

Is that really me?

Fortunately 90% of the time those completing behavioural reports will comment on the accuracy of the report. Others will agree that “most” of the report is accurate but they may disagree with some of the aspects - mostly comments on “Development Areas” as no one likes being told what they read as “weaknesses”. This is not the objective of behavioural reports.

In fact the reports actually explain how the Development Areas section should be read, namely.... *“These are not a description of this person’s weaknesses or present behaviour. They are items that the person should be cautious about since if he/she gets overly enthusiastic or stressed, these weaknesses may become active”*. But many don’t read the explanation and just jump to the bullet points!

One such example was shared with us a couple of months ago. Our client, a business coach, had been asked by the CEO of a large privately held company to work with one of the key executives. His client, let’s call her Sophie, was performing well, but both she and the CEO wanted to further improve her performance. In other words, the coach had a willing and motivated client and not a hostage who did not want to change! The coach asked Sophie to complete a FinxS Behavioural Report to establish a starting point for his coaching. Sophie was both excited and curious to see the results.

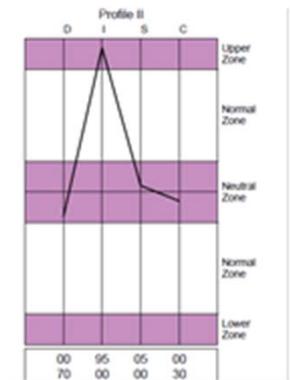
The report, which was customised and tailored to the precise specifications of the coach, was designed to stimulate his client’s thinking. The tailored report focuses on who the candidate really is and in the process uncovers possible blind spots that may be holding her back. The coach’s view (which we share) is that if an assessment provides only what the candidate already knows, it is of little value. FinxS tailored reports uncover issues that may never have been considered by candidates.

The coach’s standard practice is to have his clients read their reports for the first time in his presence. He believes that observing the body language of his clients as they read the reports reveals valuable information.

The coach noticed that Sophie agreed and accepted the “strengths” statements in the report, but when she began to read the “development areas”, her reaction was very different. She openly questioned the accuracy of the statements. The report had stated that she

is not frank – embellishes” and *“gets excited without analysing the situation”*, both of which she disputed. She went on to explain to the coach that she had learnt to be realistic and to keep to the facts. She also explained that her training had taught her to thoroughly analyse all the realities before forming an opinion, although she admitted that it took her a lot of energy to both control her emotions and keep to the facts.

Those familiar with the DISC model will have identified Sophie’s behavioural style as an “I” style and she validated the results of her report in front of the coach by recalling experiences that related directly to those she disputed. As she recounted various events relating to the “development areas” of her report she began to realise that the report was indeed accurate as she admitted it took her a lot of energy to deal with challenges identified in the report. She began to understand that the report wasn’t a “can-cannot do” document. Being a strong “I” type, the more she challenged each statement, the more she talked herself into it!



This is a simple case, but it is certainly not an isolated one. Sophie was not aware of some of the issues the report had identified including some of the “competencies” that the coach had deliberately selected when tailoring the report. She immediately realised that she needed to focus on some specific aspects that she had never thought about.

But there is one other thing. The reports cannot identify “learned behaviour” and frequently candidates will have learned to address issues identified in their reports as possible challenges. This will often impact on the client’s confidence in the report unless the impact of “learned behaviour” is explained to them. The “development areas” and in fact other statements in the report could even relate to issues they may have to address on a daily basis and if they have been trained to cope with them, will not find them difficult.

This does not mean the reports are incorrect as far as their behavioural style is concerned, but it is very important to make candidates aware of “learned behaviour” versus “unconscious behaviour” to ensure they fully understand what the report is telling them.