

Aptitude Testing After College

By Alicia Bergfeld
Senior Test Administrator

The staff at AIMS is frequently asked whether or not the program is helpful for individuals who have already earned their college degree. These individuals worry that the results will direct them into a field that is seemingly unrelated to their degree. Or perhaps the job experience they have gained will not apply to the suggestions recommended by one of the Senior Test Administrators. At the same time, many individuals find that their degree field is perfectly suited to their aptitudes, and they benefit from learning about the positions with which they would be most satisfied. The AIMS program is extremely helpful to individuals in their twenties and early thirties. This age group is able to transition easily into a new career because they may not have the financial or familial obligations that concern older adults.

The AIMS staff strives to incorporate clients' previous experiences and educational background in the recommendations outlined in the conference. For instance, an accountant came to our office with a unique situation. He was on the fast track to make partner at one of the Big Eight accounting firms, but he was also presented with the opportunity to start a private firm, at which he would be able to make his own rules and be his own boss. He consulted AIMS in order to help him figure out which path would give him the most satisfaction. While in conference with a Senior Test Administrator, the accountant admitted to high levels of stress, anxiety, and the formation of ulcers, the cause of which he could not identify.

The testing produced surprising results for a successful accountant; although he scored as a Specialist like most accountants, he scored extremely high in Structural Visualization and Ideaphoria. Accountants typically score very low in these two aptitudes; a high score in the latter indicates a very rapid flow of ideas and is usually detrimental in activities that require concentration and a fixed method of completing tasks. Structural Visualization allows a person to think spatially and to see a two-dimensional object in three dimensions. His results implied that he should be able to succeed in a three-dimensional or mechanical field such as engineering or medicine, in which the ability to "see" in three dimensions is essential. Unfortunately, many technical fields require extensive education, and it was not a feasible option for the accountant to return to school for a second degree. In order to make the use of his training, while at the same time trying to satisfy his strongest aptitudes, it was suggested that he become an accountant in a technical field. Ideally, he could gain on-the-job training in an area that would challenge his aptitudes, apply his experience, and hopefully relieve the stress and anxiety he experienced in his current profession.

Others tested by AIMS a few years after college graduation include a stockbroker who became an interior designer, a restaurant manager who went to medical school, and a bank loan officer who became a construction manager. These individuals and others who changed career directions absorbed the temporary financial setbacks associated with entering a new occupation. Once they gained information about their aptitudes, they found the motivation to begin a career in which they could find long-term satisfaction.

Many of the individuals who use the AIMS program in their twenties make very little change in their career direction. Frequently, the examinees find that they have the appropriate set of aptitudes for their projected career goals. Testing after college does make sense. People in this age category have fewer obligations, and can expect to recoup the expense of pursuing further education or starting in the entry-level positions of a new career. Most importantly, the aptitude testing provides self-knowledge and a sense of confidence in one's abilities. By

learning about these natural talents, clients will be able to more effectively judge career opportunities that present themselves throughout their working careers.