

CRG's Learner-Friendly Tools & Solutions

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT



The Advantages of Learner-Friendly Assessment Design and Development

CRG Strategically Developed Tools 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 Resources (HR) 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 and non-profit organizations; provincial, state, and federal government organizations; small- and mid-sized businesses; as well as Fortune 2000 companies.

In addition, CRG has a worldwide network of Licensed Associates who deliver CRG's assessments and programs to these organizations; further, it has Affiliates linked to CRG's referral program. Finally, CRG is a founding member of the Association of Test Publishers (ATP), with its tools and assessments meeting ATP's quality standards.

CRG's Keys to Success for Learning Retention:

- There is a long-term plan for ongoing education.
- All levels of management and staff are involved with the program.
- The senior-level managers experience the program first.
- The ongoing programming is designed to be educational and skill-focused, rather than just motivational and entertainment-oriented.
- Leadership development is primarily personal development, with professional development second—an “inside-out” process.
- Training, coaching, or programming is based on an established-yet-innovate model for development.
- A training or coaching curriculum is delivered in a systemic, developmental manner.
- Program facilitators and coaches are fully qualified to deliver the programs.

CRG Publishes Learning Tools, Not Psychometric Tests

CRG has developed learning and communication tools rather than psychometric tests. CRG's **Personal Style Indicator (PSI)**, for example, is not actually a test.

(Please note: All the content in this report also applies to CRG's other style assessments—**Sales Style Indicator, Quick Style Indicator, Learning Style Indicator, Instructional Style Indicator** and **Entrepreneurial Style and Success Indicator**).

The **PSI** was *not* created for use with abnormal or unstable populations, like Carl Jung's research used in the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) and other similar work. It was **not** developed to fit pre-identified "norm" groups so that participants might be compared to those groups. CRG's philosophy is that this type of 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 author S. Epstein aims at traditional personality testing in his article "Explorations in personality today and tomorrow: A tribute to Henry R. Murray. *American Psychologist*, 35, p. 649":

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.

A foundational assumption of the Personal Style Theory is its belief that no single Personal Style-related 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 that claims it can predict anything from the four interrelated scales is inappropriately misleading people into believing that the assessment can do something 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 four scales to be interrelated.

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**).

Most Personal Style assessments are "ipsative" measures because they produce scores that 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. Authors Johnson, Wood & 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. Spuriouser and Spuriouser: The use of ipsative personality tests. Journal of Occupational Psychology, 61(2) pp. 153-162.

The authors of the **PSI (Personal Style Indicator)** 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 Psychometric Assessments and Testing, etc.).

The MBTI claims to be a normative measurement, but recent journal articles suggest it is also an ipsative measurement. Its scales are separate and interrelated to one another. 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.

Note: *The Consulting Psychology Journal* (2005, Dr. David Pittenger) suggested that MBTI is inaccurate 47% of the time, yet is still one of the most-used assessments in education.

Upon examining many of CRG's competitor's manuals, it would seem that the others do not recognize that there is a substantive and qualitative difference between a learning tool and a psychometric test.

Further, 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 (e.g., the 16-Personality Factors Inventory has achieved some of this validity, and reliability).

To use a personality assessment appropriately within an organization would require large sectors of a population to develop its own norms, which could then be used only for comparisons in that specific environment.

The **PSI** stands out as being both significant and innovative because of the manner in which it is presented and in which 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 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, naturally, 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 with whom CRG has engaged and 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 remained the same.

Informal, unpublished test-retest reliability studies in Dr. Terry Anderson's university classes (n=25-30) reveal correlation coefficients consistently in the upper 80s. This was also confirmed in a **PSI** retest study by Professor Guenther Singer with coefficients in the low 90s, which is remarkable for any tool. 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 receives 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 that are a part of the 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 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 feedback using the **PSI**—to compare the extent that others see them the 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 form of statistical analysis. As has been 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 restate 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. (Spuriouser and Spuriouser: The use of ipsative personality tests. Journal of Occupational Psychology, 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 creating comparative norms. This feature of CRG's products has actually made them more attractive to many organizations that do not want something officially "psychometric" related to training or coaching to be included in their employees' 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 still having 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—at face value. 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 them using the results for future improvement will decrease.

The **PSI**, in particular, has an extremely high level of face validity. After years of using this assessment 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 **PSI In-Depth Interpretations**, fit them. People are actually amazed that they can receive such in-depth feedback from a relatively brief assessment, and are even more impressed that they are encouraged to cross out comments that do not “fit” or 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 or experience them. (This is CRG’s **PSI 360°** option.) As far as we know, this adult learning approach has not yet been utilized in other tools. Further, 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 “pigeonholing” that is part and parcel of many other measurements.

While people do receive prewritten Personal Style profile descriptions with the **PSI**, 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 that 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 with whom they may have little in common.

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

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 generally developed using only quantitative methods, CRG tools have been revised many, many times until users (including educators, trainers, coaches, and counselors) reported ease of reading, clarity of understanding, and immediacy of application of the learning.

These tools were all written, researched, and revised (some of the tools are in their sixth edition) from 1984 to 2017 and were subjected to lab testing—to ensure face validity and test-retest reliability were sufficiently high for them to be considered accurate, 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—demonstrating CRG's commitment to continuous process improvement.

In addition to the testing and pre-publishing research, all of the assessment tools have been fully available for a period of at least 15-25 years in the marketplace.

The **PSI (Personal Style Indicator)** has now been translated into 12 different languages and is used online in more than 30 countries.

Every assessment tool comes equipped with a set of "Trainer's Guidelines." These guidelines explain how to use each tool in one-to-one coaching feedback sessions, or in team workshop settings.

The Authors

The authors of CRG's 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 at www.crgleader.com.

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ASSOCIATION OF TEST PUBLISHERS

Policy Statement on Fair Access to Assessments

Established in 1992, The Association of Test Publishers (ATP) 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 are 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 regarding fair access to Assessments and Psychological Tests through the Association of Test of Publishers.

- 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 that 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; 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.

Association of Test Publishers <http://www.testpublishers.org>

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