

## **Using Psychographics in SCA Event Planning**

**By Oswyn of Baðon** mka Sean Wilson oswyn969@gmail.com

### **Shire of Wurmwald, Middle Kingdom, Known World**

**with Baroness Verena Entenwirt**

I want to preface with I am not a psychologist or sociologist. I happen to pay attention to the inner workings of one of my hobbies and found an interesting idea. If you are a psychologist or sociologist and feel that my methodology is really out of whack, I am happy to discuss it.

### **What are Psychographs? Why use them?**

Psychographs are a way to classify people. Whereas demographics look at age as a common factor, psychographics looks for a common psychological factor. It is primarily used in marketing and communications but can apply in many areas. I first heard of psychographics playing Magic the Gathering. The lead designer of Magic, Mark Rosewater, developed a set of profiles to determine why people play Magic. More specifically, what they are trying to do when they play Magic. Using those results, he made very generic profiles and that helps the design process. The designers for Magic can make sure they are putting something in each set that appeals to each of their profiles and therefore, ensure the set is attractive to each part of their audience.

For reference, the Magic psychographics are: Timmy, the Power Gamer; Johnny, the Builder; and Spike, the Competitor. Timmy wants to experience something when he plays. He likes the big, splashy spells and creatures. Timmy is looking for cool moments so he plays with cards that may not be competitive but that are fun and impressive. At his core, Timmy wants to have fun, and the definition of fun is broad.

Johnny is a builder. He wants to show you something. He wants to build interesting and unique decks that take a small number of cards and takes them to the extreme. Johnny is an artisan. He likes winning but at the end of the day, it is really about the OMG moment. That moment can be from either side but if the deck does what he designed it to do, and someone was impressed, Johnny is happy.

Spike is a competitor. He wants to prove something. Usually, he wants to prove how good he is. He plays Magic because it is a mental challenge. He has analyzed all the cards, developed rubrics to determine power, efficiency, whatever. Spike wants to win though. Winning is how he shows that his skills are at their peak. A lose means that he needs to refine his ideas and try again.

These are simplistic though. No one is 100% any of these profiles. These are purposely 1-dimensional. So, for me in particular, I am mostly a Timmy with some Johnny. I build decks with a purpose but as long as I have fun, it is fine. Also, I am not skilled at analyzing cards and finding just the best ones and I am not skilled at finding out how to break cards. So, I am mostly a Timmy.

I think this idea can be applied to the SCA as well. While at an event, it occurred to me that I was not having fun. I started thinking about it. Why? The thing I wanted to do wasn't happening. Now, of course, I could have and probably should have made that thing happen but I went deeper. Why didn't the event organizer know what I wanted to do and make arrangements for it? How was the event organizer supposed to know what that was? What about the events that I am helping to run? Do we have all of our bases covered? How would we know? As a casual Magic player, I knew about Timmy, Johnny, and Spike. My mind went there; could that idea help SCA events? I think so.

For the SCA, I was interested in motivation. Why do people attend events? What do they want to do at them? How can that information help an event planner make a better event?

### **Meet Matilda, Conrad, Leofric, and Agnes**

Tentatively, I have identified four motivations for SCA events: people who want to do stuff, people who want to learn stuff, people who want to experience stuff, and people who want to connect with others. Let's make it easy and give them names. Matilda wants to do stuff. Conrad wants to learn stuff. Leofric wants to experience stuff. Agnes wants to connect with others.

Matilda might be a fighter but she might be anyone who wants to do something. The trick is doing something can be a lot of things. Matilda might want to teach. Matilda might want to help. Matilda likes to be active and she wants her time at events filled with activity. The downside to Matilda is that she gets bored if not kept active and is likely to then do things on her own.

Conrad might be a craftsperson but he enjoys learning. Conrad might want to learn fighting. Conrad might want to learn histories. Conrad might want to learn about other people in SCA. Acquiring knowledge is what he wants the most. Conrad is tricky because it is difficult to determine if he is not engaged. Conrad is generally passive so there is a fine line between engaging him in his chosen learning activities and Conrad being bored.

Leofric likes a lot about the SCA but he is looking for experiences. He wants to be immersed in the event. He doesn't really care what he is doing but if he feels like he has left the "real world" behind, then he has enjoyed himself. Leofric is between Matilda and Conrad on his engagement though. He is neither hyper active or hyper passive. If he is not engaged in the event, he will likely feel disappointed but he is not likely to pave his own path as that would disrupt what immersion there is.

Agnes primarily wants to connect with people. She goes to events to be part of a community. She may only seek out her own friends or she may look for new people to talk with. The connecting with people does require time and space. If Agnes doesn't have that time and space, she will take those friends elsewhere to find the time and space. Unlike Matilda, Conrad, and Leofric, Agnes will be engaged regardless of what activities are planned. Agnes is there for the people. As long as she can make or reinforce connections, she is happy.

As with Magic, no one is 100% any of these things. Each activity requires a new look at all four.

For the psychographs I am proposing, realize that there are several types of each. There is Matilda the fighter, Matilda the fencer, Matilda the teacher, Matilda the organizer, Matilda the artisan, Matilda the server, etc. The same applies to the others. Any one event cannot hope to be all things to all people. Most people in the SCA also wear several hats. If an event has fighting and fencing, there are people who do both. They now have to choose which to do at any given time. The more people who attend an event, the more separate activities an event can support.

### **How to use the profiles**

How could these profiles be used? The profiles can be used to help plan new events, fine tune existing events, help determine whether and where resources should be applied to activities, and analysis the success of completed events. For all of these purposes, it is important to break the event down into its component activities.

Here is an example of a typical but fictional event. The event will have the following: fighting, archery, A&S classes, court & feast. What is there for our profiles? (Again this is totally made up and is not reflective in any way of any particular event).

Fighting – Matilda likes fighting so that is good. Conrad is trying to be a better fighter so as long as someone is there to give him lessons or direction he is fine. Leofric is trying to experience something. Most fighters are armored up with livery and there are some tents. So there is a nod to changing the setting. But if this is as far as it goes, Leofric could use a bit more. Perhaps something to help build camaraderie or to simulate an actual tournament? Stands, challenges, pageantry?

Archery – Matilda likes shooting so that is good. Conrad is trying to be a better archer so as long as someone is there to give him lessons he is good. There needs to be balance though. The actual shooting time is over pretty fast. Matilda likes to be active and standing around and waiting for Conrad is going to bore her. Is there a way to accommodate both? Two courses maybe? Matilda II likes to teach. Maybe she can instruct Conrad in a safe way so that Matilda I can shoot more often. Leofric wants to experience something. Creative challenges are good. But there is little that makes the archery range feel different. What can be done about that?

A&S classes - Matilda likes to teach but there is little interest in her class. Conrad likes to learn but there is little being offered that he doesn't know. Leofric likes to experience things but everything is pretty mundane. More thought needs to be given to this part of the event. Is there a theme that can help bring things together? Can we recruit someone who is knowledgeable about things we would like to see taught? Is there a way to help transform the space? Is the event maybe doing too much and it is better to not include this part since it isn't the primary focus?

Court – Matilda likes to do things but court is a bit boring. She isn't likely to be presented with anything and she isn't a herald or an officer. Matilda goes because it is expected of her but she is not happy. Conrad likes to learn. Court is okay. He is learning what the awards are and a bit about the people

getting them. Leofric loves court. Usually, there is some effort to transform the space. Everyone is dressed in their finest cloths. There is some pageantry. The language is flowery. By and large Leofric is happy with court. What can be done for Matilda and Conrad though? Is there a way to engage the populace more? Is there a way to introduce topics so Conrad can learn more?

Feast - Matilda likes doing things so she helps with feast. She likes to stay busy so serving is just fine. Conrad likes to learn so the new and different food is nice. The placards that give the tradition of the dish and its history help him a lot. Leofric likes to experience things. The new foods are great. Most of the same pageantry of court is still at feast. And there is entertainment too! It would be nice if the modern concrete walls could be disguised but Leofric is mostly happy.

So far, I haven't said much about Agnes though. Agnes isn't as interested in any particular part of the event but is interested in the event as a whole. From my research so far on motivations, the most often response to why people do things in the SCA is for the people and relationships they have made. So, being a Matilda, Conrad, or Leofric is only a part of the SCA experience for most. Being an Agnes is the greater part. So, Agnes needs space and time to build, renew, and reinforce the relationships she has made. What does this mean? It means that some thought on events and event space needs to be devoted to Agnes space. Adequate space for day camps, event seating, and the ability to accommodate groups of friends (large and small) needs to be part of the overall event planning. In terms specific parts of an event, if there is fighting, is there space for spectators? The same of fencing and archery. For A&S, is there adequate space for the groups? For Court and Feast, can larger groups sit together? But more important that the parts of the event is that the event as a whole have spaces set aside. Activities need to be scheduled so that a decent number of them happen and so that the Matildas and Conrads are not bored but spaced far enough apart so that Agnes has time to catch up with people.

Let's look at another event. A smallish Barony or Shire is planning an archery event. The activities are an archery tournament, an A&S fair, Baronial court, and feast. The potential audience will be archers of course. How might the psychographs help? The Matildas will likely be barbed Matildas. But some people may be looking to learn archery. Perhaps the group can arrange their course so those looking to learn are on a separate course or at a different time. The contest may have a theme. Perhaps a harvest theme. The tournament is to select the baronial champion but separate shoots (even for the beginners) might involve gathering the food through target shooting. Perhaps there would be some challenges issued. Perhaps those of higher status might introduce their champion and extol their virtues for the baron/ess. All of this theme work helps to give the Leofrics something. There will be some pavilion space set up for the Agneses. The feast is intended to fit with an autumn hunting party so autumnal vegetables and "game" meats.

So far in my research, Crown Tourney has been listed as the least favorite event type. To be fair, I have not interviewed many fighters yet so this may change. So, why is this the least favorite event? It is an important event and central to how the SCA works. So, many people want to be there for this reason. Many of the people who I have interviewed so far are Matildas but they are not fighting Matildas. They are standing around not doing much. Inactivity is the bane of Matilda. Due to how the event works, it is very focused on a subset of fighting Matildas and that probably can't change too much. But can

something be done to help our other Matildas? Maybe. Can some pageantry be added so it appeals to the Leofrics inside of all of us? Can there be more side activities that don't detract from main event so the other Matildas have something to do? From the recent Crown Tourney, the people I have interviewed have stated that the side betting helped make them more engaged in the actually Tourney. Also, it seems that Agneses like Crown Tourney as a way to reconnect with people. I am sure some of these ideas have been tried in the past but by using the psychographs, you can narrow down what is missing.

If this is a new event in the planning stage, the group can determine whether there are enough activities for everyone to enjoy. They can make decisions on where to spend resources to support those activities. If this is a recurring event in the planning stage, the same questions can be answered. If this is a wrap-up on a concluded event, the group can evaluate how good of a job they did satisfying these profiles and then make recommendations to improve the event next year.

There may be more psychograph that the ones here. Research needs to be done to see how many people fall into which categories. It may be that for most events, the Matildas are pretty happy (things to do is the reason for the event after all). Maybe there are not as many Leofrics as believed and therefore it is not worth the time to satisfy him. Once we have a good sense of who fits in which categories (and most people will fit in all of them to some extent), then we need to come up with ideas to help fix the deficiencies. Some events can justify the effort and expense of some solutions better than others.

## **Children**

A few respondents have mentioned children and there is some discussion about children on the various boards so I will make a mention of them here.

One issue with children is that there is age range and maturity. Teenagers will be different than a 5-10 range which will be different again from a 0-5 range. You could probably sub-divide it even more.

By and large, children will have the same motivations as adults. A child will want to do, learn, experience, or socialize just as much as an adult does. The issue is primarily one of degree and with whom. A child who has never shot a bow before has the same issues as an adult who has never shot a bow before. There may be a few more challenges with muscle strength and motor control (depending on age) but the issues are largely the same. Children may want to feel they know how to swing a stick but do not know how to do so safely. Children may like dressing up and play acting. Children may want to socialize with other children or even adults. Very young children may have motivations that won't be covered here. They may be small enough that eating and sleeping are the primary motivations. An SCA event isn't really going to be focused on satisfying those motivations.

Many children, like many new people to the SCA, will be Conrads until they know enough about something to do it well.

Basically, these psychographs do not distinguish by age. However, if you expect significant numbers of children or new people who are looking for instruction, then you can plan for them accordingly. The goal of these psychographs is not to tell you what to do but to help you see why people are doing something.

### **Other profiles**

There are some psychographs that I have determined but I have discounted. I won't bother naming them though.

One positive psychograph that some of my interviewees have suggested is the person who enables events to happen. I have thought long and hard about this and determined it is really on a different level than my main point. It would be very difficult to have an event or activity where the focus was to enable an event to happen. Those who put themselves forward to make sure an event happens are needed and special but their focus really is to do things, i.e. serve but they serve on a much higher level than others. These are the ones who will create an event on the spot. Basically, these are people either like you (people taking the class) or who you may be want to be.

Some people are motivated by recognition. They want to be rewarded and told that they are the best at something. There is no inherent judgment against this; the SCA does recognize people for their accomplishments. However, in the SCA, there is a humility that is expected. Recognition will come for your efforts and from your peers. There is an expectation that in addition to doing something well, you should pass that knowledge on to others. There are events that feature recognition as a primary reason. Such events are tournaments to choose champions, A&S fairs for determination of awards, etc. It would be difficult to satisfy a person with this primary motivation. The recognition comes from excelling at a given activity and only a few would receive that recognition.

Related to recognition, I have heard from a few people who say they are Spikes (see the Magic section above). Spike is the competitor in Magic. The Magic profiles do not really work for the purpose of event planning. Take Spike. How does one "win" at the SCA? Is it becoming King? Becoming King multiple times? It just does not really make sense. Now, once someone has decided on an activity, like fencing or weaving, you can then decide that you are going to do your best at this activity. For things like armored combat, fencing, and archery, there are regular tournaments. A&S champions are also decided by competition but there is no brewing champions or embroidery champions. Timmy, Johnny, and Spike apply to how one engages in one's chosen activity, not a motivation for a specific event. Or rather, once you are a Steely Matilda (i.e. someone who likes to fencing over all other activities), you then might be a Spiky Steely Matilda, someone who fences on a very competitive level. It doesn't change the events you go to. Both Spiky and non-Spiky Steely Matildas will go to fencing oriented events. The addition of another modifier is interesting but can quickly become cumbersome and doesn't really make event planning any easier. So, I won't be adding those additional modifiers because it doesn't help with the purpose.

## The Data so Far

So far, I have data on 119 individuals and the number will grow. I have tallied the data in a spreadsheet and counted keywords in context to come up with a score for each of the 4 psychographs. A score of 5 or more is enough to say that a given psychograph is dominant or co-dominant. However, recall everyone is probably a little bit of everything and I am only looking at the questions that I have asked. So, this is a tool; not a way to pigeon-hole someone into a role. Look at it as something interesting to understand; not a lens into someone's SCA psyche. Plus knowing why the questions are asked can and does skew the results. So, please do not read too much in this analysis.

I use a score of 5 or more to say that a given profile is dominant. If someone only has one psychograph at 5+, I will say that person is primarily that psychograph. If someone has multiple psychographs scored at 5+, then two or more psychographs are co-dominant. The tables below show the number of respondents that fit in each category.

	Matilda	Conrad	Leofric	Agnes
5+ in profile	91	24	21	36
5+ in one profile only	45	7	5	4

	M&C	M&L	M&A	C&L	C&A	L&A	M C L	M C A	C L A	M C L A
5+ in multiple profiles	9	10	23	1	3	2	1	2	1	0

I am also using some adjectives to help distinguish activity bias. A Matilda with more interest in service I would call a feathered Matilda. The adjectives are: **Feathered** for service, **Leafy** for A&S, **Armored** for heavy fighting, **Steely** for fencing, **Barbed** for archery, **Mounted** for equestrian and I will develop more as I need them. This is just to reinforce that not all Matildas (or any psychographic profile) are created equal.

Breakdown on Matildas	
Armored	18
Barbed	3
Feathered	13
Leafy	35
Mounted	7
Steely	13

The attached PDF has several interview responses to demonstrate how the responses are rendered into scores.

Some other interesting things in the responses. Those who strongly identify with a given activity tend to be happiest with that activity. That should be no surprise. Those who are really into heavy fighting prefer fighting events. While not stated, I get the sense that there are a significant number of people who attend events with their strongly motivated Matildas (not just armored). The strongly motivated ones want focused events on their activities. The companions seem to want diverse events with lots of activities. This will be a difficult task to achieve.

Another dichotomy is between those that want lots of activities and those that want a slower pace. This will also be a difficult balance.

There is some concerns about children activities that are meaningful. There are some concerns about creating magical moments.

A pretty universal complaint is that people do not want to be kept waiting past when an activity should start. This is especially true with Court. Yes, things happen and it is at the behest of the royals that things happen. Just fair warning royals, the people like Court that starts on time and that moves quickly. Perhaps entertainment is what is needed here.

### **Data needed**

I feel that there is not enough representation from pure fighters. So there needs to be an effort to collect more data from them. Also, the respondents so far are skewed heavily towards those in the SCA longer than 15 years. More effort needs to be spent to find those with less than 15 years in. Those less than 2 years in may feel that they are too new or that their opinion doesn't matter.

### **The Takeaway**

The takeaway to this class is: here is a tool to help look at what kind of people might be at your event, to help you evaluate the activities you are offering and how to allocate your resources. All this is one tool. Experienced event stewards may be doing this exercise unconsciously. But by being deliberate, you can ensure you are not overlooking something.

A word of caution: many people will advocate for more psychographs. They will argue that somehow their corner case is different. I would suggest you resist this unless you can definitely see where that psychograph has a unique motivation and that motivation is important to consider. There are scores of different screwdrivers and they all do something slightly different but they are all screwdrivers and serve the same purpose. You don't need to clutter the toolbox with a bunch of screwdrivers you cannot use. The same with the psychographs. The details can be sorted out as the actual event is planned.

Because I think this is important, anyone is free to teach this class at whatever event you like. By giving me your email, I will send you this handout, the questions, the PDF, and the compiled answers so far. As you get interview responses, I would appreciate it if you sent them back to me (scanned is fine) so I can add it to the response sheet. There is undoubtedly more information that can be gleaned from those responses to improve events further.

**Survey link**

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1QLq2\\_oM7dIVzfe\\_aj4m82kHuwY8FnAy5uJOojGYq9Zk/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1QLq2_oM7dIVzfe_aj4m82kHuwY8FnAy5uJOojGYq9Zk/viewform)