

Using the CPI 260® Instrument with the Wesman Personnel Classification Test



Selection is a critical issue in today's turbulent business climate, and many psychological assessments have been introduced to help organizations address it. Several of those instruments are also valuable tools in succession planning, performance management, and employee development. The *Wesman Personnel Classification Test* (PCT) is one such instrument that translates well into the development space.

The PCT was designed to assess general mental ability and comprises a verbal reasoning component and a numerical reasoning component. The verbal section examines people's ability to create analogies and recognize conceptual similarities despite surface differences. The numerical portion examines their ability to understand quantitative relationships and "operate with ingenuity." The instrument explores people's skills in solving problems, constructing explanations, building arguments, and perceiving relationships. Research on the PCT indicates that it focuses on power rather than on speed (the respondent must select the one correct answer out of 16 possibilities; there is no set time limit).

To delve into the PCT a little deeper, we will need to understand some basic terminology. Robert J. Sternberg, in *Beyond IQ* (1985), indicated that solving analogy problems involves seven different information-processing components that are characteristic of inductive reasoning. The chart below defines these seven terms.

Component of Inductive Reasoning	Definition
Encoding	Understanding relevant information so one can interpret what it means
Inference	Relating one concept to another
Mapping	Acknowledging one rule that is shared by two concepts
Application	Bringing a rule related to one set of concepts to bear on another set of concepts
Comparison	Choosing the option that best conforms to an ideal
Justification	Exploring how reasonable the choice is relative to the ideal
Response	Expressing a choice through inductive reasoning

COMBINING THE ASSESSMENTS

The CPI 260® assessment pairs well with the PCT. The leadership competencies assessed by the CPI 260 instrument show us the type of leader we might see after we analyze the results. When we add the PCT, we learn how that leader might sound if we were to have a conversation with her. Would she present information directly in plain language? Or would she likely enjoy using metaphors and analogies to paint a picture of the concept or theory she is sharing?

To begin our examination of the overlaps and parallels between the two instruments, let's look at the four lifestyles on the CPI 260 instrument: Implementer, Supporter, Innovator, and Visualizer. The chart below offers a quick summary of these lifestyles and their implications.

CPI 260® Lifestyle	Implications	At Their Best	At Their Worst
Implementer	Take-charge leaders Move toward action Task focused Organized	Make things happen Charismatic Influential Ambitious	Self-promoting Manipulative Aggressive or hostile Rigid
Supporter	Reserved Patient Caring Conscientious	Inspirational Fair Hardworking Supportive	Self-critical Too rigid with rules Don't share their ideas Too accommodating
Innovator	Creative Independent Embrace change Enthusiastic	Risk takers Challenge convention Show initiative Change agents	Lack follow-through Judgmental Rebellious Ignore important details
Visualizer	Autonomous Imaginative Unique Reflective	Creative Perceptive Interesting Autonomous	Impractical Disjointed Alienated from others Conflicted

It might seem logical to assume that Innovators and Visualizers would tend to have higher scores on the PCT. The PCT measures verbal reasoning, so wouldn't lifestyles that are creative and innovative demonstrate a higher level of verbal reasoning? Not necessarily. We know that each lifestyle exhibits skills in many areas, including some that might seem outside the scope of that lifestyle. We can hypothesize what higher and lower scores on the PCT might look like within each of the lifestyles. The chart on the following page lists some of these hypotheses.

We must also pay attention to how PCT results are affected by the Level of Satisfaction (LOS) scale score on the CPI 260 instrument. This score indicates the degree to which clients have truly tapped into their potential and to what extent they feel generally satisfied with themselves and

CPI 260® Lifestyle	High PCT Score	Low PCT Score
Implementer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present clear and specific goals Connect the dots easily Share big-picture issues Teach through storytelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer simple presentations Speak directly and are straightforward May have difficulty making links May have difficulty translating ideas for others
Supporter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are reserved Are patient Are caring Are conscientious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are inspirational Are fair Are hardworking Are supportive
Innovator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct successful initiatives Explain and manage change well Can help others think outside the box Easily get buy-in from others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May have difficulty explaining ideas to others in terms they can understand Risks may not be calculated but are unreasonable Their ideas may not yield expected results Promote too much change that doesn't make sense to others
Visualizer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe ideas well to others through writing Create unique imagery to demonstrate concepts Are eloquent in using metaphors to describe ideas Have rich inner dialogue about possibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Their ideas are isolated and often not shared May feel misunderstood by others May be sensitive and take things in a way that was not intended May lose sight of reality when sharing a concept or idea

with their life in general. When clients' LOS score is high, they are likely to be optimistic, resilient, confident, capable, and potentially content. When their score is low, they may be frustrated, restless, or unmotivated, or they may be managing a challenging life situation. These variables may influence their PCT scores. The PCT is a timed test that requires concentration, focus, and energy. When clients are struggling with feelings of dissatisfaction and thus are not in a good place emotionally, they may not have the presence of mind to appropriately examine and respond to the questions on the PCT. It is likely that a low LOS score on the CPI 260 instrument will skew some results on the PCT and result in their abilities being misrepresented. In addition, to the extent that general mental ability may affect self-confidence or self-esteem, we must pay attention to how these elements relate.

Examining the CPI 260® Core Performance Areas

The five core performance areas assessed by the CPI 260 tool are affected to varying degrees by people's verbal and numerical reasoning abilities. Here we will discuss the areas that would likely show the most significant impact. The chart on the following page lists the five performance areas and their components.

Core Performance Area	CPI 260® Leadership Characteristic	CPI 260® Scales
Self-management	Self-awareness	Self-acceptance Empathy
	Self-control	Self-control Social Conformity
	Resilience	Well-being Self-acceptance
Organizational Capabilities	Use of Power and Authority	Dominance Self-control
	Comfort with Organizational Structures	Social Conformity Achievement via Conformance
	Responsibility and Accountability	Responsibility Leadership
	Decisiveness	Dominance Independence
Team Building and Teamwork	Interpersonal Skill	Sociability Amicability
	Understanding Others	Empathy Insightfulness
	Capacity for Collaboration	Tolerance Creative Temperament
	Working with and Through Others	Managerial Potential Independence
Problem Solving	Creativity	Creative Temperament Achievement via Independence
	Handling Sensitive Problems	Empathy Dominance
	Action Orientation	Sensitivity Flexibility
Sustaining the Vision	Self-confidence	Leadership Independence
	Managing Change	Flexibility Self-control
	Influence	Dominance Sociability
	Comfort with Visibility	Social Presence Capacity for Status

Source: Adapted from *CPI 260® Coaching Report for Leaders: Advanced Guide for Interpretation* by Sam Manoojian (Mountain View, CA: CPP, Inc., 2006), p. 7. Copyright 2006 by CPP, Inc. All rights reserved.

Self-management. As stated previously, clients' mental abilities may influence their sense of self. When they feel competent and capable, it is possible that their Self-acceptance score on the CPI 260 assessment will increase as a result. Alternatively, clients who struggle intellectually or academically may develop greater empathy for others who face challenges, whether or not they are similar to those they confront.

Self-awareness is one of the most critical elements of the Self-management core performance area. More than any other, this leadership characteristic seems to shape people's ability to manage both intrapersonally and interpersonally. The higher clients' level of self-awareness, the higher their EQ and impulse control and the more solid their sense of self will be.

Organizational Capabilities. The interpersonal savvy required to navigate the political landscape of any organizational culture is deep and complex. When people comprehend how to effectively leverage power and authority, it can dramatically affect their ability to rise to higher organizational levels. Both verbal and numerical reasoning play a part in a person's ability to tune in to the subtleties that require interpretation.

Several of Sternberg's information-processing components listed earlier—encoding, inference, application—play a role in people's decision-making processes and methods of understanding significant events. When clients score low on the PCT, their process of arriving at conclusions or creating solutions may take longer, resulting in their missing opportunities that are time sensitive. Furthermore, when their decision-making process is not comprehensive, they may miss certain pieces of data or cues that are critical to steering them to the appropriate path. When clients are unable to translate concepts from one situation to another, it becomes a liability of sorts in the way it relates to their comfort within an organization. Being "in the know" or part of the group that gets the important information has a drastic affect on whether or not their performance leads to a seat at the table.

Team Building and Teamwork. Patrick Lencioni (*The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, 2002) speaks to teams that endure dysfunction and go on to be successful. He contends that even in the presence of difficult team dynamics, people must have the courage to move forward and present themselves to the best of their ability. This aspect is essential in creating synergy on a team and seems to be robust in clients with both higher and lower scores on the PCT. Regardless of whether their scores are higher or lower, the way in which clients access or develop their desire and/or courage to act is related to their ingenuity, their ability to "get it," and their competency in interpreting nuance. That being said, there can be a relationship between the ways in which people "operate with ingenuity" (a component measured by the PCT) and the level of respect they receive from teammates. Even more important is their ability to demonstrate that they grasp concepts easily and can "get it" (whatever "it" is), quickly and easily. Most interpersonal relationships are influenced by how much energy is required to work or interact with another person. People who can readily understand and interpret nuances may be regarded as easier to work with because they grasp concepts quickly and can apply them to a multitude of situations. In the

absence of this ability, frustration may increase if constant explanations are necessary and a person is still not able to understand.

Regardless of clients' competencies or abilities, we have to factor in their motivation to collaborate with others as an essential element that affects whether or not they are a team player. Highly motivated individuals score at all levels on the PCT scales, so even if they don't present well on the PCT assessment, their level of commitment and engagement in their role can make the difference.

Problem Solving. Clearly, this CPI 260 core performance area is closely related to the results we see on the PCT. We can often correlate high scores on the PCT with higher scores on the Creativity scale largely due to people's ability to read between the lines and formulate big-picture concepts successfully. In the area relating to Handling Sensitive Problems, success ties back to the level of empathy a person displays in difficult moments. As stated previously, clients can have a high Empathy score along with high or low PCT scores, and empathy can often make or break the resolution of a challenging situation. Regarding Action Orientation, there are a couple of things that matter. One is the degree to which clients exhibit flexibility while moving toward action. The other is how sensitive they are to how they are perceived by others.

People's ability to be flexible relates to many aspects of their development and personality. When they are open to and comfortable with ambiguous situations, they can thrive whether or not sufficient structure is present. When people are not confident of their ability to connect the dots and infer meaning from events or situations, they may develop a need for more clear boundaries, structure, and directives in the way they deal with others. They may become inflexible in response to feeling a lack of control in being able to understand something. Sometimes people overcompensate for areas of discomfort by imposing structure so that they feel in control, even if the feeling is artificial.

In the absence or presence of high scores on the PCT, the Sensitivity scale score on the CPI 260 tool contributes to problem solving at many levels. High scorers on Sensitivity may seek approval from others and have a need to be liked by and feel connected to others. They may have difficulty making unpopular decisions because they feel that doing so would leave them vulnerable to scrutiny from colleagues. In addition, they may know what course they should take to generate the best possible options yet choose something different from what is required to get on that path. Consequently, the ability of high scorers on Sensitivity to understand concepts and reason well does not automatically translate to effective problem solving. When clients' Sensitivity score is too low, they may know what the best option is yet choose one that is self-serving or more to their liking. Low scorers may not care very much about the way they are perceived by others, and as a result may bulldoze their way through problems, leaving resentful colleagues in their wake.

Sustaining the Vision. Independence is one competency that may be drastically affected when people have verbal or nonverbal learning challenges. Working alone comfortably requires a level of confidence and belief in one's abilities that may not be present in people who have challenges with

verbal or nonverbal reasoning. Another important competency combination is change management and one's ability to regulate impulses. When clients are not thorough in their exploration of a situation or problem, they may act too quickly and make inappropriate decisions. Lower levels of verbal and nonverbal reasoning could affect their ability to follow through on collecting vital information necessary to truly comprehend a concept.

Influence is an area in which achieving buy-in from others is critical. Even if individuals have lower scores on the PCT, they can still be successful in their area of influence if they have excellent interpersonal skills. The area on the PCT in which clients would need to score higher is the ability to perceive relationships. Misreading cues from others could lead to moving forward in a direction of which the others do not approve.

CONCLUSION

After examining how the competencies on the CPI 260 assessment align with and diverge from the areas assessed by the PCT, we see how the blending of these two instruments provides us with a broader view and clues for professional development, coaching, and succession planning. When the data align it can be powerful, but even at points where there are differences, we have an opportunity to learn more and help our clients move in the right direction.

About CPP, Inc.

Since its founding in 1956, CPP, Inc., has been a leading publisher and provider of innovative products and services for individual and organizational development. CPP has been supplying reliable training solutions to businesses of all sizes, including the Fortune 500, for more than 50 years. The company's hundreds of unique offerings have been used by millions of individuals in more than 100 countries, in more than 20 languages, to help people and organizations grow and develop by improving performance and increasing understanding. Among CPP's world-renowned brands and services are CPP Professional Services and the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*® (MBTI®), *Strong Interest Inventory*®, *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument* (TKI), *FIRO-B*®, *CPI 260*®, and *California Psychological Inventory*™ (CPI™) assessments.

For more information on CPP, Inc., and the CPI 260 assessment, please visit www.cpp.com.