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USING THE MBTI® INSTRUMENT WITH THE PSYCHOMETRICS 360 ASSESSMENT:

MAXIMIZING SELF-AWARENESS AND INDIVIDUAL EFFECTIVENESS

This article outlines how professionals in the development and coaching arenas can use the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® with the Psychometrics 360 Instrument to help individuals increase self-awareness and drive their personal development. While using these assessments independently leads to valuable insights and developmental targets, employing the instruments in tandem with clients provides a greater level of self-awareness, which is the cornerstone of individual development and success.

THE ROLE OF SELF-AWARENESS IN INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

Self-awareness is "the ability to reflect on and accurately assess one's own behaviours and skills and the impact they have on others" (Zenger, 2014; Church, 1997). The relationship between self-awareness and individual effectiveness has been explored at length, and multiple research studies have shown its positive relationship to work performance and managerial excellence (Van Velsor et al., 1993; Atwater and Yammarino, 1992; Ashford and Tsui, 1991). Furthermore, it has also been found that by enhancing one's self-awareness, an individual's performance is directly influenced in a positive direction (McCarthy & Garavan, 1999).

However, what we also know is that in order for an individual to be self-aware – that is, to truly understand their *impact on others* - they must first be privy to feedback about their approach. In many work settings receiving feedback from others is rare and may never be voiced, especially in leadership contexts (Zenger, 2014).

Given the importance of self-awareness on individual performance, combined with the need for real and tangible feedback to necessitate this awareness, a key to any successful development initiative is to utilize tools that encourage both. By employing the self-report MBTI® assessment and the objective Psychometrics 360 instrument, a practitioner *maximizes* the opportunity to encourage – or elicit – more accurate self-reflection and a better understanding of an individual's impact on the organization and others.

UNIQUE BUT COMPLEMENTARY: BOOSTING SELF-AWARENESS AND OPTIMIZING INSIGHT

When used together, the MBTI instrument and 360 assessments have been shown to demonstrate invaluable impact on one's self-awareness in the context of development (McCarthy & Thomas, 1999). Initially, the MBTI instrument is particularly useful in helping individuals understand their inherent motivations, intentions and default approach. It is a powerful starting point for self-knowledge and awareness as it provides feedback about a person's preferences without judgement. That is, the MBTI assessment assumes all preferences are equal – every type has strengths and possible challenges to be mitigated, depending on how each preference is applied in one's work. When an individual understands their preferences, they can reflect on how these may be

influencing their communication, decision-making and general persona. From this, development comes in the form of understanding where they can start to focus more attention.

Meanwhile, the Psychometrics 360 tool uses evaluative data from others to elicit self-awareness. Feedback from this assessment consists of skill-based behaviours and outwardly manifested competencies that others perceive. Because it reports how the individual is seen by others in the work environment, the Psychometrics 360 often identifies more specifically where a client needs to develop their capabilities. In other words, rather than self-reported motivations and intentions, the Psychometrics 360 provides a first-hand opportunity to explore outward impact as reported by others. This is particularly important, as most people are not aware of other people's expectations or experiences of them. Awareness of the gaps between self-perception and that of others helps individuals be more accurate when identifying their strengths and challenges, and also encourages more direct action to changing or addressing the limitations of their approach (Moses et al., 1993).

The key differences between the two assessments are summarized below:

MBTI Assessment	Psychometrics 360
Self-report instrument	360 degree instrument (various external raters)
Describes four innate preferences	Describes *observed* behaviours and competencies
Examines preferences and their *possible* impact on work outcomes	Avenue for exploring individual's *specific* actions as they relate to expectations
Avenue for exploring an individual's *general* style as it relates to work	

WHY BOTH?

The MBTI assessment is a powerful starting point to invite initial reflection and evaluation of an individual's natural approach and what *could be* an outcome of their style. The MBTI can be thought of as a gateway to self-knowledge, and often times, an individual's first opportunity to consider their impact on others from an internal and self-reported perspective. However, it is important to note that the preferences themselves make no actual conclusion about skill, ability or overall performance. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' types, and depending on development and a host of other factors, the specific skills or actual behaviours may not necessarily be directly correlated with an individual's preferences. This leaves an opportunity to use a tool such as the Psychometrics 360. Unlike the MBTI instrument, the 360 does not measure motivations or intents – it focuses solely on behaviour observations from people that a client interacts with in the workplace. In other words, the 360 provides the individual with an opportunity to explore the 'what is' of their style and its impact on the people around them. Then, behaviour based feedback from a variety of people identifies areas where a client needs to develop specific skills and capabilities. This multi-rater feedback becomes especially useful as it moderates the potential bias in personal reflection, resulting in more accurate self-awareness.

By using both the MBTI instrument and the Psychometrics 360 together, a coach or practitioner can explore connections between a client's natural style and the actual behaviours they utilize in the workplace. The result is a much more comprehensive picture of the individual, and a profound increase in accurate – rather than

supposed – understanding of the self.

The overall benefits of using both assessments together are:

- More concise and targetable action plans based around real observations.

- Deeper level of understanding how one's individual style and observed competencies contribute to personal effectiveness or highlight developmental needs.

- Better buy-in from the client – more likely to be more receptive to some of the specific 360 feedback after exploring their inherent style in positive terms.

INTERPRETATION GUIDE/BEST PRACTICE

When using the MBTI and the Psychometrics 360 together, it is recommended that the MBTI be used first. Due to its positive nature and its general approach to inherent style, the MBTI provides a great foundation to invite self-awareness and openness on the part of the client. Debriefing results and encouraging reflection around possible development sets the stage nicely for the introduction of more objective – and sometimes more difficult – direct feedback via the Psychometrics 360.

For specific interpretation instructions around the MBTI instrument and the 360, please see:

- MBTI Manual

- **Psychometrics 360 User's Guide**

Once the initial debrief of results is complete for both assessments, it is then valuable to explore possible connections between an individual's preferences and the competencies they are – or are not – demonstrating. While the relationships between preferences and competencies are not guaranteed or always observed, it helps to have a framework by which to ask an individual how their preferences may be influencing their ease or challenge in performing certain behaviours. The best way to do this is to follow the order of the Psychometrics 360 report and discuss how the participant's preferences impact behaviours in each of the 3 key competency areas: Work and Execution, Interacting with Others, and Thinking and Deciding.

WORK AND EXECUTION: WHOLE TYPE

Competencies in the Work and Execution section of the Psychometrics 360 are generally influenced by an individual's whole type. A holistic impression of one's type preferences reflects the *kinds* of environments, motivators and tasks an individual finds natural and thus, how they probably approach their work in general. For example, certain types are known to focus more on Achieving Results Efficiently (NTJ and STJ types), and planning work activities (J preferences in general). Other specific behaviours associated with Work and Execution that may be explored given an individual's whole type include Satisfying Customers (FJ correlates), expressing ideas in written form (typically preferred by Introversion) and Expressing ideas in spoken form (typically displayed amongst Extraverted preferences).

Sample questions that elicit insights around Work and Execution may include:

- How do your preferences influence how often you utilize competencies in the Work and Execution category?

- What competencies might be more or less natural for you based on your type preferences?

- What do you need to continue to leverage as you approach tasks? What's working well?

- What are the developmental areas – specifically given your type – and the expectations in your role?

INTERACTING WITH OTHERS: E/I AND T/F PREFERENCES

Competencies in the Interacting with Others category are most influenced by an individual's preferences on E/I and T/F. While Extraversion or Introversion preferences often determine the activities we naturally find energizing (reflection vs. interaction; independence vs. collaboration), T/F influences the way in which we consider others and make decisions. Thus, when viewed in combination, one's preferences in these areas may be reflected in how often they are perceived as fostering teamwork (E/I), displaying cooperation and teamwork (E/I), or showing respect, inclusiveness and sensitivity to others, where F preferences may do this differently or more intentionally than Ts, for example. Other correlations to explore include how easy it is for the individual to handle disagreement constructively, or to influence others – both activities Ts may report a more natural proclivity for.

Sample questions for this 360 competency could be:

- How have you noticed your preferences for E/I influencing the frequency of your interactions with others? Is teamwork or collaboration influenced in this area?

- Based on your preferences for T/F, how may you be perceived when it comes to sensitivity, coaching others, or handling disagreement? Any developmental areas here?

- Based on the perceptions of others, what is the most important thing for you to leverage going forward to enhance your effectiveness – is it preference, skill or both?

Note: If using the MBTI Step II instrument, facets can provide an even deeper understanding of how one's frequent or infrequent behaviours may reflect one's unique style. Rather than addressing E/I and T/F in general, the practitioner may want to ask whether their preferences for Initiating and Receiving or Active and Reflective are influencing their public persona even more so. Additionally, focusing on Accepting or Critical or Accommodating or Questioning on T/F facets can generate fruitful conversations around facet-Competency relationships when it comes to showing respect, sensitivity, or constructive disagreement.

THINKING AND DECIDING: S/N, T/F AND J/P PREFERENCES

S/N, T/F and J/P preferences influence the kind of information an individual pays attention to (experience or possibilities), how they make decisions – or the key focus or outcome they try to achieve (outcomes or relationships) – and how decisive they are in the execution of their decisions (closure or exploration). For these reasons, the competencies most influenced by these preferences are those found in the Thinking and Deciding

category. Individuals with preferences such as N and P may find it more natural to seek innovation or display flexibility respectively, while S and J preferences may be more likely to demonstrate organizational awareness and mobilize activity around a clear purpose. T preferences show a more natural tendency toward logical analysis when solving problems, while people with F preferences may focus more on clarifying the values at play and the impact on people.

It may therefore be worth asking the following questions in relation to Thinking and Deciding:

- Do your S/N preferences influence how others may see your flexibility or willingness to innovate? Why or why not?

- How are your preferences for T/F impacting how you analyze information, solve problems or make decisions?

- How easy do you find it to influence others? Did this show up in your 360 report as a developmental area?

- Do people see more – or less – of a clear purpose or plan because of your J/P preferences? How can we leverage or develop this?

Note: If using the MBTI Step II instrument, a practitioner may also choose to explore specific facets rather than whole preferences in these areas. For example, Conceptual and Theoretical facet results may be more inclined to embrace innovation, while Experiential facets may show up in behaviours around organizational awareness. Other JP facets worth exploring include Methodical/Emergent or Planful/Spontaneous if a practitioner wants to discuss approach to timelines or perceived flexibility in the 360 instrument.

INTEGRATING THE MBTI INSTRUMENT AND THE PSYCHOMETRICS 360 INTO A DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Deciding where to place one's energy and focus for development is important, since most people can effectively address only a small number of developmental areas. When using the two instruments together, encourage the client to pay specific attention to the behaviours that are critically important, and the preferences that may be playing a part.

Effective developmental plans include:

- Goals that are achievement-oriented and positive – focus on what the participant wants to accomplish, not what he or she wants to avoid. For example, a better goal for the participant is to "write memos that are concise and easy to understand," rather than "stop writing confusing memos."

- Standards for measuring change and the achievement of goals.

- Action steps and learning opportunities for each goal.

- Identification of people who can act as supporters and/or provide ongoing feedback.

A sample template for bringing together MBTI and 360 results is provided below:

My Goals	MBTI Preferences that are at play	Related skills or competencies I am Targeting (Psychometrics 360)	Specific Actions to Develop and Reach Goals	Target Date and Who will hold me Accountable?
Example: To better communicate as a leader	Introversion, Thinking	Interacting with Others – Encourages open dialogue; shows sensitivity, inclusivity and respect	Be more visible, invite feedback and questions from direct reports; Validate efforts, show concern	Immediate; Jim, my supervisor

SUMMARY

Given the relationship between self-awareness and performance, and the rarity of behavioural feedback to help individuals improve their awareness, effective development approaches should use assessments to catalyze an individual's understanding of themselves and also provide an accurate glimpse of how they impact the world around them. Particularly in the organizational development sphere, as practitioners we can only hope to spur on real transformation if we find a way to align personal reflection with tangible outcomes and targets.

For this reason, using both the MBTI instrument and the Psychometrics 360 assessment can provide a much deeper, multi-leveled and accurate understanding of self; our nature, our motivations, our behaviours, our skills, and how these come together to yield effective or ineffective results. Therein lies the power of using an integrated approach to individual development, and from there: individual evolution and long-term success.

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Psychometrics Canada Ltd. 7125-77 Avenue NW, Edmonton AB   800-661-5158   www.psychometrics.com