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## Return of the human

BY: TENNILLE VAN JAARVELDT | 11 JUN 2015 13:12

What has caused the assessment industry to sway so sharply from the needs of talented individuals towards a transactional process? We need to put the human back into assessments.



In our profession, we are taught to listen, take into account emotional cues, and offer a supporting role to others in many psychological and emotional ways.

We believe that we can help others and that we're good with people. Increasingly, I find myself trying to balance between the needs of the



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individual and that of the organisation by asking: Am I attending to the needs of the individual, something that I've been moulded to do, or am I more concerned with delivering the project?

Tennille van Jaarsveldt

Could I not deliver a better product if I focused more on the individual, the human being? When we refer to the human being, we must create the

opportunity for the candidate to benefit most from the testing process and gain far more value from this process than they could ever imagine.

### Risk-taker rights

We should never forget the rights of the risk taker - the assessee - and the factors that play defining roles in the testing situation. When candidates engage with us, we should make them feel at ease. This allows candidates to display their best performance and feel that they have given their best. Creating a positive experience also uncovers and facilitates further development discussions. However, we need to provide more than just a good testing situation.

### Adequate briefing

Unfortunately, even in a competitive job market, we often find assessment appointments being cancelled, often as a result of the candidate being anxious or uncertain. What is it that made a keen, confident and positive candidate disengage from the prospect of landing that dream job? Is it a lopsided process that resulted in desirable talent slipping through the fingers of our client? We also find that candidates have not been adequately briefed, which puts them in a stressful situation. As professionals, our role is to create the environment where candidates look forward to the opportunity of presenting their worth and potential.

### Empowering candidates

We must empower the candidates with a deeper understanding and insight into the assessment outcome. It's easy for candidates to rate themselves based on their own experiences, creating a more subjective view. As we are trying to determine the candidate's performance against the competencies of a specific job, we need to indicate that psychometric assessment will try to measure more specific behaviours, aptitudes and skills and, as such, bring in a more objective perspective. Not only are we trying to highlight on best fit for the role, but also making the candidates more aware that they are not only being assessed to help employers understand abilities, skills and preferences, but also highlighting to the candidates their



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likely fit into a role based on these and other factors, such as would they even enjoy or like the role.

By ensuring that they understand the assessment process, they will be in better position to make informed decisions about their careers. It must be made clear that failure for one role does not need to be viewed as a negative outcome, but more as an opportunity to make a better contribution to an organisation where there is likely to be a better fit.

When someone is in a job he enjoys, he is likely to make better use of his strengths and abilities, and, vice versa, when people are in jobs they hate, they may very well under-utilise their strengths. We therefore play a very vital role to the candidates in seeing the assessment process from a far more deeper perspective which can actually help them move into jobs they can not only perform in, but also enjoy and allow them to move on if they can best put their skills and motivation into use elsewhere.

### Improving the balance

After seven years of assessment experience, I've often wondered whether a candidate could have done better if given a second chance of an interview. The reason for the assessment is to assess their competence for specific role demands and is not an indication of their performance in life and forever. In a global market where precious talent is in demand, we need to improve the balance of our assessments process.

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Tennille van Jaarsveldt is a Consulting Psychometrist of Work Dynamics



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