Name: Carl R. Persing, Ph.D.

Job Title/Company: Research and Solutions Advisor, Metrus Group

Job responsibilities: Client project management including design and delivery of organizational survey research and consulting on organizational development.

My specific I-O interests: Beyond survey research and application of psychological principles to organizational development, I am interested in how personality and individual differences affect social cognition, emotion, and behavior in the workplace, especially as it pertains to occupational health and counterproductive behaviors. I’m also interested in occupational safety and the personality and cognitive predictors of unsafe workplace behaviors.

My career path/job history: I started my work life in steel fabrication, then excavating and road construction; I was an entrepreneur and owned several businesses. I’ve worked as a truck driver, welder, and I am still a master certified auto and truck technician. I went to college later in life, fell in love with psychology, went to grad school, worked as a professor for 7 years, and now I work on the applied side of psychology.

How I became interested in I-O psychology: I was in business before I went to college—so when I took psych I immediately saw its usefulness for business! I then told everyone I knew about the link I “discovered.” Then I found out they had been applying psych to business for about 100 years by that time.

A typical day at my job includes: There is no typical day—presenting results to clients on site, conducting a strategic planning session with senior leadership teams, creating scale items, discussing and conducting stats on data, etc.

What I like best about my job: Being able to use most of my skills almost every day and being challenged in the process!

Some of the challenges of my job: Making sure that I represent my company and my discipline well in every encounter.

Something others may find interesting about me: Besides my varied work history, the only thing is that I’ve sang and played guitar solo and in bands.

My other I-O and SIOP-related activities: I am the chair of the Visibility Committee for SIOP. I think what we do can cure so many workplace problems. But I quickly realized that few people—including business leaders, have heard of I-O! I told my I-O students that the first thing they have to do is educate everyone they talk to. Then I learned that SIOP had a Visibility Committee—I had to be part of that.

My advice to future I-O psychologists: You need business acumen as well as psychological, statistical, communication, and computer skills. I required my undergrad I-O students to take 5 business classes along with extra stats and other classes to gain the knowledge they needed. Look at jobs you think are interesting and see what the qualifications are, then get those qualifications while you are still in school. Do as many internships as possible to get valuable experience. Also, students should join SIOP. Be responsible for your own education and career. Read, join, and expose yourself to learning opportunities in business and psychology. Never be afraid to ask questions or for an opportunity to work with a professor or a company—tell them what you know and why you would be valuable.

Why I-O psychology matters: Because it is an important means to changing workers lives for the better, creating more profit for companies, and enhancing the world economy.

Is there anything else you would like to add? You have to be able to understand and use the language of business. You must strive to be as sharp as those to whom you will consult—maybe even a little sharper. That’s what they’re paying you for, right?

Read the entire series at www.siop.org/psychatwork.aspx!