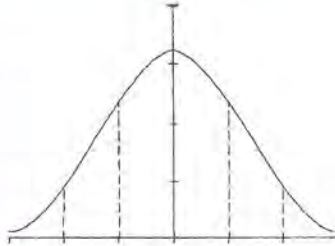


16 PF Newsletter

The 16PF, Novels, Poetry and Songwriting

Ian Florance, Managing Director of ASE made the connections at our April Meeting...



Have you noticed that every now and again, you have a blinding insight into something? You believe there is enough substance in it to produce a couple of lines of impressive homespun wisdom. Not philosophy of the kind produced by Wittgenstein, Descartes, Karl Popper, or even Bertrand Russell. Much better than that. However things being what they are you never get round to it. Then you forget it. On to the next. These thoughts came to mind when I found my notes on the talk given by Ian Florance, Managing Director, ASK. To say they were thin is an understatement. To say that they were clearly legible would be even more inaccurate. It was then that I formulated what might become the equivalent of Parkinson's Law, in due course:

The comprehensiveness of notes on meetings varies in direct proportion to the interest they generated at the time.

It hardly needs any explanation. When you are absorbed in what is being said, you forget to take the notes. It is as simple as that.

So it was that when I came to look at my notes I saw a ragbag of statements. "Psychology is poetry seeking safety in numbers." Another one: "T. S. Eliot said that poetry is not the expression of personality but an escape from personality." Einstein said: "We should take care not to make the intellect our god. It has of course, powerful muscles, but no personality."

Ian Florance is a polymath. Although he has worked in the test publishing industry for around 20 years, he says he is not a psychologist, but a marketing man, a novelist, and a poet. And a songwriter. As such he had some interesting things to say about creativity, citing Arthur Koestler's 1975 book *The Act of Creation*. (Just finished reading this. Great read. Go for it.) One of the interesting factors about creativity is that it is usually associated with a difficult temperament and being disorganised. At present, Ian is writing a book on 15th century Florence and he says that up until around that time, creativity had a much more businesslike image.

The continuum

He saw personality assessments as being on a continuum with "Gasp" at one end and "Grasp" at the other. The "Gasp" zone described personality in all its wonderful complexity and the "Grasp" zone reduced the complexity of personality to a level that was easy to grasp, but in which people were more like objects than living individuals. It struck him as odd that one of the early criticisms of 16PF was that it was too complex, and yet, for example, although there are 200 chemical elements, when did you hear a chemist say that the framework is too

complex? Yet within the field of personality, there has been Eysenck's 'Big Three', and more recently, the 'Big Five'. This may be enough to validate the content of a personality questionnaire - is it enough to fully describe one individual human being? Even though it wasn't Cattell himself who postulated the theory that five dimensions were all that was needed to comprehensively describe the human personality, others used Cattell's original

research to prove that five dimensions were enough. Cattell knew that he could have summarised his data into five factors - that of course was why he included reference to 'second-order factors'. But he always felt that too much information was lost when you try to categorise people and compare them on the basis of five dimensions.

The case for testing, he thought, could be summed up simply in the phrase, "As opposed to what...?". Poor decisions made over a few beers or at lunch?

Future Plans

Ian then went on to talk about some initiatives planned by ASE, a few of which he asked should remain confidential to the meeting. One issue affecting all test publishers however, was the pressure from recruitment consultancies for tests to be made available on the Internet. He felt that at some point in the future there would inevitably be some move in this direction by one or other of the test publishers.

Cattell's framework for comprehensively assessing human personality is one thing: the instrument he designed to tap into and measure that framework is another. He chose a self-report method. Ian suggested that we could explore other ways in which the 16PF framework could be used, for example the way in which narrative reports are presented. On the other hand, it may have something to do with methods other than self-report that could be used to benchmark individuals against the 16 factors. What add-on products could ASE provide that would enhance the usefulness of the 16PF framework to

NEW VENUE - The Naval Club, 38 Hill St Mayfair, W1

- ① 3rd October AM 16PF5 Job Descriptions - Mike Smith
- ② 3rd October Elements of Awareness - Nigel Evans
- ③ 29th November Creativity and Innovation - Dr Fiona Patterson

practitioners? Ian said that ASE was looking at a wider range of narratives, and were working with IPAT to bring in some US developments, as well as taking a critical look at its own training programmes.

Ian offered two ideas for consideration. The first was developed with Wendy Lord two or three years ago, and it concerns the development of a system based on 16PF factors to describe the culture of an organisation. The second referred to the fuller development of international marketing possibilities.

As I implied at the outset of this piece, Ian provided us with a stimulating session, relating the assessment of personality to artistic and cultural matters, thereby taking a much broader perspective than we usually hear, a sort of helicopter view of the value of the 16PF and of personality assessment in general.

Perhaps it was fortunate that my notes were fairly sparse. How much more I might have written if they were comprehensive.

David Roberts Editor

The interpersonal skills of management? Some further findings

Hugh McCredie takes up a point from a previous article...

Over a year ago (Newsletter 20, April 1999) our editor, David Roberts, wrote an article entitled 'I didn't come here to argue...' which bewailed the absence of interpersonal skill amongst top managers. He asked the question '... are they really strong in IP skills, or are they more simply, strong characters, for the most

SELECTING THE WORST OF THE WORST

An art gallery in Los Angeles (where else?) has come up with an intriguing idea. It plans to hold an exhibition of all paintings that were rejected by all other galleries as not being good enough. This made me think.

New ideas are at a premium, we are told. Only those companies that are prepared to do something different - radically different - will survive in the 21st century. So what if we collected all those people we had rejected - sorry deselected - and formed a company around them? Alternatively, for them?

We could be on to a winner here. A winner staffed with losers. Alternatively, maybe not. Because they were not selected in the first place, we can never be sure whether they were suitable or not. Even so, there will be some that will not be able to get a job even in our hypothetical company of rejects, and although they are physically and mentally fit.

Anyone any ideas on career counselling for them?

David Roberts Editor

TO ALL NEWLY QUALIFIED 16PF USERS

There is a right or wrong answer!

Are you one of those who believe that the 16PF User Group is only for academics or those with 20 years 16PF experience? Wrong! We have all had the daunting feeling of being newly qualified but wishing that there were a helping hand nearby for those tricky initial assessments - ones on which your 'in-company credibility' may rely. Our meetings present an excellent opportunity to chat informally to experienced users, to talk about that weird profile, to meet committee members, get second opinions, and to talk to our speakers. You will not be 'put on the spot' nor made to feel anything other than welcome. There are few one-day sessions that you can attend for a mere £45. And if you are an IPD member, attendance can count towards your CPD accreditation. See the front of the Newsletter for future dates.

Or for more details:

e-mail: david@davromc.demon.co.uk.

part intent on getting their own way at any price?' David's enquiry impinges on my own research into general manager competency profiles from which I arrived at two conclusions one of which David is likely to view as bad news and the other as better.

Firstly, the bad news. A review of the literature and my own data point to the likelihood that the characteristics suggested for top managers probably occur in managerial populations at all levels and in all cultures. After Abstract Thinking (16PF Factor B), Assertiveness (Factor E) is one of the strongest traits differentiating the managerial from the general population. The factor is alternately defined in 16PF4 as dominant, aggressive, competitive and stubborn. This finding makes sense intuitively. It is not without reason that the most common term for manager and/or leader is the 'boss'. Thus the popular perception of those who hold such roles is that they are bossy. In fact it is not easy to generalise a leader in a managerial situation, whether elected or appointed who is unassertive, as it is such individuals who are noticed. Notwithstanding these comments, generalities at mean population level do not invariably hold good at the level of the individual.

The more encouraging news comes from my study of the interactive behavioural habits of unit general managers in the heavy manufacturing sector. In the 1970s, Neil Rackham and Terry Morgan identified two styles of relating to others as a result of studying managers in a range of interpersonal situations. The most frequently used style was the *Push* style which consisted of above average telling people what to do, giving facts and opinions and interrupting other parties to the conversation. The lesser used was the *Pull* style, consisting of above average seeking fact and opinions from other people, testing that you have understood what they said and building or developing *their* ideas. Unsurprisingly, given the findings concerning 16PF Assertiveness, the mean use of the *Push* style exceeded that of *Pull* by a ratio exceeding 3:1. The crumb of comfort comes from the fact that the general managers whom I studied had a marginally, but significantly smaller ratio of

Pen Portrait

Continuing our series of profiles of your committee members...

Hugh McCredie



My personnel career started in the Durham Coal Board and the T & N Group. I progressed to Group Personnel Manager with Steeley plc, a diverse conglomerate trying to maintain a unitary position on staff employment and left

when we concluded that this was a contradiction.

I realised my fallibility in selection and was impressed by a report from McGill University that interviewing experience brings increased confidence but not competence! Accordingly, I joined Glynwed, another conglomerate, as Group Staff Manager with responsibility for assessing/developing the directors of its constituent businesses. I saw the opportunity to discover empirically, the personality, skill and performance factors contributing to long-term success.

Over a decade, I collected 16PF profiles and other psychometric data together with skill and performance ratings on nearly 500 executives. I published findings at intervals in *Selection & Development Review* and other journals and then persuaded Aston University to register me for a M.Sc. by Research. The degree was awarded for a competency profile of The Unit General Manager.

My secondary line of enquiry at Aston suggested that seeking convergence in assessments of personality, skills and performance, could enhance the validity of management assessment. Subsequently, I set out to devise measures for these three 'co-ordinates' which are now the basis of my business.

Although my initial interest in 16PF was 'scientific' I became impressed by the more idiographic approach of some User Group colleagues. They inspired me to temper my deterministic tendencies by studying first for a counselling skills certificate at Warwick University and then for a B.Sc. in Psychology with the OU that I hope to complete this year. I have done other exciting things in the development of management competencies.

Hugh McCredie is Managing Consultant, Co-ordinates

telling people things, to asking them questions, than did the functional directors who reported to them. The implication is that they are slightly more concerned to explore other people's point of view than are their juniors. It is uncertain whether the general managers were promoted because they behaved this way or whether they developed this modicum of interpersonal sensitivity in role.

My overall conclusion was that, at least in one sector, the age of autocratic management is not dead but that the benevolent autocrat variation might be the more effective model.

Further details of Hugh's most recent research are to be found in an academic paper McCredie, H. and Shackleton, V. (2000). *The unit general manager: a competency profile*, Personnel Review, Vol. 29, No. 1, 106-114 and also in a shorter article for practitioners: McCredie, H. (in press) *Researching the unit general manager*, Competency & Emotional Intelligence

Hugh McCredie is Managing Consultant, Co-ordinates

The Double Condom Diver

Bill Lubbock provides us with another tenuous link between the 16PF and his life experiences

Personal safety is important to all of us. We would like to be assured that those on whom our lives depend take their responsibilities seriously. 16PF has a safety specification equation that helps predict this, but only validated to date on car drivers:

.12B +.18C -.12E -.12F +.3G -.3M -.180 +18Q₃ -.18Q₄+6.6

But though we might like to give the test to train drivers, airline pilots, and in my case diving instructors, and select only the safest, we sometimes have to use other, simpler methods.

I dive with two dive schools in Barbados. The first is attached to our hotel. The last time I dived with one of their divemasters he lost one of his three divers - me. He decided we should jump in the sea one after another and meet on the reef at the bottom. Unfortunately there was a strong current flowing, and poor visibility, and after diving first, I never saw the others at all.

After four minutes I surfaced a long way from the dive boat and was picked up. Leaving his remaining two inexperienced divers down below on the reef somewhere, the divemaster then surfaced. The boat then picked him up, and we had to cruise around to locate them from their bubbles so that we could both rejoin them. I had not been in any danger but the other two could have panicked when he disappeared to look for me, and this wasn't the sort of care and attention I had been used to.

The other dive school is in Bridgetown. The owner is highly qualified, intelligent, and caring, and has won several awards from the Barbados Tourist Authority for contributions to tourism and diving. I usually dive with one of his instructors, Randolph.

Randy is scrupulous in checking you throughout the dive. He once shared his air supply with two panicking ascending divers who wrongly thought they were going to run out, ascending without an air supply for himself. That's the sort of

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.

buddy to dive with, one who believes the needs and safety of the customer come first.

Randy, by nature as well as name, drives me from the hotel to the dive centre at the Boatyard in Bridgetown, and on the way keeps up a running commentary on the beautiful young Bajan girls we pass, many of whom he knows. I asked him whether he was not afraid of AIDS, prevalent in these parts, and whether he always uses a condom? After all one doesn't want to lose an instructor like him just because of his base passions. "Two, man," he replied, "I always wear two." "At the same time?" I asked, "But why two?" wondering whether nature had endowed him with some remarkable features in that direction. "In case one breaks of course," he replied, "One can't be too careful."

I thought about that, and concluded he had inadvertently given me the criterion for assessing an unknown instructor. To predict the care likely to be taken with my own life when diving I need not administer a 16PF. I shall merely ask any instructor I am not familiar with, "How many condoms do you wear at a time?"

If they're embarrassed, refuse to reply, or simply say 'One', then forget it. In future I'm only going diving with a double condom diver.

Bill Lubbock is with Lubbock Associates

LEADERSHIP STYLES

**Whatever happened to Blake's Grid -
the model that set out leadership styles?
Well, the new Blake's Grid came out in 1975!**

Dick Cross brought us up to date

The original Blake's Grid posited two major dimensions - concern for task and concern for people, each on a scale of 1 - 9. Thus a manager could have a score of 9 - 1 signifying that he scored high on concern for task (9) and low on concern for people (1). Similarly a 1 - 9 score would indicate a low concern for task and a high concern for people. The ideal to aim for would be a 9 - 9 score in which there was equal concern for getting the job done, and for the people doing the job.

Dick explained that this model had been used within his last company - the American multinational Cargill - for many years, with success. However, in 1997 they launched a model based on Hersey and Blanchard's approach to Situational Leadership. This proposes that a manager may use a range of leadership styles depending on the situation. These are Directing - Dominating; Negotiating Compromising; Supporting - Submitting; and Delegating - Avoiding. It is evident that the second of each of these pairs is in fact an extreme form of the first. An 'unallowable weakness' to adapt a term from Belbin!

I had cause recently to look again at leadership styles and to trace the various leadership theories to be found in textbooks dealing with the subject. It seems that up until around the late 1940s there was the "Great Man" theory. This stated that leaders were born with certain personality

Acknowledgement

The 16PF User Group gratefully acknowledges financial support from ASE NFER - NELSON, directed at defraying the production costs of the Newsletter. The Newsletter remains independent, and views expressed do not necessarily represent the views of ASE NFER - NELSON, or the Editor.

characteristics thought essential to leadership. Perhaps WW2, in which thousands of 'ordinary' people were plunged into critical situations, gave psychologists the spur to look more deeply into leadership, and this led eventually to the theory of situational leadership, meaning that specific situations demanded certain personality characteristics in order to resolve them.

In looking at leadership, I naturally re-examined our old friend Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y, which first appeared in *The Human Side of Enterprise* in 1960. (Theory X, workers are lazy, dislike work, loath to take responsibility, Theory Y, average person does not dislike work, learns to seek responsibility.) Because other writers of what became known as the 'Human Relations School' of management were saying similar things, I wondered what had sparked them off. Then I found the Aha! Factor. (Not as scientific a phrase as Eureka! but you know what I mean.) In the 1950s the University of Michigan and the Ohio State University, each unaware of the other's intentions, investigated the behaviour of successful sports coaches. What were they doing right that led to the success of their teams? Researchers found that there were two elements that they paid equal attention to: which they called Consideration (friendship, trust, warmth) and Initiating Structure (communication, objectives, methods). They concluded that leaders were made - could be made - not born. The conclusions of both Universities were very similar. In my view this study, apparently unlauded, unsung, and for which one has to dig very deep amongst impenetrable textbooks, provided the bedrock for much of what came later - not just McGregor, but Blake and Mouton who developed Blake's Grid, which has now developed into Blanchard and Hearsey's Situational Leadership.

Which leads us back to Dick Cross's presentation.

Funny old world.

David Roberts Editor

Can it really be true?

A job centre has refused to carry an advertisement for 'an enthusiastic and hard-working' person on the grounds that it is discriminatory. Will they ever learn? All selection involves discrimination. The only point is whether it is fair or unfair. Discrimination on these grounds appears simply ludicrous. It brings ridicule even to those policies that are fair and sensible. PC seems to be the new McCarthyism.

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