

Expertise & Craft

To us, delivering psychological assessments and our other services, is not a job, it is a profession and craft that we deliver, with solid science behind it.

While there may be many assessment and development service providers out there, it takes a lot of experience and talent to be an expert in the interpretation of complex psychometric assessment tools.

Depth of Experience and Training

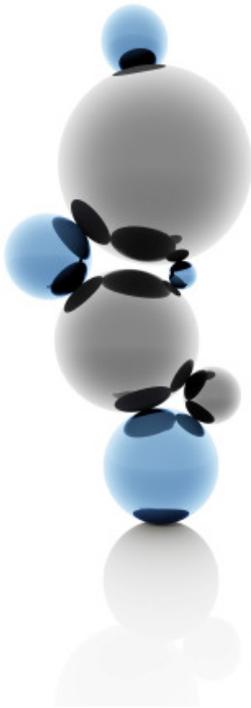
- ◆ While the 5 years university study helps us have a foundation of knowledge in the field of psychology, the real difference however is that daily we utilise these tools; we administer, interpret, write reports and give feedback on these tools and have done so for years and years.
- ◆ We become experts as opposed to casual users of assessments, the difference in experience and depth of knowledge and expertise is extreme when compared to someone trained only on one test makers tools and who has no degrees in Psychology.
- ◆ Add to this our preference at Niche to use multiple personality tools and ability tests means our psychologists have taken years to be at the top of their craft and profession.
- ◆ Not everyone has the natural talent to interpret assessments well and link them as well as make them meaningful to non-psychologists. No matter the training given to people, in our experience, the best assessment experts are the ones who have a natural talent and passion for the area.
- ◆ There are restricted tools that are only available to qualified and registered psychologists. The Californian Psychological Inventory (CPI) is a particularly complex tool, which requires an advanced level of psychometric training to be able to interpret it.
- ◆ As such, the level of expertise applied to interpretation of the CPI is much higher than to non-expert tools such as the OPQ, HPI, and 15FQ which can be interpreted by non-psychologists, once they have done the test makers short training course.
- ◆ Some countries such as South Africa have legislated to restrict psychometric assessment use to psychologists, as they were concerned about the unethical use of assessments by non-psychologists. They seem to have recognised the risks of having psychometric assessments delivered by people with limited training and it would be ideal if we in NZ, also come to recognise these risks and the potential for misuse when used by non-experts.
- ◆ The following excerpts are taken from the Health Professional Council of South Africa's (HPCSA) Policy on the Classification of Psychometric measures devices, instruments, methods and techniques:
 - ◆ "According to the Health Professions Act, Act 56 of 1974, tests, measures, questionnaires, instruments, etc. that tap psychological constructs must be used, interpreted, and controlled by psychologists."
 - ◆ "Only persons registered with the Professional Board for Psychology under the auspices of the HPCSA may administer, score, interpret and give feedback on psychological tests. However,



Where assessment expertise is part craft and part science

interpretation and feedback are limited to registered psychologists, and psychometrists registered in the category Independent/Private practice.”

What Organisational Psychologists Learn at University versus On-the-Job?



intricacies of the assessment.

- ◆ There is a fallacy that a person does their Bachelor and Masters degrees in Psychology and that they will have had significant training in psychometric tools and their interpretations.
- ◆ In fact, most Organisational Psychology courses will have no more than 1 paper on psychometrics and this paper will concentrate on understanding underlying constructs and statistical properties of assessments such as their validity and reliability.
- ◆ These courses are not designed to give training or information on how to interpret the tests, give feedbacks and report writing. This means a new psychology graduate is likely to still have a steep learning curve to master the assessment tools they choose to utilise.
- ◆ Over the years our Director, Neisha Voot has trained interns and other psychologists on the use of these tools and we estimate it takes 3 years full time working with tools like the CPI (Californian Psychological Inventory) to master the

- ◆ This is not something you learn at university, you learn it on the job, doing the job. It becomes a craft for our psychologists and our experience allows us a depth of knowledge to rely on when interpreting our assessment tools.

For the psychologists at Niche we are proud to work in this profession and to add expertise and craft to what we do.

What are the Competencies a Person should have who uses Assessments?

The International Test Commission released Guidelines of Test Use and the following is an excerpt from this outlining the skills needed by a test user:

Knowledge, Understanding, and Skill

Knowledge, understanding and skill underpin all the test user competencies. The nature of their content and level of detail are likely to vary between countries, areas of application and as a function of the level of competence required to use a test.



The Guidelines do not contain detailed descriptions of these. However, when applying the Guidelines for use in specific situations the relevant knowledge, skills, abilities and other personal characteristics will need to be specified. This specification is part of the process of contextualisation, through which generic guidelines are developed into specific standards.

The main areas descriptions of knowledge, understanding and skills need to cover include the following:

Relevant declarative knowledge

This includes:

- knowledge of basic psychometric principles and procedures, and the technical requirements of tests (e.g., reliability, validity, standardisation);
- knowledge of tests and measurement sufficient to enable the proper understanding of test results;
- knowledge and understanding of relevant theories and models of ability, of personality or other psychological constructs, or of psychopathology, as necessary to properly inform the choice of tests and the interpretation of test results; and
- knowledge of the tests and the test suppliers relevant to one's area of practice.

Instrumental knowledge and skills

These include:

- knowledge and skills relating to specific assessment procedures or instruments, including the use of computer-based assessment procedures;
- specialised knowledge of and practitioner skills associated with using those tests that are within one's repertoire of assessment tools; and
- knowledge and understanding of the construct or constructs underlying test scores, where this is important if valid inferences are to be drawn from the test results.

General personal task-related skills

This includes:

- the performance of relevant activities such as test administration, reporting, and the provision of feedback to test takers and other clients;
- oral and written communication skills sufficient for the proper preparation of test takers, test administration, the reporting of test results, and for interaction with relevant others (e.g., parents, or organisational policy makers); and
- interpersonal skills sufficient for the proper preparation of test takers, the administration of tests, and the provision of feedback of test results.

Contextual knowledge and skills

This includes:



- knowing when and when not to use tests;
- knowing how to integrate testing with other less formal components of the assessment situation (e.g., biographical data, unstructured interview and references etc.); and
- knowledge of current professional, legal, and ethical issues relating to the use of tests, and of their practical implications for test use.

Task management skills

This includes:

- knowledge of codes of conduct and good practice relating to the use of tests, test data, the provision of feedback, the production and storage of reports, the storage of and responsibility for test materials and test data; and
- knowledge of the social, cultural, and political context in which the test is being used, and the ways in which such factors might affect the results, their interpretation and the use to which they are put.

Contingency management skills

This includes:

- knowing how to deal with problems, difficulties, and breakdowns in routine;
- knowing how to deal with a test taker's questions during test administration etc.; and
- knowing how to deal with situations in which there is the potential for test misuse or for misunderstanding the interpretation of test scores.

Read more... http://www.intestcom.org/test_use.htm