



Individual Progress ► Collective Success

# Choosing Personality Assessments for Employee Development

## Why What They Told You Was Wrong!

Lunch and Learn

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# Do you use personality assessments? What do you use them for?

Please raise your hand if:

- ▶ You use personality assessments, for any purpose

Please keep your hand raised if:

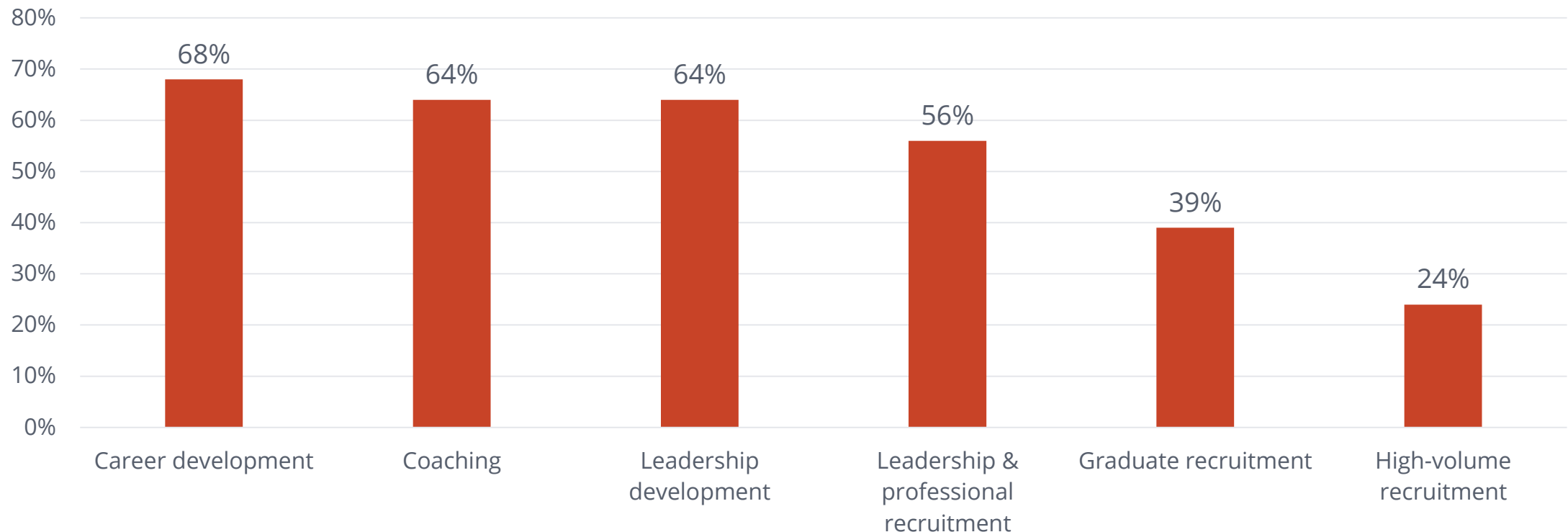
- ▶ You use personality assessments for employee development
- ▶ You use the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) assessment



# What assessments do test practitioners use?

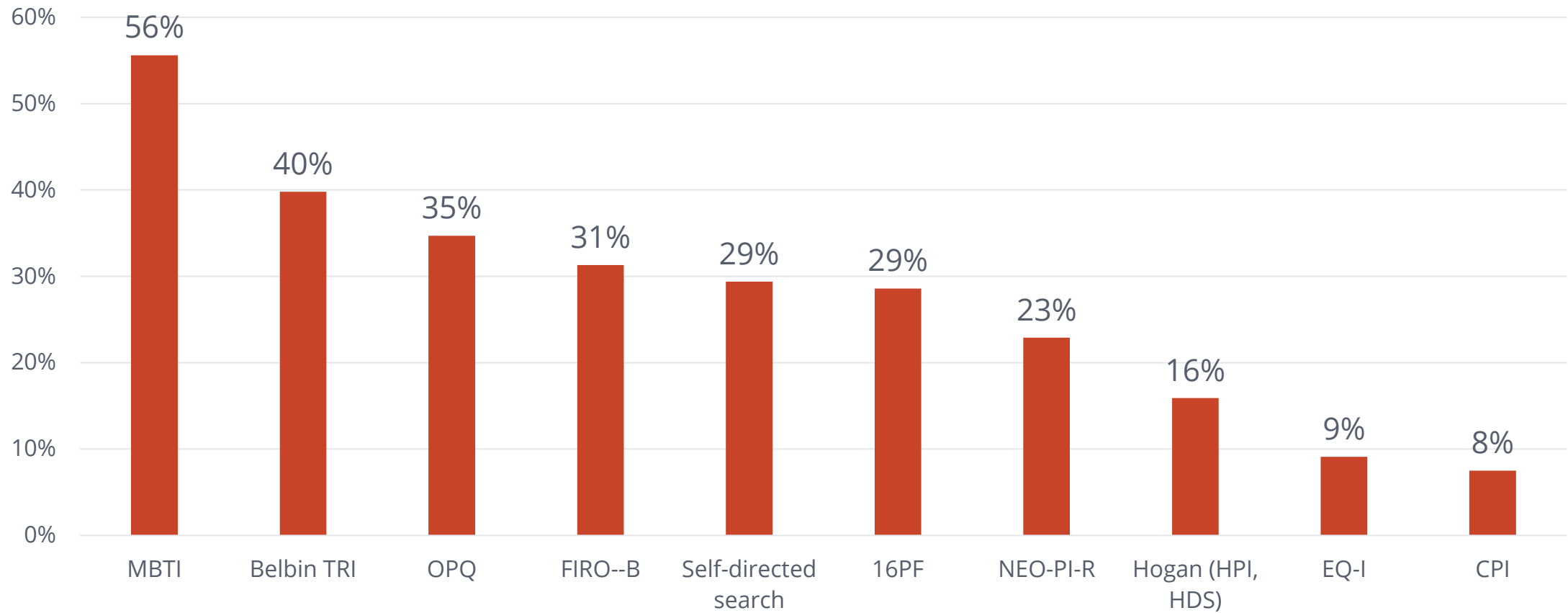
**84%** of test practitioners use personality questionnaires – more than any other assessment type

## What do you use personality questionnaires for?



# Most used personality assessments

Does your organisation use this test?



# So why is what they told you about tools used in development wrong?

## We know that:

- ▶ Personality questionnaires are used more for development than for selection
- ▶ Assessments designed for use in employee development are used by more organisations than those designed for use in selection

## But:

- ▶ Much of the published research into tests is concerned with selection
- ▶ And the criteria used in test reviews are more suitable for selection, not development

## As a result:

- ▶ The wrong criteria are applied to reviewing/choosing personality assessments for employee development
- ▶ Assessments used only in development get a bad press

What they told you about choosing personality assessments for development was **wrong**

## An example of bad press – the MBTI® assessment



# An example of bad press – the MBTI® assessment





# Criteria we are supposed to use for choosing assessments

## Norms

- Is there a relevant and up-to-date range of norm groups (comparison groups)

## Reliability

- Are the results consistent, both over time (test-retest) and within the test (internal consistency)

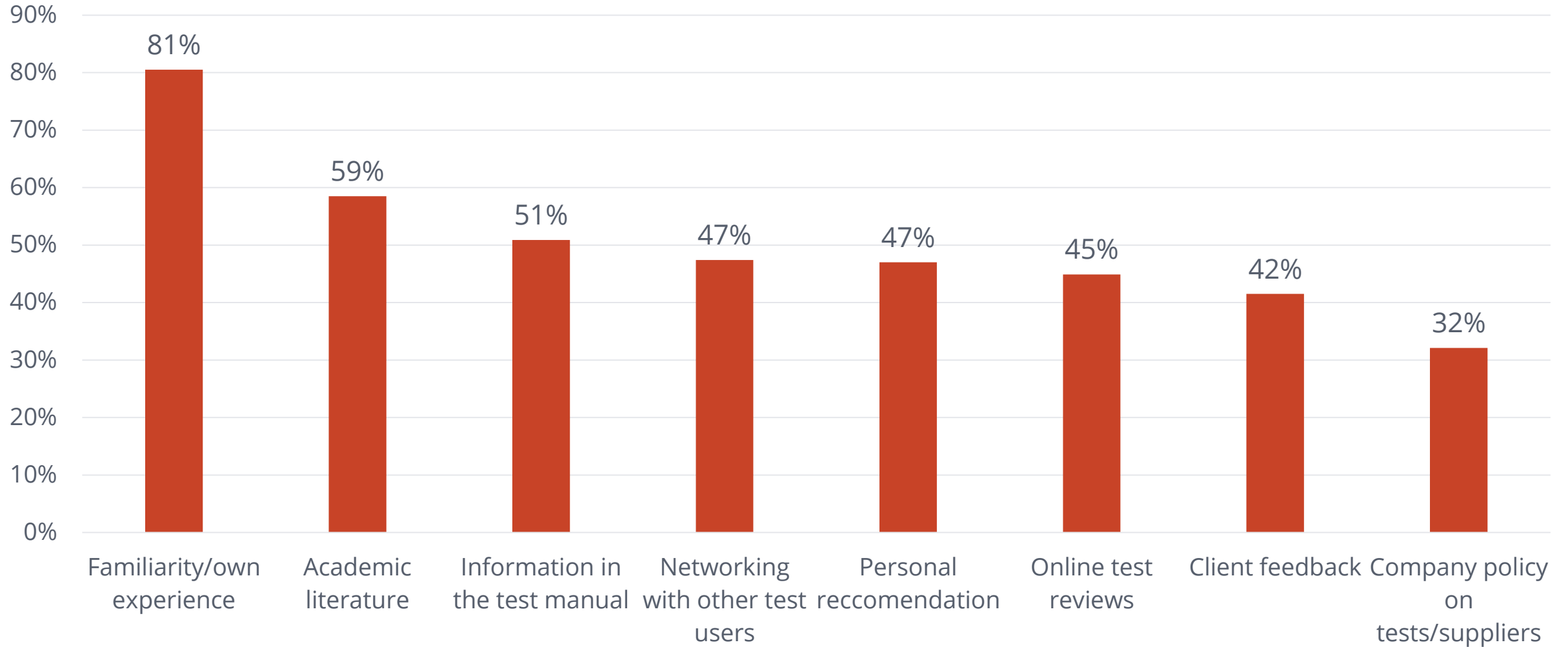
## Validity

- Face validity – does the assessment look appropriate
- Content validity – does it cover the relevant content
- Construct validity – does it measure the correct underlying constructs
- Criterion validity – does it relate to relevant external criteria (e.g. does it predict job performance)?

## Fairness

- Does the assessment treat different groups similarly, or is there evidence of adverse impact?

# Criteria that practitioners actually use for choosing assessments



# The scientist-practitioner divide



Practitioners and researchers have often held stereotypical views of each other, with practitioners viewing researchers as interested only in methodological rigor whilst failing to concern themselves with anything in the real world, and researchers damning practitioners for embracing the latest fads, regardless of theory or evidence.



*Anderson et al. (2001), p. 392*

# What they told you is partly right #1 : Norms, reliability, fairness

## Norms

- Less relevant; development tools less concerned with comparison to a standard
- For some tools (e.g. MBTI) not relevant at all

## Reliability

- Still important

## Fairness

- Still important – but less critical

# What they told you is partly right #2: validity

## Face validity

- Applies to outputs as well as the assessment

## Content validity

- Does not have to cover all aspects of personality

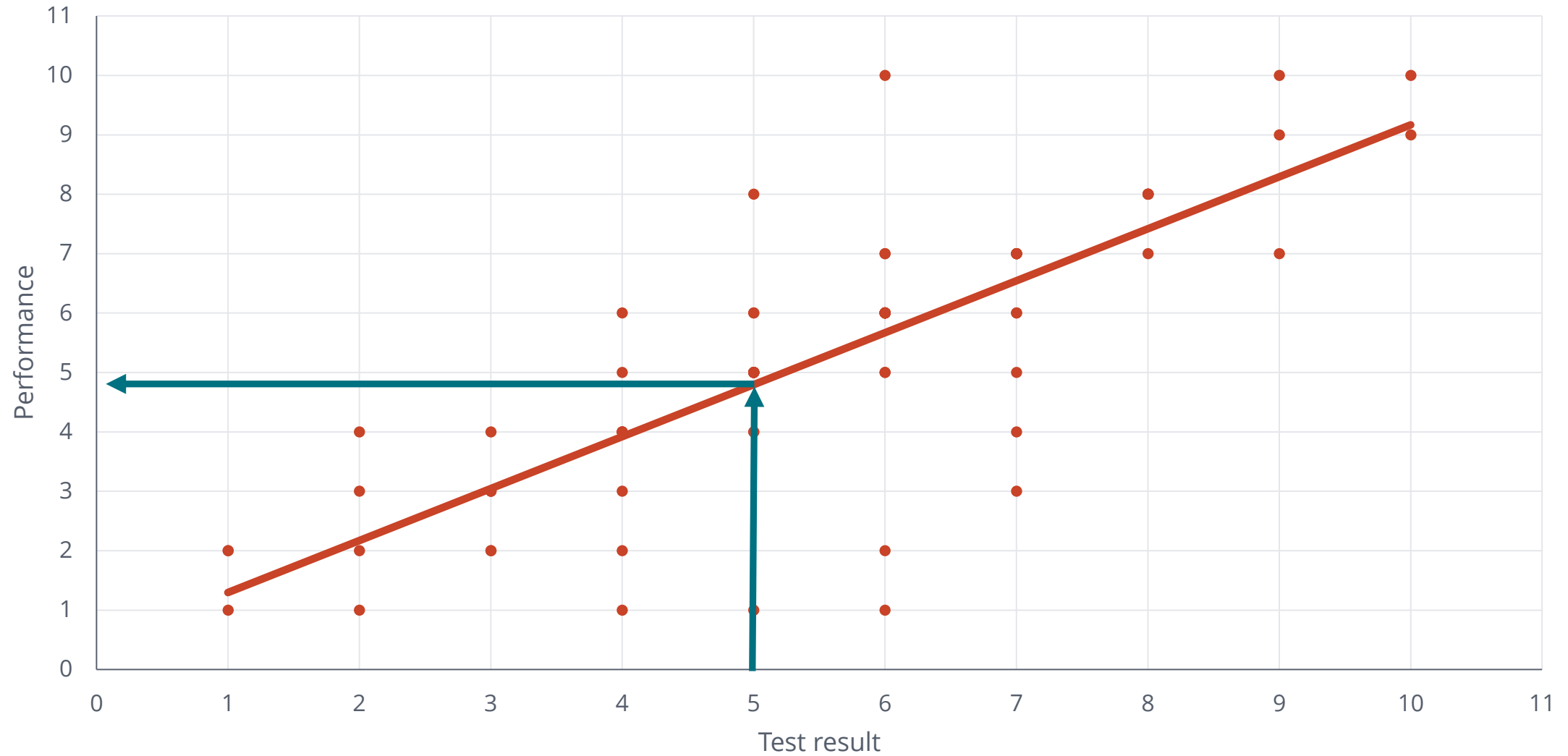
## Construct validity

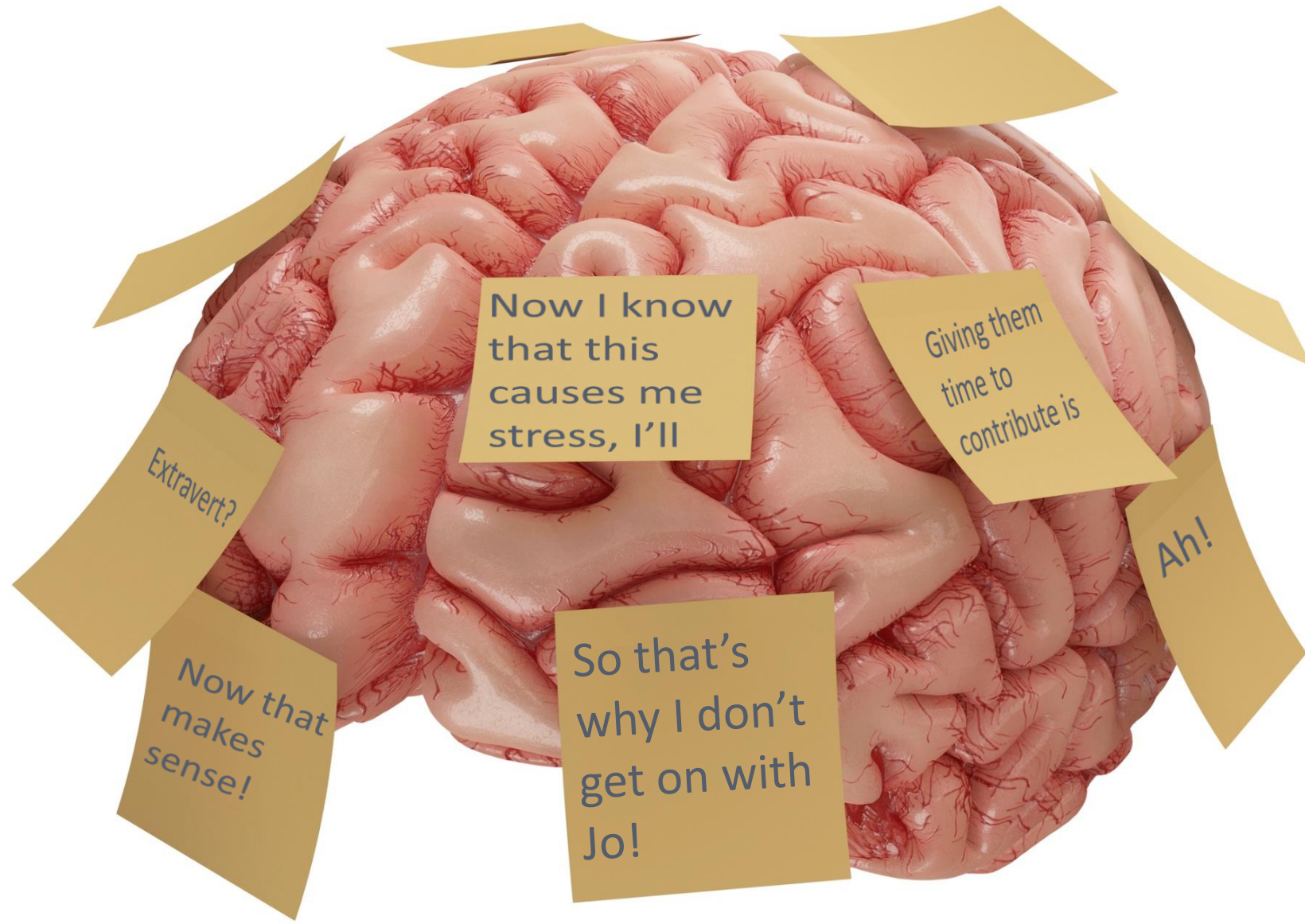
- Structure should be clear, and easy for client to understand

## Criterion validity

- Results should relate to developmental outcomes rather than performance

# Predicting performance





Increasing “stickyness”

# What they told you wasn't the full story: other criteria

## Simplicity

- Simple enough to understand in the time available
- Can build into a deeper understanding

## Interpretive output

- Accurate, understandable feedback
- More than reports?

## Broadly positive output

- Increases client buy-in

## Practitioner skill/intelligent output

- Importance of context

## Exercises, video, color etc.

- Not just a gimmick – even simple approaches (e.g. color) can be effective.



# Was the client experience valid?

- ▶ Did the person experience the process as personally valuable?
- ▶ Were the intended outcomes from the development achieved?
- ▶ Can key learnings be recalled months later?
- ▶ Is there ongoing impact at work?

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SPECIAL SECTION: ORGANIZATIONAL AND CONSULTING PSYCHOLOGY

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## Personality Assessment for Employee Development: Ivory Tower or Real World?

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### ABSTRACT

The acceptance and popularity of personality assessments in organizational contexts has grown enormously over the last 40 years. Although these are used across many applications, such as executive coaching, team building, and hiring and promotion decisions, the focus of most published research on the use of personality assessments at work is biased toward assessment for employee selection. Reviews have therefore tended to use criteria that are appropriate for selection, neglecting the additional and different criteria that are important in relation to employee development. An illustration of the often-discussed scientist-practitioner divide is that the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is the most widely known and used personality assessment in organizations, despite harsh criticism by the academic community. This article reviews this debate, and draws implications for the appropriate choice of personality assessments for use in individual and team development, and a new direction for scientific research.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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## In summary...

- ▶ Personality questionnaires are used more for development than selection
- ▶ But many assessments popular in the development arena get a bad press
- ▶ The criteria usually used to review tests, and recommended by academics for choosing tests, are more suited to selection than to development
- ▶ You should still consider fairness, reliability and validity when choosing tests, BUT:
  - ▶ The usual criteria of validity have a different 'flavor'
  - ▶ Additional criteria are important
  - ▶ The experience of your end client is paramount - stickyness



# Questions?

