



Thomas International News Update

March 2009

25% off Thomas 360 in March and April

I am delighted to reveal our enhanced and improved Thomas 360 assessment. We have invested significant amounts of time and money to seamlessly integrate this into the Thomas website. It has also been developed and changed so that your user experience will be everything you have come to expect from us.

To celebrate the return of Thomas 360 we are giving a 25% discount on all reports completed online in March and April. This will mean all reports completed before 30 April will cost 30 units as opposed to the normal 40.*

We really appreciate your continued feedback on our assessment and there is, at the end of the Thomas 360 assessment, an opportunity for you to tell us what you think of it. Please tell us!

To begin a 360 assessment log-in to your Thomas account and select Thomas 360 from the main menu. Thomas 360 will be automatically set at the offer price of 30 units until 30 April 2009.

*Offer applies to reports completed online only. It does not include reports purchased through the bureau system.

Thomas exhibits at Scottish CIPD Partnership conference

Thomas is pleased to announce that it will be exhibiting at the 2009 Scottish CIPD Partnership Conference at Dunblane Hydro 11-13 March. The CIPD Scottish Conference is the largest human resources event in Scotland, attracting over 500 HR professionals.

We will be demonstrating our comprehensive range of assessments and tests, and each visitor to the stand will be entitled to a FREE Personal Profile Analysis, our leading behavioural assessment.

Client Survey 2008: The results

We would like to say thank you to everyone who completed our online client survey back in November. The survey was designed to find out what you felt about Thomas, the service we provide, our assessments and tests and in particular your thoughts on the new website.

Here are some of the surveys key findings:

80% of you thought the new website was an improvement on the old site

Most people felt that site navigation, appearance, speed and the ease with which assessments could be administered were good or excellent. These results are great, but where tempered by the fact that a significant number of people disliked the new navigation – an indication that we still have work to do in this area.

90% use our assessments for Recruitment

Whilst our tools are fantastic aids in the recruitment process, they can also be widely and usefully used for development and retention purposes. We need to get better at communicating where and when our tests can help you, and this is something we will be trying to do over the coming year.

64% felt our assessments offered good or excellent value for money

It's great that most of you think we are hitting the mark price wise. In these cost conscious times we know it's vital to keep costs competitive, giving you access to quality assessments during a time when you need them most. Expect to see plenty of special offers and deals over the coming months.

97% would recommend us to other businesses and organisations

We were really pleased with this figure, it's great to know that for the vast majority the experience of working with us has been a good one. Obviously we'd love to make it 100%, and we'll be continuing to try and improve this figure further.

Article: Thomas 360 - To see ourselves as others see us

360 degree feedback is a successful way of raising performance issues in development programmes, appraisals and day-by-day management. It takes subjectivity, threats and defensiveness out of the process and allows you to concentrate on improving another person's – or your own - performance.

The two work scenarios below show where 360 can contribute. The precise details may differ from ones you've addressed – but their overall shape will be familiar.

- One of your staff is promising a lot more than he delivers. The problem is follow-through. He's an important member of the team: you don't want to demotivate him. You put off talking about it. When you finally do he reacts angrily. "It's not true", he says. "Who said that about me?" You're going to have to convince him that the comment is justified and prevent any emotional fall-out before you can even start working on the actual problem.
- You're a good manager. You're very clear when you give instructions ...or you think you are, until in a meeting someone comments "Could you write that in an e-mail. We're not always sure exactly what you want us to do." Everyone else nods in agreement. Are they all wrong? If they're right what other things about the way you operate are you mistaken about?

Thomas 360

Our new web-based tool allows people to rate themselves on a set of competences, then compare their ratings with those given by a minimum of four other people – their managers, peers, subordinates and even customers and external suppliers – that they have nominated.

Talking about the reasons for the gap between how they see themselves and how others see them (as well as the differences in view between, for instance, their peers and their manager) has consistently proved to be the best way to address performance issues, identify development needs. When someone has an unrealistically low view of their own abilities, seeing other people's ratings can give a much needed boost to morale because. By contrast unrealistic self-confidence can be checked and lead into valuable development work.

Why is 360 degree feedback so useful?

The person being assessed has nominated the other raters so he/she can't complain it's a biased sample. Results are strictly anonymised so private conflicts, unhelpful emotion and self justification are reduced.

Discussions focus less on whose view is right or wrong; they concentrate on reasons for gaps between self perception and other peoples' views, what they mean and how they can be closed. This opens up immensely fruitful, open discussions.

Two specific findings from 360 work show its sensitivity and power:

- For obvious reasons, managers are often the last people to know the specifics of someone's day-by-day working. 360 allows them access to the group who consistently rate most accurately: a person's peers.
- Leaders and senior managers find it difficult to get honest feedback on their performance from subordinates and peers. 360 is a way of overcoming this communication flow and helping senior people work on their skills.

Where is it used?

Thomas 360° is particularly useful:

- as the basis for development work with managers, leaders, supervisors and promotion candidates. It creates self-awareness and challenges mistaken beliefs. It can create buy in to a process and help shape a programme by identifying what development needs are.
- in team development: sorting out the dynamics within a team
- in performance review or appraisal. 360° adds a whole new dimension. Appraisal is often derailed by the clash over whether the manager or the individual is right or wrong in their appraisal. 360 focuses on action.

Used regularly - before and after a development programme for instance - it can provide a measure of the programmes effectiveness.

Some features of our system

Our 360° system draws on best practice and research into its use and features.

- Web delivery - this reduces administration time, allows efficient management of the process and gives you results in seconds once the ratings are collected.
- Two versions - leadership/management and field selling.
- Three different ways of responding including a free text area which provides extremely useful insights to supplement numerical ratings.
- 360 fits with the growing Thomas range of tools. PPA looks at behavioural preferences: our new Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire assesses areas of personal functioning that are crucial in specific jobs. Thomas360 measures competence and how people actually behave. You can therefore address a huge range of human issues at work without learning new systems and approaches, increasing the financial effectiveness of interventions.

A final thought

The well-known business thinker Edward de Bono comments that too much thinking is centred on solving problems rather than creating new possibilities. Thomas 360 can be used to address problems in performance. But it can bind a successful team together, generate creative ideas for systems and structures and identify strengths that can be further improved.

Ian Florance is Managing Director of OnlyConnect, Secretary of the Business Test Publishers Association and the European Test Publishers Group and on the Advisory Board of The Psychometrics Centre at Cambridge Assessment.

Self Awareness and Modifying Behaviour 26 March – Places still available

Places still available for the March session of our Self awareness and Modifying Behaviour course.

This workshop is designed to help you understand your behaviour and that of others, and teach you how to modify your behaviour in order to reap huge rewards in improved communication, a more motivated staff, better sales or a more productive team.

The course will enable you to:

- Create a harmonious work environment
- Improve collaboration and team working
- Improve motivation
- Improve interpersonal skills
- Improve communication/relationships with customers and colleagues
- Develop higher levels of empathy across the business

This course is suitable for Managers, Supervisors, Team Leaders, Sales people and any group of employees who need to be aware of their impact on others in order to build effective relationships.

Date and Location: 26 March – Covent Garden, London

Places are allocated on a first-come-first-served basis so book now to avoid disappointment!

To secure your place contact Leigh McBain on 01628 475 366, email leighm@thomas.co.uk or speak to your consultant.