

# Bangkok Post outlook

**Right for your type (an excerpt from the original article, 21 June 2004)**

***Enneagram followers identify people by nine different patterns of personality traits, motivations and world-views. Could this be the key to better professional and personal relationships?***

**Story by KARNJARIYA SUKRUNG**

In a bid to improve his extensive line of businesses, Pravit C. Pong, president and CEO of PRO-Line Group of Companies, took time off work \_ to delve into an ancient psycho-spiritual art called Enneagram. Last year, the executive shed his signature expensive suit and tie to sit down and share the ins and outs of his past life with a group of more or less total strangers. Why?



Over the past 12 months, a growing number of leading Thai business executives have flocked to study how one can identify people by nine different patterns of personality traits, motivations and world-views (see related boxes). The phenomenon is not new. **There has been a surge of interest in Enneagram in the West for over a decade now, and top conglomerates \_ including Boeing Corporation, Toyota, Sony, Adobe and AT&T \_ have sent their brightest staff to learn this ancient discipline with a mind to implementing it in their workplaces.**

Perhaps those executives have discovered similar benefits as Pravit. He said Enneagram has helped enhance his managerial style, enabled him to recruit the right staff, assign the right person to the right job and create a workplace environment to promote productivity as well as maximise personnel contributions.

“The business world is so competitive and stressful. Knowing Enneagram helps ease this tension and benefits my businesses,” said Pravit, whose companies span everything from coffee houses to hi-tech IT devices. “Basically, it helps promote mutual understanding and good communication among people \_ the fundamental factors of good relationships in all areas of life, not just business,” he said.

“Our executives who have attended the workshops have proved to be more understanding, flexible and able to coordinate things well at work. It helps bring out their potential,” he said.

Sharing similar views are some executives from the Bank of Thailand and insurance, export, computer and consultancy companies.

“Problems at work are mainly about people. Enneagram helps me see through the roots of problems, which are our different viewpoints and our attachment to our ideas,” said a senior executive from the Bank of Thailand.

“From Enneagram, I've learned that there is no right or wrong views, or smarter or more stupid ones. We think and react to things and circumstances differently because of the different make-up of our inner personalities. We need to understand these differences rather than quarrel over them,” she said.

“This art of understanding oneself and others can be applied to several facets of life: love and relationships, parenting, professionals at work and spiritual growth,” said Wajasit Losereewanich, an Enneagram facilitator who since last year has conducted several workshops on Enneagram for companies in financial and exporting sectors.

“Enneagram is a comprehensive, pragmatic and tacit knowledge which is powerful to bring about changes. It answers to our needs most when we want to know about changes and self-improvement. Only when you know your personality and what gives rise to such traits will you know how to improve yourself,” said Wajasit.

## SELF-DISCOVERY TO SELF-IMPROVEMENT

Unlike other popular psychology systems, such as physiognomy, MBTI (Myers Briggs Type Indicator), Big Five Models, Six Thinking Hats, or Seven Habits, for instance, Enneagram requires us to probe deeply into the source or the root of our pattern and structure of thoughts and feelings.



In Enneagram, the core issue to explore is not what our own personality expression is but “how we look at the world, people, things and circumstance”. Our point of views will show to which type we belong.

Each of us has in ourselves a bit of the qualities of all the nine types, but we will have dominant characteristics of certain types. Enneagram points out the passion and ego-fixation that unconsciously gives rise to our expressions and personalities, constantly getting us into trouble, as well as the latent values that we should cultivate and put into use.



## RIGHT PERSON, RIGHT JOB

In the Enneagram schema, there is no inferior or superior characteristics. Each type complements the others and together they make up a balanced, unified world, if we know how to make use of each type's positive force.

For those who identify themselves as Type 1 “Perfectionists” who strictly cling to rules and principles, Pravit said, he would not assign them a job that requires them to think outside of the box. “That's too breaking for them,” he said.

“When people work under circumstances they find suitable for their personalities, they will be happy and enthusiastic to do the task. That not only contributes to top performances but also lessen conflicts,” said Pravit.

“Before, I was so upset with some of my staff who seemed hesitant to me and indecisive. Now that I know they are “Mediators” [Type 9] who may not be able to make easy decisions. So now I won't give them a task that requires them to make swift decisions because it may give them difficulty, and they may fail,” he said.

## INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

“Most of interpersonal conflicts come from different personalities and viewpoints. When we understand the origins of our differences, it helps soften the conflict. It will help us to see that this is not a personal thing but the frame of thought each type is conditioned to have. Anyone under the influence of their type will think or act similarly the same. So nothing is really personal and that's no reason to hate others,” said Enneagram facilitator Wajasit. “Also, with Enneagram, we will become more self-aware, thus restraining ourselves from indulging in our habitual weaknesses,” he said.

Pravit said he has become more patient and compassionate for his subordinates who are Type 9 Mediators. “I don't get upset with them so easily if they don't show their decisiveness. Rather, I give them advice and encouragement to be more decisive,” he said. The Pro-Line companies CEO also added that since many of his executive team learned Enneagram, the environment at work has greatly improved and has gone from being like a pressure cooker to one of calm.