



Natural SKEPTICISM regarding the Judgment Index™

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Of course, it is natural to have skepticism about almost anything, but especially about some reality that is not what a person knows a lot about, not what a person has had educational exposure to, or not in a person's field of expertise. We are skeptical in the same manner. It is healthy, so no one should be intimidated or antagonistic about skepticism. I would much rather have honesty, and that can be a beginning point for conversation, dialogue, and refinement.

On the other hand, there are a couple of matters that are hard to avoid. First, if creditable companies have used this for decades and have seen significant results, something must be working, and working well. Whether I "understand" inner dynamics is not so important - don't we base many, many decisions on the validation that comes from other people's experiences and knowledge in their own fields. I have purchased televisions since 1967 - I have done so with reference to Consumer's Reports and one guy in town who I know that is an electronics expert. That is, I am trusting other people's experience who know more than I do. In fact, I could not begin to explain to anyone the inner dynamics of a television. All of the past customer experience and high acknowledgments are a kind of "consumer's report." If Bill Kilbride, President and CEO of Mohawk Home, writes me a letter saying that his company gets the Wal-Mart "Small Vendor of the Year" Award and he believes that his success is, in part, due to the Judgment Index™. How many other questions does a person have to ask to begin to understand that the Judgment Index™ works, and works very well?

Second, from a legal and validity perspective, it takes only a few minutes to go to Westlaw or other legal search engines to see if there have ever been legal, validity problems with the Judgment Index™. There either has, or there has not been a legal or validity issue. What's more "scientific" than that? I always encourage people to look, and to look exhaustively - to call in their legal people for an opinion, etc, etc. However, once they have done that, and no negative has appeared, what else do they need? Let's move on and see if our processes work in their organization as well and beneficial as they have for others.

To say that a person can't see the relationship of words and phrases to interpretative outcomes is understandable, maybe. It may also be that the questioning person is simply not in touch with a time honored means of gaining insight that has been used by educators, psychologists and psychiatrists, and even detectives, across decades and decades. This now rather formalized process is not all that different in some respects from the old "word association" games that we played as teenagers and young adults. For example:

1. Give me four words on a sheet of paper: Soccer, Rugby, Baseball, Football. (Imagine that I pick "Football.")
2. Now, let me prioritize the following nine words: Ohio State, Tennessee, Florida, Michigan State, Stanford, Alabama, USC, Michigan, UCLA. (Imagine I start my prioritized list "Tennessee," "Alabama," "Florida.") It's at least safe to begin to assume that my football priority may run to southeastern football.



3. Now, let me prioritize the following four positions: Running Back, Kicker, Offensive Lineman, Safety. (Imagine I give highest priority to "Running Back" - It's pretty safe to assume that I'm probably going to watch the offensive backfield during a ballgame more than other positions. One might assume that if I played football that I might have been a Running Back.)
4. Now, write: Catholic, Muslim, Hindu, Baptist, Methodist, Jew, Presbyterian. If I prioritize something like Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian in the first three choices, assumptions could be made about my having been raised, know more about, or have some knowledge or belief that are Protestant.

Anyone should get this idea. What the Nobel Prize nominated creator of this assessment does is simply create a tested and refined process that is more formalized and scientific than these questions, but it is the same principle. It's just like when we have a conversation with a stranger sitting next to us on an airplane and, from minimal clues, begin to form a picture of someone. Obviously, these pictures can be deceptive. Who wouldn't understand that? However, unless I am an abject cynic, these pictures can just as easily be very revealing and very accurate.

Finally, the idea is not to have a perfect crystal ball - there is no such thing. What we are trying to do is cut to the chase in an orderly and precedented manner to a place that we can have helpful conversation and dialogue. Who would not want to advance getting to the heart of matters with people in a quicker, more accurate fashion?

I understand skepticism and appreciate it. Let's use skepticism to make sure we do everything we do in a more careful fashion. But, it is not skepticism that throws the baby out with the bath water. It is narrow mindedness. I've got to go watch TV now and – I'm pretty sure it will work. Just don't ask me to explain the inner dynamics of how it works. – I couldn't tell you. And just because I can't, doesn't mean that I won't use it. I have been around a long time and I'm too smart to be dismissive of something just because I don't understand it – just ask my wife.