Psychologists launch automated team development, assessment and strategy software

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Thursday, 29 April 2004

Psyfactor, a team of Birmingham-based psychologists, has developed comprehensive team management software that will save public and private sector HR departments thousands of pounds. Recent public inquiries have highlighted inadequate training and poor teamwork as instrumental in system failures. The new software targets these failings at source and delivers immediate strategy to engage staff to meet targets, reduce absenteeism and support the whole team. The software, called TMR (Teamwork and Management Resource), is thought to be the first of its kind to deliver tailored strategies for managers - via desktop PC - on improving team (and individuals') performance.

Philip Perry C.Psychol, managing director of Psyfactor, explained:

"We're confident that TMR's strategy suggestions are a leap forward. Traditional performance assessment requires the results of questionnaires to be manually interpreted in order to derive a strategy. By automatically calculating strategies TMR removes bias and human error and at the same time reduces the workload for managers. This provides more objective assessment which can be easily benchmarked."

The national launch of TMR follows a successful pilot with Derek Eyre, a senior manager in local government, who used the software on two of his teams over twelve months.

Eyre added:

"Employing occupational psychologists in team assessment exercises costs thousands of pounds for a one-off consultation, so there is tremendous potential for an intuitive product like TMR with its built-in follow-up features. When you consider ongoing evaluations and staff turnover issues, bringing in consultants whenever the team make-up changes is cost-prohibitive, however TMR has made it affordable for us to manage our teams and assess their performance over time."

Team managers, line managers and team members are required to enter data and answer questions in order to derive overall attitudes to workload, team effort, team capacity and quality. The team manager is then to able assess the team as a whole as well as receiving a performance profile and suggested management approach for individual staff members. TMR also includes 360° feedback so that team managers can gain insight into how they are perceived by their staff.

TMR has been developed in two formats. One format assesses performance when assigned targets (such as sales) are important, whilst the other is structured to make assessments in environments involving case studies. The software uses algorithms developed from prevailing psychological methodology such as Kolb's Learning Cycle and Hackman and Oldham's research. Its integral reporting features are thought to be unique.

The software can be used for teams of up to 12 members with 7 different targets. The team manager is able to set these parameters and add weightings according to the size and difficulty levels of the varied

tasks and case studies assigned.

On the underlying philosophy of TMR, Perry was keen to add:

"Whilst providing an effective team performance management tool, it is also important to realise that TMR is more carrot than stick. By looking at team members' own issues, and not just the tasks that they need to achieve, it engages with their personal drive and motivation. Such an empowering approach intrinsically promotes staff development rather than acting as a simple method of assessment."

Whilst initially developed for large organisations, TMR has the potential to open the door to the delivery of high-end managerial performance methods for much smaller companies, departments and teams. TMR assessment is also available online via the Psyfactor website (www.psyfactor.co.uk).

Notes for Editors:

TMR (Teamwork and Management Resource) assesses and provides strategies for the effective performance of teams. It addresses workload, individual effort, team synergy, team support, staff retention and quality issues. It also provides individual profiles for each team member and directs managers to the management approach that is likely to have the best impact in terms of both performance and support for each team member.

TMR aims to help teams achieve the most from combined work and identifies and deals with persistent problems to enable teams to overcome them and support each other. TMR is the result of over thirty years of management and psychological research in performance management.

The software can be installed on standalone PCs or deployed over networks.

Psyfactor is a chartered occupational psychology practice based in Birmingham. Established in 1997, Psyfactor provides specialist management consultancy on improving business and individual performance. Philip Perry C.Psychol is managing director and the driving force behind TMR.

Psyfactor's varied client base includes Sun Chemical and Birmingham City Council.

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