



16PF User Group Newsletter

OCTOBER MEETING

We were delighted to see five potential new members at the October meeting, largely thanks to the efforts of our new marketing director, Xanthy Kallis. We hope to see them all again at our **SOCIAL EVENING** on Wednesday 30th November.

On a hot day in June, **David Frost**, Head of HR at Carlsberg, taunted us by talking about ice-cold lager. Oh, and how he selected a Sales Director.

An enthusiastic champion of his company, David gave us a thorough introduction to Carlsberg and its brands. On a particularly hot day, he took us through the delights of their various lagers and beers but, to our intense disappointment, failed to produce samples of the ice-cold drinks he was talking about!

Fortunately our interest was captured instead by his presentation on a selection exercise to recruit a newly created Sales Director role. Carlsberg has a well-developed competency framework with three levels of competency - Core, Level 2 (intermediate) and Level 1 (highest). The competencies for this appointment included a Core level of Innovation and People/Performance Management, Level 2 Strategic Direction and Planning and Level 1 Customer Focus and Positive Leadership.

The company decided to look at internal candidates first, as they needed someone who could hit the ground running. The selection process comprised a competency-based interview and personality profiling using the 15FQ, a trait-based self-reporting questionnaire.

PROFILES

David shared with us profiles on 2 candidates, which the group analysed. As usual, this prompted much lively debate and some perceptive insights. Given the brief background information David gave us on the two individuals, the 15FQ profiles were surprising in some respects. Although few of us were trained on this particular instrument, it was not difficult for 16pf users to

even uses many of the same trait descriptions. But there were some glaring differences, most notably the 'Intellectance' factor which we assumed was the same as factor B in the 16PF. When it eventually emerged that it measures **interest** in problem-solving rather than any measure of **ability**, this shed a completely different light on interpreting this particular aspect of personality. A salutary lesson in making assumptions in test interpretation!

David asked us to guess which of the two got the job on the basis of the profiles. There was a clear winner who, David revealed, interviewed particularly badly, though (with hindsight) there were some clues that this could happen from the profile, and the job has now gone to the external market!

*Ann Rodrigues
ACER HR Insights*

We've all heard of Emotional Intelligence and many of us have been critical of the hype that has accompanied it. **Scott Bedwell**, an R&D Consultant, at IPAT put a different slant on it at the June meeting.

As part of his master's degree, Scott studied Emotional Intelligence and developed his own measure, which has been revised and published by IPAT as the EJI. He is currently completing his doctorate, his thesis focussing on the accuracy of perceiving emotions in other people using multimedia and dynamic stimuli. We were fortunate to have him address the Users Group during a 3-week study and business trip to the UK and Europe.

Scott began by reminding us that emotional intelligence is not a mature construct, having only been around for 15 years, and the ways of measuring it for only 5. He was refreshingly honest and objective about the benefits and limitations of the broad concept of EI and its varying interpretations, and says that scepticism is to be encouraged because of the marketing hype produced in many cases by publishers of various EI instruments. He specifically refutes Goleman's statement that EI is the best predictor of job performance.

MODELS OF EI

Scott took us through various models of EI which all differ in their definition and ways of being measured. Goleman and Boyzatis talk of EI in terms of competences; while Mayer & Salovey define EI as an intelligence like IQ. Reuven BarOn's model defines it as

non-cognitive skills and he includes qualities such as hope and optimism; his measures have correlations with the 16PF.

Scott feels that the value of EI is that it accepts that pure logical rational thinking does not exist and is not separable from emotional reaction. In fact, he regards the contribution of emotions to problem solving as one of the most interesting aspects of EI i.e. awareness that a change in mood can affect the outcome of analytics or creative thought.

Some other studies show that high EQ people have better coping strategies; and an MSc student found that sales performance increased with high IQ, and the best performance indicator in sales was a combination of high IQ and high EQ.

Models of EI

There are two main models:

- Mixed (Trait) - measured through self-reports
- Ability (info processing) task-based measures, and based on explicit relationships with intelligence

Description of the EJI

- a self-report, 70 items (+10 social desirability items), 7-point scale
- based on Mayer & Salovey's early writings
- narrowly focussed
- written for an organisational/occupational context
- specifically designed for selection, so no data available for development applications
- no overall score, more a composite of related dimensions

Scott's own verdict: "the EJI is a good place to start from, than to end at"

The test is available from IPAT in the US, but a trial version is available for personal use only from john.hackston@opp.eu.com, for feedback and to enable OPP to compile UK norms.

He finished an enlightening talk by summarising the benefits of EI in an occupational setting:

- most likely to be useful in jobs with a large interpersonal component
- assessing EI should help us understand better behaviours at work - but should definitely not be regarded as the 'panacea' for all performance

*Ann Rodrigues
ACER HR Insights*

MARKETING INITIATIVE

The User Group has long been in need of someone to assume responsibility for marketing. Xanthy Kallis (below) has undertaken that role. Xanthy (pronounce it Ksanthy if you want to show off your knowledge of Greek) has been outlining her ideas to me.



- ME Xanthy, how do you plan to tackle this new role?
X I feel there is much that we could do to boost membership. I know that the majority of members are independent consultants, and there must be potential for more corporate members to join.
- ME Agreed. How do you plan to encourage them?
X I have several ideas. First there is the FTSE 100 Index, and I know that a very large percentage of those companies use psychometric tests of one sort or another.
- ME Not necessarily 16PF of course.
X No, that doesn't matter. One of the User Group's aims is to encourage the understanding not only of 16PF but other instruments as well. In any case, many of us also use MBTI™, and FIRO B, for example, together with other tests, as part of our battery.
- ME How do you plan to get through to the FTSE 100?
X I need to build a database first. A useful tool is the Personnel Manager's Yearbook.. It lists 100s of companies and identifies personnel directors and managers. I shall then contact them to outline the benefits of corporate membership.
- ME That sounds a useful approach. What else are you proposing?
X Well, apart from the corporate level, we have the individual level. I can tackle this though some of my own contacts at universities, for example. As a lecturer at the University of Westminster, I have many students, past and present, who are interested in psychometrics. I'm sure many of them need the sort of help and support that the Group can provide. After all, it's a bit scary when you're newly qualified. Many companies only have perhaps one person as a qualified test

user, so there is no one else they can refer to if they have a difficult profile.

ME We have many members who aren't able to attend meetings. Any plans for them?

X Well some live in the Midlands and the North. Since all our meetings are in London, it makes it an expensive day out for them if they are not sponsored by a company. The committee are planning to carry out a survey and we need to frame questions that will address issues, such as venue, popularity of speakers, etc.

ME What sort of targets are you setting yourself?

X I would like to see an increase in membership of 50% to 100% over the next 18 months. I think it is achievable.

David Roberts

Should you use the same test battery year after year? Do you use the same tests whatever the assignment – or do you look at the job description first and then decide which tests might be most applicable to assess the most important characteristics?

Several readers of the last edition have asked for comments about The Introvert Arms – the pub that is a rare bastion of inactivity and reflection, where gazing blankly into space is regarded as a sort of art form – and of my two psychometric sparring partners Hubert and Angus. Both of them, if you recall, have rather unprofessional attitudes to psychological testing. Hubert is the sort of man who still has soldiers with his boiled egg for afternoon tea. (Nothing to do with psychometrics, but it does tell you something, doesn't it?) If he had ever smoked it would have been Craven A. As for Angus' feedback style well, strong men with whiskers have been known to brush away a silent tear (as Elgar said of Beethoven's Ninth.)

Angus' wife is a Life Coach. I'm not sure what that is and have never asked him, but I imagine her skipping over green hills, Sound-Of-Music style, wearing a Laura Ashley dress. (I've just put Life Coach into Google: seems I may have a lot in common with Angus' wife, except of course for the skipping and the Laura Ashley dress.) Hubert's wife is the Ann Robinson of psychometrics. Always looking for a put-down, always quick to exploit the weakest link.

Angus started to talk about the composition of his test battery. (That topic is a crowd-puller in the Introvert Arms.) Angus said he'd stuck to the same tests for years.

"What?" I said, "Regardless of the purpose of the testing?"

"Absolutely," he replied. "They've served me well. Can't beat 'em."

I probed further. I found that he used a numerical test, a personality inventory that had not been updated since Freud was a lad, and one of the lesser known team role tests. If he is to be believed, he uses the same tests for selection, career counselling and development. It seemed that part of his argument was that he had built up a bank of norms that he referred to. I decided to reserve a discussion on norms for another day. It can be a controversial topic even for the well-informed. So for Hubert and Angus... No, I mustn't be beastly.

Anyway, I was aghast. I wondered what his Ann-Robinson-wife said about his test battery.

I turned to Hubert. "What about you?" I asked. He mentioned one or two respected names and then referred to some that could only have come from the lunatic fringes of California in the 1960s.

"They're good," he said.

"And do you always use those? Nothing else?"

"Sometimes I go into things like sentence completion. That's where..."

"I know what it is." I said. I was horrified. "And if you discover something particularly disturbing, how do you follow it up?"

Hubert looked at me blankly. "Follow it up?" he repeated. "How can I? Who's going to pay me to go to Exeter, or Newcastle, to follow it up?"

"Exactly," I said. "So why set a hare running, if you can't see the job through? That technique can be dynamite for some people, and you won't be there to support them."

He did have the decency to blush. "But I get the info I need, and the company is usually well pleased."

"But you have a responsibility to the individual as well. Just because they are not paying you, doesn't mean..." I realised I was becoming full of righteous indignation, and perhaps pompous.

"You're too prissy, you are," Angus said. "If we all worked like you, we'd never make a penny."

"Nonsense," I felt obliged to say. "If you set out your standards clearly, clients will respect them. Would you expect your solicitor and your GP to use unprofessional methods?" At that point I felt I was entering dodgy territory so I dropped the analogy.

I turned to Hubert again. "If you leave candidates in a disturbed state of mind, well.... It may not be long before you get a visit from the dreaded social services."

I think neither of them will take any notice of what I say. They'll just bumble on doing what they've always done.

They are to psychology what chopsticks is to music.

David Roberts

INTER-ACTIVE SESSION

The topic under discussion at the last meeting was broad. So broad that to fit it into a one hour slot was impossible, so we touched on some key points.

The group was asked to discuss what information

they might require in the selection of graduates and middle and senior management. See what I mean?

We covered testing of course; interviews, certainly. But we were also led down less well-trodden paths, such as job analysis, and organisational climate. Then there is the incredibly fertile and mathematically-minded Validity Family, with their children Concurrent, Content, Predictive, Construct and Convergent. Some of them born out of wedlock.

Even the apparently straightforward Interview Family has its offspring: Traditional, 5-point; 7-point; and Structured, the latter including the Behavioural and Situational types. And we haven't yet mentioned the traditional unfocussed -wandering-discussion that passes for an interview, in which the interviewer spends 55 minutes talking about him or herself and five minutes on the job and the candidate.

Readers who weren't present will now get the idea. So it is apparent that selection can be a complex business. Why then, is so little attention given to it? The credo seems to be: "You are a manager. All managers have to conduct interviews. *Ergo* you will know how to do it." Unspoken of course, but that is often the picture. And it's no use saying you've never had any training in interviewing skills. There is only one organisation I have ever encountered that has this Golden Rule: "*You will never be asked to do anything for which you have not been properly trained.*" Refreshing isn't it?

Robert Swords

BACK PAGE WITH LUBBOCK

Yes, he's at it again. Bill Lubbock returns to contemplate the darker side of life. Just read on...

PARTING CAN BE SUCH SWEET SORROW

Individuals with very high E scores, in situations they are impotent to change can have suicidal tendencies, and especially if they are low on Q3 and high on L and Q4. I never thought about taking my own life, nor did I associate food with dying or death until last week at the Waterside Inn. Of course, being past any reasonable sell-by age I had previously thought about death, and even looked it up on the internet. That refers you to a list of unpleasant fatal diseases. Two thousand references on cancer, forty-seven on Alzheimer's, one hundred and forty on an obscure complaint, lupus, and ten on having one's flesh dissolved following a spider bite. But to depress you still further, there are chat lines and support groups where people whinge about their terminal complaints in gruesome detail.

However, at dinner I came across an encouraging item on the dessert menu, "Death by Chocolate." You may have thought, as I did at first, that it was a joke in poor taste, but on reflection I decided it concealed a serious message about the possibilities of food as a means of taking control of my own death. After all, if I want to be

sure to go promptly and pleasantly the only answer is to take charge of the process myself.

The only terminal maladies I would find acceptable all have food in common. They can be brought on by putting on too much weight, so when it's time to think about departing I'm planning to commence systematically over-eating, especially those fattening luxuries we are asked to give up. That romantic dessert menu put me on the right lines. I'm going to start my own euthanasia 'Death by Chocolate' programme. I'm not E++, Q3-, L+ or Q4+ It's just that I don't want to live so long that I develop those unspeakable complaints that I've read about, and I shall change to a really pleasurable diet that will bring on the quick finale that I want.

I'm sure any kind of chocolate will do: plain chocolate, milk chocolate, Chocolate Cream, Mars bars, Milky bars, Belgian chocolate, Terry's All Gold, even Kit Kats. If I get bored with chocolate, other sweet things will be good substitutes while I pause for my taste buds to recover. I must simply be sure to avoid fruit, nuts, brown rice, wholemeal bread, tomatoes, lettuce, green vegetables and of course, exercise.

When my doctor tells me that my cholesterol level is dangerously high, I shall reply "Splendid!" If he tells me the same about my blood pressure, I'll beam "It suits me." My plan will be working.

If I stick to my diet, then one day I shall have a sudden pain in the chest and I will be on my way. I expect it to be quick, and just what I wanted, but I should like to make the call for an ambulance myself, and with luck there will be time for one last nibble at a Bourneville bar, just to make sure.

"Operator, I'm calling for an ambulance. Take your time. Please don't hurry. It's just that I'm dying of chocolate..."

Bill Lubbock Lubbock Associates

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