

VRH Introduces **QUICKV**

“We’re working diligently to provide quick and easy information access to our clients using technology-driven tools where appropriate without compromising quality, confidentiality or the personalized service you’ve come to expect.”

—Dr. Jonathan Dehlinger, VRH Newsline, Spring 2007

VRH is pleased to announce a new web-based assessment tool, **QUICKV** that will be on-line – literally – in January.

This validated tool, which closely aligns with “The Big 5 Personality Traits” (see related article) theory, hence the Roman numeral five, provides a comprehensive evaluation of an individual’s personality, interpersonal skills, and social behaviors in business settings. It is targeted for entry- to mid-level applicant screening for sales, production or broad-based staff support positions.

“**QUICKV** was specifically researched and developed using The Big 5 as a foundation,” says Dehlinger. “It’ll be ideal for clients interested in using cost effective, web-based assessment

tools in the screening process for narrowing down a large pool of candidates to get to a capable few...at which point, we’d look at additional ‘hands-on’ assessments.”

The personality dimensions represented in this tool include:

- Emotional Stability – tendency for experiencing positive and negative emotions
 - Extroversion – engagement with the external environment
 - Creativity – indicates imagination, curiosity, convention, leadership and persuasiveness
 - Trusting – gauges level of trust
 - Disagreeability – concerns with cooperation and social harmony
 - Self-Sufficiency – dynamics of working alone or in groups
- And optionally:
- Mechanical Interest – appeal with mechanical systems, machinery and tools

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The Big 5 Personality Traits – An Overview

In psychology, The Big 5 Personality Traits are five broad factors or dimensions of personality identified (and refined) through empirical research by a multitude of psychologists, researchers, and scientists starting as early as 1897 to present day. The personality traits used in the Big 5 model are Openness, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism (OCEAN).^{*} The Big 5 title was chosen to emphasize that each of these factors is extremely broad.

Each of these five personality traits describes the frequency (or intensity) of a person’s feelings, thoughts, or behaviors relative to other people. Everyone possesses all five of these traits to a greater or lesser degree, which are summarized as follows:

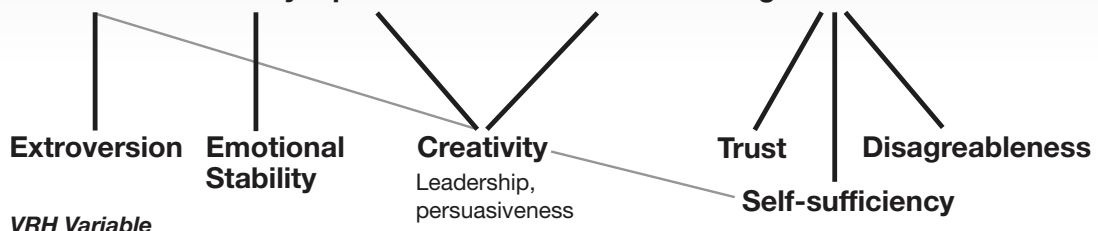
- Openness to Experience – our tendency to be creative/imaginative versus down-to-earth/conventional. (VRH’s Creativity)
- Conscientiousness – how we control, regulate, and direct our impulses. (VRH’s Creativity)
- Extroversion – our level of engagement with the external world.
- Agreeableness – our concern with cooperation and social harmony. (VRH’s Trust, Disagreeableness, Self-Sufficiency)
- Neuroticism or Emotional Stability –our tendency to experience negative feelings or unpleasant emotions.

The Big 5 model has both external validity and predictive utility – it can help relate to important outcomes in the workplace.

^{*}It is important to ignore the positive or negative associations that these words have in everyday language. For example, Agreeableness is obviously advantageous for achieving and maintaining popularity, and naturally agreeable people are better liked than disagreeable people. But agreeableness is not useful in situations requiring tough or totally objective decisions.

Big 5 Variable

Extroversion Anxiety Openness Conscientiousness Agreeableness



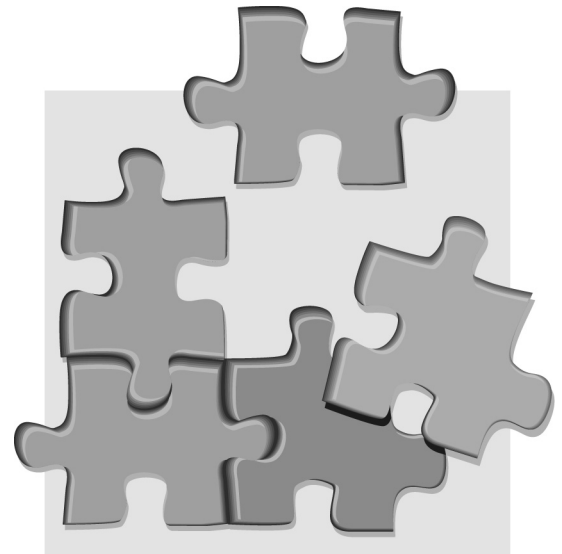
Who's Having A 'Fit'...?

Yahoo News posted an on-line article written by AP Business Writer, Ellen Simon, on November 6th entitled, Employers Study Applicants' Personalities. The article describes to what lengths employers are going to hire the 'right fit' people personality-wise for their organizations. She writes, "Businesses in fields where jobs are highly coveted – or just sound like fun – are stepping up efforts to weed out people who might have the right credentials but the wrong personality."

She cites actual hiring examples from such organizations as Rackspace Managed Hosting, Lindblad Expeditions (an adventure cruise company) and KaBoom (a nonprofit that builds playgrounds):

- Rackspace (San Antonio) CEO Lanham Napier is quoted, "We'd rather miss a good one than fire a bad one." Job interviews last all day – 9 to 10 hours – so interviewers can rub away fake pleasantness.
- Lindblad Expeditions VP of HR, Kris Thompson, says, "You can teach people any technical skill, but you can't teach them how to be a kindhearted, generous-minded person with an open spirit." Lindblad sends job applicants a DVD showing the unglamorous job side – cleaning toilets, washing 5000 dishes/day – to scare the 'wrong' people off. And it works!
- KaBoom co-founder and CEO Darell Hammond describes his answer to the board for high employee turnover, "I rationalized that they were on the road too much, when in reality, it was the wrong fit in the wrong role." They now start the vetting process by watching how the job applicant(s) act around the playground equipment set up in the reception area. People who remain aloof from the equipment – not sitting on a swing or the bottom of a slide – aren't asked back.

VRH has been talking about the importance of 'fit' for quite some time. In the past few years the buzz word for this has been 'emotional intelligence'. By whatever label this 'candidate fit' criterion masquerades, business psychologists have ability to measure and describe it such that you can make more informed hiring decisions.



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According to Dehlinger, "**QUICKV** is just another tool in a human resource professional's arsenal, especially for those who are technology-driven. It uses the Internet to provide easy administration and reporting of personality factors...that is, the social behavior to be expected from a candidate."

QUICKV has been designed to complement VRH's existing QuickPIC assessment tool (a traditional paper/pencil personality evaluation capable of assessing personality, intellect and leadership capability). The Roman numeral five in the designation reflects the tool's ability to capture and describe the elements of the "Big 5" personality theory.

How Does It Work?

Clients are set up with a password that gives them access into a special website, www.vrhassessment.com. Candidates armed with the password simply log on and follow the instructions.

After answering some basic background information – name, client company, etc. – the candidate moves into the body of the assessment tool. The entire four-part assessment consists of 210 yes/no (and sometimes maybe) and 33 'pick the best word from a pair' questions. It takes about 30 minutes to complete. Clicking 'Done' sends the data to VRH for scoring and interpretation.

The candidate's results are reported via email back to the

client using both a visual scale and narrative in a password protected PDF® document format. The scale illustrates a percentile score (how the individual scored relative to a comparative sample of others) and the narrative details each dimension – high, moderate or low score – in a customized paragraph. An added feature of this profile is a "Recommendation for Further Consideration." Because each profile is reviewed by professional staff, there is opportunity to offer an integrated recommendation relative to the position being considered.

One-day turnaround is expected for the electronic report.

"We've done extensive psychometric testing on **QUICKV** – it's sound and accurate," adds Dehlinger. Dr. Stephen Guastello, Marquette University psychology professor and noted statistician, conducted the validation. You may recall that Dr. Guastello is a member of VRH's virtual staff. Dr. Terrill Frantz, computer scientist at Carnegie Mellon University, computerized the personality test.

[You may want to check out the article describing the caveat emptor (or 'buyer beware') aspects of Internet-based pre-employment screening and testing featured in the Spring 2007 VRH Newsline.]

If you're looking for more information or just want to get started with **QUICKV** within your organization, contact VRH to register as a client user. Registration is simple and costs nothing. You will then be ready to direct suitable candidates to this online tool for screening.

Family Business Issues

Excerpts from Dr. Dehlinger's presentation to members of the M&A Alliance, a group of business leaders working in the mergers and acquisitions field (Fall 2007).

“About one-third of our consulting activity involves family-owned or closely held businesses and usually surrounds issues of identifying and developing the right talent for the right “seats on the bus.” However, some of our family business consulting also deals with supporting business owners in the sale of their business and the owner’s transition to the next stage in their business and personal lives. These comments today concern the emotional aspects of family controlled businesses, especially those in a pending change of leadership as occurs with the sale of a business.”

“First, some basic facts surrounding family-owned businesses. Recent statistics document over four million family-owned businesses in the United States with most of these having less than ten people/employees. Forty percent of these family-owned businesses will change leadership in the present decade and most of these have no chosen successor.”

“Traditional resources to family business owners – attorneys, accountants and tax advisors – bring familiarity with the mechanics of a business sale transaction, such as valuing a business, inventory/audit, cleaning up financial statements, drafting contracts for sale and the like. However, these resources are less familiar with the “psychological mechanics” that accompany such transactions. As business psychologists who often work closely with family-owned businesses, we have been able to identify three specific areas that can serve as psychological obstacles to a smooth transition from business owner to whatever comes next, typically retirement:

Once in a Lifetime

The first such psychological hurdle is the fact that most business owners have never sold a business before. They don’t know how to do it nor what to expect. Most business owners, whether family-owned or not, prefer being in control, making decisions, and monitoring results. When it comes time to sell the family’s business, lack of control is the norm. Couple this with the reality that financial security is impacted; all of a sudden this is a very high stakes transaction. The number of sleepless nights suddenly escalates.

Guilt/Fear

The sale of a family-owned business often triggers feelings of failure – failure to grow the business sufficiently to enable “passing the baton” to another generation of leadership. There is also fear that, after all of the hard work invested in growing this business and then preparing it for sale, no one will come to the party. The emotional burden is enhanced by guilt of selling memories, the family name and heritage, and a sense of betraying fore bearers.

Reality of Retirement

Issues here revolve around the extent to which family business owner(s) is/are prepared for a change of identity and lifestyle. Fundamental questions of “Who will I be if I sell the business/retire? How will I now build meaning into my life? Will I be happy without business ownership?” surface and beg to be resolved.”

VHR has the experience to assist family businesses with such transitions.

The Sporting Way

That’s how Milwaukee’s Irish Fest tees up the sporting events featured during the festival event. Along with the ever popular tug-of-war and hurling contests, Irish Fest also features several racing events. And this year, VRH got into the sporting way by sponsoring a team at the 5K walk/run to Irish Fest on behalf of the Arthritis Foundation. The 12-member team, Dr. D’s Irish Wannabe’s, actually had two finishers in the Top 30 racers!

Any runners/walkers out there who would like to join in the fun in 2008 are encouraged to contact Dr. D.!

VRH Celebrates 70th Anniversary

This summer, Vernon Roche and Hodgson, Inc., celebrated 70 years of professional service. Founded in Chicago by siblings Leroy and Grace Vernon as The Personnel Laboratory, the firm has evolved into a respected resource for business owners and managers seeking assurance around talent management decisions.

Echoing our mid-year announcement...

“The shoulders upon which we stand have contributed to client relationships that span decades. Some of these relationships yield frequent interaction, others less so. All are significant. Thank you for the opportunity to be involved in your business, for your friendship and the privilege of supporting your needs.”



Holiday Wishes

from VRH

Holidays and year end are fast approaching for all of us. In the frenzy of the season it is easy to lose perspective on what is meaningful about this time of year. Being from Wisconsin we can comfortably paraphrase the venerable Vince Lombardi and acknowledge 'family, faith and friends' as being the most important things in life. How each of us celebrates the holidays may be influenced by heritage and upbringing; however in whatever way you choose to celebrate the coming holidays, accept our best wishes for health, happiness and success.



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