

Mistakes, Success, and Applied Profiling

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Dr. Cal Lightman argued in his popular thriller *Lie to Me* that he is the best “human lie detector” in the world. Applied profiling separates between the amazing (and imaginary) television version and the methodology that works in the real world.

Introduction

A tale is told about a successful businessman who was interviewed for a European newspaper and was asked a number of questions: “Can you tell the readers what is the secret of your success?” The man answered: “In two words? **Right decisions.**” “Ah, excellent. And can you tell us how you reached the right decisions?” “One word.” He answered. “And it is?” The journalist asked. The businessman replied. “**Experience.**” “And one last question, sir, how is this experience acquired?” The businessman answered. “This again needs two words – **wrong decisions!**” In this vein, everyday business coping requires each one of us to consider, to implement our judgment, and to decide what to do and how to act with all the people who work with us – both inside and outside of the organization. Since every decision entails risks, the following question is asked. Which tools work “for real”, in all that pertains to understanding people? Which tools enable the risk of making wrong decisions to be reduced and how is it possible to implement such tools?

Barbara Tuchman described in her book *The March of Folly* three conditions that make a policy into a folly. Two conditions are relevant to the present discussion. First, it must be possible to identify the negative results of the decision at the time it was made (and not in retrospect), and second, there must be an alternative course of action, which could have been adopted when the decision was made. In this spirit, it is possible to ask:

- Could the Trojans have avoided the mistake of bringing the horse into their city – an action that caused their loss – had they recognized the decision profile of Odysseus?
- Could Chamberlain, the Prime Minister of Britain before World War II, had he learned Hitler’s patterns of decision, action, and deceit, have avoided signing the pacifist Munich agreement, which led to the Nazi annexation of Czechoslovakia, Austria, and more?

- In a more contemporary perspective, more at “eye level”, if we could understand how truly the other side’s mind works, would we begin to work with a client who in the continuation stopped paying? Would we have submitted an especially attractive price offer had we known that the other side is using it only to contest with an existing supplier? Would we sign this contract with the supplier had we known his priorities and what is really important to him? Would we have decided to negotiate – or to get up from the table instead of surrendering essential demands or alternatively to continue the discussion and search for an adequate solution instead of adhering strongly to our positions – differently than we did? Would the understanding of the other side have changed our actions and even led us to derive more from familiar business situations?

It is always easier to be wise in hindsight, but this is not our intention. We maintain that the use of strong and validated tools, anchored in reality and in research, helps us better understand the constellation of people who influence every person, organization, and country – ranging from rivals and enemies to peers, managers, subordinates, clients, suppliers, and business partners. We mean the applied profiling methodology™, also known as business profiling™.

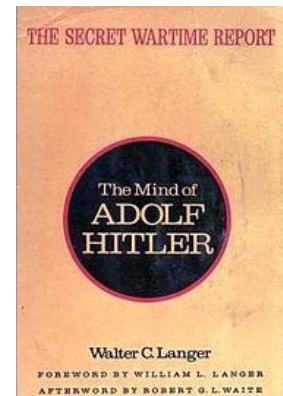
What Is Business Profiling and What Are Its Roots?

Applied profiling is a multidisciplinary field that combines research and practice from a number of areas, including applied psychology, marketing, sociology, and criminology, neuropsychology, neuro-marketing, systems analysis, and so on. The historical review, in a nutshell, will pass through a number of milestones.

- **The Mystery of Jack the Ripper:** On August 31, 1888 Mary-Ann Nicholas, a 45 year old woman, was found dead in the East End of London. The victim’s skirt was raised to her waist and deep cuts, caused by a long knife, were found in her belly and neck. In the months after the case another four women were murdered, when from one case to the next there was a significant increase in the violence inflicted on the murder victim. The murderer, who was called “Jack the Ripper”, was never caught, but the search for him led to the development of a new field, the science of criminal profiling, which is based on the analysis of the victims and the crime scenes.



- **Prediction of Hitler’s Actions.** In 1942 the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) of the United States ordered an evaluation of Adolf Hitler’s decision profile regarding his reactions in the scenario of Germany’s defeat in the war. The resultant profiling work led to the conclusion that the most likely scenario in this situation is that Hitler would commit suicide. About three years later, Germany’s defeat was complete and the Soviet armored divisions rushed to Berlin and to Hitler’s command bunker. As predicted, Hitler committed suicide, and with him Eva Braun, his long-time mistress, whom he had wed two days beforehand.



- **Further Development in the FBI framework.** The rise in the levels of crime in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s led the FBI, under the management of J. Edgar Hoover, to give top priority to the field of profiling, as a tool to fight serial crime. The development of the field continued until Hoover’s retirement in 1972 and led to the establishment of the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime and to the design of a formula that provided a guiding light to the practitioners in the field, according to which adding the “how” (how a certain crime was committed) to the “why” (why the crime was committed) leads to the “who” (who committed the crime) (How plus Why equal Who).



- **Exposure and Popularization.** The field of profiling gained even greater momentum after the events of September 11, 2001, following the allocation of tremendous federal resources to the global war against terror and against fundamentalist leaders and organizations at the forefront of terrorism. In parallel, the concept of “profiling” and the discussion of the field were popularized for different reasons, including the success of the movie *Silence of the Lambs*, which tells about a profiler in the FBI (acted by Jodie Foster), and the television series *Profiler*, which follows the stories of Dr. Samantha (Sam) Waters, a special agent who is a psychologist in the FBI, and so on.



- Like other technologies and methods developed using government funds, profiling, too, has been converted for civilian and business needs. By nature, business profiling is a tactical tool that equips its users with practical knowledge regarding what can be defined as “value-oriented targets”, in other words, people

whose innate value for the organization is especially high, whether because of the benefit or because of the harm that they may cause the organization. The profiling enables transition from non-initiating conduct (responding to events, surprises, and unexpected incidents), which is less effective, to a proactive approach based on prediction, planning, and calculated adoption of actions against the most significant others in every organization. Our work in the field led us, in 2005, to announce the IDR program and the methodology at its basis, which enables, for the first time, the identification and mapping of the constellation of human motives at the basis of the behavior and decisions of each one of us¹.

For now, the use of profiling enables us:

- To map the “operating system” of the person facing us – from the constellation of motives that shape his preferences to the degree of influence of the emotional element on his decisions – and to guide our actions more effectively.
- To understand, bridge, and cope successfully with intercultural and inter-gender gaps.
- To increase the understanding of the inner motivations of the workers in the organization, to predict the success of candidates for a given position, and to predict the influence of different courses of actions on the workers – on the level of functioning, level of commitment, and degree of satisfaction with their work and with their integration in the organizational fabric.
- To more successfully identify deceitful steps on the part of the rival and to function with increased effectiveness during the negotiations.

¹ Inventive Thinking Applied in Mediation Processes – A Practical Guide (2005). Inovent Applications Press, Ltd., Tel Aviv. (Hebrew)

Main Principles in Applied Profiling

The strength of profiling derives from the reliance of the theory on familiar marketing understandings that shape our daily business conduct.

A. Marketing is the connection between needs and answers.

A person who copes with a problem necessarily has a need. If this person is provided with an answer to this need, then the chances are that this proposed answer will be adopted.

B. People make mistaken decisions.

We all make many decisions throughout our lives. In the business world, many of the decisions engage in the choice between suppliers, between alternatives, and between “large” products and services (car, apartment, etc.) and small ones (newspaper, fast food, etc.). Analysis of the factors behind the decisions, whatever they may be, shows that many of the decisions are based on emotional motives that have weight in the consumer’s final decision. Until now, research has identified 63 different motives at the basis of people’s decisions.

C. Use one-to-one marketing principles.

The one-to-one marketing approach addresses every person as a separate entity, with motives, interests, and desires. This constellation of motives is, in essence, the abstract “operating system” that the focus of profiling seeks to understand.

D. Perform pre-engagement actions before every step.

The pre-engagement stage is the stage that comes before the establishment of the contact with the client (or supplier, competitor, etc.), and it includes a line of preparatory actions, before processes of sale. This stage includes use of raw information input into the profiling program in its different applications. This information is used to identify the client’s decision profile and to plan all the actions during the establishment of contact with him.

E. Maintain and perform post-engagement actions as a routine

The post-engagement stage includes administration actions such as the verification of the previous information and input of this information into the client’s record, as well as a series of actions intended for the maintenance of the relationship and the preservation of the client.



Success as an Index of Profiling Effectiveness

There is one way of judging the degree of effectiveness of every business effort, and profiling – both the program and the methodology – is no exception and must be measured, over time, according to the outputs that derive from its use. To dispel all doubts, results are defined here as those that yield one – or more – of the following outputs:

- Did the activity lead to better business performances and better results in our business operations – in the work with competitors, suppliers, partners, and workers?
- Did the activity increase the activity with existing clients (namely, increase the customer shares)?
- Did the activity lead to the creation of sales turnover for clients and new market sectors?

One final thought:

We cope daily with uncertainty regarding the future, and therefore it is worthwhile asking how many actions did we not undertake and are we continuing not to undertake because of our fear of a mistake? How many opportunities did we miss because of the fear that the price we would pay for a mistaken course of action would be too high, even intolerable for us? Profiling contributes to the increase of confidence in the degree of rightness of decisions that we make – and this is its contribution.

If you have questions and requests, please contact me: nir@nirbenlavi.com