

# Harrison Assessments: An Overview

Harrison Assessments is an online assessment tool used by industry worldwide to assist with a variety of human resource issues and challenges. The assessment itself was developed by Dr. Dan Harrison 15 years ago, based on his diverse background in Mathematics, Personality Theory, Counseling Psychology, and Organizational Psychology. His 30 years of experience in Psychology and Assessment has enabled the Harrison Assessment tools to fulfill practical needs for recruitment, development and assessment. Dan's ongoing world-wide travel gives him direct involvement with the needs of Harrison Assessment clients and exposes him to the appropriate practical application in a wide variety of cultures.

## Harrison Assessments - Theory

There are two underlying theories that are integrated in the Harrison Assessment methodology. The first is called Enjoyment-Performance Theory and is based upon Behavioral Theory. The second is called Paradox Theory and is an extension of the "psychological opposites" theories explained by Jung and Freud.

- Enjoyment-Performance Theory

Enjoyment-Performance Theory states that an individual will perform more effectively in a job if that individual enjoys the types of tasks that are required by a job, has interests that relate to the position, and the work environment conditions correspond with the person's work environment preferences. In other words, the enjoyment of all the various aspects of a job is a significant indication of a higher level of performance, assuming the person has the education and training necessary for that job. Our research indicates that the enjoyment of these various work aspects is highly correlated with good performance.

Behavioral Theory tells us that we tend to do the things that bring us enjoyment and avoid things that bring us displeasure. The enjoyment of a particular type of activity produces the tendency to do that type of activity more often. The Enjoyment-Performance Theory extends Behavioral Theory to say that when we enjoy and thus do an activity more often, we tend to get better at it. Our improved performance in turn reinforces our enjoyment of that activity. Conversely, if we dislike a particular activity, we tend to do it less often. When we do that activity less often, we tend not to get better at it and our lesser performance reinforces our dislike of that activity. Thus performance and enjoyment are linked because the level of enjoyment of a particular activity generates the quality of performance related to that activity and the quality of performance of an activity generates the level of enjoyment of that activity.

For example, if we tend to enjoy tasks that require a great deal of precision or exactness, we tend to do them more often, further developing our patience and attention to detail. Our increased skills related to "precision tasks" tend to make us enjoy those types of tasks more. Conversely, if we tend to dislike tasks that require a great deal of precision or exactness, we tend to do them less often and do not develop this type of patience and attention to detail. Our relatively poorer performance related to "precision tasks" reinforces our dislike of those tasks.

Employees who enjoy most aspects of their work tend to perform more effectively. The more an employee tends to dislike aspects of his/her work, the lesser the performance. Thus if we are able to determine the degree to which a person will enjoy the various aspects of a job, we will have a strong indication of the probability of success in the job, assuming the person has the education and experience necessary for the position.

- Paradox Theory

Both Jung and Freud recognized that the human mind is based upon opposite forces. Paradox Theory extends that principle to include complementary and paradoxical forces and applies it to specific traits. Paradox Theory includes a series of principles that can be applied to the individual psyche as well as organizational dynamics.

According to Paradox Theory, our lives involve dealing with a series of paradoxes. Each paradox is a relationship between two categories of traits, "Gentle" traits and "Dynamic" traits. If our range of behavior is able to extend to both the Gentle and Dynamic aspects of the paradox, we will have an exceptional capability and means of fulfillment related to that aspect of our lives. This is called balanced versatility. If our range of behavior extends only to the Dynamic aspect of the paradox, it is called "aggressive imbalance". If our range of behavior extends only to the Gentle aspect of the paradox, it is called "passive imbalance". In either case, our behavior will have some counter-productive tendencies and we will experience lesser fulfillment. If our range of behavior extends to neither aspect of a paradox, it is called "balanced deficiency". In that case, we will also have some counter-productive tendencies and/or lack of fulfillment. By measuring traits and organizing them according to the paradoxical model, we gain insight into the manner in which each person manages each paradox. Thus we gain a wealth of understanding about an individual's behavior patterns that is well beyond the traditional bipolar system of measurement.