

OPRA VALUES

Integrity

We are committed to using research methods, diagnostic tools and products that are technically sound and commercially viable.

Long Term Relationships

We value long term relationships that are built on open communication, trust and mutual respect.

Practical Application

We blend contemporary research with practical application to create solutions that are accessible, portable and flexible.

Results-Focus

We strive to deliver positive solutions that support the strategic needs of our clients.

Success

We recognise and celebrate success.

MISSION STATEMENT

OPRA Consulting Group specialises in the research, design and delivery of human resource solutions to support the strategic needs of its clients.

Through our combined expertise we are committed to producing results that have a positive impact on client organisations and continually strive to blend the best of contemporary research with practical application. We are focused on developing long term relationships and value the celebration of success both internally and externally.

VISION

To be recognised as making a positive impact in the way Industrial and Organisational Psychology is viewed globally through the education of HR and I/O practitioners around practical, robust, long term research based solutions.

News from the OPRA House



OPRA's Plans for the Year Ahead

With 2009 in full swing, we hope that you had an enjoyable Christmas break and feel re-energised to tackle what is likely to be a challenging year ahead for many organisations. As always, OPRA continue to seek out new opportunities both nationally and internationally to ensure that our clients are **fully supported and achieving their strategic objectives**. 2009 promises to be a year of innovation and advancement - a taste of OPRA's plan for the year ahead are listed below:

- ✓ A range of new measures into the GeneSys System for a **fully integrated assessment platform**
- ✓ **Educational sessions** presented in a new and dynamic forum
- ✓ A new look and feel to the **OPRA website** to capture OPRA's growing international brand
- ✓ An update to the competency based **Occupational Performance Dimension (OPD) system**
- ✓ An exciting **new range of psychological tests** to meet gaps in the current market



Adaptive General Reasoning Test (AdaptGRT): Revolutionising Psychometrics



In a world of constant technological advancement and innovation, psychometric testing is no exception. OPRA are excited to announce the launch of **AdaptGRT**, the latest and most sophisticated administrative method for **cognitive ability assessment** developed by Drasgow Consulting Group.

AdaptGRT is an intelligently designed psychometric assessment uniquely tailored to the ability level of each respondent. Based on **Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT)**, AdaptGRT is an efficient way of yielding maximum information in minimum time. Test difficulty is tailored to the ability level of each respondent by selecting items that meet content and "information" specifications. In this way, each test is individually designed to provide high accuracy and precision with far fewer items than would be required for a non-adaptive test.

Research in the area of intelligence testing has repeatedly demonstrated that three aptitude domains most consistently correlate with general reasoning ability: verbal, numerical and abstract reasoning ability (Heim, 1970). Consequently AdaptGRT is specifically developed to assess these domains of ability using a **sophisticated and efficient** method. Read more about CAT testing further on in the newsletter.

Introducing our International Associates: Arabian Assessment & Development Centre



Based in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Arabian Assessment and Development Centre (AADC) apply the same **best practice principles** of Occupational Psychology to human resources as OPRA. AADC utilise the GeneSys range of personality, values, interest, ability and aptitude tests for employee selection and development, team-building and coaching, as well as for individual career development and counselling. AADC apply their expertise to assist HR professionals with other services such as the design and delivery of assessment centres and exercises, competency framework design and delivery, and training in interview and selection skills. Visit their website: www.arabianassessment.com

OPRA PRODUCT RANGE

360 Degree Surveys

A fully-automated, customised 360 degree feedback system, enabling the set-up, administration and reporting to be completed online in a fast and flexible manner.

Assessment Centres

OPRA provide a wide range of 'off-the-shelf' assessment centre exercises. From entry level to executive roles, exercises can be found across a range of industries and disciplines.

Career Guidance Software

A range of tools to both facilitate discussion on future aspirations, as well as provide an insight into the range of careers that best match an individual's interests.

Data Solutions - STATISTICA

A leading-edge solution for integrated data analysis and data management.

Emotional Intelligence

Individual or 360-degree assessment via a comprehensive survey of one's ability to recognise, express, control, manage and understand others' emotions.

Job Analysis - CMQ

A comprehensive questionnaire designed to investigate all aspects of jobs, including the job itself, the knowledge and abilities required by the worker and the specific behaviours that lead to effective performance.

Psychometric Assessments

OPRA offers a wide range of ability, aptitude and personality assessments, which are designed to provide a fair, objective and cost effective means of assessing likely behaviour and job performance, in a wide range of settings.

Sonar6 Talent Management

Sonar 6 is a line of sight for senior management to view all talent in an organisation.

Skills Evaluation – Prevaluate

A skills evaluation tool for training needs analysis and pre-employment assessment. Evaluations include software skills, technical skills and clerical skills.

Work Wellness – PMI

The Pressure Management Indicator is a comprehensive measure of an individual's current sources of pressure and coping styles.

What is Your Business Doing to Survive the Recession?



With all the talk of an economic downturn, many of our clients are asking: What can we do to survive? OPRA has put together 5 suggestions for maintaining high performance in the face of a recession:

1) Reduce costs while keeping quality high: When faced with the challenge of reducing costs, HR practitioners need to explore smarter more cost effective ways of maintaining critical HR processes. For example, savings can be made by bringing OPRA's range of assessment tools in house, helping to significantly reduce costs without any reduction in quality!

2) Prepare individuals for the economic downturn: Redundancies are common in periods of downturn and employers must diminish the fears and concerns of employees. Assessments (such as the Pressure Management Indicator) can be used to identify sources of stress. Follow-up training programmes (such as OPRA Develop) are an effective way to address stressors identified, and ensure dollars spent will yield real results.

3) Help those who need to move on: Employees faced with redundancy are often left feeling helpless. One-on-one coaching is a way to encourage individuals to take responsibility for their career path moving forward, help them build a stronger sense of self worth, and feel confident approaching future prospects. Once prepared to move forward, tools such as OPRA's FutureSelves assessment can be used to uncover career goals.

4) Build capability among those staying: Organisations reduced to a leaner structure must enhance the efficiency of remaining employees. Development courses to lift performance at a personal and managerial level are vital to improved effectiveness. Driven by the work of world-renowned specialists, OPRA's courses on communication, healthy thinking, and emotional intelligence are a powerful way to improve personal functioning and bottom line results in lean organisations.

5) Evaluate regularly: With budget restrictions in place, HR professionals are being asked to prove the worth of strategic initiatives. HR activities must be routinely evaluated to ensure they meet wider goals and ROI. OPRA is able to assist your organisation in determining the value of current practices, identifying areas for improvement, and increasing the effectiveness moving forward.

Latest Updates from the OPRA House

Welcome Laureen Chong: In January, the Auckland office warmly welcomed Laureen Chong to the team. Laureen has taken on a newly created role, **National Operations Manager**, which sees her responsible for taking a lead role in all aspects of the day-to-day business administration, financials, and quality assurance. Welcome on board Laureen!

Psychology Registration for Sue Sommerville: Ongoing staff development is an important policy at OPRA and all consultants are encouraged and supported to engage in continual professional development. This year, Sue Sommerville, Psychological Advisor in the Wellington office will be undertaking her **Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology to become a Registered Psychologist**. This will involve many interesting and challenging projects ahead which we look forward to sharing with you throughout the year.

Congratulations Marisa: In November 2008, Auckland consultant Marisa Witzel submitted her thesis on the effects that alternative work arrangements have on employees and their families. After many months of hard work, Marisa has achieved her **Masters qualification** and is currently working towards publication of her results. **Congratulations Marisa!**

THE OPRA TEAM

AUCKLAND

Tamara Sallis
Manager Upper North Island

Grace Eadie
Administration/Training Coordinator

Tammy Simpson
Psychological Advisor

Marisa Witzel
Psychological Advisor

WELLINGTON

Sarah Burke
National Manager

Dr. Paul Englert
National Sales and Training Executive

Paul Wood
Psychological Advisor

Sue Sommerville
Psychological Advisor

Rose O'Sullivan
Receptionist/Helpdesk

CHRISTCHURCH

Teresa MacGregor
Manager South Island

Kaleena Muirhead
Psychological Advisor

ADMIN & SUPPORT STAFF

Laureen Chong
National Operations Manager

Hilary Blackledge
Accounts Administrator
Auckland

'OURIT'

Glenn Brown
Director - OurIT

Case Study: MOTAT Puts OPRA's End-to-End Solution into Practice



One of OPRA's clients, the Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT), is **leading the way** in the use of a strategic end-to-end solutions approach to HR. OPRA assisted MOTAT in the design of a **customised competency framework**. This competency model has since served as the foundation of selection systems, performance reviews, and individual and organisational development plans for its staff.

In line with this commitment to the strategic use of its competency framework, MOTAT's selection methodology includes the use of competency based **structured interviews, referencing checking, and psychometric testing**. This has assisted MOTAT in making the right hiring decisions, which is more important than ever in today's economic climate.

As well as hiring the right people, MOTAT is committed to getting the most out of its employees whilst providing the best managerial and organisational climate to assist in their on-going **job satisfaction and retention**. This includes 360 performance appraisals, up-skilling managers in the art of having 'courageous conversations', and keeping a finger on the pulse when it comes to organisational stress levels. For further information contact Robyn Winks (HR Manager, MOTAT).

"The Museum of Transport & Technology (MOTAT) has a unique environment where volunteers work alongside paid staff to deliver a quality Museum Experience on a daily basis. The Museum was established in 1964 and for the majority of that time has been operated by Volunteers. With the introduction of the MOTAT Act in 2000 the Museum was able to receive funding from the 7 City and District Councils across the greater Auckland area. With that comes the added responsibility of ensuring that the Museum is operated in a professional and transparent manner that can only be achieved by having all MOTAT people working towards common goals and objectives. Establishing a Competency Framework that is specific to the MOTAT environment was fundamental to that, so that we had a framework that is understood across the Museum and becomes a natural way of how we operate on a day-to-day basis. Our framework supports an environment that builds upon a museum that overflows with passionate, skilled and committed individuals. It is important, therefore, that the Competency Framework has become the driving force behind all our HR processes such as Recruitment, Induction, Individual Development etc."

Robyn Winks, HR Manager, MOTAT

Whatever Happened To... Michaela Drum?

Michaela Drum was a Psychological Advisor in the Auckland office before starting her own consulting company in 2005. Her business, '**Added Insight**' specialises in psychometric assessment, assisting organisations in both the selection and development of staff. Her business interests are in creating practical solutions that integrate technology with recruitment support services, having recently developed '**I-Supervise**' – psychometric testing using web camera technology. In 2008, Michaela completed her Post Graduate Diploma in Psychology to become a Registered Psychologist. After an intensive year of study, she intends to focus on new business ideas as well as hopefully having a bit more time for fun!



~ NEW OPRA WEBSITE ~

Look out for OPRA's new and improved website, due to be launched in April!

Information and resources at your fingertips

Check out OPRA's updated brand

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Article Review: Computer Adaptive Tests... What Are They?

In the last 20 years, advances in computer technology mean that practitioners are no longer restricted to tests with static questions. Sophisticated computerised tests can now be made adaptive, meaning that the difficulty of the assessment tailors itself to the candidate's level of ability. This means that **for every correct answer a candidate gives, the next question will be progressively more difficult** and vice versa for an incorrect answer, giving a more accurate final result.

Such assessments are called Computer Adaptive Tests (CAT) and use advanced mathematical models that can take into account question difficulty, guessing, and how well a question distinguishes between candidates' different ability levels. Because this type of assessment is not dependent upon the ability level of the person taking the test, it is **appropriate for candidates of all levels**, from the person on the shop floor to the CEO.



Summary of Benefits:

- A more **precise measure of general cognitive ability**
- Less questions are needed to get a result, meaning **time savings** for both the candidate and the administrator
- **Improves candidates' impressions** of the assessment, as the questions are at an appropriate level for their ability
- It is **suitable for all levels** of ability

For more information on Computer Adaptive Tests:

- Check out the useful information in Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer-adaptive_test
- Contact an OPRA Representative to learn more about our new Computer Adaptive Test, the '**Adapt GRT**'.

Upcoming Training

COURSE	WELLINGTON	CHRISTCHURCH	AUCKLAND
Psychometric Test Administration (\$750 + GST)	6 th April 2009	4 th May 2009	2 nd March 2009
Psychometric Test Interpretation (\$2,400 + GST)	7 th – 9 th April 2009	5 th – 7 th May 2009	3 rd – 5 th March 2009
Psychometric Test Interpretation Stage 2 (Price included in Stage 1)	14 th April 2009	8 th May 2009	6 th March 2009

Additional Training Courses:

- ✓ Assessment and Development Centre Training
- ✓ Career Management Training
- ✓ Emotional Intelligence Training
- ✓ Structured Interview Training
- ✓ Team Building Workshops
- ✓ Healthy Thinking
- ✓ Emotional Intelligence
- ✓ Resilience
- ✓ Effective Communication
- ✓ Self-Esteem

If you are interested in attending any of the courses above, please contact **Grace Eadie** at auckland@opragroup.com or (09) 358 3233.

For any further information regarding the content of this newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact Tamara Sallis at tamara.sallis@opragroup.com or call (09) 358 3233

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