



Enriching People's Lives

Learning-Friendly Tools for This Millenium

CRG's unique approach to assessment design and development is a breakthrough for learning organizations

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Executive Summary

The Advantages of Learner Friendly Assessment Design and Development

CRG Tools Were Developed Strategically with the User in Mind

Consulting Resource Group International Inc. (CRG) systems are designed to strategically develop the people side of organizations. CRG uses systems theory and best practices models that transform, strengthen and develop Leadership in organizations, teams, individuals and families. Since 1979, CRG has been an internationally recognized human-resource development and change-management publishing company, and has provided educational materials and programming to Leaders interested in helping others develop their leadership and personal potential.

CRG has served clients in civic, not-for-profit organizations, provincial, state and federal government organizations, small and mid-sized businesses, as well as Fortune 2000 companies. CRG also has a world-wide network of Associates who deliver CRG's assessments and programs to these organizations; and it also has a network of Affiliates who are linked to CRG's 2-Tier (non-multi-level) affiliate program.

As a founding member of the Association of Test Publishers, CRG's tools meet the standards set out

CRG's Keys to Success for Learning "Stickiness"

- There is a long-term plan for continuous and ongoing education.
- All levels of management and staff are involved with the program.
- The senior level managers experience the program first.
- The continuous and ongoing programming

is designed to be educational and skill-focused rather than just motivational and entertainment-oriented.

- Leadership development is firstly personal development, and professional development second: an inside-out process.
- Training, coaching or programming is based on an established yet innovative model for development.
- A training or coaching curriculum is delivered in a systematic and developmental manner.
- Program facilitators and coaches are fully qualified to deliver the programs.

CRG Publishes Learning Tools Rather Than Psychometric Tests

CRG has developed learning and communication tools rather than psychometric tests. The Personal Style Indicator, for example, is not a test (all of the comments in this report apply to the Sales Style Indicator, The Quick Style Indicator, Learning Style Indicator, Educational Leaders Indicator and the Entrepreneurial Style and Success Indicator). It was not created for use with abnormal or unstable populations. It was not developed to fit pre-identified norm groups so that participants might be compared to those groups. It is CRG's philosophy that such an approach to personality testing is biased and does not allow for the full range of interpersonal interaction that adult learners want and need to discover and develop their potential. We agree in principle with the criticism that Epstein (1979) levels at traditional testing:

In our zealous pursuit of rigorous, experimental research models we have somehow lost track of our subject matter. Instead of following Murray's example of studying individuals in breadth and depth, we have pursued a narrow vision of science, one in which method has become more important than substance. As a result, our journals are filled with studies describing laboratory manipulations of variables of little significance to the people in the experiments (p. 649).

A foundational assumption of Personal Style Theory is its belief that no single personal style assessment (PSI, MBTI, DISC, TTI, etc.) can be standardized into a personality test that has predictive validity. From the beginning, the authors of the PSI have not claimed predictive validity and have stated the PSI is not a normative test.

In particular, we believe any kind of "ipsative" (non-normative) measure which claims it can

predict anything from the four inter-related scales is inappropriately misleading people into believing that the assessment can do something which it cannot do. An ipsative test is any measurement that uses two or more interrelated scales to produce individual scores. The PSI uses such an ipsative measure because the forced-choice, rank-ordering of the descriptive words causes the 4 scales to be inter-related.

Inasmuch as these types of scales are only used for the individual, their scores are valid for them. When applied to groups to establish norms for future predictions or interpretations for other individuals, these test measures are not valid due to the limitations of their own construction.

This interrelationship between the four scales affects the discreteness of each scale and therefore prevents the PSI from being used as a normative measure. Therefore, information gained from the administration of the PSI on one employee or applicant cannot be applied to information about any other employee or applicant (PSI/JSI Leader's Manual, p. 36).

Most personal style assessments are "ipsative" measures because they produce scores which are not independent from each other. They are developed using forced-choice scales that clearly ask people to rate their personal preferences based on scales that are interrelated. Johnson, Wood and Blinkhorn stated strong concerns about false reliability and validity claims when they described the use of ipsative measures.

One of the more worrying features of recruitment and selection practices in the United Kingdom is the misuse of ipsative personality tests. Employers are understandably attracted by claims that these quick and easy to administer tests will give valid insights into the personality of job applicants. However, on the evidence we have seen, the publishers and the promoters of these tests are either unaware of or do not understand, or are choosing to ignore their limitations. This is not to say that ipsative tests have no utility but that the claims made for their validity and reliability and their applicability to inter-individual comparisons are misleading. Failure to take into account the mathematical properties of ipsative tests leads users to treat them as if they are normative measures, with startling consequences which ought to be obvious but are not.

The authors of the PSI openly state that normative statistical analyses cannot be used appropriately with the PSI. Many personal style assessments, trying to appear to be more than they are, misrepresent their findings and make great claims that they are normative measures or standardized tests that have reliability and validity (such as most of the Marston-based tools. e.g., TTI, DISC, Thomas International, etc.).

The MBTI, for example, is a normative measurement, not an ipsative measurement. Its scales are separate and not inter-related to one another. Therefore, it is possible to use normative statistics and on the basis of certain findings claim that the results of a specific application of the test have some degree predictive validity with the particular population in each study. However, it is well known that there are conflicting results from a range of studies that have been conducted using the MBTI, some reflecting some degree of predictive validity, and most not.

It would appear from examining many of CRG's competitor's manuals that they do not recognize that there is a substantive and qualitative difference between a learning tool and a psychometric test. Also, there are only a limited number of studies that would indicate that using psychological assessments for predicting anything is feasible, and evidence suggests that this is only possible with well-established norms in controlled situations with specific and limited populations (the 16-Personality Factors Inventory, for example, is one that has achieved some of this validity, and reliably). To use a personality assessment appropriately within an organization would require large sectors of a population to develop its own norms which then could only be used for comparisons in that specific environment.

The PSI stands out as being significant and innovative because of the manner in which it is presented and its results are interpreted. By not claiming to be a psychometric test, by sharing the results in an interactive environment with the respondent and by drawing upon an integrated perspective of personality, some of the traditional pitfalls, such as personnel lawsuits, union entanglements, and employee suspicions often associated with self-report approaches to assessment are avoided.

Reliability of the PSI

The reliability of any measurement is determined by how trustworthy it is to repeat the results first achieved. In other words, can it consistently repeat the same results test after test, regardless of time lapses.

With this in mind, all self-report measurements (including the CRG's tools) are only as reliable as the person who is taking the test. If that individual marks the assessment differently the second time from the first time then there will be a corresponding change in their results. If the individual marks the words on both (or subsequent) assessments exactly the same then obviously the results will be the same.

Any assessment is 100% reliable if the person makes the same choices each time it is taken and correctly adds the scores. Most (over 90%) of the hundreds of people we have talked with who have done test-retest checking with the PSI after two to six months have been very surprised that their scores changed very little (less than 5 points on any one scale) and their personal style patterns were the same.

Informal, unpublished test-retest reliability studies in Dr. Anderson's university classes (n=25-30) reveal correlation coefficients in the upper 80's consistently. This level of reliability is a strong indication that the PSI can be used as a learning and communication tool without being concerned that the results one gets are a function of ineffective characteristics of the internal workings of the PSI itself, but are a relatively accurate reflection of one's self-perception.

Validity of the PSI

Generally, validity for any assessment lies in its ability to measure what it says it will measure. The PSI states that it measures an individual's personal style according to four personal style dimensions which are a part of Personal Style Theory. To this extent the PSI is valid, in that it clearly discriminates between the four dimensions in such a way as to help participants understand the differences between the dimensions which they prefer. It helps them to pinpoint their preferences for various behavioral styles and locate their behavioral preferences on a continuum of possible behaviors. The PSI assists them to identify what they believe is valid and real for them. If they wish to ask others to provide them feedback using the PSI, to compare the extent that others see them they way they see themselves, they can ask others to complete the PSI for them.

From a traditional viewpoint, predictive validity for tests must be measured by some kind of statistical analysis. As we have pointed out in the previous section, this type of predictive validity assessment is not possible for

ipsative measurements. The PSI is an ipsative measurement. It is important to again state that ipsative measurements should not be presented as statistically valid instruments for prediction based on normative data, as they are not designed for this type of data analysis. Johnson, Wood & Blinkhorn's findings add their opinion:

The standard statistics used in the evaluation of tests are not appropriate with ipsative tests. In some cases the authors of these inventories have made the claim that they are not tests. This is a perfectly reasonable claim to make but they should not then present standard statistics in an attempt to give the inventory credibility (p. 161).

This does not mean that the PSI does not have validity, but it does mean that it has no predictive powers, and cannot be used for create comparative norms. This feature of CRG products has actually made them more attractive to many organizations who do not want something officially "psychometric" being included in training or coaching to be included in their employee's personnel files. Many organizations do not want psychometric tests to be associated with promotional competitions or performance reviews because of potential union difficulties and legal issues. What they like about the PSI is that it is "user friendly" while it still has high levels of perceived validity, or "face" validity.

Face Validity

Face validity means that a measure is perceived by the individuals who take it to be valid and accurate. For CRG, this is the most important type of validity because we want individuals to develop their potential. If people do not agree with or cannot understand their assessment results then the chances of their using the results for future improvement will decrease.

The PSI in particular has an extremely high level of face validity. After years of using it with a wide range of groups, over 90% of the people who

take it have stated that the results, as represented by their interpretive summaries and In-Depth Interpretations, fit them. People are actually amazed that they can receive such in-depth feedback from a relatively brief assessment, and more impressed that we encourage them to cross out comments that do not typically represent their behavior. We even encourage them to add comments to the results of their In-Depth Interpretations so that the interpretive comments better fit how they perceive themselves. People are encouraged to have others complete a PSI assessment on them to compare their self-perceptions with how others perceive them. As far as we know, this adult learning approach has not yet been utilized in other tools. And, outside of clinical and personnel applications, and based on research with adult learners, it is primarily *face validity* that is important to people.

Personalizing the Results Avoids "Pigeonholing"

Those who read their PSI interpretive comments are requested to underline, cross out, or add to everything they read so that they personalize the interpretations. This means that they may alter their interpretations to fit what they think is true for them. By doing this, the PSI process avoids the "pigeon-holing" that many other measurements do not avoid. While people do receive pre-written personal style profile descriptions, they are encouraged to read more than one pattern if they think other patterns fit them. Then, they are encouraged to eliminate parts of the interpretations which do not fit for them, and add their own interpretive comments to develop their own, more complete and unique style description. By doing so, the PSI encourages people to decide what is valid for them as individuals, rather than pretending that there is some magical validity from the use of artificial norms from groups of people whom they may have little in common with.

The significance of CRG's learning and communication tools is that they place emphasis on the person rather than on the test.

The Development of the Assessment Tools

All CRG assessment tools have been subjected to extensive qualitative research and field testing before they have been published. Unlike most assessments, which are developed using only quantitative methods, CRG tools were revised over and over again until users (including educators, trainers, coaches and counselors) reported ease of reading, clarity of understanding and immediacy of application of the learning. The tools were all written, researched and revised (some of the tools are in their 3rd editions) during the period 1986-2003 and were subject to lab testing to ensure that face validity and test-retest reliability were sufficiently high for them to be accurate and credible assessment tools as seen by the learners themselves. They were field-tested in university environments and in business environments by the authors and by some of their associates prior to their publication. The feedback from these professionals directly influenced the next editions of the tools. Clearly, CRG is committed to continuous improvement.

In addition to the lab-testing and pre-publishing research, all of the assessment tools have been fully available for a period of at least five years in the market in their print-based booklet forms prior to any release in electronic form on the web. In their print-based forms, the tools have been translated into 7 languages and are purchased and used by professionals in over 13 countries. Our primary markets include but are not limited to Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, South America, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Every assessment tool has a Leaders/Trainers Guide. These Guides explain how each assessment tool was constructed and provides extensive notes that can be used in one-to-one coaching feedback or in team workshop settings.

The Authors

The authors of the assessment tools are all seasoned post-secondary educators or administrators, counselors or business professionals and all have advanced degrees from recognized universities. Additional details about the authors can be obtained from CRG.

Regards,

Ken Keis, MBA
President & CEO

Terry D. Anderson, Ph.D.
Founder CRGI

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ASSOCIATION OF TEST PUBLISHERS *Policy Statement on Fair Access to Assessments*

Established in 1992, The Association of Test Publishers is a non-profit organization representing providers of tests and assessment tools and/or services related to assessment, selection, screening, certification, licensing, educational or clinical uses.

ATP members are pledged to promote and advance the integrity of assessment services and products and their value to society; and dedicated to the highest level of professionalism and business ethics within the test publishing community.

As a Founding Member, CRG subscribes to the following Policy Statements in regards to fair access to Assessments and Psychological Tests.

WHEREAS, it is the mission of this Association to promote the ethical and effective use of assessment instruments; and

WHEREAS, assessment instruments published by association members have for decades been ethically and effectively administered, scored, and interpreted by assessment professionals in many disciplines, including education, human resources, counseling, rehabilitation and psychology, who belong to professional associations, and in many cases are licensed or certified in various professional capacities; and

WHEREAS, these assessment professionals and their associations have established ethical standards dealing with the competent use of assessment techniques; and

WHEREAS, the instruments which include measures of mental abilities, aptitudes, interests, attitudes, personality characteristics, emotions and motivations have been effectively used in a wide range of educational, employment, training,

consulting, and clinical settings throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, individual members of the Association of Test Publishers (ATP) have provided assessment professionals with access to these instruments on the basis of their education, training, and/or experience in administering, scoring and interpreting these assessment instruments; and

WHEREAS, these assessment professionals who have been qualified by individual ATP member publishers to use these assessment instruments, perform a valuable and essential service to the public in ethical and effective ways; and

WHEREAS, recent efforts have been made in certain states through state licensure laws and business and professional codes to restrict access to and use of these assessment instruments only by psychologists who are licensed in that state;

BE IT RESOLVED, that it is the position of ATP that qualifications to use assessment instruments should be based on appropriate education, training, and/or experience, as evaluated by individual test publishers, and that access to assessment instruments should not be restricted exclusively to psychologists who are licensed in a given state; and further

BE IT RESOLVED, that is the policy of ATP to oppose all efforts to restrict use of assessment instruments exclusively to psychologists licensed in a given state or states, and that ATP shall monitor closely any attempts to restrict use based on licensure as a psychologist, and shall intervene where appropriate to ensure open and equal access to the use of assessment instruments for all qualified professionals. To see other members of the Association of Test Publishers go to:

<http://www.testpublishers.org/atpmn.htm>

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