

MARS Model of Individual Behavior and Results

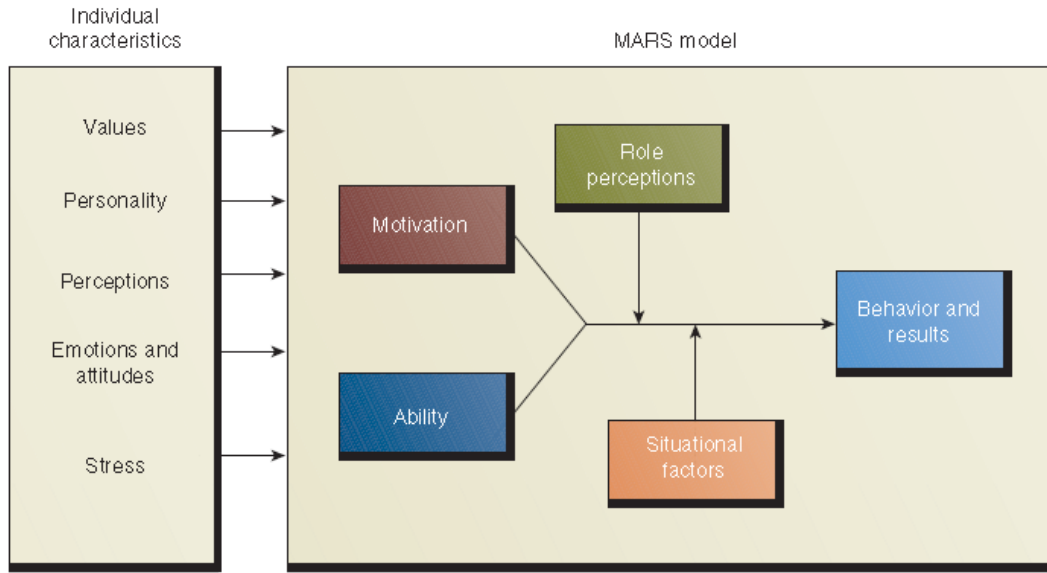
Why do individuals behave the way they do and perform well or poorly in the workplace? This question has been the Holy Grail of much research in organizational behavior.

The MARS model, illustrated in Figure 1, is a useful starting point to understanding the drivers of individual behavior and results. The model highlights the four factors that directly influence an employee's voluntary behavior and resulting performance—motivation, ability, role perceptions, and situational factors. These four factors are represented by the acronym “MARS” in the model's name.

The MARS model shows that these four factors have a combined effect on individual performance. If any factor weakens, employee performance will decrease. For example, enthusiastic salespeople (motivation) who understand their job duties (role perceptions) and have sufficient resources (situational factors) will not perform their jobs as well if they lack sufficient knowledge and sales skill (ability). Thus, the Container Store and other companies that excel in customer service pay attention to all four factors in the MARS model.

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Reference: McShane–Von Glinow, Organizational Behavior. (2004).

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