

Niche Consulting Limited

Niche Update

Niche Consulting 's 1st Birthday in April 2006 - Thanks for your Support

Special points of interest:

- Test Construction
- How to spot a good or bad test
- Hogan's assessment tools
- PRB goes Online
- Is face validity important?

As of April 17th 2006, Niche Consulting will have been up and running for **1 year** and thanks to our wonderful clients we have had a good 1st year of operation. Neisha, Traci & Amanda would like to thank our clients for their loyalty and custom over the first year and we look forward to continuing business with you. We have thoroughly enjoyed the 1st year and look forward to being able to continue our relationships with you in the coming years.



The PRB Integrity Test – Goes Online

We are pleased to announce that we have commissioned the current distributor of the Personnel Reaction Blank (PRB) to create an online version of the original test exclusively for Niche Consulting.

While a new version of this test has been put online, the old version which we have validated for the NZ environment was going to be discontinued. The main reason for the new version was to ensure the distributor could control the marking and data collection of the tool, rather than there being any issues with the original paper based version. We felt it was important to retain consistency for our clients who had used the PRB over years. We have NZ norms for the old version and considerable high performance data. The predictive validity data for the old PRB version is substantial and has been proven over time. We are also able to offer the flexibility of paper based testing and the online version. For those using the paper based forms you should notice they now look different as they are now produced through a new distributor.

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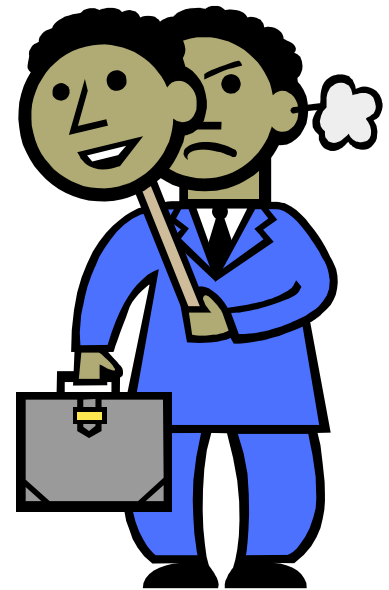


A study of by Viswesvaran, C & Ones, D (1997) said the following about the PRB "The PRB is the cheapest psychometrically sound, theoretically grounded integrity test on the market. Its reliability and validity have been demonstrated in several major, large sample studies. We agree with Gough's assessments that "In any setting where dependability, conscientiousness, diligence and restraint are relevant to the quality of work, the PRB should yield useful information"

Taking you to the DARK SIDE of the Personality !

Our Director, Neisha Voot, has recently been certified to use the Hogan assessment tools and these include a measure of normal personality HPI (Hogan's Personality Inventory) which was modelled on the CPI personality assessment (Californian Psychological Inventory), the HDS (Hogan's Development Survey) and MVPI (Motives, Values & Preferences Inventory). Of interest is the use of the HDS with leaders as it is an assessment of blind spots and risk factors that are potentially counter-productive which may occur when an individual is put under high stress, change or task saturation. Unlike normal personality which is exhibited on a day-to-day basis, the HDS uncovers behaviours which are

not normally displayed as the individual can actively manage their image to others under normal circumstances. The HDS then reveals the "dark-side" of an individual's personality and uncovers the likely disposition to 11 common dysfunctions that interfere with a person's ability to build relationships and create cohesive, goal oriented teams. The counter-productive behaviours associated with these dysfunctions can negatively influence a person's satisfaction, success, relationships and career success. We see the HDS as a good tool to include in leadership development and to supplement the CPI in understanding individual's development needs.



"The HDS is an intriguing, innovative instrument that may eventually make a major contribution to the leadership and career development assessment areas" - Quoted from the Buros Test Review by E. Scott Huebner

Do you know what motivates your people?

The Hogan's Motives, Values & Preferences Inventory (MVPI) appears to be a useful tool in understanding motives and drivers of behaviour within an individual which would affect the person's fit with the organisational culture, team and environment. This tool can be helpful with understanding how to motivate employees. The tool has some added value as it not only assesses what is important, but it can pinpoint where these motivators are important to the individual. The tool gives measures of the motivator over 5 themes: whether it is motivating in the way they live their life out of work (lifestyle), occupation, beliefs, aversions and preferred associates. For instance, someone could be highly motivated by Altruism in their personal life but have no interest in it as an occupational preference.

Adding a motivational assessment tool to your recruitment process can have a 2 fold impact. It can ensure that people's motivations and drivers are in line with the organisation and also identify key motivators of an employee which can be used to assist in retaining good candidates. This tool joins the following motivation tools we already have on offer in the Niche Toolbox: MQ (Motivation Questionnaire), WAPS (Work Aspect Preference Scale), and VMI (Values & Motives Inventory).

B.Z. Toons

by Brian Zaikowski

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Zaikowski

Why does the CPI personality assessment ask those odd questions?



Candidates and clients often ask us why the CPI personality assessment (Californian Psychological Inventory) asks certain questions which seem odd or obscure and the following article is designed to answer this question and highlight the ways different tests are constructed. The validity of an assessment tool is very important and for the purposes of this article we will be talking about 2 types of validity; Face and Predictive:

Face validity - does the tool on the face of it appear to be measuring something is related to what it is meant to be measuring? E.g. if we are measuring sales ability does it on the face of it to the candidates look like the questions would measure sales ability.

Note: that face validity has no scientific or statistical value, it is about the candidate's perceptions about the test.

Predictive validity - does the tool measure something that predicts a future desirable outcome? E.g. if we want to predict the likelihood someone is going to be counterproductive does a score on the test accurately predict this outcome?

Of the two above types of validity, psychologists agree that the most important validity is the second – predictive validity. Can the test predict something useful about the candidate from the assessment results? Face validity is less important as it has no scientific value – it is purely about how people perceive the test on the face of it. There are 2 points of view on how to construct a test and how important, in particular, “face validity” is in an assessment.



When it comes to test construction, the purpose of a scale and its goal can be looked at from two different construction view points these are: *Instrumental* or *Definitional* viewpoints.

The CPI was designed from an *Instrumental* viewpoint in what it is trying to measure. Most of the scales on the CPI were developed using an “empirical keying” strategy. What this means is that the scales were devised based on a comparison of what the item suggested about an individual, with the way observers described them, and a measurement of their performance. As such the items content is much less important than whether the item predicts the desired outcome. Theoretically, scales developed in this way have a much greater likelihood of accurately predicting actual behaviour. In addition, the results are more likely to reflect the way others see them rather than how the individual sees themselves, which is especially useful for individuals who have little self perception or a lack of appreciation of their own strengths and weaknesses. In the case of the CPI the “face validity” of the test is relatively low for some items. For instance, “I like Alice in Wonderland” is an example of a subtle item where you are not sure on the face of it what it is trying to measure. However the predictive validity data is good for most scales of the CPI.

An alternative method of test construction is from a *Definitional* viewpoint. The purpose of a *Definitional* test is to design a scale that measures a psychological variable such as a trait e.g. conscientiousness. The OPQ is an example of an assessment designed from a *Definitional* viewpoint. This method starts with a theory of personality and through a factor analysis of the items which are designed to measure a trait in the personality model, they come up with appropriate items which measure the trait. In the case of the OPQ “face validity” of items is very high and an item such as “I will persevere until a job is done” is an example item loading onto the scale Conscientiousness. Due to this test item's high “face validity” most candidates would have a reasonably good idea about what the question is trying to measure. High face validity does however have a downside as the transparency of what the question is trying to measure does make the items much easier to manipulate or “fake”.

While there is no one best way to design a personality test, the ideal is to have an assessment which is harder to “fake” and that has high predictive validity for outcomes you are interested in.

I want to know if the test predicts something useful, not whether candidates like the test or perceive it is useful on the face of it!



Training & Development Services

Below are some of the training courses on offer which we can customize to a half day or full day formats for groups:

- ◆ *Understanding Assessments and linking to development of individuals*
- ◆ *Dealing with Difficult People and Conflict*
- ◆ *Recruitment Skills Training—Behavioural Interviewing*
- ◆ *Conducting Performance Appraisals*
- ◆ *Communication Skills*



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How do you know which test is a good test or measure?

For the lay person sometimes the claims about tests from less scrupulous businesses or consultants can seem compelling. For instance claims like “*Predicts Sales Success with 70% accuracy*” and other such claims are, at best misleading, at worst fraudulent. The role of a Registered Psychologist is to adhere to ethical guidelines which ensure they “are prepared to justify, in terms of scientific literature, their use and interpretation of any assessment instrument or procedures. They are to avoid using instruments which are obsolete or of dubious scientific nature” – *New Zealand Psychological Society : Code of Ethics*. There is no legitimate single psychological test which has ever approached predictive accuracy of 70%, and we would caution any person accepting such a claim without the back-up of a published academic study in a well regarded journal to prove it. Researchers who are serious about making substantiated claims on the whole try to publish their studies in scientific journals where their research data, methods and conclusions which are subject to peer review and therefore are to a standard that is credible and refutable.

If you want to know if the test you are considering is a valid measure then you can check it out. As part of the test publication it should have gone under peer review and this can be done in America through the Buros

Institute or the British Psychological Society in the UK. There are the test measurement standard bodies that “tests the test makers” before backing any new assessments. The reviews go into the *Mental Measurement Yearbook* and this is where psychologists and lay people can check out the validity of an assessment tool prior to using it.

B.Z. Toons

by Brian Zaikowski



Hector studied the human carefully for a while and decided that “*Monkey see, monkey do*” was clearly out of the question in this case.