WE WISH ALL OUR MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES A HAPPY CHRISTMAS
Shefali Sharma is a Lead Consultant at OPP whom she joined in 2005. She has previous experience both in external consultancy and internal work with the NHS on the development of their services. She took her Masters in Occupational Psychology at Nottingham University. Shefali is an experienced user of 16PF5, and runs accreditation workshops, including usage of this instrument for a variety of applications.

One of these is a Talent Management workshop for qualified 16PF5 users. She defines Talent Management as “a conscious deliberate approach undertaken to attract, develop and retain people with the aptitude and abilities to meet current and future organisational needs.” Talent management involves individual and organisational development in response to a changing and complex operating environment. It includes the creation and maintenance of a supportive, people-oriented organisation culture” (Stockley 2005).

A key principle of TM is the Employee life cycle, whose stages are Career choice → Recruitment → Coaching → Teams → Leadership development, and sadly for some, Outplacement. The 16PF can be used effectively at each of these stages.

Looking specifically at coaching, Shefali describes this as “a dynamic two-way dialogue that aims to enable learning and development in line with business performance”. Coaching is often used to support individuals through any significant transition, both personal (e.g. job change or promotion to a bigger and more challenging role), or organisational (e.g. re-structuring or culture change). In today’s business environment where the only unchanging certainty is that things are changing rapidly, coaching is going to be an increasingly valuable development tool for both the individual and the organisation!

Coaching Responsibility

An interesting question from the floor prompted some debate about the dichotomy of the coach being the expert, when using the 16PF, and then letting the coachee take responsibility, which is a fundamental tenet of coaching. [In my view, it is crucial for the coach/assessor to use the feedback discussion as a two-way dialogue to explore the implications of the personality factors in day to day behaviours, and as a means of increasing the individual’s level of self-awareness - a necessary precursor to their taking responsibility for their own development and behavioural change]

Another question was whether OPP provided guidelines on using the 16PF in coaching. The answer is ‘no’, but directly as a result, OPP are looking into doing so.
Shefali then gave us the opportunity for a practical exercise to analyse the profile of a particular individual and identifying which factors could shed light on his coaching needs. An important consideration is that, when coaching, we should be aware of our own profile and of how our own personal priorities and style might exert an influence on the coaching session, bearing in mind the profile of the individual we are coaching.

Many members of the User Group are used to using 16PF in selection, but Shefali’s talk was a useful introduction to using the instrument in a development context. A copy of her presentation can be requested by emailing our Administrator, Caro Leitzell, at admin@leitzell.com.

Exciting developments in the 16PF User Group!

In the June edition of the Newsletter, we told you about the Committee’s plans to expand the remit of the 16PF Users Group to cover a wider range of psychometric instruments, whilst still retaining a focus on the 16PF in the short to medium term. As an overall framework, we propose to focus on tests that map onto the The Big Five and which are accredited by the BPS.

To reflect the expanded scope of the Group, we propose to change our name to The Psychometrics Forum.

We will continue to maintain our independence of any test publisher. The aim of the Forum will be to promote good practice and increase breadth and depth of understanding of various psychometric instruments and their applications in different occupational contexts. We wish to share experiences and knowledge from a wide range of sources: test users, leading test publishers, academics, professional experts, researchers and - not least - each other. As our recent meeting on the theme of coaching demonstrated, members also have a significant interest in topical subjects such as leadership/team/career development, and therefore some meetings will reflect these themes, but where possible link them into the use of relevant psychometric tools and models.

We will be voting on the proposed changes at our AGM, which is incorporated into the next general meeting of the User Group in February. So we hope that many of you will attend this important event to add your voice to ours.

Ann Rodrigues
Chair, 16PF Users Group

Meeting Dates For 2008

5 Feb Leadership Development
23 Apr Team Development and/or positive psychology
17 June To be agreed
8th Oct The Big Five
27th Nov Coaching Theme (and festive lunch)
Teresa Payerle is a broadcaster living in Berlin, Germany, where she taught English as a foreign language for six years. She was born during the Eisenhower years in the Great Lakes region of the United States, and before moving abroad had lived in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Philadelphia. Her interests include music, languages, writing and picking things apart.

The Man Who Knew Too Much

I keep telling David Roberts that he knows too much about me, and that, regrettably, I will have to kill him. He seems to take this in his stride, even encouraging me to get on with it, saying the suspense is killing him. Clearly a man with a low anxiety profile.

But I had to let him live long enough to assess my latest personality questionnaire. The first (NEO) revealed that I was an oddball, just as I always knew—but now I was an oddball with talent. The second, (MBTI), showed me as self-conscious and creative.

This time it was the 16PF5. I've tried to figure out some rhyme or reason to these tests, but I'll never crack the code. The questions are worded in tricky ways. One time I say yes to something, then along comes fundamentally the same question, and this time I answer no. Despite that self-consciousness, upon being asked whether I tend to get embarrassed if I suddenly become the center of attention in a social group, I hesitate to say yes. It depends on the group and on why I've become the center of attention. The only possible answers are (a) true, (c) false or (b) I don't know. Where is the button marked "It depends"?

Questions, Questions

But David assures me that it balances out and that one shouldn't ponder these questions, just answer them. Still, I think the test-makers are out to throw us off our guard. One technique is to sneak too much into one sentence. I enjoy inviting guests over and amusing them. And amusing them? I enjoy inviting guests over but I don't try to amuse them, unless my cooking does that. Is that a yes or a no?

I greatly enjoy the saucy and slapstick humor of some television shows. Saucy yes, slapstick no.

I prefer to eat lunch (a) with a
group of people, (c) by myself. It depends entirely on who those people are. (I am choosy about my companions. (a) yes or (c) yes.)

There's no way to indicate strength of feeling. An (a) can mean my agreement is lukewarm or the other choice isn't so interesting, or it can mean I strongly, passionately agree and option (b) makes me want to run away screaming.

If people interrupt me while I'm trying to do something, it doesn't bother me. It depends. If I'm doing laundry at the dingy Laundromat, and the person interrupting is tall, dark, handsome and male, then (a), it doesn't bother me. If I'm working on a fascinating project and a bore comes by to chat about his weekend, then (c), I hate it. (I checked (c). Scenario (a) is not worthy of serious consideration.)

Muddy Waters

Adverbs like “often” can muddy the waters. I like to go to shows or entertainment, but not necessarily often, as the question demands. Should I say yes, meaning I go often, or no, meaning not often but I do go? I note that ‘no’ would be the same answer given by someone who doesn’t go at all. How does the assessor tell us apart?

This process again gave me some "Are there really people like that?" moments. When I find I differ with someone on social views, I prefer to (a) discuss what our basic differences mean or (c) discuss something else. Here only an emphatic (a) will do. I wouldn't think of discussing something else if there was a good fight to be had.

So I await the results as I mull over how I ever managed to get along with my best friend in high school. She would have answered that routine work makes her feel secure and confident, that she prefers familiar foods to new and exotic things and likes stable and conventional people better than unconventional ones. Then again, she managed to like me. Must be some quirk in her personality…

The results have arrived, this time complete with Global Factor Worksheet, Primary Factors, and the Profile Sheet. How exciting to get a peek into the process! David listed my scores vertically along a kind of graph, then multiplied those by a series of fixed numbers at different points across the graph. Finally, he subtracted the results in the shaded columns from those in the unshaded, to arrive at a row of mysterious numbers along the bottom that correspond to five characteristics, the so-called global factors.

Dominant and Forceful

This reveals that the test subject is “independent, persuasive, willful” and, elsewhere on the profile sheet, “dominant, forceful”. Good heavens! Is this why strong men back up when they see me coming? But the subject would seem to redeem herself by being “open to change, experimenting”. On the kinder, gentler left side of the page we see “receptive, open-minded” (this as opposed to “tough-minded”, which to me isn’t the opposite but never
mind), “trusting, unsuspecting, accepting” and, for good measure “abstracted, theoretical, idea-oriented”. I would ask those tough guys to please explain why they were backing away, and I would listen.

But enough about me. David, perhaps like most test users, turns the base metal of our answers into psychometric gold. Numbers are one thing, but I imagine the written assessment needs to transcend the obvious while still sticking to the facts.

Meanwhile, I look back over my scores and note with cautious relief that Open-to-Change defeated Dominatrix, if only by a hair. With results like this, would I take another of David’s tests?

(a) definitely yes
(b) definitely no

It depends.

Teresa Payerle
Berlin

Leadership Blind Spots
Dr Karen Blakeley

Karen Blakeley is Assistant Director of the Centre for Leadership, Learning and Change at Cass Business School in London and is also a director of Waverley Learning - a leadership development company.

Originally trained in Finance in the City, Karen has spent over 15 years helping organisations adapt to change. She has appeared on TV, radio and in the press and regularly presents at conferences. So we were delighted to welcome her to the November meeting of the 16PF User Group.

How Leaders Learn

Karen has recently published a book entitled Leadership Blind Spots and what to do about them**, based on her in-depth research in two large organisations about how leaders learn and manage through change.

Karen is particularly interested in deeper learning and creating lasting change.

She defines learning as:
- New or changed behaviours
- New or changed constructs, beliefs
- New or changed emotional orientations, values, attitudes

Having first completed a comprehensive literature search, Karen identified 21 different types of learning processes. After further research, she then devised a model of learning that is a little too complex to be reproduced here (but can be found in her book). It breaks down learning into a 4-stage process, Attention, Emotions, Sensemaking and Behaving - respectively becoming aware of new and different cues; exploring new or
unprocessed/unexplained emotions; using new constructs to find new meaning; and experimenting with new or changed behaviours.

To apply these to our own situation and demonstrate how blind spots can occur, Karen asked the 16PF User Group firstly to explore our own values. We were then asked to analyse and list what activities we as individuals spend our time and attention on and draw these on flip charts. Much creative talent was revealed and in our small sub-group alone, a range of things represented our activity profiles from pretty pie charts, to a road (complete with traffic), a beautifully drawn heart and a box of chocolates (yes, the author of this article is a chocoholic).

Analysing our values/what is important versus how we actually spend our time demonstrated to what extent we live our values; and comparing the resulting gaps as well as each other’s profiles helped identify possible blind spots. It was an entertaining and enlightening exercise, and is one she finds equally powerful when she asks senior managers to undertake it.

Karen identified eight Learning Practices which enable deep learning to take place, and which we can all use for ourselves and for our clients in a coaching or personal development relationship:

- Direct attention
- Harness emotions
- Overcome defensiveness
- Deepen sense-making
- Engage creativity
- Reality check
- Change behaviour
- Nurture integrity

and we need to look at these in the light of our

- motivational values
• ideals
• espoused values
• goals and drivers

This article probably does not do justice to the degree of research and thought that went into Karen’s presentation. More than anything, she is an engaging speaker and keen to ensure that her audience learns and enjoys their learning!

**available from Amazon

Ann Rodrigues
Assistant Editor

CREATIVITY

We return to this fascinating and often misunderstood topic. Misunderstood? It is more accurate to say ‘little understood’. Here’s an attempt to explain more…

In the last newsletter, we posed the question as to what is novel in the world of creativity… Taken literally, novel means “new; hitherto unknown.” It is difficult to think of much that completely satisfies this definition. Most ‘new’ things are based around something that already exists in one form or other.

But in any definition of creativity, whether in discussion or in writing, this word very quickly crops up. ‘Usefulness’ is also another word coming into any debate. We can do something in a creative way, but unless it has a potential use what is the point? Of course, in science and technology there have been many creative ideas that have not been recognised at first; often, not until long afterwards, has the true value of an idea been realised. It seems that the creative idea has to have some connection with existing theory; otherwise it is likely to be ignored. Even Einstein acknowledged that he could not have produced his theory of relativity without the benefit of the discoveries of the physicists that had come before him.

Creativity in Music

A similar principle applies to the arts. It is claimed by Simonton (1980), in his article on melodic originality, that musical compositions that are seen as creative, tend to be original in the sense that they depart from what has gone immediately before, but that is not as great a gap as exists between the present and what may have existed much further in the past. To illustrate this, one
may doubt that the music of Stravinsky would have been evaluated as kindly by society had it followed hard on the heels of Bach without the benefit of the work of other composers of the intervening 200 years. He goes on to say that it is doubtful if it could have followed Bach anyway, because some of the instruments that Stravinsky used did not exist at the time of Bach, but not only that: Stravinsky’s thinking was influenced by the work of all his predecessors.

The Creative Personality

In October we discussed the place of creativity in industry, how managing directors and others cry out for it, and then seem to reject it. Is this true, and if so why? To answer this we need look no further than the assumed characteristics of the creative person. But before we do, consider a hypothetical person specification of a middle or senior manager that is likely to contain at least some, if not many, of the following words:

Decisive; action-centred; analytical; confident; outgoing; high interpersonal skills; strategically minded, etc.

Does that sound like a descriptor of a limp-wristed dreamer of the popular imagination?

In looking at the characteristics of the creative person we need to establish first, whether that person is scientifically biased or artistically biased. Yes: there are considerable differences.

In addition we find that there are differences between visual artists (photographers, sculptors, painters, architects), and literary artists (writers and poets) and performing artists (musicians, singers, dancers, actors.) Pufal-Struzik (1992) used 16PF to determine the differences between 177 painters, poets, writers and film directors, and their less creative peers. The creative artists were more aesthetically oriented, imaginative and intuitive. What a surprise!

Artists also appear to be rather impulsive and rate low on conscientiousness, as well as having a tendency to be somewhat rebellious and non-conforming. (Remember Fiona Paterson’s Innovation Potential Inventory in which Challenging Behaviour was one of the predictive ingredients of innovation.) Empirical research supports the stereotype of artists as being emotionally labile, manic, expressive and sensitive. There is plenty of similar evidence.

The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire

Researchers using the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire found that performing artists scored significantly higher than control subjects on anxiety, guilt and hypochondriasis. Also, using the EPQ again, they found that professional actors scored significantly higher on the neuroticism scale than did non-actors. And just to plunge the knife in even further, an early study in 1958 by Drevdahl and Cattell showed that a group of artists scored lower than norms on Factor A in the 16PF. Hostility, aloofness, lack of warmth and unfriendliness were all there as was a degree of introversion.
Now let's turn to scientists. Drive, ambition, and achievement are present in the most eminent and creative scientists according to Busse and Mansfield (1984). Among social traits, we find dominance, arrogance, hostility and self-confidence. Now isn't this nearer to that hypothetical person specification mentioned earlier? Remember that science can be highly competitive, with grants and other resources going to those who can demonstrate that they are likely to make best use of them. Van Zelst and Kerr (1984) collected 514 self-report personality descriptions and found a significant correlation between productivity and describing oneself as "argumentative", "assertive" and "self-confident".

And what about female scientists? In one of the very few studies undertaken, Bachtold and Werner (1972) administered 16PF to 146 women scientists and found that there were significant differences from women in general on 9 of the 16 scales including Dominance and Self-Confidence.

Top scientists also tend to be more aloof, asocial and introverted than their less creative peers.

In summary, creative scientists are more open to new ideas and are flexible, driven and ambitious, although they are asocial, when they do interact with others they are more prone to arrogance, self-confidence, and hostility.

To return to our original question of managerial selection, it would seem that the elite scientist, although somewhat aloof and asocial, has other qualities likely to appeal to selectors. But what if you are not a scientist? Arguably, creativity is important in every managerial role, but particularly say, in marketing, advertising, and strategic planning. (We'll overlook creative accounting.) So candidates for these jobs may lack some of the more desirable characteristics of elite scientists. Their emotionality, impulsiveness, and oversensitivity may come to the fore and turn out to be to their detriment in the selection process or until such time as they have had the opportunity to prove their worth.

So when chief executives say they want to encourage creativity, they should spare a thought for the characteristics they require. To get the artistically creative characteristics in the science lab and allow scientific characteristics to run riot elsewhere, would do nothing for productivity. Or for the standing of creativity.

References

- Pufal-Struzik (1992) Differences in personality and
self-knowledge of creative persons at different ages. Gerontology & Geriatrics Education


In the March newsletter we will look at the creative process from the Eureka moment onwards.

David Roberts
Editor

UNWANTED TEST MATERIAL

I have recently raised the question as to what happens to test material when a practitioner retires, or moves to another career or simply has no further use for it. Bearing in mind the restrictive nature of the material, it seems that there should be a means of disposing of it.

Any reader who has, or knows of, unwanted test material could e-mail the editor with the details and we can include them in the next newsletter. Arrangements (postage, cost of material, etc) should be made directly between the purchaser and the buyer.