



Continuing our series looking at coaching tools and techniques, *Coaching at Work* road-tests the **Hogan Development Survey**

OUT OF THE DARK

1 The tool What is it?

Psychological Consultancy Ltd (PCL) first published the UK edition of the Hogan Development Survey (HDS) 10 years ago. The HDS is a psychometric survey which, rather than focusing on leadership talents, is based on research into leadership failure and the reasons why leaders so frequently self-destruct – the ‘dark side’ characteristics.

How does it work?

The HDS focuses on 11 dispositions that would generally be considered desirable attributes but which flip into destructive mode if not managed well (see box, right). These dark side qualities typically become apparent during novel or stressful periods, or when the individual feels relaxed or invulnerable. Combined with an individual’s imprecise beliefs about the impact these behaviours have on others, they undermine loyalty and commitment and negatively influence careers.

Dark side personality characteristics can be identified in most people. We all learn to vary our behaviour according to the pressures we are under and the situations we face and we all exercise restraint over socially undesirable impulses.

Cloaked by their positive and attractive aspects, dark side characteristics promote the high flyer’s success, and support his or her journey towards the top table.

Recognising the potential danger of extreme characteristics, the HDS allows risks to be measured and helps in identifying an agenda for coaching and personal development.

The HDS can be used alongside other psychometric tests or 360-degree feedback in a coaching intervention.

● For details go to:
www.psychological-consultancy.com

2 The administrator Using the tool

In the summer of 2008 I trained in delivering the HDS as I was working with senior leaders who were under pressure from the unprecedented changes in the external environment and the impact this was having

internally. They had to deal with ambiguity, uncertainty and added responsibilities. The HDS seemed to be a great instrument to use alongside other personality surveys and 360-degree assessment. It brings a depth of insight into how behaviours can be interpreted by others.

The 11 leadership derailers interested me as they provide valuable, additional personal development material. Most leaders will have now undertaken strength-based assessments, but the HDS demonstrates that strengths in stable times can work to your detriment when under stress, pressure or boredom.

The two-day training programme was excellent as it gave deep insight

MOVING AWAY

E-V Enthusiastic-Volatile

Swings from enthusiasm to disappointment. Moody, irritable, bad tempered, inconsistent and impossible to please.

S-M Shrewd-Mistrustful

Suspicious of motives and intentions. Shrewd and difficult to fool. Takes criticism personally, readily feels mistreated and retaliates when ‘wronged’.

C-C Careful-Cautious

Too concerned about making mistakes. Reluctant to take initiatives, or express controversial opinions.

I-D Independent-Detached

Self-focused, uninterested in others’ problems and unaware of how their actions affect others.

F-PA Focused-Passive

Aggressive Procrastinators, stubborn and reluctant to be part of a team.

MOVING AGAINST

C-A Confident-Arrogant

Opinionated, self-absorbed and unwilling to learn from their mistakes.

C-M Charming-Manipulative

More ‘spin’ than substance, take risks and ignore their mistakes. Hard to advise.

V-D Vivacious-Dramatic

Self-centred, impulsive, over committed, too quick to take credit and unwilling to listen to negative feedback.

I-E Imaginative-Eccentric

Impulsive, eccentric and unaware of their socially inappropriate ideas.

MOVING TOWARDS

D-P Diligent-Perfectionistic

Inability to delegate, fussy, critical and stubborn about their work.

D-D Dutiful-Dependent

Deferential to maintain relationships and find it impossible to make decisions on their own.

Hogan Development Survey scales – the 11 ‘dark side’ derailers



into the range of behaviours, either the individual scales or by certain combinations of them.

The verdict

I used the HDS as part of an ongoing coaching programme with Jayne Harrison of the Savile Group. We worked with her corporate sponsor and the HDS addressed some of the core aims of her programme, including building professional resilience, implementing effective boundary management and being more effective in managing stress and pressure.

The HDS supported the coaching programme objectives as Jayne was under extreme pressure and stress, both professionally and personally. In her business development role she had successfully built the business but this was creating additional work and stress and she needed to develop more effective coping mechanisms.

The HDS survey gave a different lens to the situation and new insights into the impacts of her behaviours on key stakeholders. It gave permission to address the impact of stress and pressure in a more objective manner, without it being seen as 'something wrong with the individual'.

Through the use of the HDS I've identified that most people will display one or two extreme dark side characteristics. Leaders do need to be open to considering these potential derailing behaviours as they are mostly very attached to these sides of their personality. I have found that many of the leaders I've worked with have a conceptual, as well as practical, interest in their strengths in overdrive. The HDS provides a neat framework to examine and understand these characteristics.



It's a very sophisticated personality assessment, and as it's something different it catches the interest and attention of the client.

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3 The client The experience

I have been with the Savile Group for 11 years. Following a three-year sabbatical, I found that the organisation had changed and moved on. My manager suggested coaching to further develop my skills as a regional account director where I was having great success in building a new client base. However, this was creating additional work and pressure.

The application

The HDS helped me explore some key questions. I had two very high dark side characteristics: Charming-Manipulative and Imaginative-Eccentric.

I knew that I tended to rely on my social skills rather than preparing prior to meetings. However, I would get very nervous if I hadn't prepared so knew I was doing myself a disservice.

On the Imaginative-Eccentric scale I know I am very creative but also that I need to rein in some of my thoughts and ideas so they don't appear 'wacky'.

The HDS also helped identify that I could be Dutiful-Dependent. While I didn't agree with all the definitions of this scale, I recognised that I do find it difficult to say 'no'.

One immediate change is that I got a PA and asked for more support which I wouldn't have previously considered.



The verdict

I have been on a journey of self-discovery. I realised that modifying my behaviour helps me achieve more at work and raises my profile. In client-facing meetings and internally I no longer come across as eccentric, though I have realised I can get easily bored. The HDS helped me recognise certain unidentified character traits.

Jayne Harrison is a regional account director with Savile Group

HDS: pros and cons

UPSIDE

- A different insight into behaviours and their potentially negative impact on others
- Use of HDS develops a high level of trust between coach and client
- Helps the client identify when their behaviour is tipping into the 'dark side'
- Develops coping mechanisms and an increased awareness of impact on others

DOWNSIDE

- Relies on strong relationship with coach and client. Without trust and empathy it could elicit defensiveness
- Some will not be open to considering their own potentially derailing behaviours
- Best used in a developed coaching relationship as reflection time is needed to identify one's impact on others
- The client must be open to exploring new ideas about their behaviour and be willing to consciously moderate these too