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Title

Using Hogan Assessments to explore team culture and unconscious bias.

Summary

Hogan Assessments consists of three tools: the Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI), Hogan Development Survey (HDS) and the Motives, Values, Preferences Inventory (MVPI) (Hogan, Hogan & Warrenfeltz, 2007). Whilst these measures are usually employed to give feedback to or about individuals for development or recruitment purposes, the scores for individuals that form part of a team can be collated and discussed. This has the advantage of being able to explore the culture of the team and also their unconscious bias. Quantitative data of an organisation is given, and the results of this study discussed.

Introduction:

Understanding teams and their culture is essential for recruitment and development. If you can understand team culture, then you can align potential recruits to this culture with a hope to retain them for longer (Furnham, Humphries, & Leung Zheng, 2016; Harrison & Stone, 2018). This is especially important if it is at c-suite executive level as the cost of a poor fit can have huge ramifications for the company (Schmidt, 2016).

Alternatively, if a team knows its values and respects diversity and contributions from different perspectives - this may give the team additional advantages in the workplace (Biggs, 2010). In other words, if a team has overcome all their possible dysfunctions as proposed by Lencioni (2002) then they can work effectively together (See FIGURE ONE).

FIGURE ONE: Lencioni (2002) Dysfunctions of a team



The first step in this process of creating a better functioning team is improving trust. This involves encouraging people to feel ok with being vulnerable, open and honest in front of their co-workers (Lencioni, 2005; Robbins & Finley, 1997). Improving trust is easier said than done as putting ourselves at risk of failure or ridicule for others may be difficult to achieve (Lencioni, 2005). Individual differences may also creep in here. Individuals who are more sceptical may be less trusting especially under pressure (Hogan, et al., 2007; Hogan & Hogan, 2009).

Lencioni (2005) suggests that behavioural profiling may be key to improving trust within a team. In this way, the team get an objective reliable measure for understanding one another. This aids the team in admitting their weaknesses and strengths to one another part of building an effective team (Robbins & Finley, 1997). It also provides the team with a common vocabulary for describing their differences and similarities (Lencioni, 2005).

Personality psychology is key to this understanding, which can translate through to business success (Furnham, et al., 2016; Hogan, et al., 2007). Knowing how individuals may be in terms of their personality when they're at their best (HPI), how they may derail (HDS) along with their motives and values (MVPI) is key to this understanding (Hogan, et al., 2007). Having this knowledge may also reduce the risk of destructive conflict and lead rise to constructive and open criticism, which again is essential to the functioning of a team (Lencioni, 2002).

In looking at just the individual elements of a team, we are missing a major aspect of team's functioning in terms of unconscious bias. Unconscious bias refers to a disposition that a team may have that they are unaware of and consequently react in a particular way to a particular event. Schein (1990) warns that unconscious bias may develop as a by-product of values and filter down the organisation when leaders promote individuals with their own values (Schein, 1990). Again, by working out the whole profile of the team, unconscious bias can be drawn out and discussed.

Method

A medium sized financial services company was selected for this study as the top leadership team was interested in improving their performance and becoming aware of their collective unconscious bias. Seven participants took part in this study. They initially completed online the HPI, HDS and MVPI assessments. They were then given a 90-minute slot, where an Advanced People Strategies (APS) consultant went through their data and gave detailed feedback. All participants gave their consent that their data could be used for the purpose of a team level workshop. Scores were collected and presented to the team. Participants responses to their own individual feedback and team workshop were recorded in terms of qualitative responses.

Results

The team demonstrated low, average and high scores on a number of scales of the HPI, HDS and MVPI (See Table A). Of note, were the low scores on the HPI of Adjustment ($M=27.71$, $SD=24.39$), Prudence ($M=28.00$, $SD=24.01$), high scores on Ambition ($M=64.57$, $SD=29.22$) and Sociability ($M=63.29$, $SD=36.83$), On the HDS, high scores were noted on Excitable ($M=83.43$, $SD=11.87$) and Mischievous

(M=74.00, SD=27.75). And finally, on the MVPI, high scores were noted on Hedonism (M=74.14, SD=27.60), Commerce (M=70.71, SD=24.97) and low scores on Science (M=38.57, SD=28.92) and Security (M=33.57, SD=28.92). The participants considered both their individual feedbacks and the team workshop a success.

TABLE A: Collated team data on the HPI, HDS and MVPI

Hogan Assessment	Scale	Each Column represents one team member								Mean	SD
HPI	Adjustment	2	14	17	17	24	46	74	27.71	24.39	
	Ambition	28	34	42	73	85	95	95	64.57	29.22	
	Sociability	1	31	62	62	89	99	99	63.29	36.83	
	Interpersonal Sensitivity	6	14	14	22	52	92	100	42.86	39.21	
	Prudence	0	5	7	30	48	48	58	28.00	24.01	
	Inquisitive	1	4	19	40	40	72	86	37.43	32.54	
	Learning Approach	4	7	7	12	18	61	74	26.14	28.85	
HDS	Excitable	69	69	79	86	86	97	98	83.43	11.87	
	Sceptical	14	45	59	59	87	99	100	66.14	31.43	
	Cautious	13	28	28	28	58	58	69	40.29	21.01	
	Reserved	23	38	53	65	65	90	97	61.57	26.47	
	Leisurely	4	43	59	59	59	83	98	57.86	29.91	
	Bold	8	14	14	51	74	92	92	49.29	37.54	
	Mischievous	23	60	60	90	90	95	100	74.00	27.75	
	Colourful	25	36	48	60	99	99	100	66.71	32.33	
	Imaginative	6	6	50	83	83	91	99	59.71	39.73	
	Diligent	8	8	12	38	68	68	96	42.57	35.34	
Dutiful	17	27	39	39	53	68	81	46.29	22.57		
MVPI	Recognition	5	17	25	46	65	78	96	47.43	33.75	
	Power	7	27	49	66	71	81	98	57.00	31.62	
	Hedonism	34	46	57	90	95	98	99	74.14	27.60	
	Altruism	5	20	31	45	71	78	97	49.57	33.53	
	Affiliation	4	7	26	48	48	80	92	43.57	33.97	
	Tradition	16	19	25	41	67	84	91	49.00	31.47	
	Security	4	15	15	15	48	55	83	33.57	28.92	
	Commerce	36	42	57	87	87	93	93	70.71	24.97	
	Aesthetics	14	29	29	45	49	58	76	42.86	20.76	
Science	3	7	9	38	63	67	83	38.57	32.95		

Discussion

The culture of the senior leadership was revealed by the Hogan assessments. There were individual variations in all the different measures that formed part of the discussion but generally the leadership team were as follows.

Team values were ascertained by the MVPI. The team valued good company, pleasure and having fun along with business activities money and financial gain. Most of the team were not motivated by security, having certainty and predictability. Science was also low for the team suggesting that they tended not to engage in rational and data driven logical problem solving (Hogan, et al., 2007).

Trends of how the team operated on a daily basis, when not under stress, were revealed by the HPI scores. Here the team were tense, critical of their performance and driven. They were quick to act and made things happen within the organisation. The leadership team were also socially self-confident, leaderlike, sociable and gregarious (Hogan, et al., 2007).

Under pressure or being complacent, the team revealed how they may appear through their HDS scores. In this regard, the team may appear to others to get quite emotionally volatile and potentially explosive. They may lose interest in others and lack empathy. They could also become charming, impulsive, limit testing and excitement seeking (Hogan, et al., 2007).

The use of the three Hogan Assessments revealed much of their culture in terms of how business was conducted. Nevertheless, central to this process was exploring individual differences. So, with the Hedonism scale, for instance, one of the team had a low score on this, which meant he showed some social restraint but may have been criticised for being “a bore” by the others.

The unconscious biases that the team may have according to the Hogan Assessments were also recognised by the leaders. The team assumed that others were excitement seeking like them. People that were not so hedonistically driven may be perceived by the team as overly serious or even boring. They also assumed others were as materialistic as they were and did not understand those indifferent to money. This meant that unknowingly the leadership team attracted individuals to their company who shared their values. This may limit the diversity in terms of the top senior leadership team, which could in turn affect their success (Harrison & Stone, 2018)

Limitations

The paper represents an evidenced based case study in line with the conferences theme, the practice of science: occupational psychologists at work. It gives clear evidence of how validated tools, such as the Hogan Assessments, can be used in a practical way. Even so, evaluation of the workshop is difficult to ascertain. The client remains an advocate of the Hogan Assessments and uses these tools to assess new recruits and high potential staff.

Conclusions

This paper demonstrated how individual psychometric assessments can be collated together to form evidence on what a team values, performs like and how they are under stress.

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