HANDWRITING ANALYSIS:  A PRECISION EVALUATION TOOL

By Elaine Charal

General Electric, U.S. Steel, and over 3,000 other companies in the United States have adopated handwriting analysis as a valuable personality assessment tool.

80% of European corporations use handwriting analysis in their hiring and placement practices.

Why is modern business turning to this old science?

Matchmaking

Human resource professionals find handwriting analysis helps avid the ‘square-peg’ syndrome—mismatching a new hire, promotion, or transfer to a job—thus saving the organization thousands of dollars in training and orientation.

The “Dress for Success” power suit, firm handshake, and impressive curriculum vitae may make a great first impression, but the trained eye of the professional handwriting analyst will discern those argumentative p’s and wimpy y’s that tell the real story.

The fink in the ink

Handwriting analysis has been recognized and used throughout history.

Thomas Gainsborough, the great English artist, kept a sample of his subject’s handwriting beside him while doing a portrait because he felt that the writing helped him to translate and capture on his canvas the essence of the personality.  Many of today’s Fortune 500 companies feel the same way.

Your handwriting is as individual, as unique, as integral to your true self as are your fingerprints.  With every stroke of the pen, your thoughts and emotions are transmitted through your nervous system into the movements of your hand and fingers.  Each time you commit words to paper in your own inimitable style, you declare your character and personality traits, your talents and abilities, even your current mood.

Of course, everyone’s handwriting changes from time to time, often several times throughout the day.  However, generally just the slant changes—the stroke structures themselves remain fairly constant.

Assessment tool

Handwriting analysis offers a way to look beneath the surface to identify the individual’s personality traits and aptitudes, and determine whether they fit the job.

For example, an energetic, dynamic personality may mask a weak-minded undisciplined individual who has difficulty with problem-solving.  On the other hand, handwriting analysis may reveal a “diamond in the rough”: an employee who on the surface may seem only average, but whose handwriting indicates otherwise undetected exceptional talents in specific areas.

In Europe, the science has so grown that if someone’s writing demonstrates an abundance of negative traits—such as weak will, lack of self-confidence, and resentment—that can be enough to halt o delay that person’s career.

In North America, the science is still relatively new.  The few practitioners here work largely for the courts (criminal investigations, faaud, etc.), or for career counseling r placement agencies.

Many companies employ handwriting analysis to handle all the initial screening, based on handwritten letters submitted by the applicant.  Others use it at the second screen stage, after selecting the best-qualified applicants.

Minding your Ps and Qs

Personality is complex. You can’t judge a person from just one letter or one word. You need to see it in the context of a larger representative sample, with several combinations and repetitions of letters.

Usually, an analyst looks at about 100 strokes—a paragraph or preferably a page of normal handwriting—to assess your character traits. A signat8ure alone is an insufficient sample for three reasons:

• Because people have to sign their name so so often, signatures take on a stylized form that may be quite different from one’s regular handwriting.

• The spelling of your name may only cover a narrow span of the alphabet, and convey just a partial picture of your personality.

• Much like stage fright or photo shyness, people need to write a while before they ‘loosen up’ and begin to be more themselves on paper.

Here are a few examples of what handwriting can reveal:

• Consider the letter ‘t’:  Is the ‘t’ bar situated mid-way, high or low on the ‘t’ stem? The higher the bar is on the stem, the higher the person’s goals, and the more he or she will want to stretch his or her talents and abilities.

However, when other strokes such as lower loops (or non-loops) and other traits are seen and compared, that may alter or focus the perception of the individual’s competence, for example, with respect to willpower, the ability to accept challenge, self-discipline, and energy.

• Check the downstrokes of the ‘g’ and ‘y’ letters. Are they curved or straight? If they are straight you know the individual will finish what he or she starts and will have the determination to see a task through to completion.

• Is the writing slanted to the right, to the left, or is it vertical? As a general rule, the more right-slanted, the more outwardly expressive of emotions the individual will be. You may want to review the qualifications and tasks this potential employee is to perform, and how people-oriented the position is going to be.

• Are the ‘I’ dots close to the stem, or far away? The closer the dots is to the ‘I’ stem, the more detail-oriented the person will be.

• Are there loops in the ‘d’ and ‘t’ stems? If so, check for frequency and width of loops. The wider the loops, the more sensitive to criticism this candidate will be.

A good handwriting analyst must take a multitude of factors into account to provide a thorough, balanced picture—everything from the measurement and evaluation of the upstrokes in the writing, to the way the writer utilizes “white space”. Isolating individual traits is  not enough. All traits must be considered and evaluated in relationship to one another to form a coherent personality profile.

Although various psychological testing methods have proven useful in avoiding the ‘square-peg’ syndrome, handwriting analysis is becoming ever more widely accepted as a precision tool that can augment or sometimes even replace more cumbersome and costly methods.

