



The effective analyst

Part 4: Attributes

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In this last article in a series of four, Janet takes us through the findings of research by her and Mark Kebbell on what makes intelligence analysts effective.



In this the final article in the series, I will consider the final theme that emerged from considering what makes an effective analyst -

Attributes of the analyst. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, I am going to reflect on the most ethical way forward for us as a community of practitioners now knowing the findings offered by this study.

In the previous issues I described how 246 constructs were used by the subject matter experts to describe the theme of *analytical products* and 107 constructs to describe the theme relating to the analysts' *attitude*. In contrast only 21 constructs were used to describe the *attributes* of the analyst by subject matter experts. The theme of *attributes* incorporated inherent characteristics and qualities as well as physical characteristics like age or gender.

From this study it is asserted that the attributes of the analysts contribute less than other themes to indicate an analyst as more or less effective. From an ethical or equity perspective this is heartening as there is no indication that men or women, older or younger analysts make better analysts. The *attribute* factors that held some interest for the subject matter

experts were being confident, being calm and patient, and being likable.

The results of this research serve as the first empirically-based set of characteristics required to effectively perform the role of analyst.

The importance of the analytical product in understanding and determining an analysts' effectiveness has been clearly demonstrated. For an analyst to be viewed as effective they need to have skills in developing a product as well as disseminating their results. The most critically important variable in disseminating the product was the ability to communicate with the recipient of the product both in general terms and through briefings and a written product.

This requires us to reconsider our approach to recruitment and development. It is our moral responsibility to select analysts who can perform in these domains and, if we already employ analysts, ensuring they are servicing the goals of law enforcement as effectively as they can by having received the 'right' training. It is no longer enough to train analysts on software or to give them another tool. This study shows that effective analysts derive meaning and develop inferences that require enhanced thinking skills.

Analysts need to develop themselves into advanced problem-solv-

ers. In this study computer and technical skills were barely mentioned and the importance of thinking skills and life experience were highly sought after in determining effectiveness.

Although data collection and collation are described as part of the intelligence cycle they were not considered to be an indicator of analyst effectiveness. It is now our ethical responsibility to decide if this is because they in fact are not part of an analyst's role and if so why are so many of our analysts consumed with this task? Is it because this is what they have become comfortable doing? As managers can we pave a new path towards where analysts predominantly think (rather than collect), derive meaning and create and deliver products?

This study has raised a number of questions that require further investigation, including how we best test for effective communication skills and how do you measure an analyst's attitude to the position. These questions and others have at their heart an ethical responsibility to make choices not just at a point in time, for the sake of your career, to ease the pain of recruitment or to silence an analyst who just wants another mapping course, but for a profession in its development years and in many cases for the safety of our communities or countries. •