

## *Other Data-Generating Devices*

The ten data-generating devices contained in the workbook should provide you with enough information to do your self-assessment. Many other possible sources of data, however, might be useful to you. You may wish to use such sources to supplement those you now have. In this chapter we will briefly describe some of those other sources.

We would offer two caveats, however, neither of which should surprise you. First, be sure you understand the nature of other data-generating sources so that you can understand the information they produce. Second, be sure you treat the supplementary data as you have treated those from the ten devices in this book. Remember that a single datum from a single source proves nothing; look for patterns.

### **Other Psychological Tests**

Various students of ours have at one time or another used the following instruments in their self-assessments:

1. Edwards Personal Preference Schedule
2. Thematic Apperception Test
3. Rorschach Inkblot Test
4. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
5. FIRO-B

There are numerous other instruments like these.

You may find that you cannot gain access to these tests—especially tests like the Rorschach—except

through a properly trained psychologist. And this is probably how it should be. If a psychologist administers a test to you and interprets its output, be sure *you* understand the basis of his or her interpretation.

### **IQ and Other Aptitude Tests**

A number of IQ and so-called aptitude tests exist today. No doubt you have taken at least one of these tests (such as the SAT or GRE tests you took as a part of applying to undergraduate or graduate school). A few of the more popular are these:

1. Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale
2. Harvard Speed Alphas
3. Skills Inventories
4. Miller Analogies

Be sure to treat these devices as carefully as you do all your data-generating instruments. Sophisticated “tests” such as these look more authoritative to many people than a simple device like a 24-hour diary, and so people may be more passive, less critical, and less demanding in dealing with the output of these tests. Don’t be!

### **Experiential Exercises and Games**

In the past decade, a number of exercises and games have been created that simulate some type of real-

world activity and can provide interesting data to the participant. An example is the In-Basket test, developed by Educational Testing Service and AT&T, and today available in a variety of versions. In a typical version, an individual is given the role of a manager who has twenty-five items in his or her in-basket (letters, memos, phone messages, and so on), must catch a plane in three hours, and can reach no one on the phone or in person (it is Sunday). The individual is given three hours to go through the in-basket and take any actions that seem necessary (schedule meetings, write notes, and so on); his or her behavior and decisions become the output of the exercise.

Experiential exercises and games can provide useful data for people of all ages, but we've found them particularly helpful to young people—especially those with no work experience.

The output from these exercises, which can be rather rich, should be treated just like the output of other devices. Again, it is important to understand the data-generating device to avoid misusing its output. The most common misuse of game output is to make huge inferential leaps to grand conclusions, based on the assumption that the game experience was exactly like the real experience it was simulating. (For example, Joe seems to do a much better job than other participants playing a "plant manager" in the

in-basket exercise. Joe therefore would probably be a good plant manager.)

The In-Basket exercise can be obtained through Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ 08540. Other exercises of this type can be found in *Organizational Psychology: An Experiential Approach*, by Kolb, Rubin, and McIntyre (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974) and in *Management: An Experiential Approach* by Knudson, Woodworth, and Bell (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973).

### **Other Personal or Historical Documents**

Our students have occasionally used a variety of documents from their pasts as data in their self-assessments. For example, we have asked them to include their graduate school application form, since it requires them to answer a number of interesting essay questions. Some students have also used old diaries, photographs, letters of recommendation, performance appraisals, newspaper clippings, and essays that they wrote. As long as you are sensitive to the circumstances under which these personal or historical documents were generated, they can occasionally be useful additions to your data.