

Introduction to the Counterproductive Behavior Index™ (CBI)

The CBI is a contemporary integrity test—a cost-effective screening procedure for identifying job applicants whose behavior, attitudes, and work-related values are likely to interfere with their success as employees. The CBI consists of an objective questionnaire with 140 true/false items that can be completed by the job applicant in about 15 minutes. There are two forms of the test. One form is administered, scored, and interpreted by computer. It yields an objectively generated report addressing degree of potential concern about the six major areas identified above, a measure of Overall or total concern, and an assessment of self-serving response bias. The other form is a paper-and-pencil version in which applicants answer the questions on an answer sheet that is then hand-scored and profiled by the test administrator, yielding the same information as the computer-based version. The content of the two forms is identical, and there is no reason to believe that the scores yielded by the two forms are not comparable.

The Eight CBI Scores

Either by using the scoring key (for the paper-and-pencil version) or automatically (with the computer-based version), the CBI yields eight scores. Sample items are given in Table 1. The basic meaning of the scores are as follows:

Dependability Concerns. Low scorers are dependable, conscientious, and reliable. High scorers can be undependable, careless, lazy, and disorganized.

Aggression Concerns. Low scorers handle their feelings well and are unlikely to be disruptive. High scorers can be aggressive, hostile, disruptive, and have poor control of their anger.

Substance Abuse Concerns. Low scorers have no problems with alcohol and/or illegal drugs. High scorers report substantial use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs and may be disruptive.

Honesty Concerns. Low scorers have no problem with workplace dishonesty. High scorers have the potential for dishonest behavior in the workplace.

Computer Abuse Concerns. Low scorers use their workplace computers only for work-related uses. High scorers use their computers in ways that are unrelated to their work activities or are disruptive to their work.

Sexual Harassment Concerns. Low scores are unlikely to engage in sexual harassment at work. High scorers have attitudes and behaviors regarding sexuality that are likely to be considered as harassment by the opposite sex.

Overall Concerns. Low scorers report few instances of workplace deviance. High scorers report a wide range of deviant behaviors in the workplace and are likely to be problematic employees. (The Overall Concerns score is included in order to help identify applicants whose individual scale scores might all fall below the cutting score for inclusion in the Concern category, but whose total score does identify them as worthy of special attention. It is important to note that high Overall scores still require a close examination of the six individual scale scores.)

Counterproductive Behavior Index™ (CBI)

Good Impression. Low scorers are open about acknowledging their normal faults and imperfections. High scorers deny normal shortcomings and exaggerate personal virtues, suggesting that their scores on the other scales may be artificially depressed by their efforts to make a good impression. Scores on this scale can be used to determine the degree of confidence that should be placed in the remainder of the profile.

Table 1
Sample Items from the CBI

Dependability Concerns

My bosses know that they can count on me.
At work, I often daydream.

Aggression Concerns

It's hard to control your feelings when you're caught up in traffic.
When someone hurts me, I tend to get revenge.

Substance Abuse Concerns

I have used an illegal drug on the job in the past year.
Drinking on the job is a real safety hazard.

Honesty Concerns

At work, I have shown a fellow employee how to beat the system.
Most people lie a little at work to protect themselves.

Computer Abuse Concerns

I would not use my computer at work to send and receive e-mail if it was against company policy.
It is OK for employees at work to use their computers to play computer games.

Sexual Harassment Concerns

Making sexual remarks is just part of human nature.
I have put my arm around a member of the opposite sex at work.

Good Impression

I have never acted without thinking first.
I obey all the rules, all the time.

How to Use the Counterproductive Behavior Index

Counterproductive Behavior Index Profile

A sample interpretive report on the CBI is shown on the next page. For easy reading, high scores indicate either a **serious concern** or a **concern** about that area, depending on the level of the score. Thus, an applicant who answered a number of questions about dependability in such a way as to indicate that he or she has had prior difficulties or problems in being dependable would have produced a high score on Dependability Concerns. The graphic report shows a profile of an applicant's scores on each of the six areas of concern, plus the Overall score, together with the score on the Good Impression scale (which indicates a less-than candid approach to answering the questions). The profile is constructed so that the higher the score on each scale, the more reason there is for concern.

The profile contains three bands, or levels, of concern. Scores that fall in the Serious Concern band are in the upper 5 percent of the standardization population. Scores that fall in the Concern band are between the upper 5 and 15 percent of the standardization population. Scores that fall below these levels (i.e., below the top 15 percent) are considered to be of No Concern. A statement made about each scale based on the norms indicates the extent to which an applicant's score is high enough to suggest a potential problem (a Concern or a Serious Concern) in each of the areas. Separately from the profile, a statement is made about the applicant's score on the Good Impression scale, indicating the degree of defensiveness/distortion in responding to the questions.

It is imperative to note that hiring decisions must never be made solely on the basis of an applicant's profile on the CBI. Rather, the scores on the profile indicate areas that need to be followed up on in a subsequent employment interview, using behavioral interviewing techniques. It is beyond the scope of this manual to teach behavioral interviewing techniques. Simply put, in conducting a behavioral interview the interviewer asks an applicant in a neutral manner for specific behavioral examples of instances when the individual engaged in certain critical activities. For example, an interviewer could ask a candidate with a high score on Honesty Concerns, "Tell me about a time when you stole something from your employer." Depending on the applicant's specific responses, additional questions should be asked about the frequency of such behaviors, their consequences, and so on. The purpose of the behavioral questions is to help the interviewer understand the past behavior of the applicant, since past behavior is the single best predictor of future behavior.

Counterproductive Behavior Index™ Profile

Version 2.0

Name: **John R. Smith**

Date: **2/25/03**

Position: **Customer Service Representative**

Test Validity Concerns Good Impression (GI) Score	0	1	2	3	X	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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Scale Score	Dependability (Dp) Concerns	Aggression (Ag) Concerns	Substance Abuse (SA) Concerns	Honesty (Hn) Concerns	Computer Abuse (CA) Concerns	Sexual Harassment (SH) Concerns	Scale Score
20							20
19							19
18							18
17							17
16							16
15							15
14							14
13							13
12			X				12
11							11
10		X					10
9					X		9
8							8
7				X			7
6							6
5						X	5
4							4
3							3
2	X						2
1							1
0							0
Scale Score	Dependability (Dp) Concerns	Aggression (Ag) Concerns	Substance Abuse (SA) Concerns	Honesty (Hn) Concerns	Computer Abuse (CA) Concerns	Sexual Harassment (SH) Concerns	Scale Score

Overall Concerns Score	0 – 38	X	39 – 59	60 – 120
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RECORDING SCORES	COLOR KEY		
Transfer your scores from the Scoring Sheet to the corresponding boxes on this Profile for a visual representation of a candidate's scores.	Little/No Concerns Scores in this shaded area indicate that the applicant is not likely to engage in counterproductive behavior.	Concerns Scores in this shaded area indicate that the applicant may engage in counterproductive behavior.	Serious Concerns Scores in this shaded area indicate that the applicant is likely to engage in counterproductive behavior.

WARNING: Information contained on this CBI graph is intended for confidential use only.

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How to Use the Counterproductive Behavior Index

Score 2	Dependability Concerns: <i>Mr. Smith's score does not suggest a concern about dependability.</i> High Score: Undependable, careless, unmotivated, and disorganized Low Score: Dependable, conscientious, and reliable
Score 10	Aggression Concerns: <i>Mr. Smith may be likely to be disruptive because of angry feelings or behaviors.</i> High Score: Angry, hostile, poor control of anger, could be disruptive Low Score: Handles feelings well, unlikely to be disruptive
Score 12	Substance Abuse Concerns: <i>Mr. Smith is likely to abuse alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace.</i> High Score: Alcohol and/or illegal drug usage may be disruptive Low Score: Is not likely to use alcohol and/or illegal drugs in the workplace
Score 7	Honesty Concerns: <i>Mr. Smith's score suggests no potential problem with dishonesty.</i> High Score: Potential for dishonest behavior in the workplace Low Score: Is likely to demonstrate honest behavior in the workplace
Score 9	Computer Abuse Concerns: <i>Mr. Smith may be likely to misuse computer equipment.</i> High Score: Potential for misuse of computer in a disruptive or inappropriate manner Low Score: Is likely to use computer equipment appropriately
Score 5	Sexual Harassment Concerns: <i>Mr. Smith is unlikely to have a problem with sexual harassment.</i> High Score: Potential for causing disruption in the workplace through sexual harassment Low Score: Is not likely to show behaviors that could be viewed as sexual harassment
Score 45	Overall Concerns: <i>Mr. Smith may show workplace deviance in one or more ways.</i> High Score: May show workplace deviance in one or more ways Low Score: Not likely to demonstrate workplace deviance
Score 4	Good Impression: <i>Mr. Smith is likely to have answered the questions truthfully.</i> High Score: Likely to be under-reporting, or not being truthful in answering the questions Low Score: Likely to have answered the questions in an open and truthful manner

Counterproductive Behavior Index™ (CBI)

Thus, once areas of concern are identified for a particular applicant, a series of questions that will allow an in-depth understanding of the area(s) of concern should be asked by the line manager, human resources professional, or whoever is conducting the screening. For each question in the CBI, a series of questions are provided for follow-up. If the profile reveals scores in the Serious Concern or Concern band, follow-up questions in relevant area(s) of concern are an essential part of the selection process and will enable the interviewer to better understand the basis for the applicant's answers. These questions will be displayed automatically for the interviewer in the computer version of the CBI, while the paper-and-pencil version requires the interviewer to select the appropriate questions from a complete set of follow-up questions found in Appendix E. The applicant's answers to the follow-up questions should be the basis for all final decisions about the suitability of the applicant for employment.

One very important caution remains in using the CBI: the results of the CBI should never be discussed with the applicant. You should not indicate to any applicant that he or she was disqualified by a single measure, particularly a psychological test. If applicants ask about the CBI results, they should be told that the results are simply a part of a package of information that needs to be analyzed and understood. If an applicant is not to be hired, there is no obligation on the interviewer's part to explain the reasons for that decision. Rejected applicants can simply be told that there are other applicants better qualified for the job. If the job remains open and this becomes known to applicants, unsuccessful applicants can be told that they did not seem to match the job requirements. Never, ever, suggest that an applicant was not selected because of answers to the CBI!

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