

CHAPTER 2 HOW TO PROFILE SOMEONE

As discussed in chapter one, there are different types of profile in terms of the type of analysis required and the type of information sought. A profile of the members of a target market which a manufacturer wishes to sell a particular product to is likely to be vastly different to a profile of an individual who is facing trial for shoplifting. The information gathered for use in a profile will therefore be influenced by what the profile is intended to be used for.



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PROFILING TECHNIQUES

In arriving at an individual profile, the following sources of information are gathered and brought together.

Observational Data

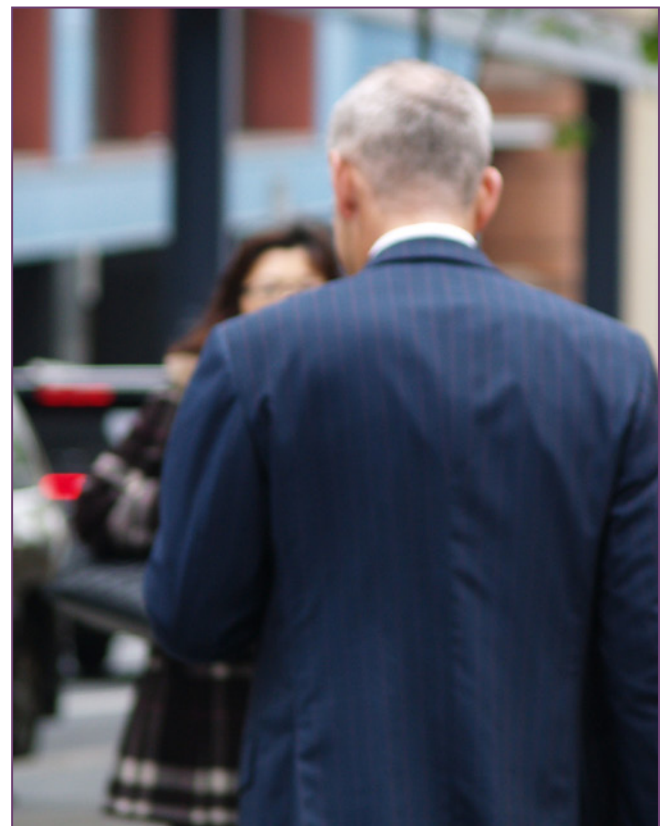
Thoughts can be hidden. We do not know what is going on in a person's head. We only know what they tell us. But our thoughts and feelings can be demonstrated in some ways through our behaviour. For example, a psychologist may build up a profile for anxiety in a professional athlete. The athlete may be performing badly and demonstrating high levels of anxiety, but is unable to verbally tell the psychologist why. The psychologist might then observe the athlete when they are playing the sport. They could watch how they perform, how they respond to the crowd's reaction, how they respond when they miss a shot or lose a race, how they respond when they win a race. They may find that the athlete is particularly anxious when performing in front of their home crowd. Their anxiety levels may double when in front of the home crowd. This may turn out to be because they think the home crowd expects more of them. They think that they judge them more, and are more able to comment about the athlete's performance. So the psychologist can then help the athlete with techniques to deal with that anxiety. It is more effective by helping the athlete and psychologist to pin point the reason for the anxiety, through observations, as the athlete may not have been aware that this was a problem.

A psychologist may observe how a disruptive child behaves in the classroom. They may look at what the child does, what happens just before the negative behaviour, just after the

negative behaviour and so on, to get a picture of what the disruptive behaviour is and why it occurs.

Interview Data

Interview data is found through interviews with individuals for certain reasons. An interview may be a psychological test or done in addition to a psychological test. There may be one interview or many. Interviews can be structured or semi-structured or completely unstructured. A structured interview is one that follows the same pattern of questions every time it is used. An unstructured one uses some set questions, but also allows for the interviewer to ask other pertinent questions. An unstructured interview may not rely on specific set questions.



Interview data is found through interviews with individuals.

An interview may cover points such as a person's age, gender, employment history and so on. However, interviews also seek to gather more detail, such as the nature of an existing problem, or why someone thinks they committed a particular crime, or someone thinks they behave in a negative way at work, and so on.

Psychologists may also interview friends and family to obtain more information if they think this is relevant. For example, a person may not recognise that their behaviour is inappropriate or unusual, so the psychologist may try to get more information from the family to find out what is going on. They will not base their conclusions solely on information from friends and family, but use that to get a better overall picture of what is going on.

Psychological Test Data

Specifically designed psychological tests can also be used to measure particular traits and characteristics. These may be tests to measure intelligence, such as the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS); personality traits, such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), or memory functioning, such as the Wechsler Memory Scale (WMS), and so on. There are many different tests available. Each test is designed for a specific purpose. Within some tests there may be different areas that they measure, for example, memory, cognitive ability, skills and so on. The tests are standardised procedures. Some tests can be asked or answered via a computer programme, but others are administered individually. Some can also be a tick list or questions the person answers privately but others must be completed in the company of the tester. The psychologist will usually be specifically trained in the use and

analysis of the particular test used. Some different categories of test are as follows:

Achievement Tests

These are tests usually carried out in an educational or employment setting to measure how much a person knows on a certain topic (their achieved knowledge), such as mathematics, spelling, and so on.

Aptitude Tests

Aptitude tests can be carried out in employment and educational settings. They aim to measure how much capacity (aptitude) a person has to mastering material in a particular area, such as a person's aptitude for engineering, horticulture, law enforcement.

Intelligence Tests

Intelligence tests aim to measure a person's intelligence, or their ability to understand the world around them, assimilate how it functions and apply that knowledge to enhance their quality of life. They therefore measure the potential of intelligence, not just what a person already knows (this would be an achievement test).

Intelligence tests are supposed to be culture-free as what a person knows in the Netherlands may not be the same as what a person knows in New Zealand. However, intelligence tests often fail to take account of cultural differences which can lead to cultural bias in tests. In fact, the majority of tests - intelligence or otherwise - have been developed using white, middle-class, predominantly American subjects.



The rationale behind occupational tests is that if a person is interested in certain things this may match up to a certain career.

Neuropsychological Tests

These tests aim to measure if a person has any deficits in cognitive function. For example, whether they have any significant difficulties in their ability to think, speak, and reason. This can occur due to some form of brain damage, such as a brain injury or stroke. Significant deficits may also accrue as part of the normal ageing process, though more usually they will indicate some form of dementia.

Occupational Tests

Occupational tests aim to match a person's interests with certain professions. The rationale behind these tests is that if a person is interested in certain things this may match up to a certain career. For example, if you are interested in most of the things that make a good law enforcement officer, you would probably make a good law enforcement officer. However, occupational tests are usually conducted as part of a "test battery". A battery is a group of tests which assess more than one variable. A typical occupational test battery would also include a personality test. The personality clusters identified would then be matched up with suitable groups of professions. An intelligence test may also be used as part of the test battery.

Personality Tests

Personality tests aim to measure a person's basic personality style. They can be used in research and forensic settings to help with clinical diagnosis. Two well-known tests are the MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory), which is composed of hundreds of yes/no questions and the Rorschach Test. The Rorschach test is