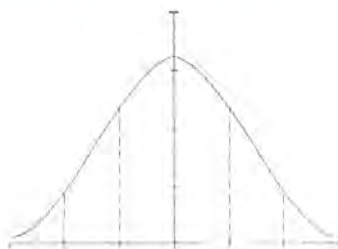


## 16PF5: Wendy Lord updated the September meeting on recent developments.....



ASE's strategic approach to collection of data has three main strands:

First, there are those projects which we commission and fully fund ourselves.

Second, we encourage students to carry out 16PF related research projects. We do that in several ways; by contributing ideas for subjects to University departments by offering supervision if required and by offering support such as free materials or free permission to photocopy materials - whichever is appropriate - and free places on 16PF training courses for those who need the training.

Finally we encourage you, the practitioners to share the data you have collected with us and offer our data analysis facilities free of charge as an incentive. In this category, most of the data is the kind from which norm groups can be constructed. That's always useful of course but what we would like more of is predictive validity data. Our top priority is growing the amount of data linking 16PF scale scores to real life behaviour. That's our biggest concern and probably the most difficult type of data to collect from practitioners because obviously a company isn't going to be too willing to share with competitors effective methods for predicting high levels of performance in employees.

For example, one of our customers, Dave Steward, who is an independent occupational psychologist, has collected a huge amount of 16PF5 and performance data on financial services personnel, which suggests that the 16PF5 is a powerful predictor in this context. His sample consisted of 1500 area managers and 1500 agents. In fact the obtained validity co-efficients are of such proportions that we at ASE suggested that it might be wise for us to double-check the analysis. Unfortunately this is a case where the client, which is a large financial institution, is reluctant to disclose the results so a psychologist internal to the company will be double-checking them. Nevertheless while the specific relationships may not be disclosed it is encouraging to know that 16PF5 is showing such predictive power and Dave Steward has promised to come and talk to the Users Group about what he did and tell us about the

results as far as commercial confidence allows him to do so.

So most of the data we collect from customers translates into norms.

Apart from the original norm groups from the standardisation sample we have abstracted those who classified themselves as managers and normed that group separately. We also have norms for 38 managers in the public sector; 60 executives and senior managers in various organisations; 145 applicant purchasing managers in commercial organisations and 52 UK managers.

We have a number of managerial groups of different types. We have Computer Analysts, GPs and Graduate Trainees.

The data continues to come in and you can get updates by asking ASE.

Norm groups like this are useful for comparing different groups. For example, we've compared the 116 managers from the UK standardisation sample with the rest of that sample. It shows that managers are higher on emotional stability, dominance, rule consciousness, openness to change, perfectionism, social boldness and impression management. Non-managers are higher on vigilance, abstractedness and liveliness.

Other useful comparisons to be made will be those of managers in industry v managers in the public sector; senior managers v trainees, and cross cultural comparisons.

This last category of comparisons will be a useful addition to the cross-cultural database.

The cross-cultural work we are doing is something we consider to be a high priority. As the world gets smaller more and more practitioners are having to make selection decisions from an international applicant pool. If psychometric tests are to retain their place in the selection process, we need to provide practitioners with a common yardstick for comparison across those nationalities. Chapter 8 of "Personality in Practice" details the work we have done so far in this area which has been from two perspectives: that of significant differences between national groups at the scale score level, and significant differences in the way different national groups score on individual items.

### FUTURE MEETINGS AT IARC

- ① 29th January 16PF Criterion Scores
- ② 2nd April PASAT - New Version
- ③ 23rd June To Be Finalised

The second perspective allows us to hypothesise aspects of culture that may be affecting how the same item is understood.

For example:

Factor I (Item 74) If I worked on a newspaper, I'd rather deal with

- a) film or book reviews
- b) ?
- c) sport or politics

This item, in the Spanish and French standardisation samples showed some sex bias with women tending not to endorse category (c), (which is the low I category). This occurred even for women who had low I scores overall. However, the bias did not occur for the British Sample. We might hypothesise that this is because British women have had more female role-models in sport and politics. Who knows? While we can identify bias that occurs differently in different national groups we can only speculate as to its actual cause.

ASE are working actively with IPAT and distributors of the 16PF in other countries to extend this database. In addition we welcome data that has been collected by users on specific groups from other countries (using the British edition) which can be normed and used for comparisons across nations. The Hungarian Managerial norm group is an example of this. This was actually a project for which we supplied materials.

So the cross-cultural work we are doing fits currently into our research strategy, could perhaps also be something that you practitioners could contribute in exchange for free norming of your data.

Let me just mention a couple of other projects which we have commissioned and funded.

People often comment in feedback interviews (when you ask them how they felt about the questionnaire) that for some items they could have answered differently depending on whether they are thinking about themselves at home or at work. Similarly, on courses delegates often ask whether, when administering the 16PF they should instruct test-takers to complete the questionnaire as their "work-self" or their "home-self". We've decided to find out whether it *does* make a significant difference by commissioning a study. That should be completed by December (97).

A second study in progress at the moment is an investigation of the links between 16PF5 scales and managerial competencies. We are using the framework derived by Vic Dulewicz who is based at Henley Management College.

Ratings on the competencies by self, boss, peers and subordinates will be gathered through 360 degree questionnaires and 16PF5 results obtained. Correlations will be calculated between 16PF5 and overall ratings as well as being broken down into the component self, boss etc ratings. We hope to identify non-linear as well as linear relationships; (a non-linear relationship being when effectiveness is predicted by average rather than extreme scores).

A third project that I think will be of particular usefulness to users is the development of an instrument to analyse job requirements in relation to 16PF5 constructs. We hope to publish that next year.

The research category I've said least about is the provision of support by ASE to aid MSc or PhD projects. Many of these are fairly small scale data collection particularly for MSc projects where time is short.

However, an exception in terms of scale is Terri Hunter's PhD project investigating the Belbin constructs.\* Finally, can I just emphasise how much we need you, the users, to build the database around the fifth edition. Any data that you think may be of interest, no matter how small scale, is welcome and as I said we will analyse it for you.

Wendy Lord is Chief Psychologist  
with ASE NFER - NELSON

\*An account of this research will appear in the next edition.

## PERSONALITY, SKILLS, AND PERFORMANCE

by  
Hugh McCredie

In my presentation to the User Group in September I sought to explore the relationships between three ways of judging managers and managerial behaviour as well as looking at their separate and combined power to explain variations in a measure of long-term, overall success as a general manager. The paper was based on a master's thesis submitted to Aston University earlier in the year (McCredie, 1997).

The measures which I had used were supervisory ratings of specific performance in Key Results Areas (e.g. controlling the operation, developing the business etc.) which I call specific performance indicators, ratings against skill dimensions based on Development Dimensions International's taxonomy, some interactive behavioural observations, and the 16PF4A primary scales.

My research revealed significant relationships between the specific performance indicators and skills but, as predicted by Boyatzis (1982), not of a one-to-one nature. However, as found by Dulewicz (1992), one-to-one skill to trait relationships were discovered and there was also a degree of covariance between the 16PF primaries and specific performance (i.e. 11%).

When specific performance, skills and personality traits were correlated with the long-term, overall success measure the covariances were 45%, 38% and 12% respectively. On the face of it, this was a disappointing finding for the 16PF although entirely consistent with other reports (e.g. Smith, 1986). **However, the good news is that when 16PF results are systematically combined with the specific performance indicators, they explained 89% of the variance, and with skills data, 54%.**

The moral is clear. On its own the 16PF, as with other self-report personality instruments, is a weak indicator of longer-term, overall performance but when combined with measures of observed behaviour its contribution is more than simply arithmetical. This is because of the progressive effect of adding together and then squaring the correlation coefficients of such relatively independent data to arrive at the variance statistic.

### References:

- Boyatzis, R. E. 1982. *The Competent Manager: A Model for Effective Performance*, New York: Wiley
- Dulewicz, S. V. 1992. Assessment of management competencies by personality questionnaires, *Selection & Development Review*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1-4

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*Hugh McCredie is Group Staff Manager with Glynwed Group Services*

## Letters To The Editor

Dear Sir,

The "Letter to the Editor" in the September edition of the 16PF Newsletter was an interesting one which underlines and emphasises that whilst it is important not to overestimate personality as a predictor of performance, it is also important not to "throw the baby out with the bathwater".

Given that three personality tests were used and assuming the results across them were consistent, let us start with the premise that the personality profile obtained was a valid reflection of the individual concerned. The writer of the letter states that the personality profile obtained, highlighted "characteristics which..... [the writer]..... knew to be necessary for the job". A further assumption I will make, therefore, is that a thorough job analysis had been undertaken and that the job analysis included an investigation of stylistic requirements of the sort measured by personality tests. Also, I will assume that the results of the job analysis were up to date and valid.

The fact is of course that all of the assumptions made above could hold true and yet an individual could still fail at the job (for reasons other than temperament).

In cases such as that described by the writer, I find it useful to consider explanations for poor performance across five categories of root causes:

1. *Other/outside influences/environment (both internal and external to the workplace).*
2. *A lack of knowledge or experience in particular areas.*
3. *Poor motivation for part or all of the job.*
4. *Personality related issues; aspects of style which are incompatible with particular work situations.*
5. *Aptitude for particular tasks.*

There are so many factors at work which can make or break a person with the potential to be effective, which can empower or disempower, which can motivate or demoralise. If the writer's sole responsibility was to investigate the individual's temperamental suitability for the role, (and assuming that the analysis of temperamental requirements for the role was accurate), then it would seem to me that the task was thoroughly completed. The conclusion could quite justifiably be drawn that, in this case, temperament is not the issue. A recommendation could quite reasonably be made to seek other root causes for the poor performance. No detriment to the instruments used (or the user of the instruments) needs to be implied. An understanding of a person's temperament can only ever be one aspect of a complete understanding of why a person is more or less successful at work. Personality is a useful contributor to the prediction of performance but we should not overestimate its predictive power.

*Wendy Lord*  
Chief Psychologist  
ASE NFER - NELSON

## ... and on the same topic ...

Dear Sir,

I was tempted to respond to the 'assessor's' request in the last Newsletter, for advice about the candidate who 'didn't match his profile' but concluded my suggestions would be only general and not first-hand. However, this little '16PF vignette' wouldn't go away and it raised my interest sufficiently to produce some observations and conclusions drawn from the situation described.

Instinctively, my initial thoughts were with the candidate and the dynamics of his situation. How was he being 'driven' to cause him to behave (under-perform) as he did? Was he well-motivated or was something or someone keeping him in 'second gear'? What did he want and was the work environment supporting or hindering him in meeting his aspirations? What else was going on in his life? And, what were the personality profiles saying about *him*, rather than just about his match for the job?

The manager's perception appears to have been that the candidate's behaviour in-post was not what she/he might have expected from someone with the profile that the assessor reported. Reacting, the manager assumes the *profiling process* to be at fault, thereby well and truly shooting the messenger.

On the face of it, it seems the 'assessor' was contracted by the manager, simply to provide the candidate's psychological profile, and no more. This, apparently, was accomplished, using not one but three instruments, each, reportedly, concurring with the others as well as with the candidate's own view of himself. Furthermore, this process seemed to confirm that the candidate had a profile that was known to correlate well to someone with the necessary characteristics for the post he was in. It appears that the assessor did what was asked of him/her and that the psychological instruments performed adequately.

The assessor on reporting the profile to the manager seemed to need to react by re-interpreting the profile as 'not matching the candidate'. Clearly it *did*, because it was, after all, *the candidate's profile*. The assessor reports feeling stupid, and, uncomfortable about the money she/he had legitimately earned, and writes about "taking the fee and scarping". It's just possible that

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under-performing is something of a theme with this particular manager.

The answer to the plea for insight into how others overcame similar problems depends upon how the assessor defines his or her role - what they think they are trying to accomplish, what kind of outcome is sought and what value they think they are adding. For an assessor in the context of our example, the recommendation might well be that prior to the next assignment, they become more prepared in respect of;

1. Contracting, up-front, with the client (the manager in this case) - *setting* expectations appropriately on both sides (learning and discovery can't be pre-determined)
2. Maintaining and ending the contract - *meeting* expectations and trying to ensure the client understands the value of the services provided.
3. *Mastering* the technical capabilities of the psychological instruments employed, knowing the uses they can be put to and how to interpret the results they provide (personality profiling is not a panacea).

What transpired in the vignette, though, was, more likely, a need for further diagnosis and, possibly, a developmental solution; a much more complex 'helping process', perhaps involving only the candidate, perhaps embracing parts of the organisation, and one where learning may have needed to occur within the organisational context or at a deeper individual and personal level. Adopting a developmental approach has broader implications in terms of both the professional ethics and the competence of the practitioner (points touched upon in the same Newsletter, in Mani Winterstein's article - Assessment or Therapy).

Developmental approaches are complex and challenging for the practitioner or facilitator and may involve drawing on sets of techniques (which may include personality profiling) at the different helping stages. Skills are required additional to those of administering personality assessment instruments (complex and specialised in their own right). In preparing to undertake assignments such as these, the facilitator will need to master developmental approaches that help to deal with dysfunctional organisations/teams and design and deliver interventions leading to greater corporate 'effectiveness' as well as mastering diagnostic and therapeutic approaches that will help candidates increase their own sense of wellness within the context and dynamics of his/her job. These two, organisation and personal development, require a broad knowledge and specialist range of skills.

This (on the face of it innocuous) episode led me to reflect on my use of 16PF in the context of career coaching/mentoring in organisations. I also, wondered just how much of a microcosm of 16PF practice in general the tale represented and about the kinds of talks or articles or themes the 16PF User Group, (which seems to be an instructive and useful forum) might feature? The topics that came to my mind (and I accept that some of them may have already been covered), include;

- 16PF Practitioner's role/s
- Professionalism and ethics with candidates (individuals who undergo testing)
- Professionalism, ethics and contractual practice with

- clients (sponsors/funding agencies)
- (further) theoretical bases of 16PF and its applications
- Knowledge of the complexity of human behaviour
- Therapeutic and helping frameworks, tools and techniques in business/commercial settings
- Approaches to practitioner's personal development
- Case studies / best practice

*As a professional body we must be able to act professionally, with conviction and belief in the methods and tools we use, if we are to help our clients answer the questions that arise for them (as a result of their personality profiles for example) and to move on. Only then will we be seen as professionals and will we deserve to be accepted as such. Coming from the position of **being** competent professionals and practitioners will only help the punters to develop confidence in us.*

*If we articulate, control and maintain the boundaries of our services (and not feel the need to apologise for what we deliver), if we provide clients with useful and fantastic learning then (and here I **do** speak from first-hand experience) they will forget any scepticism and come screaming back for more.*

*Tom Cox*

*Revelations Through Training  
Fordwich Rise  
Hertford*

## FUTURE MEETINGS

Although arrangements have yet to be finalised, topics for the remainder of the year include stress, vocational guidance, the Poppleton-Allen Sales Aptitude Test (new version), and the Sweney Measures.

The Committee welcomes suggestions for talks, which should be of a practical nature, emphasising what the speaker has actually found to work well and which is likely to be of interest to practitioners.

## Acknowledgement

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## PASAT

Part 2 of the article on the Poppleton-Allen Sales Aptitude Test has been held over to the next edition.

### SUBMISSION OF MATERIAL

The Editor welcomes contributions from members either as letters or as articles on the use of the 16PF. Case histories, unusual assignments, as well as unusual profiles are welcome.

When submitting material, please enclose a 3 1/2" disk together with the printed copy. This saves re-typing and minimises the risk of mistakes.