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Articles and Reports



Adapted from: "Derailers - and how they vary in different populations" by Gillian Hyde  
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PCL and its clients have used the HDS with a vast number of organisations in various business sectors and in the course of this work we have noticed some interesting differences in the distribution of derailers across organisations or across certain types of jobs. A couple of these comparisons are detailed below.

It is not surprising that bosses who alienate colleagues and subordinates undermine the commitment and effectiveness of the workforce with inevitable consequences for productivity, retention and the bottom line. Based on research into leadership and management derailment, the Hogan Development Survey (HDS) identifies these sorts of patterns of dysfunctional interpersonal leadership behaviour. These 'dark side' tendencies erode trust, loyalty and enthusiasm and are of obvious concern in relation to managerial and leadership roles.

The HDS measures eleven such flawed interpersonal styles that become exaggerated under pressure and that are difficult to detect in interviews - for example, the charm and social aplomb that is revealed as manipulation if the socially acceptable facade is not maintained. These 11 scales are grouped into 3 main clusters - Moving Away, which concerns managing one's insecurities by withdrawing from contact with others, Moving Against which concerns allaying one's fears and anxieties by dominating, influencing and persuading people and Moving Towards, which concerns building alliances with people and conforming to others' wishes as a way of managing one's own worries or concerns.

As publishers of the UK edition of the HDS, PCL has accumulated extensive experience of using this instrument in individual assessment contexts, in assessment and development centres, and also in the delivery of conversion courses. In our judgement, the information generated by the HDS always adds invaluable insights to the assessment process, highlighting issues for individuals that would be exceedingly difficult to discover from any other established enquiry methods.

### Differential derailers?

In our experience we have found that people working in the private commercial sector, and particularly in global financial institutions, tend to have more derailers in the Moving Against group of scales - Confident-Arrogant, Charming-Manipulative, Vivacious-Dramatic and Imaginative-Eccentric - suggesting that this group of people are more likely than the average member of the working population to engage in persuasive, influencing, dominating styles of behaviour to manage their own insecurities. As a group, they are the sorts of people who are keen to make a strong impres-

sion, who enjoy receiving attention, and who are confident about expressing their views and opinions. They also tend to score lower on the Moving Towards group of scales than the general average - Diligent-Perfectionistic and Dutiful-Dependent - and this suggests that they are also less likely than the average member of the general working population to be concerned about conforming to organisational procedures or being dependent on the opinions of others, while tending to be focused on the bigger picture rather than on the detail of a project.

### Entrepreneurial profile

An even more extreme comparison is that with entrepreneurs. We were fortunate to have access to UK data supplied by Deborah Tom of Human Systems. Deborah was coaching a small group of entrepreneurs who she describes as being "all successful and at the brink of their next level". For example, one has been turning over £7million and is just about to step up to three more outlets from the two he has. When we looked at the entrepreneurs' composite HDS profiles, we found a general trend for entrepreneurs to score higher on the Moving Against and lower on the Moving Toward scales than the average member of the working population. More specifically, the extreme highs and lows on the entrepreneurs' profile indicates that they are:

- 1. less socially anxious and less inhibited about expressing their views than most*
- 2. more risk-taking, more prepared to use a degree of spin or deception to get what they want, more prepared to exploit others to get what they want*
- 3. more creative but also more outlandish perhaps in their ideas, and more impulsive and more likely to sometimes enjoy confusing people because their ideas are so unusual!*
- 4. more independently minded, less concerned to conform to other people's wishes, happier to go their own way, less worried what others' think of them, and less dependent on finding favour with others.*

Clearly, these are generalizations and there will be many people working in these types of organizations and roles that differ from these descriptions. Nonetheless, there is sufficient evidence to point to a general trend in the directions described above.

### APPENDIX: The structure of the HDS

The HDS scales identify people who are hard to work with because -

#### MOVING AWAY cluster

*enthusiastic-volatile* - high scorers are moody, irritable, bad tempered, inconsistent and impossible to please.

*shrewd-mistrustful* - high scorers take criticism personally, readily feel mistreated and are prone to retaliate when they feel they have been wronged.

*careful-cautious* - high scorers are rule-bound and unwilling to take chances or express controversial opinions.

*independent-detached* - high scorers seem self-focused, uninterested in other people's problems and unaware of how their actions affect others.

*focused-passive aggressive* - high scorers tend to procrastinate, and display stubbornness and reluctance to be part of a team.

#### MOVING AGAINST cluster

*confident-arrogant* - high scorers are opinionated, self-absorbed, and unwilling to learn from their mistakes.

*charming-manipulative* - high scorers are more spin than substance, take risks and ignore their mistakes, they are hard to advise and don't fully evaluate the consequences of their decisions.

*vivacious-dramatic* - high scorers are self-centred, impulsive, over committed, too quick to take the credit and unwilling to listen - especially to negative feedback.

*imaginative-eccentric* - although they may be creative, high scorers are impulsive, eccentric and unaware of how socially inappropriate their ideas may be.

#### MOVING TOWARDS cluster

*diligent-perfectionistic* - high scorers are unable to delegate, their determination to do every task equally well makes them seem fussy, critical, and stubborn about their work.

*dutiful-dependent* - high scorers are indecisive and find it impossible to make decisions on their own.