



Smart people science

how psychology can add value to your business

Business psychology is about a whole lot more than just psychological testing.

We look at the entire working life cycle and not only get to grips with selecting the right people for you, but with making sure that they perform to the best of their ability.

We also apply science to team building and development, and the knotty issue of leadership - quite apart from guiding individuals and businesses through organisational change.

Spotting talent

When it comes to getting a competitive advantage the place to begin is with your existing staff. You need to identify the star performers early in their careers, and to be able to focus and develop them.

And what about those that you thought were hot stuff and have not turned out as you expected? You want a mechanism for making sure that the right person is in the right job.

We help you find the hidden talent and make it work for you. By measuring someone's actual *and* potential abilities, realistic decisions can be made. You can decide who to promote, who to develop and who to move into a different position.

Recruiting the best

Recruiting new blood is always a gamble. However if you use the right tools you can reduce the risk of making the wrong move.

Obviously interviews are a good way of finding out if people will fit in, but it is often difficult to assess some of their more subtle qualities, let alone personality.

And let's face it you tend to get employed on the basis of your ability, but sacked for your personality!

The right sort of psychometrics can make all the difference. The skill is in using those that work: those that uncover how someone *really* thinks, the way they react in teams, their management and selling styles, and the rest.

We reduce the risk in making recruitment decisions by giving you information that allows you to make objective choices.

Creating teams

When you manage talent, and spend time recruiting high quality staff, you start to see how 'high potential' people can add real zing to your business. And understanding individuals also gives you a head start in building teams. But as you probably know it's easy enough to group people together in the expectation that they will gel and be productive, rather harder to engineer a truly effective team.

We apply business psychology to the process of team building. This involves working on individuals' awareness, preferred team roles, and communication & influencing styles; as well as the mechanics of setting objectives, planning work, meeting deadlines and delivering the goods. And of course discovering who has got what it takes to be a leader & what sort they are likely to be.

Enabling change

One of the most important challenges faced by organisations is helping people to cope with change.

Naturally organisations get bigger and smaller, but they can also change in all sorts of other ways.

The role of the business psychologist is to understand both structure *and* culture, so that techniques can be devised to smooth the process of change.

Managing conflict

Along the way care needs to be taken to align the new goals of the business with the aspirations of the managers and individuals within it. Often this leads to a degree of 'conflict'. In itself conflict is a perfectly normal part of our interactions with others, but sometimes people have a problem responding in the most appropriate way.

One way of dealing with this is to explore how people typically react, and then to provide coaching so that they have a broader repertoire of conflict-handling styles.

In short, what psychologists are about is providing individuals with the means of coping with change, and negotiating their way through new roles and responsibilities.

What's the pay off?

There are plenty of statistics to support the view that all this psychology stuff can make a big difference. Those with calculators have worked out that the right people can boost your bottom line by at least 20 per cent. Try getting that any other way.

The same number crunchers have discovered that 80 per cent of businesses have no way of identifying high fliers.

This is something of a puzzle as virtually everyone agrees that talented employees improve profits.

In a nutshell our job is to root out the talent so that you can make use of it. This leaves you free to manage using the full potential of your people.

And a final thought. The EU's recent Modernisation Directive makes it incumbent on UK companies to start reporting on 'human capital'. That's people to you and me.

Reports will have to comment on topics like retention & motivation of key employees, and leadership planning: so basically whether you have the right people in place to deliver your business goals.

If you are a company you probably need to start considering this now.

About Mark Parkinson

I am a specialist business and organisational psychologist.

I have worked with Balfour Beatty, Bayer, British Aerospace, BP, DHL, Pearson, Tarmac, Waitrose and Xerox; not-for-profit organisations such as Amnesty International and CfBT; educational establishments like Exeter University, plus many smaller businesses throughout the UK.

My credentials include all those you *should* expect from a business psychologist. I am a Chartered Occupational Psychologist, Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society (BPS), and member of the Association of Business Psychologists (ABP).

What to do next

For an informal discussion of your requirements call me on 01458 851455, or if you prefer you can drop me an e-mail at: mark@markparkinson.co.uk



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