



C H A N G E M A T T E R S

OUR APPROACH TO PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING AND ASSESSMENT

“Psychological Instruments are used to provide an objective assessment of the characteristics of human beings that relate to their behaviour.”

Psychometric Testing and Assessment is used within organisations for a variety of reasons to gather objective data about an individual’s behaviour. Such instruments are used for a variety of purposes:

- Job Selection and Promotion
- Career Guidance
- Personal Counselling
- Team Selection & Building
- Individual Coaching
- Personal Development Planning
- For Personal Insight in Training & Development Workshops
- Organisational Audits

Psychometric instruments generally fall into two main categories:

Psychometric tests (tests of maximum performance) which usually measure intelligence or special abilities (for example, numerical and spatial abilities, critical reasoning, and manual dexterity) and have correct answers so that, broadly speaking, the higher the score the better the performance.

Psychometric Questionnaires and Inventories (tests of habitual performance) tend to be designed to measure personality characteristics, interests, values and behaviours. With questionnaires and inventories a high or a low score often signifies the extent to which a person possesses such qualities, holds these interests, or express such behaviours. There are some exceptions to this rule such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

The majority of the well-established instruments are well designed, objective and standardised against a large representative sample of the people for whom the instrument was developed.

Specific instruments are selected and used on the basis that they highlight the specific abilities, personality characteristics or behaviours that are seen to be critical for being effective in the present or future role(s) for which selection or development is being considered, or indeed indicate future career paths.

However, they should not be used on their own but used in conjunction with other processes that will help to provide a well-rounded picture of the individual. For example:

- As part of the selection or promotion process to support a selection interview
- As part of a coaching or counselling process
- As part of a training programme to aid personal reflection
- As part of an Assessment or Development Centre together with other sources such as simulations, role-plays, discussion group exercises

More recently, 360 degree versions of some instruments have been developed to collect objective feedback from others.

The Benefits

- It can provide an objective insight to a person's behaviour, interests, etc. where this is not already clear to people. People will often have a blind spot to some aspects of themselves.
- It can reinforce what people already know about themselves.
- It can provide an objective measure rather than more subjective evidence of behaviour.
- It can highlight individual strengths and interests which can guide career decisions
- It can also highlight specific personal limitations which can either be developed or compensated for in other ways.

The Pitfalls

- Inadequate explanation or feedback may lead people to the wrong conclusions about themselves
- They may see the results as fixed and unchangeable
- They may rely purely upon the results of the instruments without seeking other corroborative sources of evidence.
- They cannot make a judgement between well-researched instruments and those that have little research evidence but have a high face validity (they look as though they are measuring what they should be measuring).

Change Matters can help you to select the most appropriate psychological instrument to meet your specific needs from a very wide range of test material. As experienced psychologists and test users who have been trained on a variety of instruments we have access to a wide range of instruments from a multitude of sources (we are not tied to a particular supplier.) We are aware of the dangers of using such instruments in an inappropriate way and follow a clear ethical code in their use. In particular, all our consultants are highly trained in providing feedback in a sensitive and developmental manner.