

STRATEGIC PSYCHOMETRICS...

NHS TRUST ORGANISATIONAL RESTRUCTURING

Many organisations use psychometric tests to further inform their selection, promotion and development decision making processes. Often, given the practical constraints, psychometric assessment is used on a rather ad hoc basis.

However, BHR Hospitals NHS Trust wanted to use psychometric

assessment in a more strategic and systematic manner for one particular initiative. Following a restructuring of its Operations and Service Development Directorate, the intention was to apply the most objective and fair process for identifying individual potential for a number of newly created Director and General Management roles.

Director of HR and Communications at Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospital NHS Trust, Frank Sharp spearheaded this internal selection initiative. Frank understood that **specialist knowledge and experience alone was not a guaranteed predictor of strong operational performance** and that behaviours, values and aptitudes were equally important considerations. Hence, the emerging roles were evaluated not only in terms of key functional objectives, but also in terms of 'how' these objectives should be achieved. These became the **core Leadership competencies**.

The Keil Centre's psychologists then tailored a Psychometric Assessment programme that examined four of the core competencies in depth. The assessment utilised a combination of

four different instruments, with each individual then participating in a structured feedback discussion with the psychologist. This

permitted a more focussed exploration of each person's capability against the dimensions. Where specific development needs were identified, these were described in terms of behaviours being either over, or underplayed. The data was then integrated into the general pool of information about each candidate by a report containing a narrative section as well as graphical summaries.

This approach enabled the Trust to view the strengths and development needs of the population as a whole, thereby informing future Organisational Development considerations.

In Frank Sharp's words...

"This approach has proved catalytic in creating across the trust an expectation that in future, senior management roles must be more rigorously and objectively assessed and not based on perceptions that individuals with long NHS experience or specialist clinical backgrounds make the most successful leaders"

