

## **(2) FAQ about the Digital Couch (DC) – Personality Questions**

### **Do all Businesses believe that “Personality measures” are important?**

No. Some firms believe that career history interviews provide them with enough data. They usually focus on skill development (e.g., CPA, Programmer) and may be less concerned about what a person is like. Common sense would probably suggest that this is a naïve position except for lower level workers, who are primarily hired for a specific skill (e.g., welder, assembler) and their style matters less.

### **Do all Psychologists believe that “Personality measures” are important?**

No. Some feel that personality measures are the wrong way to go. Hence, rather than focusing on a person being extraverted or aggressive they want to focus on overt behavior such as spending a great deal of time working with others (e.g. extraverted) or always striving for leadership positions (e.g., socially aggressive). Psychologists who focus on actual behaviors are called Behaviorists.

### **Do Behaviorists have measures that are useful for Businesses?**

Yes. They tend to be “mock work situations” of what one would find in a regular work setting. -basket exercises” (set up a situation and ask what you would do), and move all the way to an assessment center where you actually work with others on a project and your behavior is “graded” by professionals. The latter form is the most accurate but it is very expensive.

### **Are Behavioral measures better than Personality measures for Businesses?**

It depends. Professionals don't agree on this but there are some bottom lines. If you can have both, you are better off. Assessment centers may be more valid than “in-basket exercises” but they are very expensive. If you believe that a personality provides meaningful data than a psychological test or assessment is very useful. Professional personality evaluations are also extremely expensive so often a good solution is to use the most sophisticated psychological instrument available (e.g., Digital Couch)

### **Are Personality tests legal for Businesses to use?**

Yes. If you can show that they are relevant to the position and do not discriminate on criteria that is not relevant. For example, most people would agree that knowing that a candidate is extraverted, enjoys social interaction and can deal with conflict are important attributes in a sales situation. Criteria that are usually not relevant to positions are issues such as race, sex, age and religion.

### **Why is evaluating a person's Personality useful in a Businesses setting?**

The personality is basically a person's style in solving problems (e.g., analytic or intuitive), social preferences (e.g., independent or team driven), internal concerns (e.g., anxious or assured), social drive (aggressive or passive), achievement orientation (driven or casual) and many other areas. Therefore, the more you understand a personality the more educated guesses you can make about position interests (sales or engineering), culture fit (autocratic or participatory) and other critical areas such as promotion or selection. You should understand both career history and personality to make the best decisions.

## **Are there different ways to evaluate a Personality in a Businesses setting?**

Yes. The most basic distinction is using a psychological instrument versus having the person evaluated by a professional psychologist (who may or may not use testing). The first method is usually under \$500 and the second method can be well over \$1,500 - \$3,000 depending on what you want.

## **Are there major advantages in using a Professional Psychologist?**

Yes. The person is trained and experienced to do this type of work. They can integrate results from their interview and testing (if they use tests). In addition, they understand the corporate culture and many of the important unspoken issues (e.g., “actual styles” and weaknesses) that they incorporate into their final report. You are paying for the highly specific advice and counsel that you receive.

## **Are there major disadvantages in using a Professional Psychologist?**

Yes. Because they sell their time they are a very expensive option (like attorneys and similar professionals) and you don't always need this level of expertise. An error on a \$350K/year person that you have to move across the country is more critical than a local person making \$60K/year. Additionally, if they give you normative data (e.g., data based on %) it came from a test. Hence, you should determine the advantage of using internal interviews and testing versus hiring the professional psychologist.

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## **Okay, I am interested in Psychological Testing but what are my options?**

### **Are there different types of Psychological tests?**

Yes. There are basically four types and they all have their uses. Moving from the simplest to the most complex you have the (1) Simple Trait (a couple of trait measures), the (2) Type Indicators that categorize people into types, the (3) Professional Trait based upon academic personality theories and the (4) Digital Couch based upon professional traits and measured dynamics (which were traditionally confined to the professional clinical interview).

### **What is an example of a (1) Simple Trait test and when would you use it?**

The DiSC<sup>®</sup> is a simple trait test based on measuring four traits: **D** = Dominance, **i** = Influencing others, **S** = Steadiness and **C** = Compliance. These form groupings that are given labels (e.g., results oriented, creative, achiever – seems like Types). It is simple, but easy for the test-taker to manipulate, fast to administer and separates people into very rough non-theoretical groups. It can be used for team work but it should not be used for selection, development or anything else where sophistication is required.

### **What is an example of a (2) Type Indicator test and when would you use it?**

The Myers-Briggs<sup>®</sup> has to be the standard in this area and is based on measuring four traits and calling the person high or low on that trait and assigning a letter. For example, the scale for extraversion assigns the person a letter of **E** (extraverted) or **I** (Introverted) and this follows for the other three traits so any person has a personality type (e.g., **ENTP**). You look up the type (e.g., **ENTP**) and read a description.

It is also simple, but easy for the test-taker to manipulate, fast to administer and separates people into 1 or 2 of 16 types that can be used for team building. It should not be used for selection, development or anything else where sophistication is required. Myers-Briggs<sup>®</sup> has added some additional scales (e.g., Bias and anxiety scales) to make it look more professional rather than to be a simple type indicator.

### **What is an example of a (3) Professional Trait test and when would you use it?**

The NEO PI-R<sup>®</sup>, CPI<sup>®</sup> and 16PF<sup>®</sup> are standards in the industry and are based on measuring the five major personality factors (**OCEAN Theory**) believed to define the normal adult personality. Usually these tests require a license to use but in some cases you can send your results to a Testing Service and they offer a “professional interpretation” that may be geared to a particular use (e.g., clinical or business). When a professional psychologist uses tests as an adjunct to his/her evaluation, this is the most likely instrument. Therefore, it is used in everything from selection to management development.

### **What is the OCEAN Personality Theory and where did it come from?**

OCEAN is an acronym that stands for **O** = Openness, **C** = Conscientiousness, **E** = Extraversion, **A** = Agreeableness and **N** = Neuroticism. These are based on a long-standing theory that the personality can be factor analyzed into five “independent factors” that are composed of facets (e.g. Warmth, Activity and Assertion as considered facets of Extraversion in the NEO PI-R<sup>®</sup>). While it is used in assessment and as an adjunct in clinical practices, its basis is research (basically correlating different personality traits) and it was not developed with specific external applications (e.g., selection) in mind.

### **Do Professionals who “practice in the real world” use anything else?**

Yes. They often use other types of instruments based on pathology models (e.g., a measure of obsessive-compulsive) and when they work with individual clients they may use the Professional Trait tests mentioned above but often focus on their “clinical intuition” about underlying Dynamics. While they feel it is important to know if a person is aggressive or extraverted they know that a better predictor of behavior is WHY a person is aggressive or extraverted. The “WHY’s” are called Dynamics.

### **Is there a Professional Test that measures Dynamics?**

Not in the quantifiable sense because most clinicians are interested in knowing what Dynamics exist as the major drivers but are less interested in the quantity. Other factors can be quantified such as types of pathology, which may be based on “Dynamics gone bad” and a widely used test is the MMPI<sup>®</sup>. Hence, the focus has either been research on the normal personality that is Trait based or on pathology models, which are based on Dynamics but usually from a pathology perspective.

### **How is the (4) Digital Couch different from the other 3 types of tests mentioned?**

The Digital Couch collects data on the traits like the professional tests mentioned but it also quantifies Dynamics from a normal perspective and compares them to traits. In addition, professional tests have Bias scales to determine if answer distortion is evident and they usually measure two types of bias. Since the Digital Couch is simultaneously measuring both Traits and Dynamics it can establish multiple baselines and compare results thereby determining much more than either instrument alone. The bottom line is that there is no product on the market that is as sophisticated as the Digital Couch. For additional information see: FAQ about the Digital Couch – [How to Use it](#).