

Choosing an Assessment:

The Purpose, Art and Science of Assessments

The Purpose of Assessments:

Psychological testing has flourished for more than seventy plus years. Prior to 1980, their use was primarily for clinical, educational or research purposes. Not anymore. With the advent of the web and ease of access, the market for tools to be used in personal and professional development has exploded. Along with this is the ever increasing concern for relevancy (real value) and appropriateness.

Well-designed instruments are critical and computers make the mathematical calculations far superior. Unfortunately, poorly designed “quizzes” abound and often remain popular despite their potentially limited use. Two of the more versatile and accepted tools that you will find in the corporate world are the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and the DiSC Dimensions of Behavior. Become familiar with these two assessments, as you will surely come across them.

[DiSC - MBTI Comparison](#)

Before offering or administering assessments, ask yourself a few questions:

What is the purpose of administering the assessment? What does it purport to measure? Is this the right timing? Will the results take over the agenda and focus you and the client away from what the client wants to achieve? What is your client's attitude towards assessments? How many has she or he completed in the past and what has been his or her experience? Understand and consider the purpose of the assessment before recommending it.

The Art of Assessments:

Theories Explain. Models Represent. Assessments Measure.

Theories are largely descriptive. What is often called a theory is in fact merely a working hypothesis. Good theory is a cluster of explicit and relevant assumptions – creating hypothesis that are subject to experimental tests and predictions are made. It is to help us gain greater understanding of the world around us.

While models may be useful, they are not necessarily true. The purpose of a model is to communicate, in an effective and simplified way, complex information.

The Science of Assessments:

Reliability, validity and social desirability are the three things to consider when choosing an assessment. Reliability – does it give the same results if taken by the same person on a different occasion? Validity – Does it measure what it says it measures? Face Validity – is a person's perception of the instrument. Social Desirability determines how easy or difficult it is to fake the results.

[Inscape's Research and Reliability Statement](#)