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Profiling

**An Overview of
Psychometric and Communication Profiling for the Workplace**

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Psychometric and Communication Profiling

an Overview of Profiling for the Workplace

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Psychometric and Communication Profiling

an Overview of Profiling for the Workplace

1. Introduction

The Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is currently the favourite profiling instrument in large companies in the UK and USA.

The reason we begin with MBTI is not because we like it, nor because we recommend it to our clients. In fact, the opposite is true. We have good reasons for preferring one of the other profiling instruments.

Since a key reason for profiling is to enable work and personal relationships to be more harmonious, productive and constructive, we have chosen profiling systems that are effective and accurate as well as easy to learn and use.

And since our work is with professionals and business people, the workplace is the primary context for the profiling in this report.

So we have included here an overview of our favourite four psychometric profiling tools, along with some remarks about MBTI, with the aim of sharing our experience and giving you a wider range of options for making your own choice. Each profiling instrument described has a specific focus.

These are our recommended four, in no particular order:

- DISC Psychometric Profiling
- Honey and Mumford
- TFK Think Feel Know
- The Impact Gap

2. The POINT of profiling

There are several reasons for profiling. Profiling shows tendencies in behaviour not absolutes. Even so they are uncannily accurate for learning about yourself, understanding better your potential and your current strengths and weaknesses. In addition they help you understand others better. As a result, psychometric tests can improve organisational performance, motivation and results. This report excludes the use of profiling for recruitment.

Knowing yourself better is the first step in changing behaviours, whether in adapting to other situations or in developing new behaviours. It is also key to more empathy and better relationships.

The second benefit of profiling is the awareness of styles and preferences that are different to our own. Since each profiling system classifies human behaviour into different types, it teaches us not just how we are but how others are too.

In addition, for anyone who develops others, whether by teaching, training or parenting, it is useful to be reminded that we need to design our programmes (or family rules) to suit different types of personality.

Making our teaching or advice accessible to different personality and communication styles, rather than only using our own preferred style, is not easy.

A further benefit of profiling is that we see what our own preferences lead us away from. It is in these areas where we can develop too as we all need at times to be able to do the tasks we prefer least. For instance a detail person who prefers to work alone on research and systems, also needs to be able to present findings or benefits in order to secure funding, buy-in or a position.

Note

We recommend that you don't just read the profile report when you get it. Taking time for debriefing with the profiled person, discussing and building on the suggestions within it, is key to development.

In our experience, a coaching process is best here because it encourages responsibility as well as awareness in the learner. Moreover, from our experience the coaching process should comprise a series of regular conversations or follow-ups as we find this is the most effective way to ensure new habits last, and provide the continued momentum for action.



3. DISC Psychometric Profiling

DISC is a personal assessment tool which is widely used to improve work productivity, communication and teamwork. A non-judgmental tool, DISC Psychometric Profiling helps individuals recognise and discuss their behavioural differences. If you participate in a DISC programme, you first complete a 7-minute questionnaire, a series of questions that produces a detailed report about your personality and behaviour; this is your DISC Personal Profile

Thoroughly tested, the DISC system was developed by Dr William M Marsten in 1926 and based on Jungian theory. It has been in existence for many years as a management tool, is accurate and reliable as an indicator of personality, communication and motivation preferences and style.

The DISC system divides personality profiles into four main types. Most people have some elements of all four with one or two elements stronger than others.

The four personality types are:

- DOMINANCE
- INFLUENCE
- STEADINESS
- COMPLIANCE

This easy-to-use assessment tool is designed to stimulate organisational and personal growth rather than primarily as a recruitment tool. Please contact us to discuss the potential dangers of using DISC for recruitment without training.

The DISC Profile identifies the individual's key strengths and development areas as well as the goals and fears that typically motivate people and underpin their expectations of others. It adds real value and can be easily integrated in a range of training workshops including Teambuilding, Communication, Conflict Resolution, Diversity, Leadership and Motivation.

DISC Profiling helps you and your team to:

- Increase self-knowledge: how you respond to conflict and change, what motivates you, what causes you stress and how you deal with it
- Learn how to adapt your own communication style to get along better with others
- Foster constructive and creative group interactions
- Facilitate better teamwork and minimise team conflict
- Develop stronger sales skills by identifying and responding to customer styles
- Manage more effectively by understanding the priorities and behaviour of staff and team members.



4. TFK Think Feel Know Profiling

Think Feel Know (TFK) Profiling is a newer system which focuses on communication. The TFK questionnaire is done over the internet and takes about 20 minutes to complete. The results come in the form of a report of several pages.

TFK shows you how you normally respond to information and gives you the ability to actively process that information differently. It allows you to understand what other people are really saying and choose how to respond to them more effectively. By understanding yourself, you can understand others. It's as simple as that.

We all have the *capability* to use all three communication styles Think, Feel and Know; however, we have discovered that most people have a strong preference for one style.

Once you are able to recognise and *understand* other peoples' preferences, you will be able to *connect* with them more easily - and you'll have a greater chance of being heard and understood.

"I was surprised at how accurate the results of the TFK indicator were."
Financial Controller



5. Honey And Mumford Learning Styles

Professor Peter Honey is well known for his research and teaching on learning and this profiling instrument is easily accessed for completion on the internet via Pearson.

The Honey and Mumford questionnaire consists of 40 or 80 questions which you complete before your profile results is produced. This shows your profile with regards to the 4 Learning styles, Theorist, Reflector, Pragmatist and Activist, and it describes these clearly in your report. Your profile report makes clear that, whatever your natural style of learning, you learn better if you can use and develop all 4 styles optimally.

For any professional who provides teaching, training or education, it is useful to be reminded of the need to design our programmes so they appeal equally to the Theorist, the Reflector, the Pragmatist and the Activist, while at the same time encouraging learners to develop their less preferred styles of learning. As with all the Profile reports, each individual's report suggests how to build on strengths and develop weaker areas.

Additionally, for a coach, or manager who coaches, the H & M profile provides an immediate indication of how and when your own communication style is likely to need adapting to that of your coachee. Since coaching is perceived as a time for the coachee's creative reflection, each one needs a conducive environment and the space to do that most effectively. For instance, managers or coaches with a predominantly pragmatic or activist profile will tend to be quite speedy; they will need to slow down their natural pace when coaching an individual with a strongly reflective profile.

It is interesting to notice that the Coaching and Mentoring Certificate from the UK's Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Level 5 emphasises the importance of profiling in its syllabus. It is an integral part of the coach/mentor's skills set to take the coachee's communication style into consideration and adapt to it.



6. The Impact Gap Profiler

The Impact Gap Profiler was designed in 2013 by Alison Haill of Oxford Professional Consulting. Still in the process of trialling it, we have found it can be used both as a DIAGNOSTIC tool to indicate current communication style and impact, as well as an indicator of the PATHWAY for training and development.

The Impact Gap Profiler has 3 levels, Interaction, Impact and Influence, so that each person's communication can be assessed against those 3 elements in hierarchical order. Interaction is the basic transactional level on which we all operate fairly well. Impact is the next and Influence the final stage. At each of the 3 levels, the Profiler takes both the emotional and logical aspects of communication into account.

Currently the Impact Gap Profile is delivered in a 60-minute individual consultation, and a print-out of both the Diagnostic and Development Pathway is given.



7. Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

The MBTI was developed during World War 2 by Myers and Briggs, two housewives who developed a keen interest in the works of Carl Jung. They developed the MBTI based on Jung's theories, with the intention of producing a useful test that would allow women entering the workforce to be assigned jobs that would be best suited to their personalities. This is already enough to make some people wary. Myers and Briggs were not trained scientists.

Also, deriving all your information from a single source is always questionable in science, even if it were not the work of Jung, whose theories were/are very influential and far reaching but largely scientifically untestable and subject to numerous criticisms.

So some psychologists see the MBTI as flawed.

The trouble is, they say, the more you look into the specifics of the MBTI, the more questionable its widespread use appears to be. There are numerous comprehensive critiques about it online, but the most obvious flaw is that the MBTI seems to rely exclusively on binary choices.

For example, in the category of extrovert v introvert, you are either one or the other; there is no middle ground. People do not work this way. No normal person is either 100% extrovert or 100% introvert, just as people's political views are not purely "communist" or "fascist".

Many who use the MBTI claim otherwise, despite the fact that Jung himself disagreed with this and statistical analysis reveals even data produced by the test shows a normal distribution rather than bimodal, refuting the either/or claims of the MBTI. But still this overly-simplified interpretation of human personality endures, even in the Guardian Science section.

This information was taken from The Guardian Science

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/brain-flapping/2013/mar/19/myers-briggs-test-unscientific>

A further KEY REASON for our own use of MBTI-free profiling is that on a practical level the MBTI system is complex and therefore hard to remember. Each profile is a combination of four letters but most users find it tricky to remember their own letter combination. I have asked senior managers about MBTI in their organisations. "Oh yes that's what we use" is they say, but when I ask what their profile is, the answer is something vague or "can't remember". If they cannot remember their own four-letter profile, it is unlikely that the rest of information provided by the system is remembered.

8. Now what?

From all profiling we receive significant insights. But then what? Most of us read the profile, whether it is our own or that of a team member, think about it occasionally over the next day or two - and make no significant changes.

To get real value and use the opportunity to make a difference professionally and personally. our experience working with clients shows that the best step is to select one or two specific areas to work on for a specific period, with the help of a coach or mentor to sustain the focus.

At Oxford Professional Consulting we have created a range of Profiling Services to help you.

Profiling for Staff

Contact us for DISC Profiling for your staff or a specific team. Our Profile comes complete with accompanying video recording of tips and your full report. We provide DISC debrief and DISC coaching as add-on features.

We also provide profiling, with or without personal debrief, for:

- Honey and Mumford Learning Styles
- TFK
- Impact Gap*

*The Impact Gap is only available with the personal debrief by face to face, phone or video conference /Skype.

Develop your Team through Profiling

For managers, we offer 2 pathways:

- a. **DISC For Teams**, a workshop package to engage and develop your team
Includes individual DISC Debrief
- b. **DISC Profiling Skills Training** to show you how to do this for yourself develop, viz:
 - DISC Skills Day for Managers or Consultants
 - DISC Practitioner Training

Develop the Individual

For individuals, first do the assessment and receive your profile and report. Then select from our 3 follow-up options to help you develop, and change unwanted habits:

- Executive Coaching
- Development or Leadership Coaching
- RICH Follow Up Conversations

**Contact us at Oxford Professional Consulting
to discuss your Profiling needs & interests**