

A Decade of the
DarkSide

Fighting our demons at work

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Part 1: Introduction

Introduction by Geoff Trickey, Managing Director of Psychological Consultancy Ltd



Current affairs and history demonstrate that there is a seriously dark side to human nature. The veneer of civilized behaviour seems to fall away alarmingly wherever there is a break down in the social order. Even in the most stable of societies, although for the most

part primitive impulses are successfully corralled within the framework of cultural values, there is always a significant fringe of malevolence and outright brutality.

This research is not concerned with this extreme level of disintegration, but it does reflect the fact that there are deeply rooted, potentially self-destructive aspects in everybody's make up. At work these tendencies can break through when, for whatever reason, we fail to rein in the more extreme aspects of our personality - in times of pressure and stress or intoxicating success. We all need to be vigilant.

Many leaders have what Aristotle termed a tragic flaw. Paradoxically, this is often also their greatest virtue. But through misuse or extreme circumstances it leads to their downfall; a theme often echoed by Shakespeare's treatment of tragic heroes and heroines.

Recent events demonstrate that the workplace can indeed be the scene of high drama. We have been witnessing the downfall of great leaders and great organisations on an almost daily basis, often brought to their knees by taking the strategies that contributed to their success to extremes. It is estimated that up to 70% of leaders will derail during their career, often through alienation of others and the erosion of loyalty and commitment. It is also said that while people *join* organisations they *leave* managers. The 2005 Workplace Productivity Survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) found that almost six out of ten (58 per cent) workers identified poor management as the biggest obstacle to productivity.

The purpose of this report is to share the insights gained over a decade of professional practice focused on these issues; to raise awareness of dark side processes, their impact on individual careers, on relationships with colleagues and on organisations. The report considers the implications of a very comprehensive set of Hogan Development Survey (HDS) data gathered between 1999 and 2009.



About the Hogan Development Survey

Ten years ago PCL first published the UK edition of the Hogan Development Survey (HDS), a personality questionnaire with an important difference. Rather than focusing on leadership talents, the HDS is based on research into leadership failure. The leadership literature is divergent, inconsistent and often contradictory, but there is considerable consensus about the reasons why leaders so frequently self-destruct. The HDS addresses these dark side characteristics.

“dark side qualities typically become apparent during novel or stressful periods, or when the individual feels relaxed or invulnerable. ”

The HDS focuses on eleven dispositions that would generally be considered desirable attributes but which flip into destructive mode if not managed well. These dark side qualities typically become apparent during novel or stressful periods, or when the individual feels relaxed or invulnerable. Combined with an individual's imprecise beliefs about the way these behaviours impact on others, they undermine loyalty and commitment and negatively influence careers.

Dark side personality characteristics can be identified in most people. We all learn to vary our behaviour according to the pressures we are under and the situations we face and we all exercise restraint over socially undesirable impulses. Cloaked by their positive and attractive aspects, dark side characteristics promote the high flyer's success, and support his or her journey towards the top table. The HDS recognises the potential danger of these extreme characteristics, providing a measure of risk and identifying an agenda for coaching and personal development.

Over the past decade, the HDS has become the pre-eminent measure of dark side personality. Used extensively in development, leadership and coaching programmes, HDS profiles open up an important new perspective on talent management and provide a coherent basis for effective action.

Hogan Development Survey scales

HDS clusters

The 11 scales of the HDS fall into three clusters or higher order factors that characterise the underlying insecurity or anxiety for any particular scale. These three clusters closely resemble the three self-defeating styles that Horney (1950) identified for managing anxiety in relationships. According to Hogan, each cluster is based on a particular interpersonal strategy (Kaiser & Hogan, 2006):

- **Moving Away or Intimidation** - gaining security by unnerving people or discouraging involvement. Relates to the first 5 scales of the HDS from *Enthusiastic-Volatile* to *Focused-Passive Aggressive*.
- **Moving Against or Flirtation and Seduction** - winning recognition with self-promotion and charm. Relates to the next 4 scales of the HDS - *Confident-Arrogant* through to *Imaginative-Eccentric*.
- **Moving Towards or Ingratiation** - obtaining approval by being loyal and indispensable. Contains the HDS scales *Diligent-Perfectionistic* and *Dutiful-Dependent*.

Hogan Development Survey scales

Every one of these traits has a positive side. It is only when enthusiasm tips over into volatility, for example, that problems can be caused.

MOVING AWAY

E–V Enthusiastic-Volatile

A tendency to swing from enthusiasm for people, projects and organisations to disappointment or disaffection with them. Others find such people hard to work with because they are moody, irritable, bad tempered, inconsistent and impossible to please.

S–M Shrewd-Mistrustful

A tendency to be suspicious and to mistrust others' motives and intentions. Such people are shrewd and difficult to fool, but hard to work with because they take criticism personally, readily feel mistreated and are prone to retaliate when they feel they have been wronged.

C–C Careful-Cautious

A tendency to be over concerned about making mistakes and being embarrassed. Such people are reluctant to take the initiative for fear of being criticised and are hard to work with because they are rule-bound and unwilling to take chances or express controversial opinions.

I–D Independent-Detached

A tendency to be self-sufficient and indifferent to social feedback or the moods and feelings of others. Others may find them hard to work with because they seem self-focused, uninterested in other people's problems and unaware of how their actions affect others.

F–PA Focused-Passive Aggressive

A tendency to be inflexible about work practices and to be stubborn about sticking to one's own timetable and standards of performance. Others may find such people hard to work with because of their procrastination, stubbornness and reluctance to be part of a team.

MOVING AGAINST

C–A Confident-Arrogant

A tendency to overestimate one's talents and accomplishments, to ignore one's shortcomings, and to have a strong sense of entitlement. Although they make a strong first impression, such people are hard to work with because they are opinionated, self-absorbed, and unwilling to learn from their mistakes.

C–M Charming-Manipulative

A tendency to be impulsive, excitement seeking, and manipulative. Such people appear charming and make a good first impression, but are hard to work with because they are more 'spin' than substance, take risks and ignore their mistakes. They are also hard to advise and don't fully evaluate the consequences of their decisions.

V–D Vivacious-Dramatic

A tendency to expect others to see them as interesting and worthwhile. They perform well in public, appear charismatic and competent and know how to create an aura. They are hard to work with because they are self-centred, impulsive, over committed, too quick to take the credit and unwilling to listen - especially to negative feedback.

I–E Imaginative-Eccentric

A tendency to think and act in ways that are unusual, striking and perhaps at times odd. Others may find them hard to work with because, although they may be creative, they are impulsive, eccentric and unaware of how socially inappropriate their ideas may be.

MOVING TOWARDS

D–P Diligent-Perfectionistic

A tendency to be indiscriminate about when to be conscientious, orderly and attentive to detail. Such people are organised and hard working but difficult to work with because they are unable to delegate. Their determination to do every task equally well makes them seem fussy, critical, and stubborn about their work.

D–D Dutiful-Dependent

A tendency to be eager to gain approval and to be excessively careful to please their superiors. Such people defer to others in order to maintain amicable relationships. They seem pleasant, agreeable and compliant, but are difficult to work with because they are indecisive and find it impossible to make decisions on their own.

Part 2:

Research findings; a decade of data

Since the launch of the Hogan Development Survey (HDS) by R. Hogan and J. Hogan in 1997, there have been well over 500,000 administrations.

This report uses data from more than 18,000 UK online completions. We have used this data as a baseline to find specific dark side tendencies within different sectors, industries and generations to see where organisations may be at risk from these potentially destructive personality traits.

“ Entrepreneurial

In short, they (entrepreneurs) are risk-taking, creative and don't tend to give a damn what anyone else thinks! ”



The UK workforce

This analysis provides an overview of the dark side characteristics of the UK workforce. Our sample is predominantly managerial and professional and includes people in public and private sectors, across many different industries, different ages, and at various levels of expertise and seniority.

THE RESULTS

The dark side characteristics of the UK workforce

Often in survey or research reports, generalisations about groups are made on the basis of average scores. However, because the HDS is concerned with the risk associated with extreme characteristics, the focus is on high scores. In this report we are concerned with the *prevalence* of high scores within each group; that is, scores above the 84th percentile (one standard deviation above the mean).

Chart 1 shows the percentage of the sample that scored above the 84th percentile on each of the HDS scales. This identifies dark side tendencies that will be highly visible in the UK workforce. The most prevalent dark side is *Dutiful-Dependent* (29% of the sample) followed by *Independent-Detached* at 26% and *Charming-Manipulative* at 24%. The least prevalent characteristics are *Enthusiastic-Volatile* at only 17% of the sample and *Diligent-Perfectionistic* also at 17%. Throughout the report, this is the baseline against which other groups are compared.

These results indicate that the most common dark side characteristic in this sample is one of appeasement and accommodation to others. The risks associated with this characteristic include an inability to make independent decisions, and an overwhelming consideration for others even when it might be more appropriate to focus on the task or organisational goals. High scorers on *Dutiful-Dependent* will have a strong desire to please their managers, to comply and to conform to what is being asked of them. They are uncomfortable disagreeing, confronting or 'speaking truth to power', which is of concern if the momentum of existing practices goes largely unquestioned by a significant proportion of managers, and particularly so if it is the ethical and moral principles of individuals and organisations that are in question.

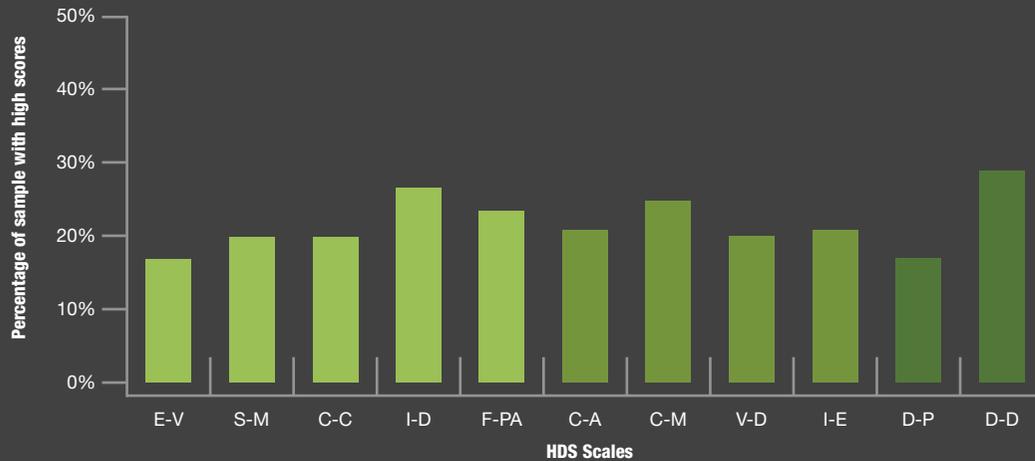
The second issue is that a quarter of managers have strong tendencies to withdraw from situations, especially when they are under pressure. They are described as remote, unaware of their impact on others, and uncommunicative. Such people will often be socially skilled and their day-to-day behaviour may belie these underlying characteristics and, to this extent, they are managing these tendencies well. However, there will be times when their resistance to casual engagement, or reluctance to deal with pressing issues will influence their performance.

Each of the other HDS scales has its own potentially counterproductive features and, of course, given that people commonly have more than one high HDS score, there are innumerable possible combinations of dark side factors. There are, for example, 6% who have exceptionally high scores on both of the most prevalent HDS scales highlighted above. This group will not only be reluctant to rock the boat themselves, but they will also be disinclined to deal with awkward issues raised by their subordinates – a combination that presents particular resistance to upward communication of concerns.

Number of dark side tendencies displayed in the workforce

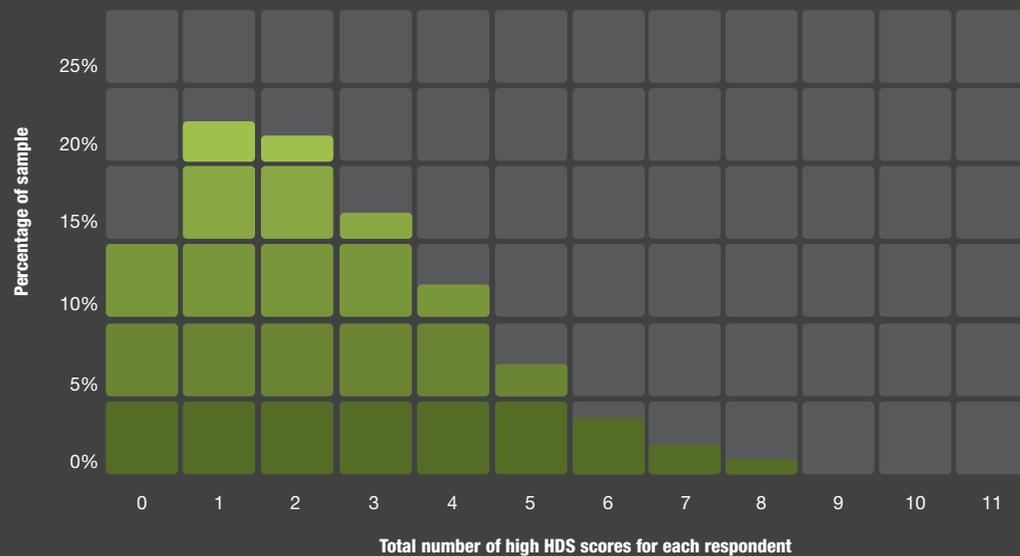
The analysis presented in Chart 2 looks at the number of high scoring dark side tendencies on display by a mixture of high potentials, employees in different sectors and industries, and of different ages. The majority of people have at least one or two dark side characteristics. 22% exhibit one dark side tendency, 21% exhibit two and 16% display three dark side tendencies. Only 15% demonstrate no dark side characteristics at work.

Chart 1: Percentage of people in the total sample with a high score on each HDS Scale
n=18464



“ The most common dark side characteristic in this sample is one of appeasement and accommodation to others... they are uncomfortable disagreeing, confronting or ‘speaking truth to power’. ”

Chart 2: Frequency distribution of high HDS scores in the total sample
n=18464



Dark sides across the generations

Since the early 90's, debate within the media and amongst management theorists, consultants and academics has fuelled speculation about differences between generations in the workplace. The emphasis has been on the 'Millennials' or Generation Y, those born between 1982 and 2001. At an anecdotal level the issues are about the readiness of this generation to pick up the baton of corporate responsibilities and man the wealth generating machinery for the next decades. This is the technological generation, familiar with computers, internet, digital music, iPods, high tech mobile phones, and a recreational life centred on texting, social network websites and computer games.

The feedback from employers about Generation Y is that they are completely out of tune with the work ethic. Described as the generation that only takes "yes" for an answer, they have no idea what work routine is about; getting to the office at nine o'clock every morning and being expected to deal with a working day. "They have extraordinary technical skills, but childhoods filled with trophies and adulation didn't prepare them for the cold realities of work," says Mary Crane, who runs crash courses for Millennials.

Research into generational differences has been far from conclusive. In our research we analyse 10 years of data concerning the dark side characteristics of three different generations (Strauss & Howe, 1991):

Baby Boomers: Born 1943-1960

Generation X: Born 1961-1981

Generation Y: Born 1982-2001

THE RESULTS

Generation Y

The data:

Generation Y score very high on the *Dutiful-Dependent* scale and high on *Diligent-Perfectionistic*, *Enthusiastic-Volatile*, *Shrewd-Mistrustful* and *Careful-Cautious*.

Implications:

The Generation Y sample has significantly more individuals who are highly compliant and dutiful. They are on average more anxious and less stable than other generations and, although eager to please, they are more worried about delivering other people's wishes, and concerned about upsetting people by disagreeing with them. The data also shows that they are keen to deliver work of a high standard, perhaps even when a casual approach might have been more effective. They appear to be less sure of themselves, more self-critical, more mistrustful of others and more self-conscious and socially anxious than the other two older generations. They may also be inclined to take criticism personally and can be seen as temperamental.

Chart 3: Dark sides across the generations



Risk profile:

Taken together these characteristics show that a distinctly ‘fearful, anxious theme’ is present for the Generation Y sample. The greatest risk comes from a reluctance of young managers to make independent decisions, to assume responsibility or to adequately confront the status quo.

Generation X

The data:

The only point where Generation X scores consistently higher than both other generations is on the Vivacious-Dramatic scale (a small but significant difference).

Implications:

The overall picture is that Generation X seems to have a more even spread of dark side tendencies than either Generation Y or the Baby Boomers. The one HDS scale that sets this generation apart indicates a higher incidence of socially skilled, talkative individuals. Perky and effervescent, they are likely to seek the limelight, characteristics that sit well with their relative charm and tendencies to be influential.

Risk profile:

The greatest risk with this group is the probability of being compliant and unwilling to rock the boat, but they are also at risk of being viewed as superficial and manipulative if they overplay their hand, as some inevitably will.

Baby Boomers

The data:

This group has the greatest incidence of all generations of high *Independent-Detached* scores and a lower incidence than both Generation X and Y of high *Enthusiastic-Volatile*, *Shrewd-Mistrustful*, *Charming-Manipulative* and *Dutiful-Dependent*. Baby Boomers are the only generation for whom *Dutiful-Dependent* is not the dominant HDS scale.

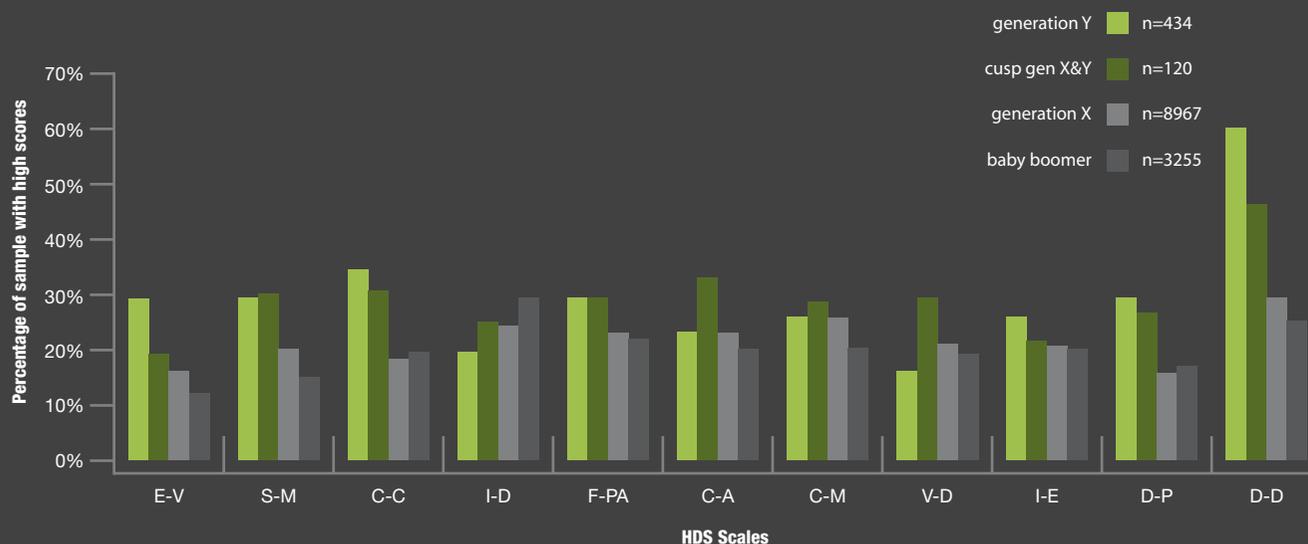
Implications:

Baby Boomers are not worried about pleasing everyone all of the time. They are more relaxed about persuading others or winning over colleagues. They seem to be less mistrustful and more comfortable with who they are, perhaps because they have little left to prove. These differences for Baby Boomers suggest an increased self-acceptance, more trust in others, less desire to exploit others and more independence.

Risk profile:

Of course, the full range of risk factors will be in evidence, but the most significant risk factor for the Baby Boomer generation will be a faction that are reluctant to deal with issues. In extreme cases, when problems are brewing, such people may simply choose to be absent or find a need to attend to something else that doesn’t involve other people.

Chart 4: Dark sides and age



Cusp analysis

To further test the theory that some dark side tendencies decrease systematically with age and experience we looked at people on the cusp of Generation X and Y. This is defined by the year in which they were born, 1981 (the last year of Generation X).

This analysis particularly sought to establish what would happen to *Dutiful-Dependent* scores as 60% of Generation Y scored very high on this scale.

Chart 4 shows the percentage of those achieving high *Dutiful-Dependent* scores for four successive age groups. The prevalence of 60% for Generation Y falls to 47% of the Cusp group, to 29% of Generation X and 25% of Baby Boomers. This clear trend for HDS scores to decline with age applies to some other HDS scales but with lesser gradation. Although far from conclusive for other HDS scales, this analysis shows that for the group of behaviours associated with the *Dutiful-Dependent* scale there are age effects.

Discussion

Overall, this data strongly supports the conclusion that Generation Y stands out as markedly different to the other two. These differences fit with a maturational narrative that would characterise Generation Y as less mature, less confident, less assertive but cooperative and eager to please, Generation X as being at their peak in terms of social skills, competitiveness and drive, and the Baby Boomers as being more easy going, generous and comfortable in their skin.

Personality, we know, does change in predictable ways over a life span, but slowly and predominantly at either end of the age spectrum. Certainly the progression across the three generations looks maturational but the size of the discrepancy suggests that other influences are involved; differences in upbringing and culture, for example. An unexpectedly high incidence of immaturity within the Generation Y sample is very much in line with the anecdotal debate and the popular media stereotype of a Millennial.

The greatest generational differences are in dutifulness and compliance. There is both intrinsic motivation and external encouragement for these strategies and they are clearly fruitful ways to behave throughout childhood, adolescence and early adulthood. The prevailing economic conditions during the nurturing years of Generation Y and the relative affluence of that generation of parents may well have acted as a catalyst to this mechanism. On the other hand, the two older generations have been exposed to a different reward regime for many years. Independent mindedness, decision-making and acceptance of personal responsibility are increasingly called for in adult working life and these qualities are rewarded and reinforced at this stage.

Can we assume that, with the passage of time, and when faced with the economic realities of life, Generation Y will increasingly fall into the mould established by their predecessors? Or, does the data identify the start of a transition to a new era and a new orthodoxy, a 'brave new world' in which the expectations of Generation Y combine with the technical possibilities to create a new work-life ethic?

In our view it has to be the middle option. Technology is in any case changing things rapidly but there are still practical, economic and psychological aspects of working life that have to be accommodated. It looks like a tough period of transition for Generation Y but, on the other hand, their attitudes and technical skills are likely to sweep away the remaining reluctance to embrace the technological possibilities.

“ **These differences fit with a maturational narrative that would characterise Generation Y as less mature, less confident, less assertive but cooperative and eager to please, Generation X as being at their peak in terms of social skills, competitiveness and drive, and the Baby Boomers as being more easy going, generous and comfortable in their skin.** ”

Comparing public and private sectors

The public/private sector divide is a structural feature of every economy. Comparison between the two sectors is a truly global exercise and a major preoccupation from China to Europe and North America. The debate has touched on a very wide series of issues over the past decade and particularly since the recent downturn in the economy. These issues include comparative rates of pay, productivity, absenteeism, pension provision, knowledge management, rate and extent of organisational change. Research has also highlighted changes in public sector structures, in styles of governance, in ethos and culture, in working relationships, security and longer-term career prospects. These are radical changes that cut across the expectations and the motivations of earlier recruits to the public sector and present new challenges.

With the UK Government pouring financial support into the modernisation of the UK's public sector, is it right to think that policies and practices can usefully be transferred between the sectors, or that the public sector can be energised by importing methods, talent and leadership from the private sector?

Our research over 10 years demonstrates that there are statistically significant differences in the character traits of public and private sector employees. The 'attraction-selection-attrition hypothesis' (Schneider, 1987, 1995) describes a systemic link between organisational culture and the predominant characteristics of its population and would predict the existence of the kinds of differences we have observed.

The implications of these distinctive differences in dark side characteristics between the two sectors are potentially far reaching. They hint at the nature of the cultural contrasts between the sectors. They suggest that the leadership or managerial risk factors that each is most exposed to are quite different. They have a bearing on the challenges faced by individuals who move between sectors, as well as implications for processes of change management.

THE RESULTS

Public Sector

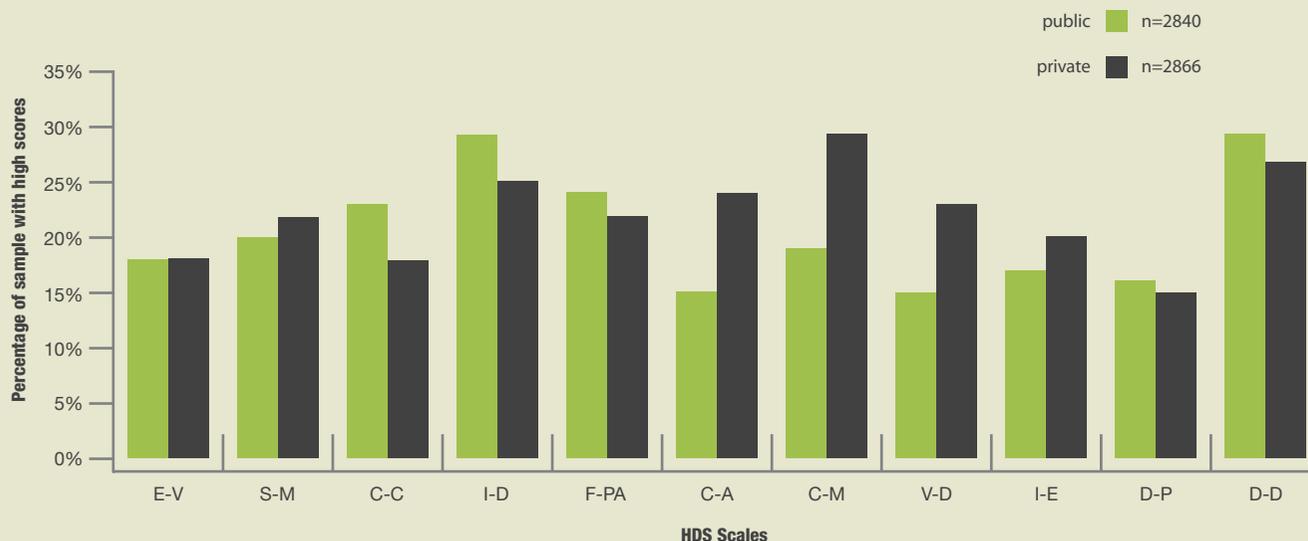
The data:

The public sector sample includes significantly more individuals with high scores on the *Careful-Cautious*, *Independent-Detached*, and *Dutiful-Dependent* scales. They have significantly fewer individuals with high scores on the *Shrewd-Mistrustful* scale and very significantly fewer with high *Confident-Arrogant*, *Charming-Manipulative*, *Vivacious-Dramatic* and *Imaginative-Eccentric* scores.

Implications:

The overall picture of the public sector sample is that, on average, they are more cautious and socially anxious than their private sector counterparts. **Public sector employees are less likely to display the same levels of persuasive, influential, self-confident and innovative styles of behaviour found in the private sector.**

Chart 5: Public sector versus private sector employees



Being more self-conscious and concerned about the embarrassment of failure may inhibit managers about voicing their opinions or making the independent contribution of which they may be capable. They may also have a tendency to become more inward looking and uncommunicative when they are under pressure and may find it hard to ask others for help or advice. The data also indicates that senior public sector staff are more inclined to take people as they find them and not to be preoccupied by the ulterior motives of others.

Risk profile:

The public sector is less exposed to the risk of managerial excesses expressed in terms of arrogance, bullying, dogmatism or flamboyant and poorly thought through innovation. The risk of excessively mistrustful leadership styles is also lower in this sector. Public sector risk is more associated with being worried about 'rocking the boat' or being responsible for mistakes and, as a consequence, avoiding or delaying decisions.

Private Sector

The data:

The private sector sample includes significantly more individuals with high scores on the *Shrewd-Mistrustful* scale and very significantly more with high *Confident-Arrogant*, *Charming-Manipulative*, *Vivacious-Dramatic* and *Imaginative-Eccentric* scores. Fewer in this sector have high scores on the *Careful-Cautious*, *Independent-Detached*, or *Dutiful-Dependent* scales.

Implications:

The four scales in the *Moving Against* cluster of the HDS are significantly higher on average for those working in the private sector. This category demonstrates a deeply rooted optimism and certainty. They will be more outgoing and talkative and less socially anxious or remorseful, often using their charm to influence colleagues and clients. They are also more likely to have fresh ideas and suggest innovative solutions to problems than their public sector counterparts. Compared to the public sector there are, on average, more private sector individuals with enhanced communication skills that are more likely to involve others in their work. On the other hand, ***the data suggests a greater tendency to be cynical about others' motives and to suspect others of organisational politicking and machination.***

Risk profile:

The risk exposure of the private sector particularly emphasises the potential for managerial styles to become arrogant and overbearing where senior staff overestimate their own talents, and become unwilling to listen to restraint or advice. As a sector, these people are more outgoing and talkative with the associated risk factor of perhaps becoming more superficial in their dealings with others, and preferring the sound of their own voice rather than listening! Being highly imaginative exposes this sector to risk associated with excessive expression of these qualities; bringing vague, impractical, time wasting ideas to the table or forever 'modernising' or changing things just for the sake of change. ***Wherever their greater cynicism surfaces, this is likely to produce a more suspicious, paranoid, 'low trust' leadership style.***

Discussion:

The data shows a trend for people with different personality characteristics to be attracted to public and private sector employment. This is reflected in the culture of these two sectors, both as a cause and as a consequence. This is also in line with the fact that attitudes to risk and to security are very different and the recruitment aims of the two sectors need to be different too. The private sector needs to take greater risks and needs people who can thrive on this. The public sector has to be more prudent and conservative to ensure that it manages public affairs responsibly. However, in order to be successful across a wide range of functions, each has to find the most effective balance of personality and talent for them.

This is critical for a private sector that has been severely battered by all the complex ramifications of the global financial downturn. It is equally critical in a public sector faced with further financial pressures and calls for reduced budgets. A Guardian/ICM poll in July 2009 showed that for the first time in over a decade voters are now more concerned with reducing spending in the public sector rather than increasing investment in public services.

The overall picture is that the private sector needs to focus on the risk of leadership and managerial styles becoming excessively arrogant, manipulative, risk-taking, and unproductively imaginative. The recent downfall of the worldwide banking sector speaks to this high level of arrogance and extreme risk taking. Conversely, the public sector should be concerned with the possibility of leadership and managerial styles becoming more indecisive, angst ridden, uncommunicative and less astute or savvy (or conversely more trusting).

“

Several authors have commented that the public sector has been subjected to an unparalleled growth in managerialism and that the skills, competencies and behaviours required of managers in the public sector have changed considerably as a consequence of the growth of managerialism.”

Worrall, Cooper & Campbell (1998)

Risks for private sector organisations

One of the senior partners in a firm of solicitors is arrogant and manipulative. He is overbearing and offensive to junior staff and is feared in the office. On the other hand, he is a very effective rainmaker, out-performing others in winning new business. The firm is fully aware of the situation, but chooses to ignore the issue because the rewards are also great. After all, if juniors leave the organisation there will be more in line to take their place.

The firm is short sighted in ignoring the effect on the culture of the organisation, the morale of the firm and its status as an attractive ‘employer of choice’ in a competitive labour market. The combined effects of low internal morale, steady attrition and a declining external reputation threaten to accelerate churn and make it unmanageable. Ultimately there will be a tipping point where the loss of an arrogant high fee earner is more than compensated for by the increased morale, energy and enterprise of all those that had felt their oppression.

Contrast the above with an example from a manufacturing organisation that employed a design engineer who tipped over into extremes of arrogance and eccentricity. Through his egotism and strident behaviour he persuaded his colleagues of his own conviction that he was the source of the company’s success. His overbearing attitude terrified work colleagues who feared he was irreplaceable. A new Managing Director took the decision to fire him and to outsource the design function. The rest of the organisation breathed a liberating sigh of relief. They lost no market share, continued to be innovative and to perform ahead of the market.

Risks for the public sector

A manager in the public sector exhibited strong *Moving Away* character traits and took such a ‘hands off’ approach that working relationships and performance of her department went into free fall. This manager was fundamentally uncomfortable in social situations and had difficulty in engaging informally with others or making small talk and generally keeping in touch with the mood and climate within her department. She increasingly distanced herself and found ways to minimise, or even avoid, contact with her own staff, and spent more time and energy on preparing reports to impress her committee than on dealing with the morale and performance of her staff and the running of the department.

Minor injustices, long standing resentments and personal rivalries and enmities had an increasingly divisive effect within the department. This in turn led the virtually unmanaged team to establish its own demarcations along social group fault lines, and working practices changed to suit friendship patterns. The tensions and animosity increasingly became known to other departments, but by the time the situation was fully recognised, it was so toxic that any chance of recovery or of re-establishing fruitful working relationships was lost.

Within the public sector the higher prevalence of *Moving Away* characteristics illustrated in extremis above, combined with an even greater decrement in terms of communication, dynamism and innovation create quite a specific pattern of management assets and risks. Within the internal population, these differences will not be so easily discernible because the cultural environment simply reflects the balance that exists and normalises it in the eyes of those involved.

Comparing industry sectors

Dark side profiles in different industry sectors

As well as looking generically at the differences between public and private sector employees we also wanted to analyse specific differences in sectors where we could identify employees in individual companies or industries. To highlight some extreme differences we looked at groups from the Emergency Services, the Finance and Insurance sectors and a small number of Entrepreneurs. The Entrepreneurs had started their own businesses, persevered and been successful. A larger group were also considered for this category because of their conspicuous leadership success in the private sector but were excluded because they were not responsible for the original start-up.

THE RESULTS

Finance & Insurance

The data:

The results from over 500 employees in Finance and Insurance sectors show that there are no significant extremes of dark side tendencies and on the whole their spread of dark side profiles is unexceptional. In the main, these two sectors are similar to each other and their exposure to risk reflects that of the total sample.

Implications:

The implications of this data are that there will be a wide range of personalities in this sector with little to distinguish

them from the wider population. Around 10% to 20% of this sample score in the high-risk range across all the HDS scales suggesting that the personality characteristics that distinguish individuals in this sector will be diverse.

Risk profile:

The risk profile mirrors the implications described above so that no clear predictions about the most likely dark side characteristics to be on the alert for are possible. There are risks associated with such a diversity of dark sides however; firstly the culture may be less distinctive so that there are fewer cues to expected behaviour, and secondly there may be increased potential for misunderstanding and conflict between people compared to organisations or industry sectors where there are fewer dark side characteristics and a greater familiarity with the associated patterns of behaviour.

Entrepreneurs

The data:

The Entrepreneurs are characterised by high scores on *Charming–Manipulative* and *Imaginative–Eccentric* and low scores on *Careful–Cautious* and *Dutiful–Dependent* (zero incidence!)

Implications:

Our small sample of Entrepreneurs exhibits very different tendencies and much spikier profiles than the more evenly spread profiles of those working in large corporations. They

are on average exceptionally high on all the HDS scales that contribute to social performance. They will often be self-confident, charming and interesting. A high percentage demonstrate particularly well developed persuasive skills, innovation, and a lack of self-consciousness, social anxiety or remorse. Equally, the numbers indicate that they are not anxious to make decisions on the basis of pleasing people. In short, they are risk-taking, creative and don't tend to give a damn what anyone else thinks!

Our sample of Entrepreneurs seems to share with the Emergency Services group a general tendency to mistrust others and to be detached and hard to know. Although reaching very different solutions, it appears that both may deal with these tendencies by seeking certainty in dealing with others. While the Entrepreneurs are emphatic in their extreme tendency to overwhelm, the Emergency Services appear to accept a more dutiful and dependent role than other groups.

Risk profile:

The highest risks for Entrepreneurs are that they can be so imaginative that they consider highly improbable ideas, only some of which will ever prove both feasible and effective. Indeed many of these ideas will prove so abstract or nebulous that they cannot be translated into action, while others will just be impractical. Other risks are associated with their social skills. When not taking care of their performance, they may appear shallow or manipulative and undermine trust or commitment as a result.

Emergency Services

We also wanted to look at another group whose working environment was dissimilar to large organisations. Over 500 people in the Emergency Services have completed the HDS over the least 10 years.

The data:

For all the *Moving Away* HDS scales, a large proportion of this group achieve high scores: *Enthusiastic-Volatile*, *Shrewd-Mistrustful*, *Careful-Cautious*, *Independent-Detached* and *Focused-Passive Aggressive* (all around the 50% mark). This is also the group in this analysis with the highest scores in the *Dutiful-Dependent* and *Diligent-Perfectionistic* scales.

Implications:

This group shows an extreme version of the public sector pattern described in the previous section. As a group they are different from the usual organisational graduate and this is reflected in their dark side profiles. On the whole they have lower self-esteem and lower self-confidence and tend to withdraw from others at times of stress or when feeling insecure.

They are much lower on the HDS *Moving Against* characteristics where an individual's social skills come into play to charm and manipulate people around to their way of thinking, yet they are potentially more eager to please than those working in large corporations. They are also far more likely than any other group in this analysis to be passionate and to show their emotions. This raises issues about the resilience of almost 50% of the group given the nature of their work.

Risk profile:

The greatest risks for this group are associated with their tendency to be detached, cautious, mistrustful and volatile, all characteristics that may impede ease of relationships and teamwork. Given the very high level of incidence, these characteristics must often combine within the same individual, amplifying this risk. The other potential risk area relates to the incidence of high ratings for dependence. This raises doubts about their ability to make independent decisions or take confident independent action, particularly under stress.

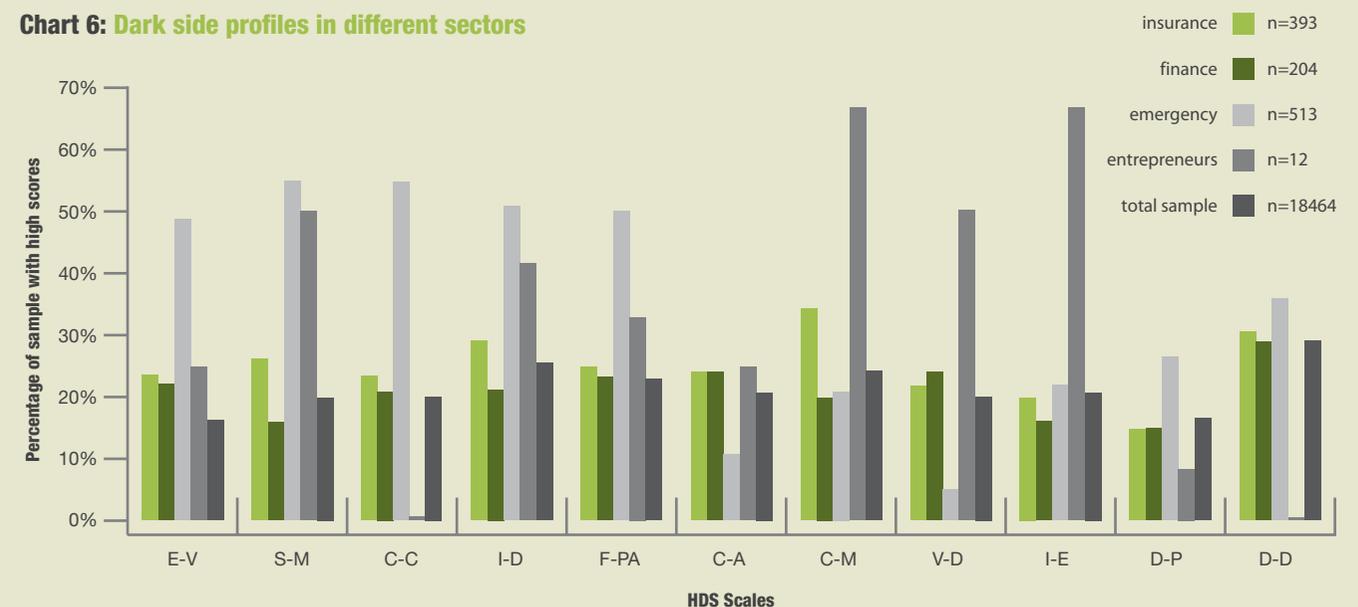
Discussion:

Analysing dark side profiles in this broad range of industries demonstrates that there are specific character traits on display within different types of organisations. There are

two sides to any HDS characteristic and recruiting managers have to decide how much risk it is sensible to take in making new appointments. Innovation, passion or persuasive social skills, for example, may be at a premium, but it is essential to appreciate that the high extremes of these characteristics may be potentially even worse than a shortfall. You certainly can have 'too much of a good thing' and there is always a balance that needs to be struck.

The other side of the organisational chemistry concerns the culture, the pressures and the support available to key players. The capacity of an organisation to optimise staff performance depends on all three. **The organisation plays its part in determining whether dark side characteristics are restrained within their positive aspect, or whether they foster a climate that encourages the counterproductive aspect to find expression. Dark side tendencies can be actively managed by organisations as well as by individuals.**

Chart 6: Dark side profiles in different sectors



“ Styles of leadership are appreciated differently in different organisations, giving credence to the belief that a rising star in one organisation might not have such a stellar career in another. The issue is whether or not these differences are strategic and intentional or whether they are another consequence of a divergent and confusing leadership literature. ”

Future leaders

This analysis looks at data from participants in four corporate leadership programmes and finds a small common core, but gives an overriding impression of variety.

Starting with the similarities, these include an above average incidence of independent decision-making and faith in their own beliefs, a greater stability and resilience, and a greater flexibility and capacity to adjust arrangements and schedules to fit in with others. These characteristics may well be widely appreciated and may be regarded, alongside demonstrated performance, as predictive of leadership potential.

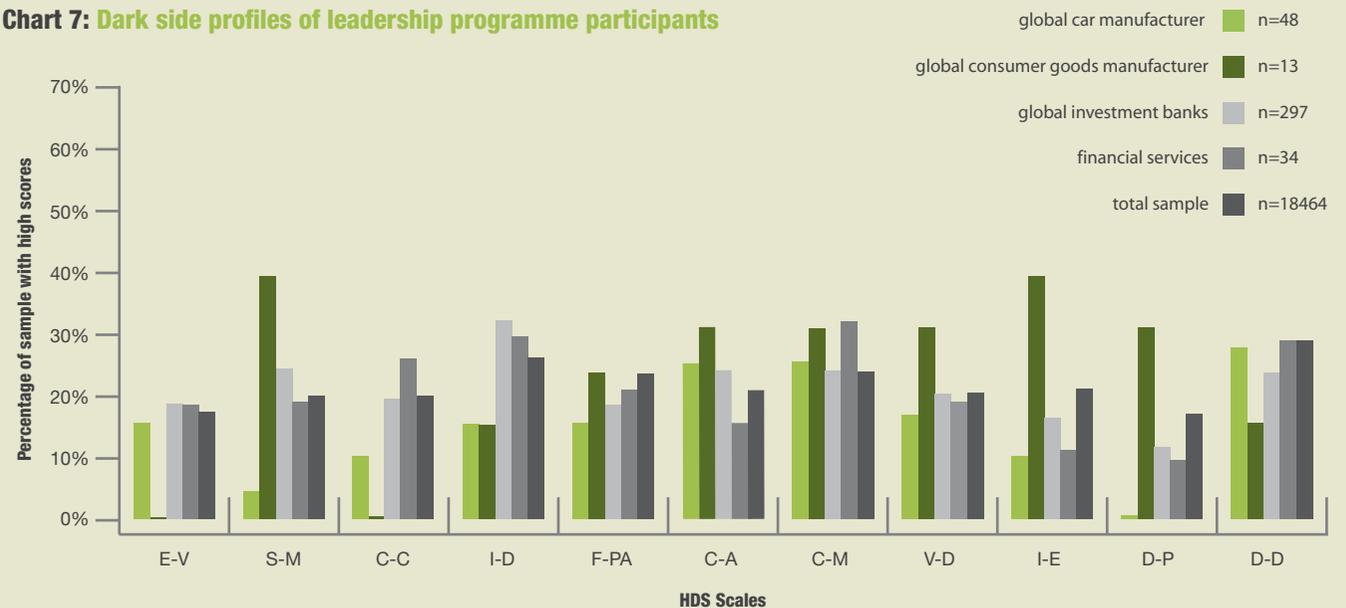
The most clearly defined characteristics are for the Global Consumer Goods Manufacturer. This was an extremely small sample and should not be generalised to the industry as a whole. However, in addition to the common features already described, they are unselfconscious, have little social anxiety

and readily express their views and contribute to debate. They are more independent in their outlook, imaginative and socially engaging but they are also watchful of others, wary of their motives and set high standards.

High potential employees in a Global Investment Bank and a Financial Services leadership programme are in line with the broader cross-section of employees in Financial and Insurance Services, and tend to be largely similar to each other and also to the total sample. The additional most distinguishing feature of this group is the prevalence of high scores on the HDS scale that suggests poise, social awareness and ability to influence others.

Leadership potential in the Global Car Manufacturer sample has a number of variations to this general trend. The biggest additional differences for this group are in their acceptance and trust in others and their readiness to delegate.

Chart 7: Dark side profiles of leadership programme participants



Part 3:

Qualitative findings over 10 years

Part 2 was based on descriptive statistics and those results are a testament to the potency of dark side forces and their influence. However, because of the dynamic nature of the dark side and the self-management element in behaviour and performance, statistics cannot tell the complete story. Depending on the self-awareness and mastery of the individual concerned, high HDS scores are capable of driving either functional or dysfunctional behaviour. This variability of outcome creates difficulties for the kind of statistical analysis typically used in social science research. This is a problem that also engulfed Freudian theory, and for much the same reason. This section provides the qualitative, observational evaluation that is essential to complete the dark side story. Here we convey the additional insights derived from countless feedback, coaching and training sessions conducted by the PCL team, and introduce a model that reflects our understanding of dark side influences.

“ **Nothing exceeds like success and failure to appreciate the potential impact of overplayed strengths threatens the probability of success.** ”

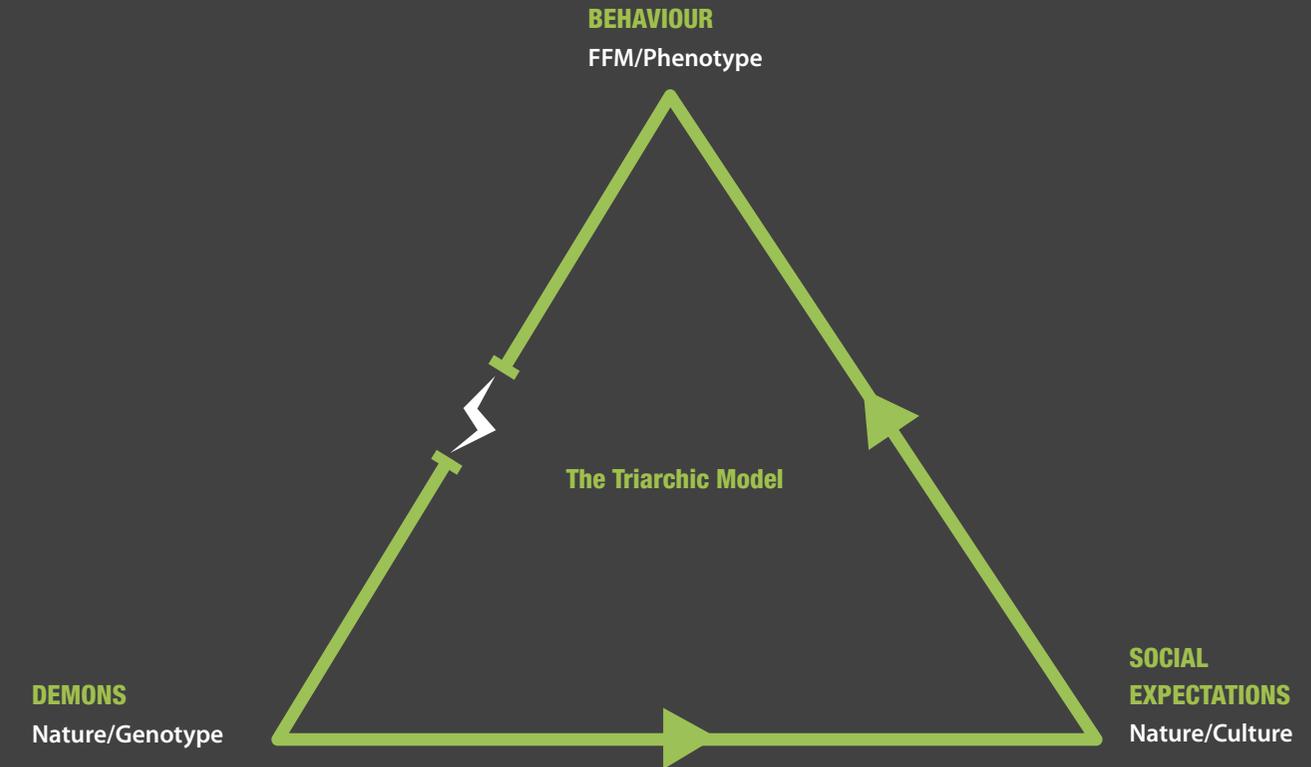


Roots of personality

We have come to view the dark side tendencies identified by the HDS as deeply rooted and often evident from a very early age. Crucially, we do not arrive on this planet as a 'blank slate'. There is an instinctive genetic basis to human nature shaped by evolution to maximise the newborn's chances of survival and this establishes our basic temperament. For all of us, personality development is the journey from our primitive, self-centred and pre-socialised infancy to the socially and culturally integrated nature of effective adulthood. There is nothing very controversial about this. Every theory of personality that we know of presents its own version of this view (from Freud and Jung to the Humanists and the Social Learning Theorists).

Fighting our demons

Our struggle to make something of our basic endowment begins at birth as a process concerned with gaining acceptance, attachment and building identity. As most parents will testify, the frustrations of infancy ensure a plentiful manifestation of dark side tendencies, from check-out tantrums, sibling rivalries and outright assaults to the less obtrusive distractibility of the highly imaginative child and withdrawal of the reclusive. The phrase 'fighting our demons' refers to the life long effort involved in marshalling our resources, maintaining our social performance, particularly under pressure or when, for whatever reason, we feel entitled to relax our self-restraint. Early progress in managing our impulses may be challenged by an influx of adolescent hormones, but by early adulthood, the majority achieve a stable workable balance.



The dynamic nature of personality

In today's occupational assessment practices the usual focus is on the consistency of personality, but what we emphasise here is the fluctuation and variability that we also experience. At the level of daily routine the dynamics of personality are concerned with ensuring that one's behaviour is appropriate to the situation (think stag/hen night, job interview, christening, football match, first meeting with his/her parents). At a leadership level it is about the dangers in over reliance on the interpersonal strategies that reaped success in the past. 'Nothing exceeds like success' and failure to appreciate the potential impact of overplayed strengths is to risk disaster.

Shaped by what?

We arrive wired in ways that establish the roots of personality but, from the values point of view, we *are* a blank slate. Nurturing is culture specific, a process that gives us our values, our language, our identity and much more. Culture provides the social codes, values and ideals that guide us in moderating our primitive nature. The 'nurturing of nature' is achieved by the complex influences of family, community, language, and the culture that we grow up in. But everybody has their breaking points. In our view, the Hogan Development Survey (HDS) gives us a glimpse of the dynamic tensions between moderation and excess that are prone to short-circuit, allowing the dark side to express

itself. These often troublesome dynamics are illustrated on the facing page in The Triarchic Model (Trickey, 2007). This portrays the constructive interaction between culture and basic instincts; Nature *through* Nurture, rather than Nature *or* Nurture (Matt Ridley 2003).

The end result?

What we refer to as 'our personality' is the person that we have become, our phenotype. In effect, this is what we assess when we use the more familiar 'bright side' measures of personality that capture the individual from the observer's perspective. These assessments provide the best available measure of phenotypic personality; the end result of nature/nurture interaction.

Of course, the dark side of human nature gets much darker than the scope of this report, or anything we can probe through personality assessment. Modern media does a great job keeping us in touch with daily global coverage of the dark side at work. In stable societies it is a fringe phenomenon, but these primitive characteristics are part of our nature. Any comprehensive understanding of personality at work needs to appreciate the dynamic and continuous flexing of our personalities and the realities of its potentially destructive influences.

Leadership and the dark side – egos in the boardroom

Leadership research is divergent and inconclusive. In contrast to this, as Robert Hogan points out, research into leadership failure is convergent and comes to clear conclusions. ***The elephant in the room, where leadership is concerned, is the blindingly obvious point that bosses who undermine the loyalty and commitment of their team quickly find that there is no team to lead.***

The base rate for bad managers may range from 65% to 75% (Hogan, 2007). This is corroborated by Dotlich and Cairo (2003) in their book 'Why CEOs Fail' who claim that "two-thirds of people currently in leadership positions in the Western World will fail; they will then be fired, demoted, or kicked upstairs." Whatever else it takes to succeed, poor treatment of others will be the Achilles heel that ends many leadership careers.

How, though, do people with such unsuitable personalities reach leadership positions in the first place? At least part of the answer is that, at earlier points in their careers, dark side impulses were held firmly in check.

New graduate recruits start corporate life as more compliant and receptive than their seniors (see Chart 3). As they rise in the hierarchy, talented employees are progressively exposed to a systemic erosion of their restraint and self-control arising from the increasing seniority and prominence of their position. They are successful, they are important, they are increasingly powerful and while some will be humbled and honoured by the experience, others will feel energised, inflated,

superior and entitled and will bask in the acclaim and sycophancy that increasingly comes their way.

On the other side of the coin of success, they have to deal with greater stress and responsibility than ever before and, as they approach the pinnacle, they become increasingly isolated. ***This combination of exhilaration, approbation, pressure and isolation is a toxic brew. It can play havoc with the ego and common sense. Whether driven by stress or success, unleashing the excesses of the dark side will always have a consequence and may just prove disastrous for the organisation.***

Bubbles in a champagne flute

The bubbles in a champagne flute appear as tiny, insignificant specks at the bottom of the glass. As they begin their rise up through the intoxicating contents, they increase in size until they finally hit the top, and burst. This is analogous to the effects of organisational altitude on egos as they rise through the organisation. This picture illustrates the potential hazards associated with rapid ascent into positions of power and leadership. In this regressive process, previously mastered and controlled impulses re-emerge to detrimental effect as restraint falls away.

The paradox is that these self-defeating aspects of personality will often be favoured, even cherished, by those that possess them. Quite naturally, the more benefits we reap from a particular strategy, the more we will exploit it. From this perspective, the problem for leaders is often their success, and especially extreme success.

Part 4:

Active management - improving personal effectiveness

A life's work

Life span personality research demonstrates that, over a working life, personality is pretty stable. After the struggle through infancy, childhood and adolescence to get the demons under control, we find a persona that works. Or rather, we settle for a persona that works. And most people become rather fond of this bundle of quirks, foibles and idiosyncrasies.

The good news from Triarchic Theory is “we can change”; we do, and we always have. For most of us, personal development only becomes a consciously self-directed process in adulthood and, from then on in, whether or not we take the trouble to re-kick start the process becomes a matter of choice. The last part of the journey to self-actualisation doesn't just happen, we have to make it happen.

Coaching

In coaching, counselling, mentoring or deep psychotherapy, the difficult and time-consuming part is identifying the problem and setting an agenda for change. Identifying the dark side features of personality is a very effective point from which to pick up the road of self-improvement. Of course, the raw material we have to work with cannot itself be changed. However, although there are things we can never be, through active management we can take personal effectiveness to the next level.

'Biographing' the dark side

Very high HDS scores represent strong impulses that will contribute a lot to one's distinctiveness and to one's talents, but they threaten to overwhelm and distort interpersonal performance. We refer to a process of tracking personal experience of these influences from earliest memories as 'biographing' the dark side (see sample mini-bio).



Appropriate goals and strategies

Everyone can improve their personal performance but, to be effective, plans and strategies have to take account of the structural realities of personality. An exploration of the distinction between what is deeply rooted and what isn't achieves a better appreciation of what can and what cannot be changed. An understanding of the dynamics of where you are now and where you came from provides the platform for future steps. Reconciling ourselves with our inherent limitations and exorcising culpability for things that were always beyond our influence desensitises issues, and clears the decks to establish a less emotionally loaded approach. By identifying specific goals and the specific strategies needed to realise them, real and sustainable change becomes possible.

A mini-bio

Personal experience of an HDS characteristic: CAREFUL-CAUTIOUS

As a child: Withdrawn, sensitive to criticism, feeling ridiculed and undervalued

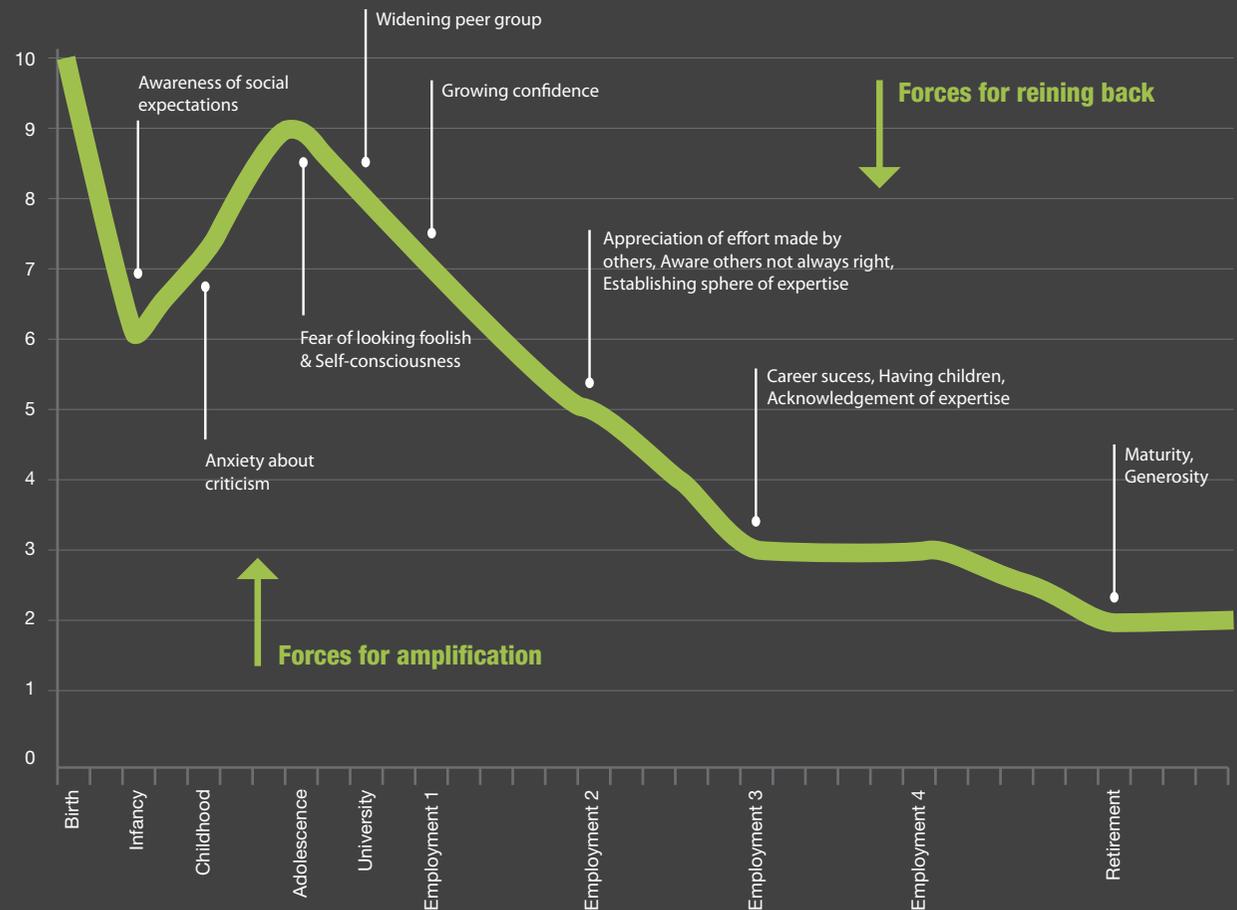
As an adolescent: Expectation of rejection, self-critical and vulnerable in social situations

As a university student: Liberation from family, better relationships, still cautious and quiet

As a new recruit: Reluctant to contribute, wary of exposure

As a developing career: Growing appreciation of own ability and how wrong other more outspoken people may be

As a mature worker: Ability to contribute when it's needed, and for the sake of others



Part 5: Conclusion

Conclusion by Gillian Hyde, Director of Psychological Consultancy Ltd



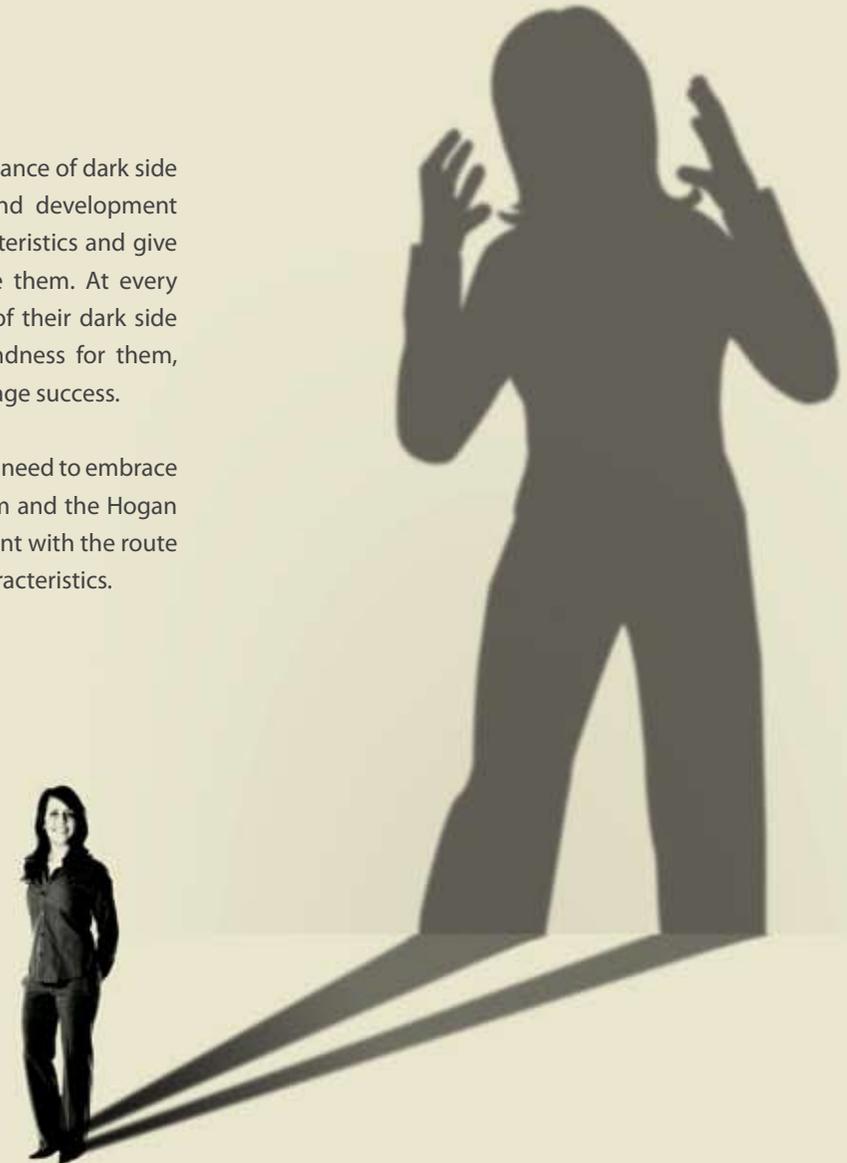
In the past decade we have witnessed an extraordinary pageant of misbehaviour at the top, the toxic consequence in corporate and public life of a failure to restrain the demons within, a struggle that may actually intensify with personal success.

Freud likened the human mind to an iceberg – with very little visible above the surface. Behind the surprisingly thin veneer of charm, social skill and morality – our public identity – lies a turbulent armoury of primitive instincts, drives and impulses evolved to maximise our chances of survival. With the stability and relative tranquility of present-day civilised life, much of this survival kit is superfluous and has to be severely attenuated. The dark side needs to be tamed and managed to accommodate to the requirements of social and working relationships.

The challenge for every individual is to pitch it right. To allow just enough expression of our instinctive drives to keep us in the zone. For the most part we are pretty good at it but to let our primitive urges rip is asking for trouble.

Organisations must be aware of the significance of dark side influences in their workforce. Coaches and development programmes need to surface these characteristics and give individuals effective strategies to manage them. At every level, individuals benefit from awareness of their dark side tendencies, and while often having a fondness for them, need to appreciate their potential to sabotage success.

Self-awareness is the key to this process; we need to embrace our dark sides before we can manage them and the Hogan Development Survey provides the consultant with the route map and the language to unlock these characteristics.



About PCL

Since 1992 PCL has provided an energetic and revitalising influence in the business psychology sector. Impatient to see the clear messages from research impact on the dated and unduly conservative practices that were then prevalent, PCL has been enthusiastically 'rattling the cage' with world class ideas and innovations that have changed the agenda and established a new and purposeful edge in terms of professional practices and the tools needed to implement them.

In 1992, none of the top five most popular assessment tools used to assess personality in the UK bore any relationship to current personality research. Robert Hogan's mantra, that personality research and personality assessment seemed to have been "separated at birth", could not have been more apposite for the UK in the early 90s. His mission to reunite assessment practices with personality underpins our professional vision. PCL triggered an exciting period of innovation with the publication of the UK's first FFM personality questionnaire in 1997 in the form of the UK edition of the Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI). The Motives, Values and Preferences Inventory (MVPI) and the Hogan Development Survey (HDS) followed in 1998. In 1999, PCL was the first UK test publisher to grasp the opportunity of putting personality questionnaires online through the original PsyKey platform. Now, based on the third iteration of PsyKey, PROFILE:MATCH® and Risk Compass™ continue the PCL tradition of well researched, high utility online assessment tools.

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HDS Scale Descriptions



Please lift flap for brief HDS scale descriptions



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