Psychometric Testing/Behavioral Assessment

Pitfalls to Avoid With Psychometric Data
Psychometrics can tell us quite a bit about a person's behavioral style, but it is just as important to recognize what psychometrics can't tell us. Some key points:

- The "science" of psychometrics is based on "normal human behavior" – this is quite a big loophole. After all, what is NORMAL?

- Behavioral assessments generally only identify HOW, not WHY.

- Assessments are in no way a measurement of intelligence or ability.

- While we may learn something about "soft skills", psychometrics do not give us comprehensive insight on tangible, or technical, skills (i.e. being detail oriented is a soft skill, while mathematical ability is a tangible skill)

It is critical that psychometrics are not used to discriminate against, or otherwise pigeon-hole, individuals. While an employee may have a particular behavioral style, it should not be considered a definition of their total ability or worth.

While psychometrics can identify behaviors that are more suited to various job responsibilities, it is very important to note that employees who exhibit less desirable behavior shouldn't be considered "bad". There are no bad behavioral profiles when it comes to psychometric assessment – there are simply differences in behavior.

For this reason, most psychometric testing results should not be casually revealed to employees without appropriate training or facilitation. Employees must be afforded an explanation of what their assessment results mean and how it falls in the realm of all assessment factors. Part of the training communication should reveal policies on how test results are utilized with regard to job responsibilities, career opportunities, promotion, etc. It bears repeating that psychometric testing should never be used as the basis for adverse decisions relating to any employee or job candidate.

How to successfully utilize psychometric data – Examples
Successfully utilizing psychometric data lies in understanding exactly what is being evaluated, what the differences are, and what the similarities are.

Interpersonal conflicts/gaps between employees are a great starting point for analyzing psychometric data. While it is a huge simplification, one can imagine that when considering MBTI results differences in each of the dichotomies may constitute potential areas for conflict. For example, an employee who identifies as ISTJ (introverted/sensing/thinking/judging) under the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator might be seen to have completely opposite behavioral preferences as an employee who identifies as ENFP (extroverted/intuitive/feeling/perceiving). Each area of difference may spell potential conflict. However, the areas of difference may also compliment or balance each other and allow employees who are willing and able to appreciate their differences to work in harmony.