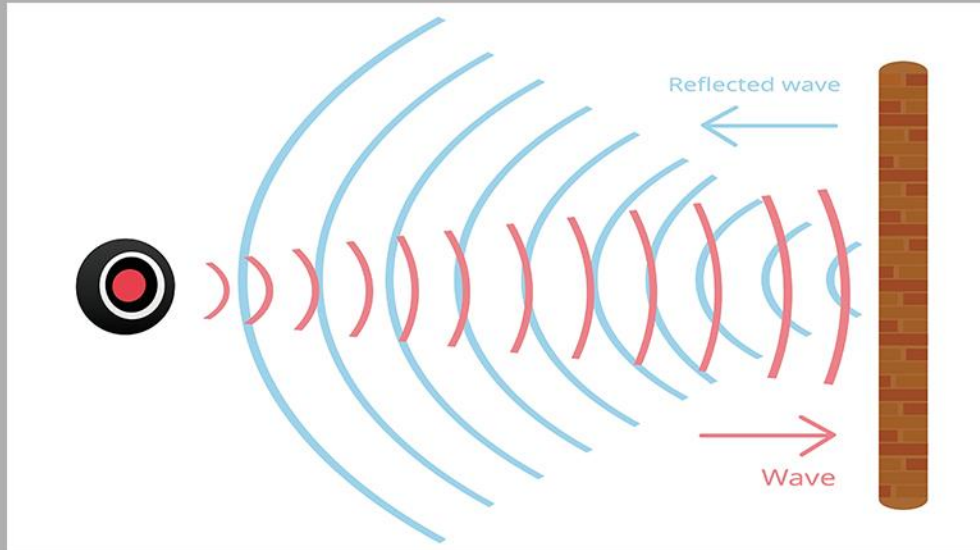


HQ  
CAREER  
GROWTH  
NEWS

THE HQ COMPANIES, INC.®

**Personality  
and The  
ECHO  
ECHO  
Effect**

by Kathy Graham



## THE ECHO EFFECT'S IMPACT ON YOUR CAREER

The Echo Effect is real and quite dangerous to your career growth, especially because the world is now so connected and in such rapid flux. An Echo Effect occurs when a group of individuals have the same shared traits, which means that no matter how many people are in the group, their similarities will result in their opinions and biases echoing the same sentiments, which may or may not be reflective of the larger environment facing you as a member of a Subject Matter Expert (SME) team, a department, the company, and/or its board.

- Your career growth is dependent upon the contribution you make as a SME, within your department, towards your corporation's goals, and/or to your corporate board's strategies.
  - QUESTION: How many people—and which people—do you talk to before you form your insights, provide your recommendations to your team, your department head, your corporate leaders, your board?

Most people talk to only a few people with similar profiles:

- 90% of Americans talk to only people who are the same ethnicity before making an important decision.
- 75% of Americans talk to only people who are in the same age range before making an important decision.
- 30% of Americans talk to only people who have the same educational background before making an important decision.
- 22% of Americans talk to only people who are the same gender before making an important decision.
- 20% of Americans talk about important matters with no one—or only 1 person—before making an important decision.

Yet, usually a corporation is selling to and/or impacted by more than one person and who are of different ethnicities, ages, educational levels/disciplines, and genders. Therefore, the discrepancy between your input—IF your info is impacted by the Echo Effect—and market reality can be huge. You're likely to not even be aware of your potential Echo Effect unintended consequences until your company nosedives and/or you're not promoted...or even fired like a number of others were recently.

One way to minimize the Echo Effect is to utilize the Five Factor Model (FFM), which is the personality selection test that since 1928 has shown repeatedly the most accurate predictability between a personality type and that person's job performance and behavior in real-life situations, plus a person's test score remains stable and valid across lifespans/cultures. There are 5 traits forming a person's personality, which are: level of openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotionality.

To significantly diminish the Echo Effect in your important decisions,

- Review the scope of people you interact with before making an important decision: are you talking to enough people in general and from different ethnicities, ages, education levels, gender, etc.?
- Take The Big 5 Test yourself (there’s many free online sources): what personality type and traits are you? What default behavior settings are you likely to exhibit? Given who you are, what other types of Big 5 personalities should you interact with to ensure that your decisions are comprehensive and free of Echo Effect?
- Incorporate into each of your decision-making resource groups a variety of different Big 5 personality traits, which will provide *the optimal level of multiple lenses viewing/collecting the information essential to your decision.*
  - ✓ Be sure to have at least 1 person high on emotionality and 1 person low on agreeableness. These two profiles are your “canaries in the mineshaft” in that the former tend to be hypervigilant—sensing danger before others do—and the latter is not likely to defer to others—i.e., that profile “tells like it is.” Empower/embrace their abilities by requesting that they consider how to defuse those situation(s) before they arise or minimize potential negatives, maybe even transform them into great opportunities.
  - ✓ While keeping the scope and personalities inclusive, do change your sources of information every now and then to keep group think from emerging and your data freshly connected to all the most likely factors that can grow your company, which is how your career grows exponentially.

#### REFERENCES:

- Baker, W.E. (2000). *Achieving Success Through Social Capital: Tapping the Hidden Resources in Your Personal and Business Networks*. Jossey-Bass.
- Caspi, A., Roberts, B. W., & Shiner, R. L. (2005). Personality development: Stability and change. *Annual Reviews of Psychology*, 56, 453-484.
- Robbins, S., Judge, T., & Vohra, N. (2019). *Organizational Behavior* (18<sup>th</sup> edition). Pearson. 163 -166.
- Judge, T. A., Bono, J. E., Ilies, R., & Gerhardt, M. W. (2002). Personality and leadership: a qualitative and quantitative review. *Journal of applied psychology*, 87(4), 765-780.