **Conformity**  
Obedience, self-discipline, restraint from harming/upsetting others
- **Tradition**  
Respect for social rules, cultural norms and others in our social groups.
- **Benevolence**  
Concern for preserving and enhancing the welfare of others

It should be noted that the values proposed above are either more, or less, congruent with each other. For example, Conformity and Tradition are likely to run alongside each other, whereas Benevolence and Power are likely to be in conflict. This can be seen in Schwartz's graphic depiction of the 10 values as a circumplex:



Here we can see that Benevolence falls into the Self-Transcendence cluster but Power falls within the Self-Enhancement grouping. It is likely then that an individual with a high value for Benevolence would have a lower value for Power, and vice-versa. Values that correlate most highly with each other are positioned more closely in the diagram above.

It is interesting to note that Schwartz has conducted research across a broad spectrum of societies and cultures and found, "a high level of consensus regarding the relative importance of the ten values across societies".

In summary, values are critical moderators of behaviours and attitudes.

## Theoretical models of values - MAPP

The driving force for the development of MAPP which began in 1988 was to produce a questionnaire that explored BOTH personality traits and values in a management and professional context. With extensive experience of assessment of senior executives we had been struck by the absence of attention to values as factors in the drivers of behaviour at work.

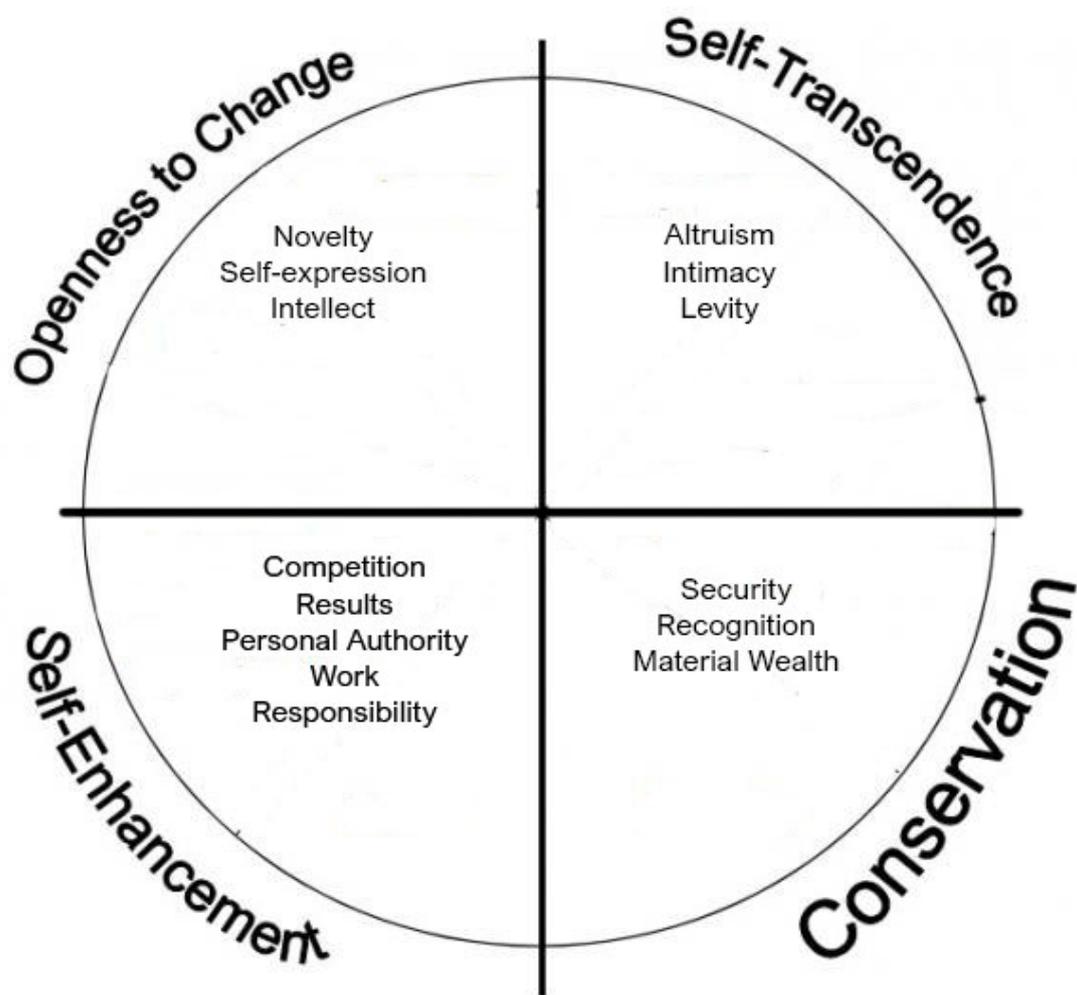
The MAPP Values model was designed to explore values that were relevant to the content of work and to the context (organisational culture and values). It was not our intention to explore personal values at a general level, however as we shall see the Values domain of MAPP does broadly reflect Schwartz's theory:

## MAPP Role Context Values

Low Score	High Score	Scale Title
Not interested in money or outward displays of wealth. Places more emphasis on interest or enjoyment at work than on material reward. Doesn't value the pursuit of possessions or comfort. Rejects materialism.	Puts emphasis on material wealth and domestic comfort. Is motivated by financial rewards. May be jealous of those who are better off. Likes spending money.	Material Wealth
Prefers co-operation to competition. Is less concerned about making comparisons between self and others. Loses gracefully. Is interested in own standards rather than those of others.	Motivated by competition. Compares own success on a relative basis. Strongly dislikes losing. May feel envious of others.	Competition
Motivated more by process than outcome. Low need for achievement. Able to be contented, even when not working towards a particular goal.	Motivated by the potential to get results. Obtains job satisfaction primarily from seeing own achievements. Sets mind on the final outcome. Likes to get on with things.	Results
Low need for respect/recognition. Relatively indifferent to people's opinions. Doesn't expect thanks for good work. Motivated more by own perceptions of good work than other people'	Values respect and praise from others (peers, subordinates, boss). Responds well to judicious praise. Likes to be seen to be good at the job. Motivated by 'pats on the back'.	Recognition
Favours democratic management. Sets little store by status. Dislikes having to submit to the authority of others. Negative values for autocratic leadership. Questions authority and expects own judgements to be questioned by others.	Values respect for own status. Enjoys the power element of personal authority. Favours a hierarchical reporting structure. Retains the right to have unquestioning support from subordinates.	Personal Authority
Unwilling to take on burdensome responsibilities. Would rather share accountability for critically important jobs. May feel more comfortable when somebody else is in charge.	Finds own responsibilities a reward in themselves. Demotivated when not given responsibility for tasks. Likes to have accountability and is unwilling to share this with others.	Responsibility
Rarely or never worries about the long-term future. Attaches little importance to the notion of security. May find the prospect of a 'safe' future unchallenging.	Needs security. Will avoid choices that involve the risk of losing security. Likes to know how the future will develop. Unsettled by uncertainty. Demotivated when the future is unsafe.	Security
Attaches no value to work for its own sake. Values other aspects of life as much or more than career. May choose not to work if it became financially unnecessary.	Feels that work is necessary for character and self-respect. Enjoys hard work. Identifies with career. Would be miserable if unemployed. Believes that people should work whether they have to or not. Misses work when away.	Work

## MAPP Role Content Values

Low Score	High Score	Scale Title
Favours the familiar and predictable. Maintains interest after novelty has worn off. Content with unchanging work and responsibilities.	Dislikes the predictable. Looks for new experiences. Dissatisfied in an unchanging environment. Becomes restless with work as its novelty wears off.	Novelty
Has less need to put something of self into work. Less likely to look for opportunities for self-expression. Puts little emphasis on creativity as a satisfier at work. Content with work that provides little outlet for individuality.	Likes to express self at work. Dislikes work that leaves no scope for originality. Is motivated by contributing something of self. Likely to be more individualistic.	Self-expression
Values personal rather than collective responsibility. Feels that first duty is towards self. Has less sympathy for those who don't or won't help themselves. Doesn't feel a need to work in a caring environment.	Places emphasis on work that benefits others. May be unhappy with work that lacks a positive impact upon others. Is motivated by the concept of service.	Altruism
Not impressed by intellectuals. Negative values for academics. Believes theoretical arguments to be irrelevant. Considers that society attaches too much significance to intelligence.	Admires people with high intellectual capacity. Prefers work with an intellectual content. Likes the company of clever people. Discontented in an environment with little intellectual stimulation.	Intellect
Less dependent on friendship. More oriented towards task than people. Sees intimacy in the workplace as inappropriate. Need for affection is relatively low.	Attaches very high value to closeness in relationships. Needs affection and friendship. Values camaraderie. Puts relationships before other needs/rewards.	Intimacy
Takes work and self seriously. Dislikes frivolity. Feels that people are often too flippant. Takes a solemn, reflective view.	Enjoys jokes. Values humour and light heartedness. Feels that seeing the funny side is healthy. Enjoys the company of jovial people.	Levity



As expected, scales in the opposing quadrants are negatively correlated. Thus, Novelty and Self-expression, for example are negatively correlated with Security, Recognition and Material Wealth. Similarly, the Self-enhancement scales associated with power and achievement are negatively correlated with the Self-transcendence scales associated with benevolence.

### Relationships between values and personality traits

Although there are some differing views on the relationship between traits and values, in his early work Allport (1937) saw a clear distinction between what he called temperament (personality) and character (values). More recently, McCrae and Costa (1999) have also stressed the notion that personality consists of endogenous basic tendencies also referred to as temperament. They cite as evidence the clear stability of traits throughout adult life as evidence of the heritability of traits and, the lack of strong evidence for parental influence on traits. Similarly, they suggest that the Five Factor Model of personality (FFM) supports the notion of the cross-cultural universality of trait structure. Modern researchers generally agree that values reside at an interface of the environment (nurture) and endogenous basic tendencies (nature) demonstrated by personality traits. Traits do not determine values but do influence them.

Parks-Leduc, Feldman and Bardi (2015) conducted a meta-analysis of some 60 studies that had explored the relationship between the Five Factor Model of personality and Schwartz's Basic Values. They hypothesised that the strength of the relationships between traits and values could derive from two kinds of similarities between the two – the nature and the content. Like Schwartz, they would want to argue that values are essentially cognitive - they are formed from learned experiences. Traits on the other hand represent characteristic thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Therefore, the relationship between traits and values would be at their strongest with cognitive traits and at their weakest with affective (emotional) traits even though the violation of someone's values might elicit emotional responses. Prior to their analysis they hypothesised:

- 1) *Openness to experience* should correlate strongly with values. This trait has clear cognitive components - curiosity and creativity.
- 2) *Agreeableness* should correlate positively with values emphasising benevolence and negatively with those values associated with power. Agreeableness is associated with cooperation.
- 3) *Extraversion and Conscientiousness* should fall between Agreeableness and Neuroticism with relatively modest correlations with values. Extraverts are looking for stimulation and this is associated with achievement. Conscientiousness is an expression of impulse control so also relates to achievement as well as conformity.
- 4) *Neuroticism* should have the weakest relationship to values given that is a predominately affective trait.

The meta-analysis generally supported their hypotheses:

*Openness to experience* - strongly correlated with self-direction and moderate positive relationships with stimulation and universalism values.

*Openness to experience* - a moderate negative relationship with tradition, conformity, and security values.

*Agreeableness* - correlates most strongly with benevolence values. It also has moderate relationships with power, universalism, conformity and tradition values.

*Extraversion* - moderate relationships with stimulation, power, achievement, and hedonism values.

*Conscientiousness* - moderately related to security, conformity, and achievement values.

*Neuroticism* did not demonstrate any significant relationships with the values domains.

## Relationships between MAPP personality and values scales

In an earlier paper, I shared the results of a factor analysis of MAPP resulting in a Five Factor solution.

In summary:

### *Openness to experience*

Free-thinking

Strategic

### *Conscientiousness*

Systematic

Intuitive (-)

Distractable (-)

Cautious

### *Extraversion*

Affectionate

Sociable

Confident

### *Agreeableness*

Uncompromising (-)

Assertive (-)

Convincing (-)

### *Neuroticism*

Sensitive

Anxious

Self-assured (-)

Given that the MAPP Values scales load broadly onto Schwartz's main clusters, we decided to explore relationships between MAPP Values scales and those MAPP Personality scales that map onto the Five Factor Model.

Our findings are presented below:

**Schwartz Cluster - Openness to Change/FFM - Openness to Experience**

<b>MAPP Values Scales</b>	<b>MAPP Personality Scales</b>	<b>Correlation &gt;0.01 sig</b>
Novelty	Free-thinking	Very strong
Novelty	Strategic	Very strong
Self-expression	Free-thinking	Very strong
Self-expression	Strategic	Very strong
Intellect	Free-thinking	Very strong
Intellect	Strategic	Very strong

**Schwartz Cluster - Self-transcendence/FFM - Agreeableness**

<b>MAPP Values Scales</b>	<b>MAPP Personality Scales</b>	<b>Correlation</b>
Altruism	Uncompromising (-)	Moderate
Altruism	Assertive (-)	Moderate
Altruism	Convincing (-)	Moderate
Intimacy	Uncompromising (-)	Moderate
Intimacy	Assertive (-)	Strong
Intimacy	Convincing (-)	Strong
Levity	Uncompromising (-)	Very strong
Levity	Assertive (-)	Very strong
Levity	Convincing (-)	Strong

**Schwartz Cluster - Self-enhancement/FFM - Extraversion**

<b>MAPP Values Scales</b>	<b>MAPP Personality Scales</b>	<b>Correlation</b>
Competition	Affectionate	Strong
Competition	Sociable	Very strong
Competition	Confident	Very strong
Results	Affectionate	Moderate
Results	Sociable	Strong
Results	Confident	Strong
Personal Authority	Affectionate	Very strong
Personal Authority	Sociable	Very strong
Personal Authority	Confident	Very strong
Work	Affectionate	Very strong
Work	Sociable	Very strong
Work	Confident	Very strong
Responsibility	Affectionate	Strong
Responsibility	Sociable	Strong
Responsibility	Confident	Very strong

**Schwartz Cluster - Self-enhancement/FFM - Conscientiousness**

<b>MAPP Values Scales</b>	<b>MAPP Personality Scales</b>	<b>Correlation</b>
Competition	Systematic	Very strong
Competition	Intuitive (-)	Strong
Competition	Distractable (-)	Moderate
Competition	Cautious	Moderate
Results	Systematic	Very strong
Results	Intuitive (-)	Moderate
Results	Distractable (-)	Moderate
Results	Cautious	Strong
Personal Authority	Systematic	Very strong
Personal Authority	Intuitive (-)	Very strong
Personal Authority	Distractable (-)	Very strong
Personal Authority	Cautious	Very strong
Work	Systematic	Very strong
Work	Intuitive (-)	Moderate
Work	Distractable (-)	Moderate
Work	Cautious	Strong
Responsibility	Systematic	Very strong
Responsibility	Intuitive (-)	Very strong
Responsibility	Distractable (-)	Very strong
Responsibility	Cautious	Very strong

**Schwartz Cluster - Conservation/FFM - Conscientiousness**

<b>MAPP Values Scales</b>	<b>MAPP Personality Scales</b>	<b>Correlation</b>
Security	Systematic	Very strong
Security	Intuitive (-)	Moderate
Security	Distractable (-)	None
Security	Cautious	Very strong
Recognition	Systematic	Strong
Recognition	Intuitive (-)	Strong
Recognition	Distractable (-)	Very strong
Recognition	Cautious	Very strong
Material wealth	Systematic	Strong
Material wealth	Intuitive (-)	Strong
Material wealth	Distractable (-)	Strong
Material wealth	Cautious	Strong

## Schwartz Cluster - Conservation/FFM - Neuroticism

MAPP Values Scales	MAPP Personality Scales	Correlation
Security	Self-assured (-)	None
Security	Anxious	Very strong
Security	Sensitive	Very strong
Recognition	Self-assured (-)	Moderate
Recognition	Anxious	Very strong
Recognition	Sensitive	Very strong
Material wealth	Self-assured (-)	Strong
Material wealth	Anxious	Strong
Material wealth	Sensitive	Strong

As with the Schwartz model, the MAPP Values scales vary in their content: some have strongly cognitive content (e.g. Novelty, Self-expression, Intellect), some have affective content (e.g. Recognition, Security).

The relationships between the MAPP scales that *most strongly* load onto the Five Factor Model and the MAPP Values scales shows broad similarities with the Parks-Leduc, Feldman and Bardi meta-analysis.

It is particularly interesting to note that in our study Neuroticism is associated with Conservation. This is probably unsurprising because the MAPP Values scale Security descriptor is " Needs security. Will avoid choices that involve the risk of losing security. Likes to know how the future will develop. Unsettled by uncertainty. Demotivated when the future is unsafe."

### Implications for MAPP use

The original MAPP model pre-dated that of Schwartz but there are important overlaps between the two. We originally felt that the distinction between values relating to the content of a role and values relating to the context/culture of a role was a useful aid to interpretation.

However, there are now compelling reasons to revise the MAPP profile charts and expert interpretative reports to reflect Schwartz's clusters of Openness to change vs Conservation and Self-transcendence vs Self-enhancement. This will make it even easier for assessors to rapidly identify the ways in which personal values interact with underlying personality characteristics.

## Conclusions

Personality traits and values are conceptually different. Traits are endogenous (nature) whilst values are exogenous - informed by life experience (nurture). Values are hierarchical - more strongly held values will tend to outweigh those that are less strongly held. Behavioural choices at work are determined by underlying personality traits that are mediated by someone's values hierarchy.

Values reside broadly in opposing clusters. For example, values that are associated with benevolence are negatively related to values that are associated with power. Values that are associated with security are negatively related to those associated with change.

MAPP was specifically developed to provide an integrated assessment of core personality traits alongside values in the workplace. The values assessed fit into the Schwartz model and as was reported in the British Psychological Society's review of MAPP the questionnaire "...offers considerably more than other popular instruments that deal exclusively with personality."

Assessing personality without assessing values is akin to an Advanced Level Mathematics examination that doesn't assess the candidate's understanding of differential calculus.

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