

Niche Update

Special points of interest:

- New CPI260 Assessment
- Candidate Feedback – how to handle
- What is the Recession doing to our Psyche?
- Assessment Centre Trends
- 10 Tips to lead staff through change

What is the Recession doing to Our Psyche?

**Are you sick of all the doom and gloom in the papers and media?
Is all this fear mongering and media attention making it better or worse?
Is our Psyche suffering unnecessarily?**

Isn't it interesting that the media, in particular, love a bad news story and this recession has really got them going in a feeding frenzy. But what is it doing to our psyche and happiness levels? While we are not advocating putting your heads into the sand, we are concerned at the level of panic and the flow on effect to people's day-to-day happiness and well-being.

What we have noticed in people's assessments since the New Year, is the proportion of candidates who are showing signs of unhappiness or uncertainty has dramatically increased, and this is not restricted to those who are out of a job. Many are still in employment and yet are showing similar signs of anxiety. It seems like all of us have taken a hit to our future views of certainty and are now focused a little on the "what if's" and doomsayer mentality.

So what can you do? Well as an employer and manager you need to think of ways to help people (and yourself, just quietly) get through this and ride out the storm so when the tide turns, you and your staff will be ready to get going again.

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10 Tips to Lead your Staff through Change Effectively

1. Communication

So obvious and yet so easily forgotten! This has been shown time and time again to be key to successfully easing organisations through change and difficulties. Communication is VERY important — people prefer to know what is going on. Remember "in the absence of other information people will assume the negative". Better to let them know what is going on "good and/or bad", they will already have guessed most of it and may have actually assumed it is worse and be gossiping about this!



2. Concentrate on NOW

If you are worrying too much about the future, (which, by the way, is ALWAYS uncertain), concentrate on the NOW. What is happening now that is good or bad and what do you have control over? Can you cut back on costs now? Can you find new customers now? What can we celebrate now? What is good about business now? That way people feel more in control—and feeling some control is important to peoples' psyches and well-being.

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10 Tips to Lead your Staff through Change Effectively—Continued

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3. **Regular updates with staff.**

Staff, understandably, like and want to know what is going on and how the organisation and their jobs may be impacted by the current economic climate. Updates on how the business is doing and strategies that are being considered will let them know what is going on and that management is working on getting the business through.

4. **Getting ideas from staff on how to expand business and save money.**

Again this assists your employees in feeling a little more in control of their destiny which will in turn lessen their feeling of job insecurity. This in turn limits impacts on performance and productivity. They are also likely to have some pretty good ideas management may not have thought of.

5. **Have fun and a laugh.**

Try and do some fun stuff at work, there is a temptation when things are quiet or in a downturn to stop having fun - this will not help morale and feelings of security. Humour and laughter just lighten things up and help to put things in perspective...for all involved. Seems obvious, but is very easy to forget when things are serious. Of course there is a time and a place for this!

6. **Team Cohesiveness and Team Building**

Research has shown that increased feelings of being part of a group or team provides a very effective buffer for stress. Now may be an excellent time to do some team building and this could be a formal session or could be as simple as having shared lunches or a drink after work together.



7. **More frequent team meetings.**

You can achieve two things by putting this in place – staff feel that they are being communicated with more and so feel more in control plus more forums for the team to get together will increase team cohesiveness and thus a stress buffer.

8. **Encourage more social support amongst your staff.**

This may just be a matter of ensuring that you check in with your employees regularly to see how they're going. More regular meetings, team events and so on will also increase social support amongst staff. Increasing social support assists in lessening feelings of stress and job insecurity.

9. **Making tough decisions in a fair and just way.**

If difficult decisions need to be made then doing your utmost to make the process just and fair will minimise the negative impact of these decisions. If your staff perceive that you have tried to do the right thing then they are less likely to be resistant to these decisions, lessening the impact on productivity.

10.



Don't hide away.

Sometimes keeping to yourself as a manager can feel like the best thing to do in times of change or difficulty. However, if your staff aren't seeing you and interacting with you, they are likely to wonder what's going on. Beware the rumour mill! Rumours can be extremely detrimental to staff morale and the best way to keep this in check is to keep talking to your staff and keep them informed.

Assessment Centres – Current Trends

Neisha recently wrote an article for 'Employment Today', on Assessment Centres and we thought you may also be interested in some of the current trends happening in Assessment Centres (ACs):

- ◆ **Virtual assessment centres** – using technology in a way that eliminates the need for actual group interaction and the need to be present at an AC place, but still allows for interaction and evaluation of behaviours (generally with computer generated characters or scenarios).
- ◆ **Technology** — the use of online assessment technology either prior to or during the AC process is ever increasing. Technology is being used more and more to reduce manpower needed to administer, run the AC, and evaluate participants.
- ◆ **Videotaping** of participant behaviour in exercises can also remove the need to have so many assessors there at the time of the AC.
- ◆ **Portfolio analysis** – for roles where an assessment of someone's work, such as a teacher or graphic designer, this is a trend that gives more information about someone's work outputs which can be added into an AC process.
- ◆ **“Day in the life of”** Assessment Centres have candidates come as if having a real day at work. The candidate would go to an office with one way mirrors for the assessors and have to deal with a day's work which on the surface seems very real and reflective of a job's daily challenges. They might be asked to prepare a presentation for the end of the day and have emails to clear as well as have visitors who drop in and want information from them.
- ◆ **Situational Judgement Tests (SJTs)** – SJTs are questionnaire format assessments that give scenarios and ideal (or sometimes worst) options (a, b, c, d) to choose from. While not a simulation, these tests have good predictive validities and therefore are being added into ACs either in the screening tool or as part of the AC. However, there are some potential drawbacks to using SJTs in the NZ context as these tests are prone to faking especially if the individual is coached or knows the true intention of the test. Unlike the US where in selection context there is no ethical responsibility to give candidates feedback, in NZ there is an ethical responsibility to give candidates feedback and in this feedback the intention of the test would be revealed.



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Professional Level Outplacement Programme from \$3,000 + GST pp

Leadership Level Outplacement Programme from \$4,500 + GST pp

All our programmes include psychometric assessment and are delivered by Registered Psychologists or those currently studying to become a Psychologist. Call us for more information 09 377-1760 or email info@nicheconsulting.co.nz



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We really do appreciate it!



CPI260 — A shorter take on a the Fantastic CPI434



The makers of the Californian Psychological Inventory with 434 questions (yes that is where the 434 comes from) have come up with a shorter assessment with only 260 questions (CPI260) which can be used at lower levels to assess the same scales as the CPI434.

While the scales may be similar there is some subtlety lost in the shorter version, and as such we recommend it as a good assessment for lower level roles.

In roles such as CSRs where we have previously recommended tools such as the NEO and PRB, the CPI260 can be implemented at a similar price, with added benefit that it is not as easily “faked” as the NEO or other face valid tools.

How to Deal with a Candidate that has Less than Ideal Assessment Results

While we never would recommend the assessment information alone be used to make an employment decision about a candidate, there are some instances when the assessment information alongside other information raises questions about the candidates suitability for a role.

In some instances the candidate’s fit with the job competencies is poor and you may need to give them feedback about the recruitment process, and why you have chosen not to progress them further in their employment application.

However, we have sometimes had candidates tell us, when we give them their feedback, that the assessments alone were the reason they were told that they did not get the role. Some claim that the client or a recruitment consultant has said they “failed the assessments” which is a concern to us for lots of reasons.

We strongly recommend that our clients use the following guidelines if you are rejecting candidates, especially when psychometric assessments are part of the process:

- ◆ Talk about fit with the desired competencies or role, over all the different recruitment stages and processes—e.g. “we have reviewed your interview, assessment results and previous experience and unfortunately you have not met our requirements in some areas.”
- ◆ DO NOT blame the assessments — e.g. “you failed the psycho tests, so sorry you won’t be progressed”
- ◆ DO let them know they will get feedback on their assessments from Niche.



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