

Where do You Fit? Understanding your “Career Type”

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Special Libraries Association Toronto Chapter
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Ulla de Stricker MA, MLS



With experience since the late 70's in the information industry and in information related operations, Ulla de Stricker focuses in her engagements on strategic planning for an organization's information and knowledge management policies, practices, and delivery mechanisms including special libraries.

With a strong track record executing information audits and needs assessment studies and recommending approaches for dealing with information services and knowledge management challenges, she is a sought-after consultant and coach for library staff.

Prior to 1992, she held senior positions in the information industry in customer facing and product development roles.

Ulla de Stricker is known for her special attention to the impact of corporate culture and extrinsic pressures on the actual day to day practices of knowledge workers and frequently conducts strategic planning studies based on such practices.

Typical projects have focused on assessments of knowledge worker requirements, determination of priorities in terms of information support content and services, and structuring of underlying operations to deliver such content and services in effective ways.

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AKA Where and Why am I Happy?

- We may have lucked into a particular career path
- Or perhaps we deliberately sought out a certain type of work and environment
- Chances are, we took a job and then ...



What Would I Do Back Then?

- *A moment of reflection: Would I ...*
- Choose a different job offer?
- Apply for different jobs?
- Take different courses?
- Spend more/less time on certain job functions in my previous jobs?
- Leave a job sooner?
- *WHY?*



What We Will Cover

1. Elements in Workplace Culture
2. Work Related Character Traits
3. Our Definition of Success and Achievement
4. Presenting as a "Good Fit" to an Employer



1. Elements in Workplace Culture

- What, to you, are the major elements in the culture of a workplace?



Elements in Workplace Culture

- Type of Organization and Environment
- Work Orientation: Client Facing or Enabling
- Structure and Autonomy
- Pace and Control
- Overall Social "Mood"



Type of Organization and Environment

- Private company - small vs. large
- Non profit, government or government agency
- Well established vs. startup
- Well known vs. niche
- "Hip" vs. "Traditional"
- Physical environment (offices vs. e.g. hospital)







HELP

EXPRESS
CHECK-OUT

EXPRESS
CHECK-OUT





Don't underestimate the impact of the micro environment

- What degree of influence do you have on how your workspace looks and feels?







Client Facing or Enabling

- In what key ways do client-engaged vs. back office jobs differ?



Client Facing or Enabling

- Dealing with clients as opposed to colleagues - being the "face" of the organization
- Client Service / Relationship Management skills
- Enabling work may not have visibility; role may be difficult for others to understand
- A certain "lonely" factor?









Structure and Autonomy

- Security of procedures to follow vs. risk inherent in thinking-on-feet
- Constraints vs. freedom to be creative
- Goals externally determined vs. individual planning and prioritizing
- Top down vs. team work
- Unionized environments



Pace and Control

- What comes to mind?



Pace and Control

- Predictable vs. unpredictable
- Seasonal or other variations - "feast & famine"
- Backlogs - stress of not feeling on top of the workload
- Burnout from chronic understaffing







Overall Social "Mood"

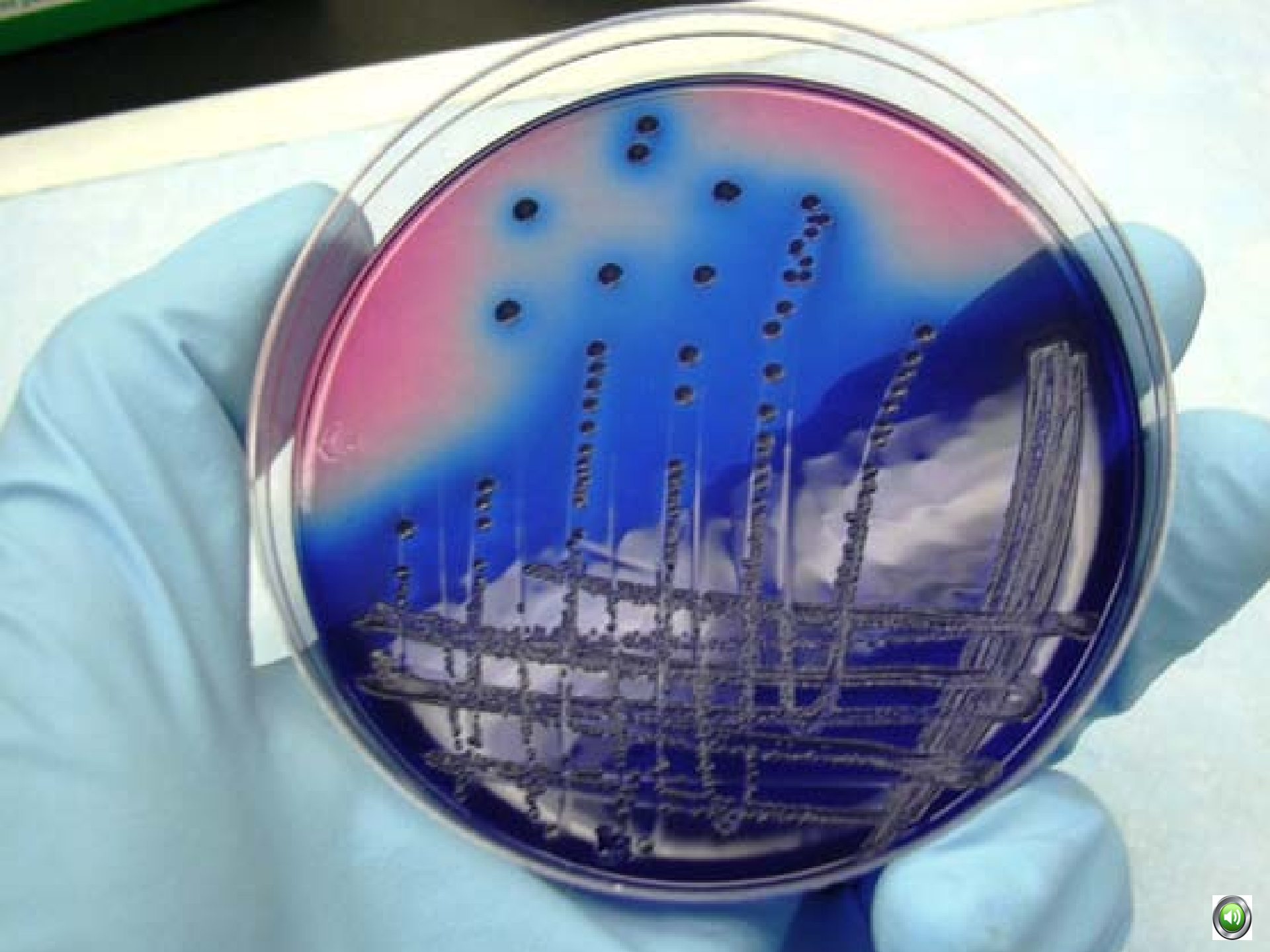
- Examples?



Overall Social "Mood"

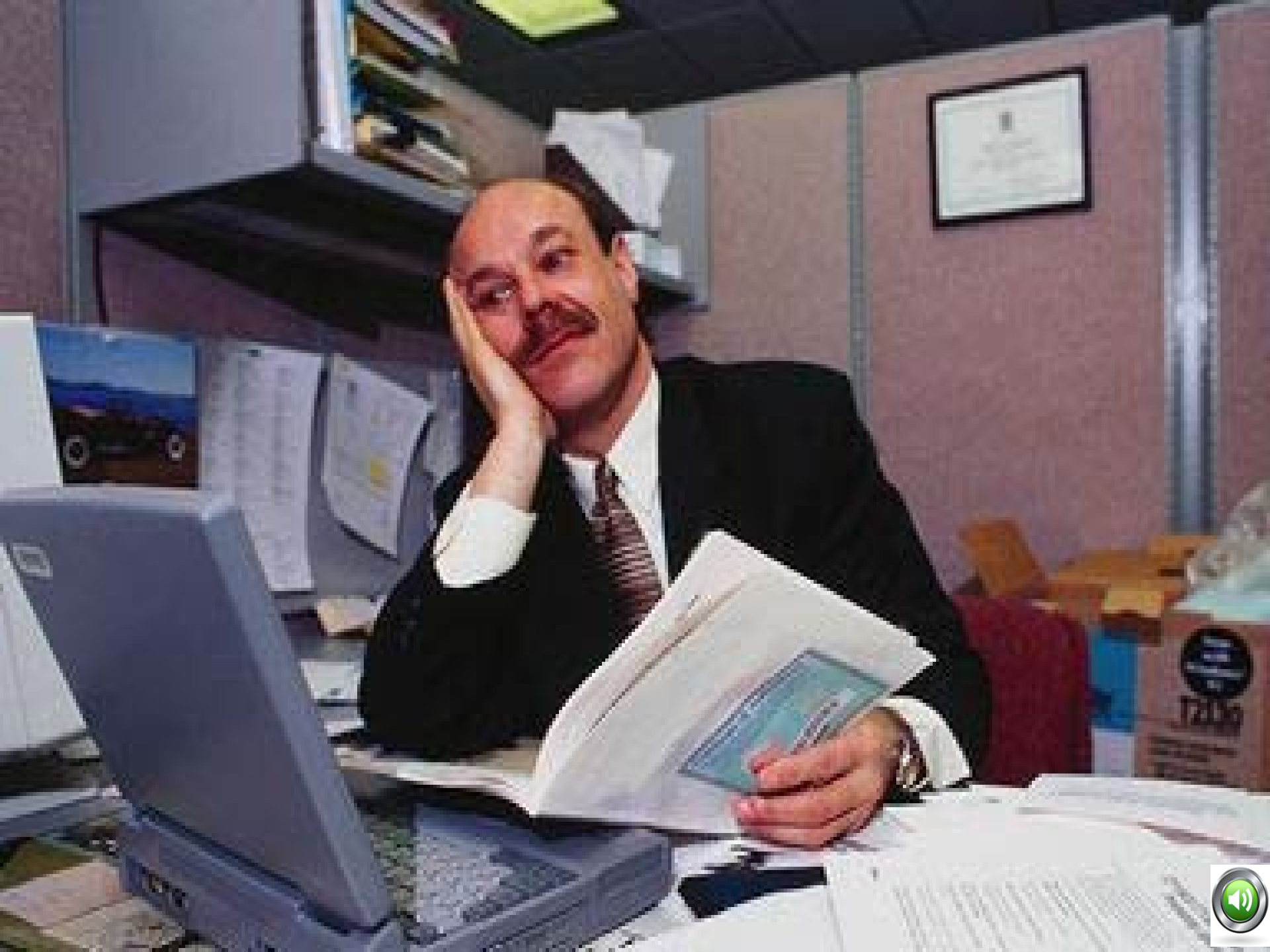
- Organizational culture is pervasive and persistent
- Executives have a choice whether to impact it or leave it as is
- Middle managers and co-workers have varying amounts of influence
- Test: Do I look forward to going to work in the morning? Why? Why not?















2. Work Satisfaction Related Character Traits

- What are some key personal traits with a bearing on a positive experience in the workplace?



Work Satisfaction Related Character Traits

- Tolerance Ingenuity Resilience
- Problem Solving Risk Taking
- Interpersonal Finesse Diplomacy
- Perspective Keeping things non-personal
- Humanity Empathy Compassion
- Leadership Initiative Collegial Support
- Sense of proportion Humor



3. Our Definition of Success and Achievement

- What job features or other characteristics of a position would be most likely to give you a sense of happiness?



Our Definition of Success and Achievement: The Questions

- Am I authentic and fully effective?
- What elements in my role give me pride?
- Am I in a good mood at work?
- Are the "burdens" bearable?
- If my job is stressful, is it time to look?
- What would I look for?



4. Presenting as a "Good Fit" to an Employer

- Employers look for team members who are a good match to the existing staff and who will contribute to the overall goals
- A good match does not imply a carbon copy person!
- What are some key features to highlight, given the organization?



Presenting as a "Good Fit" to an Employer

- Highlight features and characteristics germane to *the environment*
- How could we gauge the environment prior to submitting an application or going for an interview?



Gauging an Environment from the Outside

- Organize the facts: Put the internet to work (e.g. how many job openings in last 2 yrs?)
- Talk to friends who work in similar types of organizations
- If possible, get referral to people working there



Position Our Work Style as a Good Match

- In an environment like yours, typically ...
and in the past I ...
- Fast growth can lead to ... and I am particularly
good at ...
- Assuming the department is ... I offer strengths in ...



Bottom Line

- We owe ourselves our best efforts to secure work in an environment that offers the maximum opportunity to experience personal pride and happiness






Thank You ...

More on career matters
in the blog at

www.destricker.com

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