



16 PF[®] Newsletter

The User Group 16PF[®] and other tests – MIND THE GAP!

At two recent committee meetings, we reviewed the past year's activities and focused on future events and the direction that the User Group might take.

A brief review of our history showed that, whilst in the early days of the group's existence (mid 1980s) we focused mainly on 16PF interpretation and developments, in more recent years our meetings have embraced almost every personality assessment on the market. Just a few are: MBTI[®]; FIRO B; California Personality Inventory (CPI); NEO; Poppleton-Allen Sales Aptitude Test (PASAT); PAPI; 15FQ; Quintax; Hogan Personality Measures; HJ 17 Hatfield Jeffries Questionnaire; The Kolbe Index; and the Team Climate Inventory. There are many more that one could cite, but that is sufficient to give an indication of the Group's diversity, whilst still retaining its main focus on 16PF.

So what of the future? The committee felt that it would like to continue with this

broad mix of reputable assessments, but that we would like to extend membership to more *practitioners* of these instruments.

To achieve this requires us simply to make our intentions known through appropriate journals and through, say, the BPS. We are looking for a gradual progression towards a wider user base. Many of our consultants of course already use some of the assessments mentioned, depending on the nature of their assignment, but it is perhaps not widely known amongst practitioners that our meetings are as varied as they are.

However, as our Chairman reminded us in her report at the AGM, the Group exists only to serve its members. To this end we need to obtain their views. Our intention is to establish a small group to contact members and lead discussions on this matter and report back. If the general view is in favour of attracting a wider range of psychometric practitioners, then we will make the minor adjustment to the rules that will facilitate this.

Even if the membership is in favour, we would emphasise that discussion of the 16PF, its progression, research, and interpretation will still provide the main focus for many of our meetings for the foreseeable future.

David Roberts

THE INTROVERT ARMS REVISITED

It may seem some time since I took you vicariously to The Introvert Arms to listen to the collective wisdom of Angus and Hubert, both of whom purport to be psychometrically aware. But please be assured that their characteristics are the same as they ever were – Angus, querulous, difficult, arrogant, self opinionated, nit-picking (and that's on a good day.) He must surely be INTJ. Or may be INTJ³ if there is such a thing. (Don't panic: there isn't.) If Angus is the cheese, then Hubert must be the chalk. (ISFP? Or ISF³P?) I'm sure you get the picture.

Angus has all the sensitivity of a wire brush. Hubert is like cotton wool but without the extreme abrasiveness of that material.

So any tripartite conversation with them has one swinging from one side to the other in an attempt at mollification — trying to get Angus to see things like a human being and trying to get Hubert to come off that painful fence.

On this occasion, the discussion rambled over a number of psychometric topics.

Hubert started by saying that the test he uses is 100% accurate. I choked on my Pedigree, not just on account of my own opinion but on the reaction I expected from Angus. He did not disappoint.

"No test is 100% accurate," he said. I am paraphrasing his words out of consideration for the sensibilities of our readership. Nevertheless I could not contain my incredulity.

"It's impossible," I said. "And in any case it's completely unnecessary."

"Look at the person or job spec," I said.

"Won't there be characteristics that are desirable, or essential, or just 'nice to have if you can get 'em'? And so you'll focus on what's important, won't you? You never get the perfect candidate. She doesn't exist. Just like the perfect job. There's always a downside. There's always a slug under the lettuce leaf."

"I agree with that," said Angus in the manner of one who had encountered many slugs in his time.

Feelings of dread come over me whenever Angus agrees with me. I always wonder what on earth I might have said.

But Hubert was not to be outdone.

"When I give feedback, I always get 100% acceptance. So they've got to be 100% accurate, haven't they? If the candidate says in effect 'Yes, that's me' then why should I worry?"

"That's a very specious argument," I said. (I often think of that word when listening to these two.) "Might it not be a function of how you give the feedback?"

"I just give them the results. You know, tell 'em the scores."

"I don't think you should give them the scores."

"But some of these people are very familiar with testing. They know all about scores, and their significance. They may have been tested half a dozen times. You can't treat them like it was 1955."

He had a point.

"Don't forget the feedback is actually part of the assessment."

Blank looks.

"The scores are only hypotheses, aren't they? Not tablets of stone. They have to be tested. And you ought to probe carefully around each characteristic. In practice it's often OK to latch on to those you regard as being most important and concentrate on those."

"OK. But supposing they disagree. I'll already have passed the report to the boss."

In that case, what I do is to make a note of

it and mention it to the commissioning manager. You can then tweak the final report on the computer and send it to him.”

“Messy though, isn’t it.”

“If it’s something significant, you have no alternative.”

Anyway Hubert went on to say that even if his style of feedback was less than perfect, at least it got the candidate talking. “And then,” he said triumphantly, “you can do all that probing you talk about.”

But that depends on the skill of the interviewer. Skilled interviewers are few. I doubted that Hubert came into that category. I decided not to tell him that.

I could see Angus preening himself for an assault on Hubert. He fidgeted and leaned forward aggressively.

“What I want to know,” he said, “is what norms you use. Occupational – like managerial, financial, or adult, male or female, combined, or what?”

I groaned inwardly. This sort of conversation is typical of The Introvert Arms, where customers sit engrossed in Sudoku and crosswords (crossword fans are called cruciverbalists by the way – just learned that) and discussions on the subtle nature of a cabinet minister’s approach to interpersonal relationships.

“So what’s your view on norms?” Angus included me in his question and glared at me to evoke a response.

I’ll postpone telling you about the norms debate. Some other time. These conversations make me feel like an injured

foreign correspondent reporting from a war zone.

I ordered another pint of Pedigree to deaden the pain.

David Roberts

FUTURE MEETINGS

THE NAVAL CLUB
38 HILL STREET
MAYFAIR LONDON W1

◇ **20TH JUNE** **Pauline Willis**, Chairman of the BPS Special Group in Coaching Psychology. We will concentrate on the use of the 16PF in coaching leaders and those with high potential. We also have **Julie Mrowcki and Ian Newcombe** from the BPS’s Psychological Testing Centre. The afternoon session will be led by **Colin Chase** who will talk about a specific profile. A packed day. True value for money.

◇ **4TH OCTOBER** Dr Julian Boon is a psychologist at Leicester University. His research interests are Interview technique and interviewee suggestibility; the psychology of love and destructiveness and clinical crime assessment and psychological profiling of offenders. Fascinating! Be there!

◇ **30TH NOVEMBER SOCIAL EVENING**

CONSULTING EDITOR

Penny Moyle
OPP Ltd Tel 01865 404500
penny.moyle@opp.co.uk

MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATOR

Caro Leitzell Tel 01962 880920
admin@leitzell.clara.co.uk

EDITOR

David Roberts Tel 01509 852870
david@evanroberts.fsbusiness.co.uk

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Ann Rodrigues Tel 07947 159848
ann@acer-hr.co.uk

TRUTH, LIES AND THOSE CVs

Philip Unsworth

I have been involved in designing and using an instrument which can identify dishonesty and other counterproductive attitudes. It works on the principle that our values and beliefs do leak out and a systematic process can distinguish these. There is a semantic problem in this, for I am often asked 'What if people do not tell the truth when they have to respond to the statements in the questionnaire?' My experience from the evidence of the hundreds of responses using the instrument is that people do massage their response, in much the same way that they do if they want to give a good impression.

However, they do want to be consistent and want to be believed. Fortunately, those who are more dishonest tend to believe that other people are similar to themselves and when they try to reproduce 'normal' attitudes they move their responses into the danger zone. I came across a wonderful book by Cromer 'Deception at work' which is a detailed and thorough look at identifying those who are trying to deceive others. It focuses on criminal activity such as fraud and theft and gives amazing advice on how to conduct an investigation. However, those of us in the selection business may find that there are many tips for us. Not that we are trying to uncover falsehoods in CVs, but we are trying to measure a person's capacity for handling reality, and the book does unpack some of the phrases people use to describe their reality.

I find that even professionals tend to stick to the same sources for their information and do not often come across useful information in other disciplines. If you are interested in this area, I commend Cromer's website www.cobasco.com

*Philip Unsworth
Independent Consultant*

MEMBERS OF THE 16PF USER GROUP COMMITTEE



Back Row, left to right: Chris Chater (Treasurer); Nicholas Bennett; Hugh McCredie;
Front row, left to right: Belinda Smith (Chairman); Ann Rodrigues (Asst Editor); Xanthy Kallis (marketing Manager)

Just another reminder! TUESDAY 20TH JUNE

Pauline Willis, Chairman of the BPS Special Group in Coaching Psychology.

Julie Mrowcki and Ian Newcombe on tests and testing, and **Colin Chase** from Fox One Consultancy.

A PACKED DAY!

MANAGERIAL PERSONALITY, SKILL AND PERFORMANCE. HOW DO THEY STACK UP?



In the last newsletter we gave an extensive account of Hugh McCredie's October 2005 presentation, in which he analysed the managerial 16PF4 data that he had accrued whilst HR Manager at Glynwed.

You may recall that the key thrust of his presentation was to examine the 16PF scores of 219

managers and compare them to Bartram's 1992 study, and from there ask further questions. Did 16PF scores equate with skill competencies, and did they also equate with overall job performance?

If the answer to these questions was a flat 'no' then clearly many of us have been wasting time and money over many years.

Reassuringly, Hugh was able to conclude that Glynwed managers (n = 445) were typically: bright, extraverted, emotionally stable, independent-minded and conscientious and that higher performing managers were brighter, more stable, independent-minded and results oriented.

Functional differences

Persistent as ever, Hugh came back in February to talk about managerial differences *by function*. Were, for example, sales and marketing managers any different from others? What about finance

managers? How would they differ from sales people? What about operations people? Were they different again?

First, he looked for available published data on sales, operations, and finance managers. MBTI studies had shown that sales managers had a higher preference for extraversion and a study by Harston and Mottram supported this. Barrick and Mount found that conscientiousness was correlated with overall performance

When searching for similar data for operations managers, Hugh had to concede that this seemed unavailable. He could trace no GMA or Big Five data that distinguished operations managers from other managerial categories.

So: on to finance. Here he found that MBTI studies had shown that finance managers had a lower preference for extraversion and this was again supported by Harston and Mottram. No performance indicators were traced.

Hugh now turned to his own Glynwed managers to see if any of these functional differences were reflected there. He concluded that although there were a few variations between the roles, the mean for each of the functional groups was essentially the same as for the Glynwed managerial generic model i.e. extraverted; stable; closed-minded; independent; conscientious.

He then looked at the skill competency clusters that might predict managerial performance.

These were Results Orientation; Interpersonal skills; Resilience/Adaptability and Intellectual. For all Glynwed managers, the rank order of these skill competencies was in the order above.

Sales managers reflected this, i.e. the order was exactly the same. They varied however for functions. Results orientation was first for all managerial functions, interpersonal skills was third for operations and finance and resilience was second for operations and fourth for finance. See table below.

CLUSTER	RANKING			
	All	Sales	Ops	Fin
N	219	27	21	51
Results Orient	1 st	1 st	1 st	1 st
Interpersonal	2 nd	2 nd	2 nd	3 rd
Resilience/ IAdapt	3 rd	3 rd	2 nd	4 th
Intellectual	4 th	4 th	ns	2 nd

This, together with Hugh's presentation last September, and reported in Issue 41, was a valuable piece of research, forming part of Hugh's PhD thesis.

David Roberts

**TEST ADMINISTRATION -
IT'S OK TO LET YOUR
SECRETARY DO THE
ADMIN. ISN'T IT?**

Bob Edenborough of KPMG raised a number of points about the administration of personality assessments.



I am sure that none of those attending the April meeting would have been guilty of any of the malpractices referred to, so for the

benefit only of those who were

unable to attend, here is a brief summary of some of the key points.

There are many subtle (and not so subtle) matters that can arise in the course of administering an assessment, be it of personality or ability. From my own experience I have noticed that it is quite common for a busy BPS qualified assessor to allow a secretary to 'do the admin'. If this is inevitable because the qualified person is unavailable then it is absolutely essential that the administrator has been properly trained. It is often seen as a simple job – just dishing out the questionnaires, answer sheets, pencils, etc., perhaps answering some basic questions and - job done!

Not so.

Some of the questions encountered might be:

- Is this to do with work or home?
- What does the ? mean?
- How long will this take?
- Will I get a printout of the results?
- (And if not, why not?)
- Is this like MBTI, CPI, FIRO B, etc.?
- How big a part does this play in the selection process?
- I did one of these a few weeks ago – I have the results here – do I have to do it all again?
- Do I have to do the sample questions?

I am sure readers could add to this list. So it isn't just a case of giving the admin to someone who has a spare 45 minutes or so.

Bob went on to comment on test instructions, many of which he felt were less than clear, although they gave an impression of clarity. For example there are

mixed messages. Is it a test or not? “Work as quickly and accurately as you can?” Are these two words mutually exclusive? We say there is ‘no time limit’. Then we say ‘don’t dwell too long on any one question’.

The whole purpose of having a standardised procedure of course is so that we can compare results with those of others – including our normative data. If admin procedures vary, then the end result might be less than valid for comparison purposes.

When we say ‘there are no right or wrong answers’, we could be on shaky ground. If a set of 16PF scores is significantly different from our perception of what the job requires, it is clearly a misleading statement.

Finally, is a personality measure a test? With this thought in our minds, Bob went on to comment on Factor B, questions for which in the fourth edition, were scattered throughout the assessment, which could lead to confusion in the minds of some, who had just been told that there were no right or wrong answers. In the fifth edition, all Factor B questions were collected at the end of the question booklet.

Bob’s presentation was a reminder of many inconsistencies that we have come to accept through over-familiarity. His case was that test administration was important and that instructions should unambiguous.

David Roberts

REMINDER!

WEDNESDAY 4TH OCTOBER
Dr Julian Boon
On Love & Destructiveness!!

MEET COMMITTEE MEMBER

Nicholas Bennett
Continuing our occasional
series of interviews



Early Career Choices

I suppose that I always thought I would be involved in psychology, though a professional career in rock and roll music ran a close second and still does. Let me

explain.

I grew up in London where my grandfather, one John Carl Flugel was Professor of Psychology at UCL and wrote numerous books including the classic *Psychology of Clothes* – which is still a great hit in Italy.....where else, I hear you say with their love of all things — clothes, and style. If only I had been more aware of the advantage (or not) of having a godfather called Cyril Burt!

My father was a professional classical pianist, who fled with his mother from White Russia as a young boy and they settled in London. The music side no doubt came from him and the gift of perfect pitch. In those early 1960’s and formative teen years, I attended school in Chester close to Liverpool. I soon learned and played lead guitar and was manager of the notorious *Nick Bennett and the Buccaneers* - scourge of Chester and all points North. We were lucky enough to play on the same bill as the Beatles, Hollies, Duffy Power, Helen

Shapiro, The Bachelors, and many other great names of that time.

The crunch career decision time came when having applied to do a psychology degree at the Medical Research Council unit at Sheffield University, I took a year off to play guitar professionally.

I ended up in London, visiting the Abbey Road Studios and playing on the unmemorable vocal version of *Telstar* made famous by the Tornados. But there were also others out there playing professionally, namely Jeff Beck and Eric Clapton. The simple career choice was to continue on the uncertain music trail or go and get a proper job via that psychology degree – the degree won.

Early Career Experiences

My research dissertation at Sheffield MRC centred on child handedness (left hand or right handed, etc) and that early experience of proprioceptive movement analysis taught me that my main interest was not in experimental/educational but occupational psychology. The money was better for one and there were more opportunities to make one's mark on the world - so I thought.

My first job in 1967 was a graduate trainee at the BSA Group in Birmingham which offered a range of projects in different departments. I took with open arms the chance to work in the finance department for a year (invaluable for anyone going into HR) and then took over the running of the graduate trainee scheme itself. We were very lucky in that the US behavioural psychologists were starting to come over to the UK and I was able to persuade Dr Bill Paul to come up (for free) from his hectic lecture tour and speak to our executive and management

teams.

Part of my agreed training plan (embryo talent management?) was to be trained further in psychometrics. I already knew the 16PF and MBTI so decided that the new kid on the block was a certain Australian called John Morrisby who had done some work on a differential test battery and had published it. His personal training was memorable and he persuaded me to use those old (guitar group management) entrepreneurial skills and start my own psychology related business. This I have continued to do in parallel - no matter what my *official* job was.

A switch to HR seemed sensible for those official jobs and I became the hard man of the midlands dealing with the trade unions in what started as industrial relations and became employee relations - for such names as Alcan, Birmid Qualcast, Foseco Minsep and GKN.

A move to London with the International Thomson Group (newspapers, oil and travel) in 1980 gave me the opportunity to link my HR and psychology interests as I became their management development advisor. This company was world famous in Publishing for its training and I was soon deep into devising special executive programmes at Ashridge, Henley Management College and INSEAD. I also took on the usual HR Head Office role for Group reward and employee relations.

In December 1989, a kind head-hunter offered me an interview with Willis Faber plc. They needed a new head of the UK HR & Reward Consultancy. The last occupant had lasted 6 months which was not auspicious, but never daunted by a challenge, I took the job from 1st January

1990 and lasted until official retirement 14 years later.

The change from cost centre to profit centre was not as difficult as I had imagined as I bought a book on consultancy to help along the induction process. Due research always pays off.

Having control of the range of consultancy services across various UK offices was a great opportunity to start some new business psychology profit lines and we were soon not only helping clients with the old style executive remuneration (base salary, bonus, LTIPs, share schemes and all those benefits), but also with their coaching and development needs.

Current Situation

All this background experience has really helped me be prepared for official retirement at 60 from that City consultancy job and have ready Plan B – my own full time company. Ledborough Associates was set up two years ago (see www.ledborough-associates.co.uk for the advertorial.) What is most fulfilling is that many of my old clients have come across and the new areas of executive coaching and business psychology give great satisfaction when you see the results.

I have also kept up my skills as an expert witness in the High Court.

The opportunity first came by a chance remark from a colleague to a lawyer (always dangerous) who thought I would be good at proving the loss for an unfortunate group of execs who were fired from a well known financial services company. We won £20 million on that one which lasted 4 years. I have just completed another case which has gone on for 6 years – good for the fees I hear you say. Well

yes but we won the applicant a cool £6 million which was thoroughly deserved – not that I am biased as you will understand!

Another major area of interest is Emotional Intelligence and its links to successful business performance. After due research, I applied for and got MHS approval to gather UK normative data for their Bar On EQi instrument which has led to links with many organisations including the RAF.

One question our editor has asked me to address is that of unusual problems and experiences. Apart from the unrepeatable ones for fear of litigation or worse, there was an interesting coaching assignment which involved getting an ex marine commando to be more prepared to take on subsidiary board duties whilst not thinking like a will-do/gung-ho manager and, leaving the pretty girls relatively alone. Job done, but it was interesting. Another interesting and unusual area is helping the Royal Academy of Music get some of their pupils over any particular problems where a relatively tame and musically interested psychologist can add value and help solve problems.

So now, I am involved in executive coaching, assessment, reward, the High Court, EQi and the 16PF Users Group, amongst many other things – life is not dull.

Do I still play electric guitar? You bet I do, and have two music groups on the go. The second and newest has an average age of 17 (plus me of course) so almost back to the days in the Cavern et al.

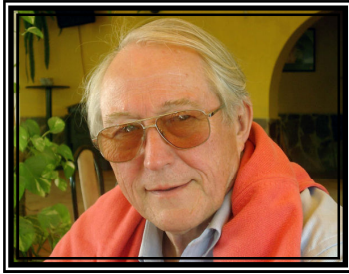
*Nicholas Bennett
Ledborough Associates*

**NEXT EDITION
Mike Smith's April talk**

BACK PAGE WITH LUBBOCK

The Best BEA Flight Ever

It is interesting how easily two people who seem obviously F+, H+ and O-, can allay the real concerns of a large number of people for a whole hour, and transform a worrying experience into a joyful occasion to be remembered.



Forty five years ago I was booked on a late evening flight from Glasgow to London in a small BEA

Viscount aircraft. The weather was atrocious. A wild night with driving rain and gusting winds presaged a difficult take-off and landing with perhaps bumpy conditions in between.

As I left the airport departure lounge and walked in the darkness in the pouring rain, holding on to my hat and dodging the puddles across the tarmac, it seemed to me to be no sort of night to go flying. I'm sure the pilots felt the same, but I put on a brave face and boarded the aircraft. There was no indication that it was to develop into my best flight ever, better even than flying Concorde.

The Viscount was a small, quiet, four-engine turbo-prop, the pride of BEA's European fleet. The cabin, fitted out for 60 passengers, was no more than 60 feet long and the engine noise was

minimal. I guessed there was something different about this flight, for on reaching my seat I noted that the packet meal included a sprig of heather and a small portion of haggis.

The plane took off and when the seat belt sign was extinguished, a man at the front stood up and addressed the passengers.

"Ladies and Gentlemen. To-night is Burns night. It's drinks all round on me, and then I'm going to propose the health of Rabbie Burns."

Drinks were served and then we were entertained by a witty speech that would have done justice to a stand-up comic at the Comedy Store.

But the best was yet to come. When the applause died down, another passenger stood up, made his way to the front of the cabin and said "Now it's drinks all round on me, and I'm going to reply to the speech on behalf of Rabbie Burns."

After a further round of drinks and a speech that was even funnier, I noted that my ears had started popping with the change of pressure, and we were on the glide path down to London Airport.

Thank you, Rabbie Burns. You made my evening unexpectedly enjoyable, and quite anxiety free. If we'd crashed because of the turbulence, rain, wind and sheer lack of visibility, I'd still have died happy – due to the near certainty of F+, H+, and O-.

*Bill Lubbock
Lubbock Associates*

**FOR YOUR DIARY
SOCIAL EVENING**

Thursday 30th November