

# Assessing the Assessor



Choosing the right profiling tool for your training business

By Jason Kipps and Colleen O'Brien-Wood, Ph.D.

EQ, IQ, Validity, Ipsative, Normative, Psychometric, Type Indicator, Core Character Traits ...evaluating the various assessment tools on the market can easily become confusing. They range from icebreaking tools like “What kind of dog are you?” to sophisticated performance-predicting psychological evaluations rooted in science and statistical analysis. So how do you know which one is right for your business?

The following 12-point checklist will help you make the right choice as you assess the assessors.

**1. Determine your requirements.** A good assessment company will work with you like an extension of your team and will help shed light on hidden opportunities within your business. Understanding how the profile you choose will fit into your existing product line-up is the first step to picking the right tool. If you're just looking for a tool that can be used as an icebreaker at the beginning of a team building program, an inexpensive “Type Indicator” could be all you need. If you're aiming to do deeper consulting and training you'll need a normative tool that can be validated.

**2. What role will the tool play in selling more training?** The opportunity to give a qualified lead something of value can have a huge positive impact on your

growing book of business and is a great way to turn a lead into a sale. Your distributor relationship should help position you as a resource and as an authority while helping you to demonstrate the value of your services to anyone you meet. Profiling companies that recognize the value of their alliances will allow their distributors to offer complimentary profiles to their prospects.

**3. How will you leverage the partnership?** The most supportive profiling companies look to build real alliances with their distributors. They recognize that they make money when you make money, so their certification process is positioned as an admission ticket and not a cash cow. Make sure the profiling company provides you with free product that you can re-sell to cover the cost of certification. You should also ask whether the profiler will allow you to white-label or co-brand your new service. If not, make sure that their brand is sought after by your clients.

**4. How will the partnership impact your brand?** Your partnership and the perceived value of all your services, including this one, will have an impact on how your brand is perceived. It will help to think about the quality of the profiling experience from your clients' perspective. If you want to be known as a professional capable of high-end consulting, the general

rule is to use a high-end tool like a normative, psychometric assessment. If your services are more geared toward events, or if you are looking for ice breakers, use a Type Indicator.

**5. Normative or ipsative?** Ipsative scores are found in any test or assessment in which the person responding is forced to choose between a few different options or give either a yes/no or true/false response. Ipsative scales are only useful as the basis for discussion at an individual or team level. A normative tool on the other hand, will ask the person scoring the assessment to rate each response on a scale typically from one to five. The numeric data collected from an assessment like this can be used to develop norms that can be compared across individuals or for employee selection, training and development. The data collected when using a normative tool also can give validity to other areas of your training work and provide a base line for ROI studies.

**6. Can the tool be used as a selection tool?** If you are in the selection and recruitment industry or want to bring some statistical accuracy into your training work, look for a predictive, normative assessment. Make sure your profile partner is committed to continuous improvement. If a tool does not predict performance it cannot be used as a selection tool. The best profiling companies proactively validate their performance predictions and continuously refine their understanding of what ideal performance looks like for each industry they serve.

**7. Does the profile provide development suggestions and feedback that can be used in other areas of training?** The best assessments are packed with relevant information and suggestions for further discussion. An effective tool can help you launch coaching and training relationships and will provide valuable insight into your peoples' strengths and growth opportunities. Complete with matching, mentoring suggestions, and facilitation points, a good tool can be a real asset in your work as an educator.

**8. What will you need the tool to assess?** One size does not fit all. Trainers looking to provide their students and organizations with a service that will have a lasting impact will benefit from a tool that measures the core characteristics most applicable to their clients' work. Measuring

job-specific factors rather than general variables helps make assessment tools easier to interpret and will help position you as an expert.

**9. Is the profile fair and free from bias?** Make sure that the profile you are using meets relevant anti-discrimination laws as well as privacy legislation. Responsible profiling companies regularly conduct research consistent with local legislation and work to demonstrate that their profiles do not discriminate against minority groups when used in selection, promotion or succession planning processes.

**10. Is the profile available in a variety of languages?** This is of particular importance to trainers looking to integrate their services into large companies that operate in several different parts of the world. If you are working with the head office team in Nebraska and the company you are working with has offices in Italy and Mumbai, being able to offer your services in Italian and Hindi as well as English and Spanish can be a big door opener.

**11. Will the profile detect deliberate distortion?** A good tool cannot be fooled. Some tests will incorporate so-called lie scales as they identify those subjects who try to fool the assessment and present themselves in a more favourable light.

**12. Does the assessment company provide a high level of customer service and support?** Ask for and check references. If you are an outside trainer, a supportive partner will help you to sell more assessments and bring a new level of professionalism and accuracy to your services. Work with your new profiling partner to establish the ideal distribution system. Some companies will even go so far as to develop a vanity web site for you that will allow your clients to complete their assessment on-line without leaving your web site. A solid distributor relationship will ultimately help you to open the door to other opportunities to do more with your clients and will help you to build lasting, lucrative, multi-phase relationships.

The bottom line is to trust your gut. Make sure the people you are talking to are people you feel you can trust and with whom you can build a real partnership.

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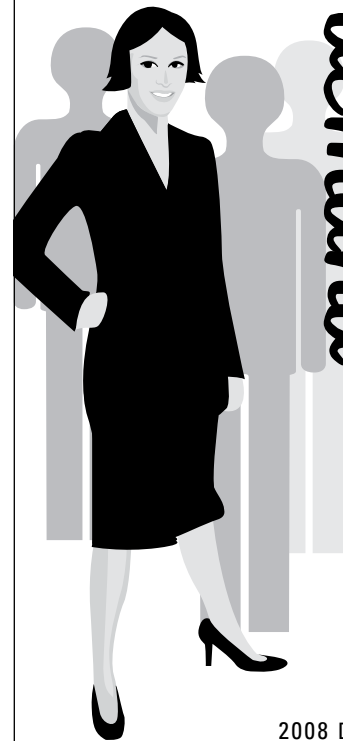
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