

### **Contradictions and Inconsistencies: What They Mean and What to Do**

I recently got a call from a client who has used the Performance Profile Assessment for many years. She had a question about what seemed to be contradictory results on a recent report.

Her question had to do with two characteristics: Coachability and Take-Charge Tendencies. This particular candidate had low ratings on both of these characteristics, and her question was, essentially, how can this be?

To answer her question, let's take a look, first, at what these characteristics measure.

Coachability measures a person's openness to suggestions, advice, and input from other people. A low rating means that the person has a strong preference to rely on himself, on what he knows, rather than being open to advice from others.

Take-Charge Tendencies, on the other hand, measures how strongly a person wants to be in charge, in a position of authority, directing others' activities. A low rating means that the person would rather not be in charge, and will not willingly take the initiative to direct others' activities.

A person who is not open to advice and suggestions from other people (↓ Coachability) is not necessarily a person who wants to be in charge of other people. It's entirely possible that this same person wants other people to be in charge (but, in addition, will not be thrilled to get advice and instruction from them.) This person might put it this way: "I know what I need to know to do my job, and I don't want to have to tell other people what to do."

There are two "morals" to this story:

First, be careful with labels! The Performance Profile Report has short names for basic characteristics (such as "coachability,") so it's important to be familiar with the longer explanation of what is being measured!

*Where can you find more information?* Our Performance Profile Reference Manual is available online and this link will take you to it. We also have a Performance Profile Training Workbook, also available online, that explains each of the characteristics in detail.

Don't forget you can always call me with questions! It's free: (800) 886-4356

The second moral is more subtle: People aren't always consistent in their behavior! Lots of factors, in addition to underlying personality, affect behavior. Here's a list of just a few: the weather, the kind of morning we had, interactions with other people, how much sleep we got, are we worried about money? I could go on for a long time, but you get the idea.

We aren't usually aware when we seem contradictory to other people, but we sure can spot inconsistencies in others' words and actions!

In spite of knowing this, we are usually surprised when the quiet co-worker, who is silent in meetings, turns out to be the life of the company party.

*Solution:* Think about how that person might see things that has led to apparently inconsistent statements or actions. Then, check with him to see if you're right. It's surprising how often that little interaction can avoid mountainous misunderstandings!

Remember, as Horace Smith said, "Inconsistency is the only thing in which men are consistent." And that goes for women and children, too.

Who's Horace Smith? Back in 1852, along with a partner, he created Smith & Wesson.

Thanks for sharing a few minutes of your time to read this note! I enjoy hearing from you when you have questions, and I'm just a phone call away. Here's my number again:

**(800) 886-4356**