Graphology in Personnel Selection

Modern Handwriting Analysis Could Prevent You From Hiring A Rotten Apple

By Miriam Graff Wilson, CGA

It is ironic that a reliable, accurate method of personnel selection is available to American business, but rarely utilized. When the business community finally realizes that this method of hiring will truly give them a competitive edge, I predict that they will jump on the bandwagon. This tool is handwriting analysis.

Allport states “All systems of handwriting analysis are based on the assumption that as a brain controlled, expressive body movement, handwriting reflects in some way, the dynamics of the human mind (the personality). Handwriting is in fact, brainwriting. The style of execution is always guided directly and without interference, by deep and lasting personal dispositions.” It appears then, that knowing how a man thinks, acts, and feels about others, is most advantageous to those who work for and with him.

Graphology, or graphoanalysis, is a scientific method in a standardized system of analyzing strokes. Combinations of strokes have meaningful interpretations. This is not a new revelation, but a well hidden one. It is time in America to get graphology out of the carnival atmosphere and into the professional world where it belongs.

Graphology didn’t just “happen” from one mind in a single day. We do not know at what time during the 6000 years man has been known to communicate by definite symbols from pictures in stone, when one could say these symbols might represent more than human thought. We do know that ancient Egyptians held handwriting sacred. A thousand years B.C., Japanese scholars judged that the way a man traced his bars had something to do with his personality.

In 99 A.D., the Roman historian Suetonius made a skillful study of Emperor Augustus’ personality from his handwriting. Shakespeare wrote, “Give me the handwriting of a woman, and I will tell you what kind of woman she is.”

In 1625, Camillo Baldi, a professor of philosophy at the University of Bologna, Italy, published the first book on handwriting analysis. Since his time, hundreds of people have devoted years of their lives to the study. People such as Michon, Klages, Saudek, Jacoby, Karohs, de Sainte Columbe and others have given a foundation on which to carry on further development in the analysis study.

Graphology or handwriting analysis as it is more commonly known, is not of the occult. It is a form of applied psychology that is fast gaining popularity. Dr. Werner Wolf of Bard College N.Y. believes that “how long you make your strokes and how wide your loops, where you place the i dots, isn’t a matter of chance. It’s governed by the laws of your personality.” He goes on to say, “the movements you make are like gestures. Anything that

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“In the hands of a professional analyst, a sample of handwriting reveals the writer’s mental ability, self-concept, and his attitudes, aptitudes and interests. His productivity, his needs and his vulnerability to stress are evident.”

moves you, excites you, or disturbs you (emotionally or physically) shows up in the strokes made by your pen.”

Mother Cecilia Koehler, an expert on child guidance, says that it is not fortune telling. You can’t predict the future, or whether or not you’ll be lucky in bingo, and it is in no way related to astrology or the supernatural. Neither should it be used as something you buy for a quarter from a machine in a shopping mall.

Still In Its Infancy . . .

In North America, we are still in the pioneering stages of this science. It is taught at few American universities. In Europe, handwriting analysis is a university subject taught at the graduate level. Twelve universities grant doctorates in it. There are over 2000 active handwriting psychologists in West Germany alone, who are all being kept busy. It is required of all teachers before they are allowed to work with children. Additionally, anyone who seeks a Ph.D. in psychology must study scientific handwriting analysis as a required part of his or her professional training.

Handwriting analysis has made inroads into the business arena in North America in the past ten years. The construction industry has been frustrated by ineffective hiring methods and rapid turnover. In reality, graphology is not the total solution, but it is one of the most reliable and cost effective methods of selection available. It is virtually impossible to disguise or conceal personality traits, and intentional altering of one’s handwriting can be detected by a good analyst. In the hands of a professional analyst, a sample of handwriting reveals the writer’s mental ability, self concept, and his attitudes, aptitudes, and interests. His productivity, his needs and his vulnerability to stress are also evident. Handwriting analysis also reveals fears and defenses.

A.R. Keown and Associates uses the personnel selection process in catering to clients in various sections of the United States, including AWCI. Not only is the handwriting on application forms analyzed, but the analyst is expert in evaluating the application form as a whole. The applicant’s work history, earning power (whether or not he is on a high as far as earnings go, or if he is in a decline), job tenure and if he makes all pertinent information correspond as to dates etc. One might wonder and need to inquire about a three year gap in a work history that an applicant chose not to mention. First, reviewing the work history is important. Ironically, many poor employees are the result of poor interviewers who do not scrutinize an application form. At Keown and Associates, applications are given individual treatment. If an applicant is not suited for the position offered, the analysts often suggest in the profile other areas where he might succeed.

Identifying Sales Personnel . . .

Different attributes and traits are needed for different jobs. Sometimes promoting an employee for work well done creates a situation where management in promoting a man beyond the level of his competency could lose a good worker and gain a less efficient employee at the higher level. Not all salesmen make good managers, or vice
A sample of writing of JOE M. BARER, JR. Note: WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET in Mr. Baker. Notice his writing in the signature and in the body of the letter are similar. He does not profess to be something he is not. Signatures are like brands. Often we sign our names in a manner that tells the world what we wish to be but are not.

Following is an excerpt from his analysis:

In the opinion of this analyst, the individual in question is a very intelligent and analytical man. He is very objective about people and facts and will weigh both sides of a situation before arriving at a conclusion. This man wants to be fair yet some decisions are made according to how they will personally affect him. He can at times be self-oriented and withdrawn while at other times outgoing. This moodiness may cause him to seem unpredictable to some. He is in a hurry and is impatient but will not want to be crowded or pushed, liking his own space.

He likes being the boss and is confident in his ability. This man is sensitive about his work and will rise to personal challenge—He can be cautious, on guard against imposition, and tough when he desires. He is sharp and can be critical of others. A caustic tongue may be a defense for him when he feels disapproval or rejection.

He doesn’t like to hurt people or look bad in their eyes. It is hard for him to fire or reprimand employees as a manager, or to handle the “No” as a salesman. His sympathy for others sometimes gets in his way.

This analyst feels the individual has enough objectivity in the personality to enable him to handle his own sensitivities without losing his footing or letting his hurts show.

The analyst who discovers an individual’s positive attributes must also find the traits that keep those attributes from being as effective as management would desire. Too much of a good thing no longer works when there is too much persistence, too much determination, too much empathy, or fear of failure. Also, there is the employee who talks too much or is so tough and rigid that he is unable to compromise or adjust. There are many traits in handwriting analysis on which to evaluate a person, however, there is a line one need not cross in personnel selection. Only those traits pertinent to a specific position for which the applicant is applying need be evaluated. Family life, or personal aspects con-
A.E. “Gene” Erwin—AWCI Technical Director

THIS HANDWRITING WAS IDENTIFIED AS SUBJECT #2 WHEN SUBMITTED TO ANALYST. Following is an excerpt from the report:

In the opinion of this analyst, the writer is a technician. He is a steady, predictable man who works in a deliberate manner. He works well with his hands and is creative and good with numbers. He is well organized. Whatever this individual’s occupation, he is well versed in the intricate make up of what makes things tick. His product knowledge is very good. This man is more interested in things than in people and could be considered a loner. He doesn’t really need people and can work unsupervised and involved in what he is doing. There is danger of becoming so involved in one thing that he may lose sight of the overall picture. His goals are high and he has a healthy ego. He is enthusiastic and strong willed. He exerts self control but could talk too much. He has his own philosophies to which he adheres and he is resolute to his own convictions. There are times he may react impulsively without prior thought and say or do things with later regrets. He prefers a buddy to a crowd and will be a loyal friend.

Many fears and defenses inhibit one’s initiative toward success. An overly sensitive person has trouble handling a customer’s “no”, and may be hesitant to prospect and not take criticism well. Some sensitive people with exceptional ability, who are well experienced, have difficulty selling. These employees work well as managers, since they are in a position where they are less vulnerable. They usually have good empathy for people and although they find it difficult to fire employees, they can delegate that task to others.

For the reader, some of the simple and easily identified characteristics to be found in evaluating handwriting are as follows:

- Most people write with a slant to the right of the page. They usually are friendly and reach out to the future. When writing slants in the opposite direction to the left of the page (back hand), the writer is more self oriented.
- The smaller the writing, the more concentrated the writer, and the larger the writing, the more self confidence a person registers. Traits do not stand alone, but rather mesh together to form a personality.
- Handwriting changes as the personality changes. It is affected by emotions, moods and the changing

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SAT Aug 17 - Departures
Steven Watkins

In the analyst’s OPINION, the subject likes working at a job where he feels comfortable and he is sensitive about his work. This man is more interested in what goes on today than in the future and he has a “I’ll give it a try” attitude. He is willing to take risks if persuaded of their validity. He moves easily from one thing to another and tries to skirt confusion. If he gets too many things going at once however, he may become frustrated. He is a systematic type and prefers everything to run smoothly and according to plan. Unexpected chaos and surprises are not welcome.

There is evidence of an active imagination and an inquiring mind. Mr. Watkins is an intelligent person and he likes to find out what makes things work. He enjoys being in control of the situation and being involved in what he does best. There is some impatience and he is prone to take the initiative. At times he could react impulsively and could say or do things without prior thought. Monotonous routines could bore him as well as being chained to a desk for long periods of time.

This is a strongly determined man. He can be deliberate and positive in his decisions. He is persistent, outgoing and enthusiastic. Mr. Watkins has a diplomatic way in handling people but may have a tendency to shut out what he would rather not hear. He wants to be liked by others and to look good in their eyes. There is strong desire for approval and to be right. Mr. Watkins will rise to personal challenge to prove himself and welcomes the responsibilities of his job. He likes being the boss and the limelight that position entails.

He is a good communicator being open and able to express himself well. He is articulate and his ability to paint mental images to customer and employee alike enhances his rapport with them. He has empathy for people and emotional responsiveness. He can be warm and friendly and has a good memory. He works well with numbers and is flexible enough to stay on top of everything around. Not very argumentative he can be sarcastic instead, in getting his point across. This is a person of ideas and energetic involvement.

(Steve Watkins is President of Aetna Drywall Contracting, Inc. in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and agreed to have his handwriting analyzed in Construction Dimensions.)
Dear Friend:

I would certainly like to know what my handwriting reveals to a graphologist.

This is a pseudo-science that has great potential for certain personnel areas or as a poor man’s psychics. I wonder if this sample is sufficient. Perhaps you can really tell something by looking at these lines.

Gerald Wykoff—Managing Editor, Construction Dimensions

It is the OPINION of this analyst that Mr. Wykoff is a very objective man who likes to look at all the parts in order to get the whole picture. He is observant and wishes to back up what he says. He is sensible and has a good attitude as well. Mr. Wykoff gives of his time to others but is not swayed by sentimentality. He does not become emotionally involved in what he is doing but rather views things in a matter of fact manner. Sometimes he could seem aloof to some people and not reach out to them. He is all business and aware of details that need his attention. This man deals with the facts realistically and in an open and frank manner. He worries about taking unnecessary risks and looks at situations as to how he will be affected by them. He can be cautious in venturing beyond the bounds he has set for himself and will not be rushed or pushed beyond his own pace. He likes working in an organized atmosphere in a step by step procedure. This person is self reliant and persistent. He wants to be fair in his dealings with others.

The subject is a creative person. He works well with his hands and tends to rely on what has worked well for him in the past. He is a visionary with long range goals and determination. He is confident of his ability and has good strength of purpose. He can be stubborn and likes to be in control and he values his own ideas and opinions. This man is full of enthusiasm and has energy and stamina. He wants reassurances that he is doing a good job and the credits he is due. He appreciates a pat on the back.

Mr. Wykoff is a private person. He feels deeply but may tend to bottle up his feelings and possibly resist intrusion upon that privacy. He is resolute of his own convictions and does not easily change his mind. He appears to be tense at the time of this writing and somewhat stressful. He may not be as flexible as he would like. It is not always easy for him to turn loose of things as he is prone to be a worrier.

dations on effective handling of personnel, but readily consults with supervisors, if needed. Putting a person in a job he does not like or is not well suited for does no one justice. The bottom line is satisfaction in a productive environment. Truly, handwriting analysis can give contractors and their employees a competitive edge.

Editor’s note: Readers interested in obtaining additional information should contact Mr. A.R. Keown at A.R. Keown & Associates, P.O. Box 26915, El Paso, Texas or call (915) 591-9457.