

Niche Update

Special points of interest:

- Xmas break dates
- Analysis of Turnaround times for Assessments and Reports
- Tips to shorten assessment turnaround times
- Self-deception and normal narcissism
- How honest are we really—facts about lying

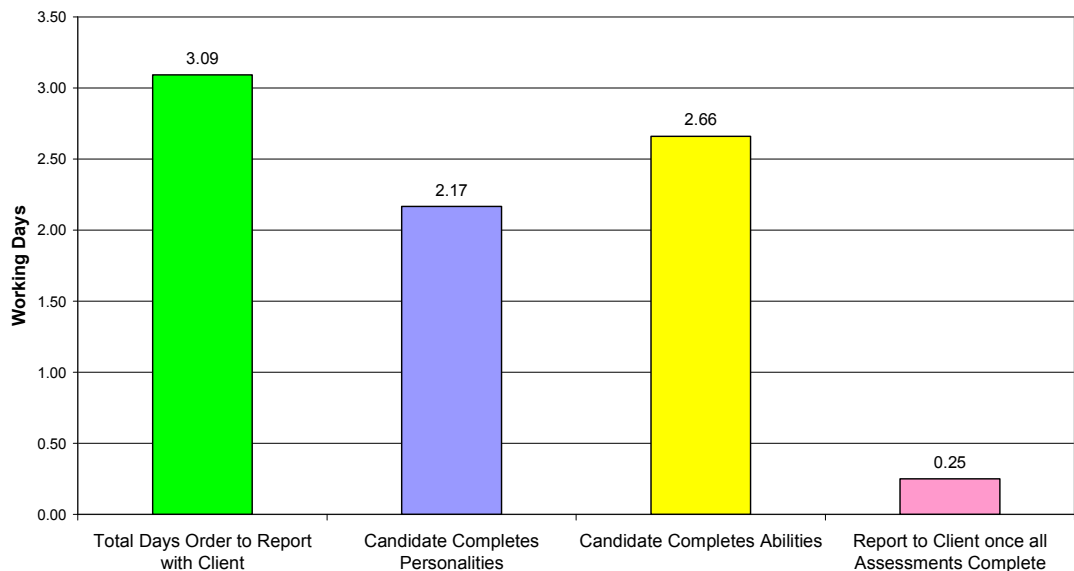
Analysis of Assessment Turnaround Times

We thought it would be interesting to do an analysis of the last 3 months on how long the turnaround times were between us receiving an assessment order from clients to the candidates completing the assessments, and sending the report to you. We have only analysed those people who were assessed for recruitment, as people undertaking developmental assessments tend to take a lot longer to complete them as there is not so much urgency. A score of zero means the activity was done the same day.

As shown below the average number of working days from order to report are 3.09. We calculated the number of working days it took for each stage of the assessment process which are shown on Page 2.

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Average Days For Completion



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Season's Greetings ~ Niche Christmas Hours

Niche Consulting will be closed from midday on the 24th December 2010 until Monday 10th January 2011. Should you have assessment needs within this period let us know and we will try to accommodate.



We wish you all happy and safe holidays.

Analysis of Turnaround times for Assessments

As you can see by the pie chart to the right in over 70% of cases the time between the assessment order and the client receiving the report is 3 working days or less. In only 5% of cases does the assessment process take more than a week (5 working days).

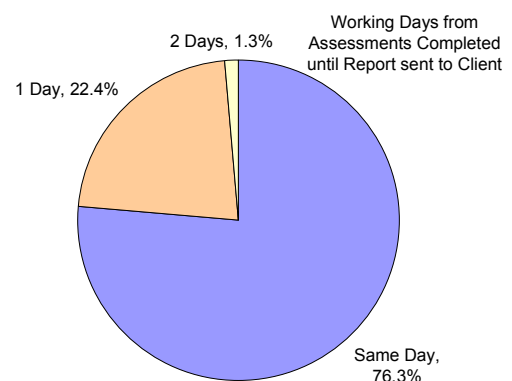
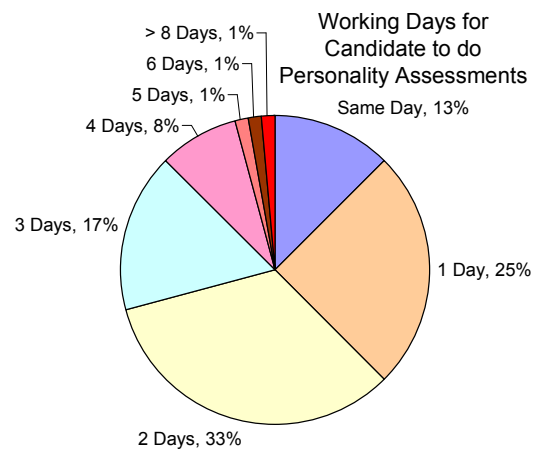
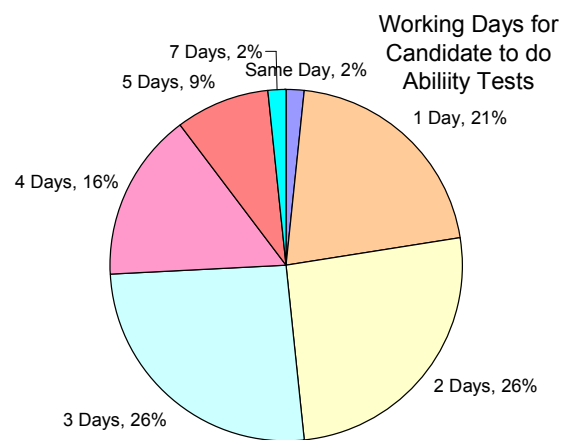
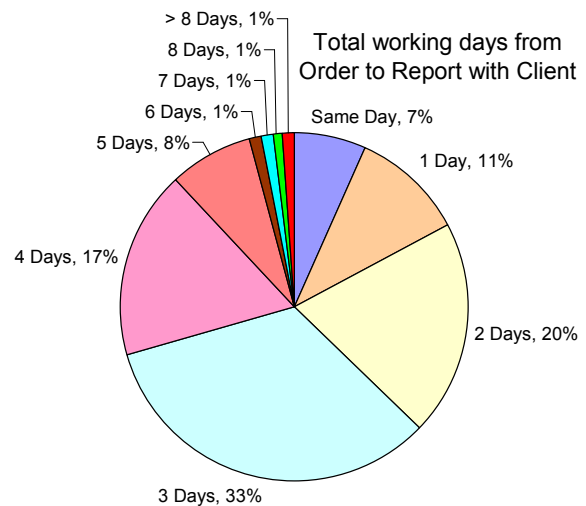
In the past we have had feedback from some clients that feel doing ability assessments will slow down the assessment process, but interestingly on average the abilities take only half a working day longer to get completed than the personality assessments. When we look at what makes up most of this time it tends to be the time it takes the candidate to complete the assessments whether they be ability or personality assessments. To be fair, candidates need time to complete them, as often the assessment process for them may take over 2 hours if they are doing multiple assessments.

See the pie charts to the right for the breakdown of number of days for the candidate to do the personality or ability assessments. This shows more than three quarters of candidates complete both the ability and personality assessments in 3 days or less.

As many of you may know Niche guarantees to turnaround reports within two working days of the candidate completing all the assessments for recruitment, and interestingly in nearly 99% of the time we exceed this completing the report and sending it to clients either on the same day (77.3%) or 1 working day later (22.4%). In only 1.3% of case did we take two working days.

Below are some tips of ways to ensure the assessment the process is as short as possible:

1. Let the candidate know when you would like the assessments completed by - that way you create some urgency for them to get on to doing them ASAP.
2. Let Niche know when you would ideally like the assessment report done by, for instance if you have booked an interview time let us know, this way we can encourage the candidate to do things in time for us to achieve this timeframe.
3. We try to contact candidates the same day that you give us the assessment order, however the early in the day you get the order to us the more likely we will speak to the candidate that day (and not just be able to leave them a message to call us) and this can assist in getting the ball rolling sooner.



Self-Deception & “Normal Narcissism”

The recent news of the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) hiring Stephen Wilce for the position of Chief Scientist, when he had fabricated his CV and qualifications, is a reminder that there are compulsive liars in our midst who try to gain the advantage through deceiving others. What many may not realise however, is that many of these people not only try to deceive others, but may in fact be self-deceptive individuals who actually believe the lies they tell about themselves to others.



Self-deception is an unconscious pattern of behaviours where the individual really believes his or her own exaggerations or misconceptions. Paulhus (2001) explains that the characteristics associated with the self-deception person are the equivalent of “normal narcissism” the syndrome that includes feelings of entitlement, grandiosity, defensiveness and the tendency to manipulate others. The underlying motivation that creates someone who is self-deceptive is most often a lack of self-esteem and in an effort to maintain and enhance self-esteem the self-deceptive individual tries to impress others with exaggerated and, at times, false, claims about their achievements, talents, and attributes.

So is it good to have someone with these “normal narcissistic” tendencies in an organisation? In Stephen Wilce’s case, obviously not. Paulhus (2001) suggests the success of a self-deceptive individuals depends on the nature of the role, how you define success in the role, and whether you can get the individual’s goals aligned with the organisations. While these types of individual may succeed in roles where they need to confidently interact with strangers, they are often less well suited to roles where they need to build long term relationships based in interpersonal trust. The self-deceptive individual may have breakdowns in trust and cooperation with peers and sub-ordinates if they manipulate, intimidate, or try to take all the credit for things they may not have done. Paulhus (1998) also found that those who were self-deceptive made a positive first impression however they were actively disliked after 7 weeks of interactions with others.



You may wonder whether psychometric assessments can measure those who are self-deceptive. In the case of the CPI, very high good impression scores or those who fake the assessment give an indication that the individual may be self-deceptive. However, we have found in our retesting after faking research that there is a difference between those who are truly self-deceptive and those who have just tried to manipulate the assessment in an effort to look good. The self-deceptive individuals on the second attempt of the CPI fake it a second time and come out with nearly the same profile. This makes sense given they are unconscious of their own self-deceptions and therefore in their minds have provided an accurate picture in both instances.

Where the recruitment of Stephen Wilce seems to have fallen down is in both the lack of psychometric assessments being used and the lack of referee checking. While the NZDF and Momentum put it down to a miscommunication about who was doing the reference checking, they do not explain how an offer of employment was made without this being completed first. It is a timely reminder that in addition to the normal recruitment processes, thorough referee checking is an important part of the selection process prior to job offer, which had it happened in Stephen Wilce’s case, would have saved NZ and the NZDF a huge embarrassment.

Honesty and Lying - How honest are we really?

1. When surveyed 89% of people rate themselves more positively than others (Brown, 1998) - *how is that possible?*
2. When asked to rate oneself on honesty, no-one (0%) rated themselves as below average - *this is of course statistically impossible*
3. In a study about honesty where there was no chance of the subjects getting caught the researchers found that 3% of people are always dishonest, 7% are always honest, and most people were dishonest approximately 50% of the time (Hartshorne & May, 1928)
4. Donovan, Dwight & Hurtz (2003) did a survey of people and found 22.7% of people applying for jobs claimed to have experience they did not actually have, 47% exaggerated qualities or characteristics such as dependability and reliability, and 30.8% inflated their past pay rates to the prospective employer
5. A University of Massachusetts study (2002) of students holding a 10 minute conversation in pairs found the following:
 - ◆ 60% of people lied at least once in the 10 minutes and on average told two to three lies
 - ◆ Lies varied in degree with some being minor, such as agreeing with the other person with whom they were speaking when they did not, to more extreme lying such as falsely claiming to be the star of a rock band
 - ◆ While there was no difference in the average quantity of lies between males and females the content of the lies did differ between the sexes. Males tended to lie to make themselves look better whereas women tend to lie to make the person they were talking to feel good
 - ◆ When viewing the video, students were surprised how many lies they had told - they were not aware of the extent of lying they were doing



While the above study's results may surprise some, it is not so surprising if we look at how we are socialised by parents about honesty and lying. Most of us are told "honesty is the best policy", but then as a child we might also be told to say we like a present from a relative so not to offend them. Children also watch as their parents lie to others in subtle ways "you look nice" or in more extreme ways e.g. exaggerating losses on an insurance claim. No wonder we may talk a different rhetoric about honesty than what we actually do in reality, we have constantly received quite contradictory information about lying and its acceptability in our culture.



We are told some lies are OK and some are not, self promotion may be OK but falsifying a qualification on a CV may not be. Putting a younger age on the internet may be acceptable to some people when dating but this would be fraud if you put in on a passport application. One thing is for sure, we all lie to some extent it seems to be part of human nature and an adaptive way to ensure in some ways that we get along with others and in other ways it may be maladaptive if it is used to manipulate others for personal gain.