TIP: The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist

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The Future Is Asking More of Us as I-O Psychologists and We're Rising to Meet It

Myia S. Williams
Editor

At the time of writing this editorial, I am also grading papers and preparing to close out the semester. I always like ending my courses with lessons learned or key takeaways from the semester for both my students and myself. I ask them what they are taking away from the semester: What did they learn about the field? But most importantly, what did they learn about themselves? One of my biggest takeaways this semester was around AI and the future of our youth.

I have been an early adopter of AI, especially ChatGPT, because of what it made possible for me, as someone who wears multiple professional and personal hats and is always dreaming up big dreams and creative ideas. AI became my thought buddy (not partner): a place to dump my thoughts, refine ideas, and ease the mental load of the mundane tasks, such as rubric creation, writing class announcements, simplifying text, you name it. It freed my cognitive bandwidth so I could redirect my creative energy where it mattered most.

Because of that, I often encouraged my students to use AI as a thought partner (not buddy, although is there really a difference?). After all, my job is to prepare the next generation, and equipping them with relevant tools is part of that responsibility. I was humbled really quickly one day during the semester:

> *Now this is a story all about how*
> *My life got flipped, turned upside down*
> *And I'd like to take a minute, just sit right there*
> *I'll tell you how I reflected and changed my stance on the use of AI in classrooms*
> (Hey, I am still for it, but with caveats.)

Please tell me you said this with your best Will Smith/*Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* voice, or you sang along (IYKYK).

During office hours, a student was struggling with summarizing large amounts of text into clear, succinct bullet points. He was so impressed with my ability to do it that he asked how I was able to condense his paragraphs so effectively. At the tip of my tongue, I wanted to say, *"Just use ChatGPT."* But something in me said: **Don't you dare.** Because honestly, I would have been doing him a disservice.

The only reason I can distill text so well is because I have practiced for years. Growing up in the Caribbean, we had to learn how to summarize in our own words large chunks of text (hated this, but here we are with it really paying off). Throughout my entire academic career, I had to build that muscle. I think back to my early years of being intimidated by mentors, unsure of myself as a researcher, the long path to my first publication. I wondered if I would ever "get there," be that expert or as qualified as some of the best mentors and people in the field. But slowly, through trial and error, step by step, I became the expert I once hoped I could be.

During my dissertation, I heard something on a podcast that stayed with me:

> *Learning and life is a series of steps. It is better to take one meaningful step and learn than take 100 steps with no foundation. If the foundation isn't built, life will eventually send you back to Step 2.*

What does that have to do with AI, though? So glad you asked: ChatGPT can accelerate us, but it can also skip the steps that make someone a novice today and an expert tomorrow. And if we shortcut the learning, we undermine the very foundation our students need to grow. So this semester, I returned to basics. I sent my students into the field to talk to people, observe, analyze, and most importantly, reflect and apply in a creative, not regurgitated way. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. They *learned* through a semester of experience.

As I reflected on that, I couldn't help but wonder: **What does this mean for the future of work?** We all see the "AI slop" online, and in our organizations, from senior leaders to the intern, it pretty much follows a copy-and-paste tone, the sameness, the disappearance of the human voice. The uniqueness we each bring is fading from our writing, our communication, our presence, and even at times our interactions with each other. So I found myself thinking deeply about how we, as I-O psychologists, help organizations prepare for the future of work. Lucky for you and I, it turns out, for this winter issue, many of our authors were asking the exact same questions.

Technology Is Accelerating, and So Must Our Judgment

Multiple articles in this issue illuminate a workplace forever shaped by technological advancement but none more clearly than the pieces exploring coaching technology and generative AI. From the review of *The Digital Coaching Revolution* to the practical guide on integrating AI into job analysis workflows, we are reminded that innovation is moving at a speed our traditional methods never anticipated.

Yet both **Dr. Steven Hunt** and **Derek Burns** remind us of something essential, which is that technology expands what's possible when paired with our expertise. They invite us to lead by designing future-ready organizations grounded in scientific rigor, ethical clarity, and the kind of human judgment that can't be automated—ever.

At the Same Time, Humanity Is Reasserting Its Place in Our Work

Even as AI reshapes talent systems, another movement is unfolding towards one that brings us back to the essence of being human. We see it in the exploration of emotional intelligence as a leadership precursor long before formal titles are assigned (Barnes). We see it in humor as pedagogy, how laughter builds connection and makes learning stick (Max. Classroom Capacity). We see it in identity, transition, and lived experience, such as the narrative journey from "Cupcakes to Curriculum," reminding us that who we are shapes how we show up in this field. Across these contributions, one message is clear: Although organizations continue to transform, people will always remain at the center of what is driving this change and can make it successful.

I get it; we are collectively burnt out due to navigating a world that keeps "life-ing." But the future is calling us to move beyond transactional living, independence, and isolation. It is pulling us back into community with others so that we are able to feel more, notice more, and lead with greater compassion that leans all the way into the depths of our humanity.

While Our Field Is Widening and We Are Better for It

By now, many of you have received your 2026 SIOP acceptances and are planning your trip to New Orleans. This issue offers a preview of the 2026 Consortia, reflecting the sheer breadth of our discipline, from master's students to doctoral candidates, early career scholars, and organizational practitioners.

Beyond that, we highlight voices from places often missing in our discourse, such as small-island work environments, underrepresented research pathways, and nontraditional journeys into I-O psychology. Whether the voices come from St. Lucia, Italy, Nigeria, Spain, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or right here in the United States, they expand our understanding of what I-O psychology can be. We have grown and expanded as a field where we are breaking down siloes and tapping into our global community of diverse thought, experience, and origin. We can never go wrong with such diversity, as it is the driving force beyond innovation and creativity, thus making our field stronger.

So Rising to the Future Means Rising Together

As you read these contributions, I hope you feel what I felt: momentum, possibility, collective readiness, or maybe just that "new year, new season, let's conquer the world" energy that always seems to find me at the start of a new year. Speaking of trying new things, we're doing that here at *TIP* as well. This issue marks the launch of *two* new series that reflect the very future-focused spirit we've been talking about.

The first, **I-O at Work**, is a collaboration with SIOP committees to spotlight the *actual roles* I-O psychologists hold across industries. Instead of focusing on individuals' stories, this series highlights the work itself in terms of how I-O is practiced across industries/work environments and the many pathways our field opens up. We're kicking it off with a partnership with the Military and Veterans Inclusion Committee, who offer a fascinating first look at I-O psychology within the U.S. Navy and the Talent Management Center of Excellence.

The second is a more reflective column that is one rooted in discipline and community, created specifically by **Bharati Belwalker** to explore various topics over the course of the year and bring *TIP* readers along for the conversation.

Anyway, beyond the excitement, I leave you with a simple question for all of us: researchers, practitioners, teachers, students, and leaders

> **Are we rising to meet this moment?**
> **Are we ready for what the future will demand of us?**

Here's to deeper questions, bolder innovations, and more human-centered science and workplaces moving forward.

Happy New Year, y'all, and I'll catch you on the next one.

Warmly,

Dr. Williams

The Evolution of SIOP—Recent and Forthcoming Changes

Scott Tannenbaum
SIOP President

The first SIOP conference was held in Chicago in 1986. We had 776 registrants and offered 34 sessions across four tracks. Hotel rooms cost $89 per night! If you were a SIOP member at that time and wanted to see a friend at the conference, you'd say, "Meet me at SIOP," and you'd be sure to see them, even though none of us were carrying cell phones! The term "SIOP" was often considered synonymous with the conference.

Since then, SIOP has **grown considerably in size and complexity**. Last year, over 4,300 people registered for our annual conference. We offered over 400 sessions and 600 posters and provided a full slate of workshops, consortia, and research forums. Beyond the conference, each year we now host one or more standalone Leading Edge Consortium events, offer a virtual program for I-Os in China, produce various webinars and white papers, and actively advocate on behalf of I-O psychology in the face of external challenges. Last year, 700+ volunteers and 14 professional staff supported close to 9,000 SIOP members.

Time to Reflect and Adjust

SIOP's growth is not unlike how a successful small family business grows into a midsized company, and then into a larger organization, adding structure, processes, and professional management to handle the increasing complexity. But, as any of you who have worked in a growing organization have seen, it isn't always easy, and you **need to periodically assess and update your structure and governance** if you want to continue to thrive. SIOP has done that at key inflection points in the past, and we recently reached another one of those key points.

For example, we recognized that as our membership grew, the number of SIOP committees and subcommittees had proliferated unabated, resulting in over 40 standing committees and countless subcommittees. I say "countless" because we had not tracked some of the subcommittees that had emerged over time!

We also learned that some committees had originally been formed to tackle a challenge or problem that no longer existed, so their members had little to do, whereas other committees were extremely busy. Expectations had organically morphed over time, so the role of committee chairs and SIOP professional staff wasn't always clear. And sometimes, Executive Board (EB) members were heavily involved in managing committees, but in other instances, they provided loose oversight. **Like many successful, growing organizations, our governance model had become increasingly ambiguous and idiosyncratic**.

> SIOP has much to be proud of, but it is time to review and modernize our governance and structure. Fortunately, **a drastic overhaul isn't required**; we are able to address the concerns **with a thoughtful update**, **redesign, and clarification** of how we intend to operate going forward.

Applying Some Organizational Psychology to Ourselves!

Like many I-O psychologists, I've provided organizational design and change management advice to companies, advised various boards, facilitated changes in organizational governance, and helped enhance the effectiveness of their teams. It was time to "apply some of that organizational psychology stuff to ourselves."

The Executive Board agreed that the focus of the effort would be on:

- **Member value**: Enable volunteers and staff to produce valued content, networking, and experiences for our members and society
- **Workable structure**: Clarify roles and enhance coordination between committees
  - Introduce a structure that works well without portfolio officers on the Board
- **Volunteer experience**: Engage a healthy number of volunteers, providing ample opportunities to do meaningful work, and avoid being on a committee with little to do
  - Develop a pipeline of SIOP volunteer leadership talent
- **Staff experience**: Enable staff to provide appropriate guidance/continuity for committees
  - Provide staff with a manageable span of oversight for the groups they support
- **EB experience**: Allow the EB to operate more strategically and adaptively

We know that our volunteers are a fantastic source of strength for SIOP, so we need to provide them with clear roles and expectations. We also know that, as members move in and out of volunteer roles each year, **our professional staff are the ones who can provide continuity. We must treat them as professionals and ensure they have a manageable span of influence**. Finally, our board needs to think ahead, monitor trends, and steer the ship. It's hard to do that if each board member manages a portfolio of committees. In organizations of our size, board members don't usually fulfill that type of operational role.

In hindsight, I can honestly say that it is easier to advise other companies on these matters than to apply them to ourselves! But we approached the effort with positive intentions and solicited plenty of input. I believe we are making useful adjustments. Over the next year, we'll reflect on what's working and identify where enhancements might be beneficial.

Updates to Our Governance and Design

With our stated needs and intentions in mind, we've been making gradual changes during the last 6 months, and we are implementing the remainder over the next 6 months. As part of this effort, we:

- Clarified the **roles and responsibilities** of standing committees, standing subcommittees, task forces, and advisory groups
- Implemented updatable **committee templates** that capture each committee's purpose, annual goals, membership, collaboration points, and so on. These are intended, in part, to make it easier for future committee chairs to hit the ground running
- Updated our **leadership training** for chairs and chairs in training
- Appointed **staff liaisons** to each committee and to select subcommittees
- Clarified who a committee/subcommittee member or leader should **contact** if they have questions or ideas
- Modernized the **board structure**, gradually moving from a portfolio officer (PO) model to a member-at-large model, which will allow the EB to be nimbler and more strategic
- Updated our board member and officer **nomination and election processes** to be equivalent to those used in organizations of similar size and purpose as us
- Updated our **website and management systems** (e.g., our online volunteering system). The basic infrastructure is now in place, and we will work to make it better and easier to use.
- Redesigned our **committee structure**

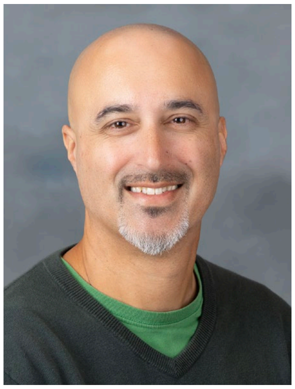
- Clarifying and, in some cases, modifying the purpose of committees to enhance clarity, reduce redundancy, and better serve our members
- Reducing the number of committees and explicitly acknowledging the importance of standing subcommittees and their leads
- Empowering committee chairs to propose changes to their subcommittee structure
- Reducing committee reporting requirements

I Hope You'll Volunteer

Revising an organization's governance and structure is not the most exciting thing to talk about, but I wanted you to know that we're keenly focused on ensuring SIOP is set up to succeed. Our Society is only as good as our volunteers, so I hope that when the volunteer system opens in the spring, you'll nominate yourself to be part of our outstanding cadre of volunteers!

Max. Classroom Capacity: The Serious Business of Humor in the Classroom

Loren J. Naidoo
California State University, Northridge



Dear readers,

When I was a high school student, I remember experiencing the most unusual exam of my life. This was a final exam in English, and I think it was a provincial standard administered to every grade 11 English student in Quebec. The exam consisted of a set of brief readings that students had to write an essay about, identifying common themes that occurred across the readings. My classmates and I were uniformly perplexed by the exam, and as it turned out, not a single student in my class (and perhaps in the entire province) successfully identified the theme.

I remember that one of the readings was the Mark Twain short story "The Recent Great French Duel." I don't remember the titles of the other readings now, but some had elements of racial stereotyping, some seemed to critique social mores and classism, others presented seemingly important figures as absurd caricatures, and so on. If you are familiar with Twain's "Duel," you know that it is difficult to read without laughing out loud. Many of the other readings were of this variety as well. During the exam, my classmates and I all struggled to identify a coherent theme in the readings, a task made harder by the frequent snatches of involuntary giggles from students that would echo across the otherwise silent and solemn exam room. All I could come up with for a theme was "stereotyping," and I dutifully spent my remaining time writing about how each reading addressed this very important and serious theme. As we all found out later, the intended theme of the exam was *humor*. I'm not sure what it says about high school education in Canada that it occurred to not a single student in my class that humor could be a legitimate topic for academic scrutiny.[1] However, I certainly remember *that* exam—and not many others!

This begs the question, can using humor help you reach your Max. Classroom Capacity as an instructor? I can immediately think of several reasons why humor might benefit student learning: Humor can build rapport between students and the teacher, increasing student engagement; humor can provide variety to a class meeting; it can stimulate the brain, surprising students or making them think about certain issues in a novel way; and humor can demonstrate that the instructor cares enough about students to try to make their classroom experience more enjoyable.

On the other hand, perhaps instructor humor diverts students' attention from course content, makes students roll their eyes at the lame professor desperately trying to be funny to distract from their inability to teach, feeds the instructor's ego at the expense of students' education, or just wastes precious class time?

What is the answer? Six seven! Just kidding.[2] Let's look at the research literature for answers. The role of humor in teaching and learning is a topic that has been the subject of empirical research for several decades now. But before we get into the findings, you will be *shocked* to learn that most of these articles aren't the least bit funny to read![3] Perhaps there is nothing funny about analyzing humor? We shall see. Nevertheless, there is much to learn here. For example, humor is generally defined as anything that people find humorous (Romero & Cruthirds, 2006). The following is an incomplete and unrepresentative review of this literature.

Ziv (1988) is one of the earlier empirical studies of humor in the classroom. If you are looking for a paper that discusses the appropriate dosage of humor for a statistics class, this is it! Ziv provides several sample jokes that were used to train teachers in their treatment condition to be funnier. Here's one example:

> an explorer in Africa, talking to a few native children who watch him somewhat surprised. Behind the explorer, and without his being aware of it, is a huge crocodile with a wide open mouth, ready to swallow him. He, addressing the kids, says, "There is no need to be afraid of crocodiles; around here their average length is only about 50 centimeters." One of the children says to another, "This guy had better think about the standard deviation, too." (p. 9)

Across two experiments, students who were randomly assigned to the humor condition received an "optimal" dosage of about 3–4 jokes per lesson, with each joke illustrating a statistical concept that was just taught. Ziv found that students in the "humor" condition had significantly higher exam scores than the control.

Berk and Nanda (1998) also considered humor in statistics classes. They hypothesized that humor improves student achievement and attitudes and reduces anxiety. They found that humor positively influenced student attitudes and reduced anxiety but did not improve achievement. They also provide several examples of humor appropriate for the classroom—here's one in the form of a multiple-choice question:

"What is the level of measurement of the following variable?
Wait time to see your doctor:
__10 minutes or less
__More than 10 but less than 30 minutes
__Between 30 minutes and one hour
__I'm still waiting" (p. 392)

The answer: hilarious![4]

Gorham and Christophel (1990) hypothesized and found evidence that instructor humor is a kind of immediacy behavior that improves students' motivation, enjoyment, knowledge retention, and understanding of the course material by making students feel closer to the instructor and the course. However, they argue that the type of humor matters. Positive effects were found for humor that was positive, inclusive, and course related, but not for humor that was perceived as tendentious or self-deprecating. Notably, in one of the few examples of *author* humor, in explaining the null relationship between negative instructor humor and students' attitudes toward the instructor, the authors joked that "students might enjoy Joan Rivers as a teacher but put little stock in what she teaches them" (p. 59). Wait, *was* that a joke?

Cooper et al. (2018) examined gender differences in students' perceptions of instructor humor in STEM classes. They tested three types of instructor humor: that which was positively received ("funny"), ineffective ("unfunny"), and negatively received ("offensive"). They found that funny humor increased student engagement and attention to course material, as well as their perceptions of instructor relatability and sense of belonging. In contrast, offensive humor (e.g., jokes about gender, race, or stereotypes) decreased students' perceptions of instructor relatability and belonging, particularly for female students.

By far the funniest read was Romal (2008), who, to her credit, attempted to provide hands-on humor training by including multiple jokes (or facsimiles thereof) in her paper. She meta-analyzed eight studies of the effectiveness of humor to understand the potential merits of instructors using humor in accounting classes. She found a meta-analytic coefficient of 0.46 and recommended that accounting instructors purchase, of many available options, the book on using humor in public speaking that best fits their personal style and their students' needs. Romal also helpfully suggested googling "jokes accounting" to find more than 150 thousand sources (p. 93). Beyond the unintended humor produced by imagining accounting professors diligently studying books on humor and infinity scrolling through Google hits of accounting jokes, Romal provided a table of strategies for the effective use of humor. This table included such gems as recommending wearing items of clothing related to the "financial statements de jour,"[5] the joke "what industry has many material errors? The garment industry!" and the "humorous" anecdote of an accountant who recommended using a helicopter to count the inventory of chickens on a free-range chicken ranch that ended in chickens being sucked into the rotors, spewing blood and chicken parts everywhere[6] (pp. 94–95). I don't want to be mean to accountants or propagate unfair accountant stereotypes, but I found the antihumor of this article to be incredibly funny.

We know from basic research that humor and laughter can have many positive effects, including decreasing anxiety and stress (e.g., Berk et al., 1989; Fry, 1992; Martin & Dobbin, 1988) and improving quality of life (Kuiper et al., 1992), but how can it benefit student learning? *Instructional Humor Processing Theory*[7] (Wanzer et al., 2010) provides the following account. An instructor makes a joke. When students do not perceive that joke as incongruous with their expectations for the situation, they don't notice the joke—the humor went over their heads. When the joke *is* perceived as incongruous with students' expectations of the situation, but they cannot make sense of the incongruity, they know that the instructor tried to make a joke, but they didn't understand it; therefore, it is not perceived as humor—they didn't get the joke. When students *can* make sense of the incongruity, then it's perceived as humor. However, the type of humor matters. When the humor is "inappropriate" (e.g., it is offensive, disparages others, etc.), then it generates a negative affective reaction that either undermines or has no effect on learning. In contrast, when the humor is "appropriate," it generates a positive affective reaction. In this last circumstance, the positive affect experienced will aid learning and retention of course material only when the humor is related to the course content. Said differently, an instructor's funny behavior will benefit learning *only* when it is perceived by students as humorous, students understand the humor, the humor is appropriate, and the humor is related to course content.

In summary, the evidence shows that humor is beneficial to students' well-being, their attitudes and motivation in class, and their learning when it is relevant to the course material and appropriate.[8] So, knowing this, how do we leverage humor in the classroom to become more effective instructors?

To me, this is a difficult question. It is dangerous business *trying* to be funny. Here's what I think.

1. Don't be afraid to use humor in ways that come naturally to you. Humor is not inherently unprofessional, and it can benefit your students. However, make sure it's not offensive or mean humor. And if you want to use humor as a tool to improve learning specifically, then it should be relevant to what you are trying to teach.

2. You can probably learn or be trained to improve your sense of humor or tell more jokes, but whether you can improve how funny you actually are is less clear. Still, some of the research involved manipulations of humor, including the use of specific jokes (which generally didn't seem all that funny), and this research generally found positive effects. Frankly, the bar for students'

expectations of humor in the classroom is probably very low. So, take a few minutes to write a joke about face validity, even if the joke isn't that funny—as long as you don't offend anyone, you probably won't do any harm, and it might help students learn and recall that concept!

In that spirit, and to open myself to the same ridicule as these and other brave humor researchers (who I feel bad for making fun of), I end with eight terrible jokes about I-O psychology, written with some help from ChatGPT.

As always, please email me with your thoughts, critiques, ideas, knock-knock jokes, or to just say hi: Loren.Naidoo@csun.edu

1. I tried to write a complicated joke about Cronbach's alpha. But it just didn't hold together.
2. How many I-O psychologists does it take to change a light bulb? Just one, but he needed to validate the new bulb's performance first.
3. You know you're an I-O psychologist when your dream date involves face validation.
4. I asked my boss for autonomy. She said, "I'll allow it—under close supervision."
5. What's an I-O psychologist's favorite pickup line? "I'm not saying you're a control variable, but you're definitely influencing my dependent variable."
6. Structural equation modeling: because multiple regression just wasn't *complicated* enough.
7. I tried applying Herzberg's two-factor theory at home. My wife said that compliments are motivators, but scrubbing the toilets is hygiene.
8. I ran a goal-setting workshop. Step 1: Get everyone to show up on time. Step 2: Redefine "time."

Notes

[1] On the other hand, Canadians do punch above their weight when it comes to our many famous comics, and we deserve some credit for writing an English exam on humor in the first place.
[2] If you understand this "joke," you either have a school-aged kid or you spend too much time online. BTW, the 6–7 meme is also a great illustration of humor being whatever people find humorous.
[3] In case it's not clear, this is me attempting a joke about the lack of humor in the literature on humor, a situation that I found to be funny. But if I found it funny, it must be considered humor according to the common definition of the term. By extension that would mean that the article WAS funny (at least to me), therefore it DID contain humor, which then paradoxically contradicts the very thing that I found funny about it. To further complicate things, this pseudo paradox itself is funny to me. However, I wouldn't be surprised if none of this is funny to you. My point: Trying to be funny is hard.
[4] The real answer is, arguably, nominal (e.g., if you are answering the question while waiting for your doctor), or, barring that scenario, ordinal, or, if you are a practicing I-O psychologist, it's interval because the stats for that are a lot easier.
[5] If any readers have training in accounting, please, PLEASE send me pictures of clothing that looks like the financial statements de jour!
[6] For the record, this is one of the few jokes that I didn't find funny at all…just seems cruel and gross. However, the idea that this joke is recommended to accounting professors so that they can be funny, that's funny!
[7] Yes, this is a real theory!
[8] Of course, this is not the whole story. I'm not a humor researcher, and a more in-depth recounting of other outcomes and mediating processes is beyond the scope of this column.

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From R&R to DOI[1]

Bharati Belwalkar
American Institutes for Research (AIR)

Dear *TIP* readers,

The intent behind writing this column is purely self-serving, but it needs two things: *discipline* and *community*. A commitment to writing this column for a year forces me to be disciplined about exploring the topic (I want to explore) and helps create a space for discussing it with a larger I-O community (because I suspect a typical *TIP* reader will be interested, too).

The Origin Story

Back in 2017–2018, as a recent I-O doctoral graduate, I was working with my dissertation advisor, Dr. Jerome Tobacyk from Louisiana Tech University, to publish my research. I clearly remember it was January 25, 2018, when we received a request for revision of our already revised submission. I read the editor's email that started with "this revision is a substantial improvement over the last submission. At the same time, some key issues remain," and I sighed. I couldn't tell if I was on my way to becoming a published author or succumbing to the sunk-cost fallacy if I continued. Besides being confused, I was also getting frustrated with (what seemed at the time) the endless revise-and-resubmit cycle and long waiting periods in between.[2]

Sensing my confusion/frustration with this arduous process, my advisor recommended I read a book titled *Most Unappreciated: 50 Prominent Social Psychologists Describe Their Most Unloved Work,* edited by Robert Arkin, who is a renowned social psychologist at Ohio State University. The book, therefore, is a fascinating collection of personal and professional insights into the processes and even politics of research. And oh my gosh, it was exactly the thing I needed at that time![3]

The book highlighted stories from eminent social psychologists who shared their personal and professional insights about their least appreciated or misunderstood work, which failed to have the anticipated impact or were influential for the wrong reasons. The contributing authors, like Carol Dweck, Philip Zimbardo, and Susan Fiske, to name a few, have shared their stories generously.

Granted, it took me a while to realize that the book was not only an interesting read but also a concealed teaching tool. Such that, at times, it was a hilarious respite from my own publication horror, but more importantly, it was incredibly validating. Reading about authors' struggles made me realize, if it happened to them, who am I to whine about it? It was that shift in perspective I didn't know I needed.

The Column

Although my dissertation publication story had a happy ending as we published it[4] (Belwalkar & Tobacyk, 2018), the related struggles were all in all a valuable experience. Thereafter, I published other research (and let some research lines go), and every publishing experience has been different. The idea for this column was born from these experiences and this book. So, running the risk of authoring a column that mimics this book, I aim to kick off similar conversations with I-O researchers and scientist–practitioners here.

This column is my attempt to find what makes research publishing feel meaningful, even when the metrics of success are slow to come. Additionally, this column is my commitment to building an intentional habit around that exploration, so my plan is simple. I'm going to talk to I-O mentors, colleagues, acquaintances, who may be some of you, and I will write about what I hear and learn.

The upcoming articles in this column will showcase challenges and struggles of conducting research, what makes good research, and what one should consider versus avoid when trying to publish their work. Each article in this column will include either (a) a story behind a seminal I-O piece directly from the author(s) and what made it successful; (b) an essay on an I-O researcher or scientist–practitioner discussing their underappreciated or highly criticized work, the factors that contributed to its underappreciation/disapproval, and the insights they gained from the experience; or (c) just my musings on all things publication.

The First Look

In the next column, I will be sharing what I learn from my conversation(s) with **Traci Sitzmann**, who is a professor of management at the University of Colorado Boulder. In SIOP's Demystifying the SIOP Award Process webinar in June of this year, she shared her experience publishing her recent work in the Academy of Management (AOM; Sitzmann & Campbell, 2021) on religiosity and the gender wage gap. She was incredibly candid about how arduous her journey was, and I figured it'd be worth exploring her story further.

Through this column, my hope is that not just me but you, especially graduate students and early career academics, will also find more resilient and perhaps more joyful ways to be a scholar. If this introduction piqued your interest, I hope you'll check out my next article on Dr. Sitzmann's AOM experience.

Please feel free to share your comments, feedback, or your own "publication stories" to bharati.belwalkar@gmail.com, or reach out to me on LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/bharatibelwalkar/.

Notes

[1] R&R = revise and resubmit; DOI = digital object identifier. I have used Google's Gemini, an AI assistant, to come up with this title and all three section headings.

[2] I don't know how you all—those who publish their work frequently and enjoy doing so—do it.

[3] Shout out to my advisor, who, I bet my life on it, has never once been mistaken for Reviewer #2!

[4] Finally!

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Developing Leaders Before Positions of Power

Portia C. Barnes, MSIOP

A few weeks ago, my daughters' K–12 school shared a resource in the weekly newsletter on emotional triggers and healthy response strategies. Upon reading this section, I was pleasantly surprised and impressed that this topic was being acknowledged and that tools were intentionally being disbursed to students as early as kindergartners through seniors in high school. The resource outlined common emotional triggers that students face, such as frustration, embarrassment, rejection, and disappointment, and how students can identify and respond to these feelings in a healthy manner. As a parent, I was proud. As an industrial-organizational (I-O) psychology practitioner, I was fascinated.

We spend a significant portion of our professional lives training adults to regulate their emotions precisely, respond rather than react, and interpret behavior through an empathetic lens. However, here it was, being taught proactively to children who have not even entered the workforce. It made me pause and reflect: *What might our workplaces, and our leaders, look like if emotional intelligence were introduced long before someone stepped into a position of power?* This question lies at the heart of leadership development science, which emphasizes that habits formed early often become the foundation of adult behavior.

The Connection Between Early Learning and Leadership Development

In industrial-organizational psychology, we often work in the "repair stage," helping leaders unlearn patterns from years of unmanaged emotions, poor feedback experiences, or reactive workplace cultures. Emotional intelligence (EI), as defined by Daniel Goleman (1995), includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These competencies shape how people handle stress, resolve conflict, and inspire others.

However, what if someone introduced those same skills in the formative years of development? What if future leaders entered organizations already equipped with emotional vocabulary and coping strategies? Instead of teaching self-regulation after a difficult 360-degree feedback report or executive coaching engagement, organizations could cultivate leaders who already know how to pause, reflect, and respond thoughtfully.

As I-O professionals, we recognize that leadership development is both an art and a science. It involves data, observation, structured experience, and learning to navigate the human side of work. The earlier that foundation is laid, the less reactive and more adaptive leaders can become.

From Classroom to Conference Room

In many ways, schools have begun to model what emotionally intelligent organizations strive to create: environments that prioritize understanding, empathy, and reflection before performance or output. The emerging focus on social and emotional learning (SEL) in K–12 education offers a model that mirrors what we try to implement in workplace culture initiatives.

Consider the parallels:

- **Self-awareness:** Students are encouraged to identify their feelings and name them. Leaders who can articulate their emotions without projecting them build psychological safety in organizations.

- **Self-management:** Students learn calming strategies when they feel triggered. Leaders who practice emotional regulation during conflict prevent escalation and model stability.
- **Social awareness:** Students practice empathy by recognizing others' perspectives. Leaders with empathy read the room, adapt communication styles, and reduce misunderstandings.
- **Relationship skills:** Students learn how to cooperate and resolve disagreements. Leaders who apply this build trust and strengthen collaboration.
- **Responsible decision making:** Students are taught to weigh the consequences before acting. Leaders who mirror this habit make more ethical and balanced choices.

These skills are not just "nice to have." They are performance multipliers, linked to engagement, retention, and overall team health. CASEL's (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) framework for SEL emphasizes that these competencies are teachable, measurable, and transferable. The bridge between childhood and adulthood is not as long as it seems.

The Workplace Reality

When employees enter organizations, many are rewarded more for their results than reflections. Traditional workplace culture prizes productivity over presence, which can unintentionally discourage emotional expression. Leaders are often told to "leave feelings at the door," only to discover later that unacknowledged emotions show up through burnout, defensiveness, or disengagement. These behaviors, often misinterpreted as "attitude" or "lack of professionalism," are human responses to unmet needs. When leaders fail to recognize this, they manage symptoms instead of causes.

As I-O practitioners, we help organizations move from reaction to prevention. We coach leaders to pause before labeling behavior, to ask, "What is driving this?" instead of "What is wrong with this person?" When emotional intelligence becomes part of leadership DNA, not a side skill, teams experience less conflict, faster recovery from setbacks, and stronger interpersonal trust.

Developing Leaders Before Titles

The most forward-thinking organizations will recognize that leadership development does not start with a promotion but with emotional literacy. The next generation of employees, those learning EI in classrooms today, will enter the workforce expecting emotionally aware environments. They will look for workplaces that model what they were taught: acknowledgment, boundaries, and safety.

For current organizations, this creates both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is catching up to the emotional fluency these future employees will bring. The opportunity is to create cultures that do not just manage people but understand them.

Practical Applications for Leaders and Organizations

To prepare for an emotionally intelligent workforce, organizations and practitioners can begin now:

- **Integrate EI into leadership development.** Move beyond one-time training sessions and weave EI into coaching, performance reviews, and promotion criteria.
- **Adopt SEL-inspired frameworks.** Translate classroom practices, like emotion labeling or reflection questions, into leadership check-ins and debriefs.

- **Train for recognition, not reaction.** Help managers interpret defensive or withdrawn behaviors as signs of stress, not defiance.
- **Model acknowledgment.** Encourage leaders to verbalize empathy before solving a problem. “I can see this situation was frustrating” often diffuses tension faster than directives.
- **Build EI into early career programs.** Teach interns and entry-level employees the same emotional awareness that K–12 students are learning now.
- **Treat EI as a measurable competency.** Include it in leadership assessments, succession planning, and 360-degree feedback instruments.

Organizations can bridge the gap between classroom and culture by embedding emotional intelligence into systems rather than slogans.

Case Highlights: Emotional Intelligence in Action

- Google–“Search Inside Yourself”: EI-based mindfulness training improved collaboration, innovation, and retention.
- Johnson & Johnson–Emotional Resilience Program: SEL-modeled reflection training increased engagement by 20% and reduced stress-related absences.
- FedEx–“Manager of Choice”: EI training boosted 360-degree feedback scores by 8–11% and improved departmental retention.
- Marriott International–Empathetic Feedback Culture: Empathy-first communication correlated with 80% retention and higher customer satisfaction scores.
- LinkedIn–“Conscious Business” Curriculum: Early career participants reported 32% greater collaboration and stronger project outcomes.
- PepsiCo–EI as a Leadership Metric: Executives high in EI outperformed peers by up to 20% on annual performance goals.

Bottom-Line Impact

Across organizations, emotionally intelligent leadership has been linked to

- 20–25% higher employee engagement
- Up to 50% lower turnover
- 15–30% greater team productivity
- Improved customer satisfaction and loyalty

(Sources: Gallup State of the Workplace, 2023; Korn Ferry Global EI Survey, 2022)

Emotional Intelligence in the AI Era

As workplaces become increasingly data-driven, the value of emotional intelligence is expanding, not shrinking. A recent article from the *Project Management Newsletter* (Project Management Institute, 2025) described EI as “the cornerstone of effective leadership in the AI era,” emphasizing that although technology can analyze and predict, it cannot empathize, inspire, or build trust. This reinforces the idea that developing emotional intelligence early, before positions of power, prepares future leaders to bring balance to a machine-augmented world.

A Generational Shift Worth Noticing

Leaders who once believed feelings had no place in business are now asked to create psychologically safe workplaces where emotions are data, not distractions. The generation currently learning to manage frustration, disappointment, and conflict in school will one day lead teams, and they will expect their organizations to do the same.

If I-O psychology has taught us anything, it is that culture does not change through policy alone. It changes when awareness becomes practice and when leaders model what they hope to inspire. What leadership habits could we intentionally nurture earlier, long before individuals step into positions of power? We are not born emotionally strategic; we are taught. The sooner we embrace that truth, the more sustainable and human our leadership practices will become.

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Industrial and Organizational Psychology in the U.S. Navy and the Talent Management Center of Excellence

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The opinions and assertions expressed herein are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Navy, Department of Defense (DoD), or the RAND Corporation.

Introduction

The influence of industrial and organizational (I-O) psychology and human resources (HR) is profound in every element of an enterprise—even within the Department of Defense (DoD) or military elements of the United States (U.S.) Government. More specifically, ***how does the system support the over 330,000 people (U.S. Department of Defense, 2024), working around the globe with continuous 24/7 operations, in the most dangerous jobs and settings, with a significant number of employees out of contact for months at a time?*** That is exactly what we are going to explore as we look at how I-O applies to the U.S. Navy and its Talent Management Center of Excellence (TMCoE) within the U.S. Navy Personnel Command (NPC)—*as the **first** article in the I-O at Work articles in* TIP.

This article will explore the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) in the NPC and how I-O is embedded in the Navy's structure, with details on the TMCoE, I-O Research and Practices for three Navy talent management efforts, and the Course for the Future of I-O in the Navy for Change Management and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

SIOP in the Navy Personnel Command

The I-O professionals who work within the MyNavy HR enterprise, led by the Chief of Navy Personnel, understand the challenges of supporting an immensely large organization, working globally with continuous operations, in dangerous settings. Because of the scope and scale of functions, the entire MyNavy HR enterprise could be viewed as a talent management organization which leverages I-O and HR professionals, whether as a uniformed service member, government civilian, or contractor partner.

The Navy's People Operations Structure

The Navy is an organization of over 330,000 people (U.S. Department of Defense, 2024), with MyNavy HR in charge of supporting the individuals and leaders across the enterprise. The Chief of Navy Personnel, through MyNavy HR, sets the strategy, priorities, and policy for Navy personnel and readiness with support from three supporting commanders—Commander Navy Education and Training, Commander Navy Recruiting Command, and Commander Navy Personnel Command. Each has a unique contribution to the MyNavy HR operations—training and education, recruiting and accessions, and sailor talent management and family support, respectively.

NPC is the operations center for all things related to sailors and families. The range of functions is immense—sailor job assignments, pay and benefits (through the MyNavy Career Center), sailor and family support programs, prisoner of war/missing in action operations, sailor records and performance management, selection and promotion board operations, and even Navy brigs and detention centers. Within

NPC, the Talent Management Center of Excellence (TMCoE) was established in 2021 as a research and innovation accelerator for a broad scope of talent management requirements.

I-O in Navy Talent Management

The TMCoE has a robust concentration of I-O psychologists conducting innovative research and transitioning efforts to use within the Navy. Furthermore, TMCoE has been led by a succession of two I-O psychologists: Michael Schwerin and **Ben Baran**. Both were confirmed to the rank of rear admiral (O7) and are the first and highest ranking Navy officers who are also SIOP members.[1]

> Michael Schwerin (Rear Admiral, Retired) earned his PhD from Southern Illinois University in 1994 in Applied Experimental Psychology, served as the NPC Deputy Commander and TMCoE Director from 2021 until his Navy retirement in 2024, and is currently a senior behavioral scientist at the RAND Corporation.
>
> Rear Admiral Ben Baran earned his PhD in organizational science from the University of North Carolina, Charlotte in 2011, was selected to the rank of Rear Admiral and nominated for these positions in 2024 to present, and is an associate professor of management at Cleveland State University.

The TMCoE team grew from a team of five in 2021 to 25 in 2024, supported by partnerships with research teams at the Naval Postgraduate School, the Office of Naval Research, and the Naval Information Warfare Center-Pacific, as well as industry partners, including BetterUp, Guardian Defense Group, and the Cognitive Performance Group. The establishment of the TMCoE and partnerships with the Navy and industry partners blend research and practice for the Navy's talent management efforts, as elaborated on in the next section.

I-O Research and Practice for Navy Talent Management

The TMCoE I-O psychologists conduct innovative research and transition efforts to use within the Navy. The three TMCoE lines of effort are the Navy Leadership Assessment Program (NLAP), MyNavy Coaching (MNC), and the Navy Performance Management Administration (NPMA). Each effort included I-O psychologists in critical roles, whether as internal team members or from partner organizations, to support these Navy-wide talent management initiatives.

Navy Leadership Assessment Program (NLAP)

NLAP is part of the command qualification process, whereby those candidates entering the command qualification process participate in assessment, evaluation, and feedback to determine which officers are best suited for command and where development is necessary. NLAP includes cognitive and noncognitive assessments, operational psychologist interviews based on assessment results, an operational psychologist debrief to the command qualification board, senior leader-led community-centric scenario-based panel interviews, operational psychologist debrief with the candidate, and candidate coaching for development, if desired by the candidate (U.S. Navy, 2025b). Officer communities have the option to include a multirater assessment, writing assignments, and work samples. NLAP has been fully embraced by the Navy Surface Warfare community (Meredith, 2023), engineering duty officers, and submarine forces, and piloted with approximately eight additional officer communities. Some of these officer communities are exploring NLAP use for senior enlisted leaders or earlier in a sailor's career, where developmental feedback has the potential for greater career-long effects.

MyNavy Coaching (MNC)

MNC is an effort to foster a community and culture of coaching for sailor development with three aims: (a) support a culture that values coaching as a complement to mentoring and performance feedback, (b) train and certify sailor coaches, and (c) augment the NLAP team by providing coaching to NLAP participants for personal or professional development. MNC trained coaches through a partnership with Flatter Inc., but now it is done through a cadre of internal Navy coaching subject matter experts. Similarly, NLAP coaching was supported through a partnership with BetterUp, but now NLAP coach support has been absorbed by MNC coaches.

Navy Performance Management Administration (NPMA)

NPMA is the latest iteration of efforts over the past 25 years to modernize and evolve the Navy's performance management system and policy to better align with organizational needs. The Navy's current system relies on computer-based form completion but paper-based routing, signature, submission, and scanning into sailor personnel files. Beyond the technical modernization needs, the Navy's performance management system (NAVFIT-98; U.S. Navy, 2025a) is plagued with criticisms of trait inflation (Cordial, 2017), inadequate information for personal and professional sailor development (Naito, 2012), and trait and value statements that are not observable workplace behaviors (Brock, 1999) or focused on warfighting competencies (Cordial, 2017; DePaolis & Ginetti, 2019). These sailor criticisms are echoed by a recent Government Accountability Office review that calls for system improvements (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2024).

TMCoE has partnered with the Naval Postgraduate School and Naval Information Warfare Center-Pacific to build a prototype new performance management system for a modern, cloud-based system with modules for expectation setting, midcycle feedback, performance evaluation, and promotion recommendation (potential assessment). Multiple I-O psychologists on the team have and continue to work on refining the prototype and conducting user experience testing with sailors on shore and afloat commands to be ready for a future implementation decision.

Charting a Course for the Future

I-O and HR professionals within the U.S. Navy must prepare for the future. Change readiness and AI are two main areas that need to be considered across all efforts as they are implemented.

Change Readiness Within a Tradition-Based Organization

Cultural change readiness is probably the greatest barrier to implementing change within our people systems. Despite the well-documented shortcomings described above, the Navy is a tradition-based organization that carefully assesses risk and is biased toward maintaining the status quo. The next major hurdle for I-O psychologists and HR officers in key Navy leadership positions is to develop a change-management plan, with a close eye on maintaining as much of the previous culture and tradition as possible.

Survivor Bias

One likely factor in play is survivor bias. In the context of performance, sailors retain, promote, and rise to leadership positions; they are the leading voices, leaders, and decision makers to promote change to the very system in which they survived. Conversely, those who are disadvantaged by legacy systems find their way out of the Navy, and the call for change exits the conversation. Put another way, if legacy systems worked well enough for you to be promoted to senior levels in the organization, how interested would you be in improving that system, and how might you convince your peers—other senior leaders— to do the same? Survivors are probably not likely to be the change agents in the system that they benefited from.

Familiarity and Comfort With Change

Another factor affecting change readiness is our familiarity and comfort with change. The innovations emerging from TMCoE are new or efforts that were tried and stalled. The last time the Navy had large-scale human performance system change was back in 1996. The number of sailors who remember and can share their change experience is rapidly dwindling. Change from a system that sailors have used their entire careers is incredibly difficult. Despite that difficulty, sailors report wanting a change to how we manage our talent, including change to the performance evaluation and promotion screening processes (Hartmann & Ahn, 2022; U.S. Navy, 2021). The Navy's job is to instill confidence and assure sailors that they can deliver the change they are asking for. This is precisely where we need our I-O psychologists to reduce the implementation risks.

Riding the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Wave

AI is here to stay—it is a powerful toolset that needs to be well thought out, with ethical considerations, and we must carefully plan where we want to have humans in the decision-making loop. The U.S. Air Force completed a series of RAND Corporation studies to both explore potential AI applications in talent management (Schulker et al., 2021), the ethical considerations (Schulker, Walsh, et al., 2024), and begin developing use cases (Schulker, Williams, et al., 2024). Recently, the U.S. Army described its AI approach for more efficient promotion board screening. They use AI to sort through the large number of known poor records to remove that workload and save more competitive records for human record reviewers (Nieberg, 2025).

The potential also exists to remove the bias and variability of promotion board briefers with an AI-generated avatar briefing all records rather than human board briefers. NPC currently uses some basic machine-learning tools for record markup that reduce bias and improve accuracy. The Navy ought to continue this walk with technology and create systems that are AI-ready and follow the Air Force example by setting the conditions and use cases for AI in performance management and promotion board processes.

Conclusion

Throughout the entire MyNavy HR organization, there are both senior executive leaders and distinct pockets of embedded I-O expertise helping our Navy meet our global mission and national defense priorities. We constantly draw upon our foundational understanding of psychology to build, advise, and lead in our respective organizations. Whether making contributions in recruiting, training, assignments, policy, or talent management (as focused on in this article), I-O psychologists and HR professionals are making profound and lasting contributions. The technical, cultural, and institutional challenges are voluminous, but I-O professionals within the U.S. Navy bring thought- and experience-based leadership that offers a multifaceted appreciation for the range of solutions, risks, and rewards for the MyNavy HR leadership team, offering support within the daily NPC and TMCoE initiatives, as well as charting courses for the future.

Note

[1] Brigadier General Dana Born (U.S. Air Force, retired) is the first I-O psychologist to achieve the military rank at the O7 paygrade.

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The Digital Coaching Revolution Gets Some Developmental Feedback

Steven T. Hunt

"Our understanding of technology limits and enables our imagination about work." This statement from my own book, *Talent Tectonics,* captures why I was eager to read *The Digital Coaching Revolution: How to Support Employee Development With Coaching Tech* by **Dr. Anna Tavis**, department chair of Human Capital Management at New York University, and **Dr. Woody Woodward**, chief coaching officer at BetterUp. Coaching is one of the oldest developmental techniques with roots dating back to the Socratic teaching methods of ancient Greece. It is a highly human intensive activity that leverages the power of dialogue to facilitate learning and behavior change. Coaching's reliance on one-to-one developmental conversations has made it a scarce resource, with access often limited to senior executives and high-potential employees. By reading this book, I was hoping to learn how modern technology, particularly the advent of artificially intelligent natural language processing solutions, might enable companies to provide coaching to a much broader audience of employees.

The content in *The Digital Coaching Revolution* broadly falls into two categories that I describe as conceptual and technological. The conceptual category contains discussions about the nature of coaching, elements that underlie effective coaching interventions, and how these are being changed by technology. It is exemplified by text such as

> [Humans] are social creatures designed to interact and driven to connect. There is no doubt that some of our interactions can be simulated and the technology will undoubtedly get better, but the question we will need to continually ponder is: What is the right application of and use of AI-driven chatbots [for coaching]? (p.165)

The technological category consists of descriptions and lists of coaching technology solutions, such as "BetterUp is the largest and most prominent player in the digital coaching space. With over $600 million in funding and a reported valuation of $4.7 billion in 2021, they have positioned themselves as a successful first mover" (p. 45).

The book feels like it was written for two audiences: people who design and deliver coaching programs and people who sell, purchase, and manage HR technology solutions. As a person whose career spans both audiences, I was engaged through most of the book. But I suspect many I-O psychologists may end up skipping over the sections of the book that read more like vendor marketing brochures than discussions of the interplay between coaching methods and coaching technology. That said, I do think this book is worth reading for anyone who is interested in learning how technology is changing how companies deliver coaching to employees.

Where I Gained the Most Value From the Book

Over the course of my career, I have worked as an executive coach, benefited from receiving coaching, and been involved in the design and deployment of multiple coaching technology solutions. Being familiar with the field of coaching, I appreciated how the book outlined different categories of coaching, defined specific elements of the coaching processes, and summarized research on factors that impact coaching effectiveness. Breaking coaching into distinct components is important because technology does not automate coaching in a holistic sense. Technology automates specific tasks associated with coaching or augments human behaviors that impact the act of coaching. Understanding technology's impact on coaching requires looking at coaching at a granular task- and behavior-based level. Examples include discussions in the book about how technology is as follows:

- Enabling greater access to coaching through platforms that help individuals define coaching needs and build relationships with human coaches whose capabilities match these needs
- Allowing coaches to use structured feedback and assessment tools to enrich coaching activities
- Leveraging wearable and web-based monitoring solutions that measure people's physical and online activities to increase self-awareness and support ongoing self-management
- Using AI-powered chatbots to augment human-to-human coaching conversations
- Integrating coaching into the flow of ongoing work operations and learning programs
- Capturing and analyzing data that enables companies to track coaching effectiveness and calculate the ROI of coaching investments

The book also contains an interesting discussion of how technology is impacting the coaching training and certification industries. Regulations to practice as a coach vary around the world, reflecting the fundamental challenge that "there is no single agreed upon definition for professional coaching" (p. 1). Technology has the potential to make coaching accessible to far more people. It also has the potential to ensure coaches are qualified to coach others. Technology is also changing the skills coaches need to be effective, such as understanding how to appropriately use chatbots and self-monitoring tools in the context of a coaching relationship.

Where I Found Myself Wanting More Information

The book provides several useful frameworks to categorize coaching based on things such as

- The context where coaching is delivered, such as remedial performance coaching, work transition coaching, high-potential leadership coaching, or crisis recovery coaching
- The outcomes coaching is seeking to achieve, such as delivering on business goals, improving interpersonal skills, managing resilience and well-being, or career advancement
- The status of the coach, such as external contract coaches, internal company coaches, or manager/leader coaches
- Phases of the coaching process, such as defining goals, understanding realities, identifying options, and committing to a way forward (the GROW model)

These models helped clarify the ambiguous meaning of the word "coaching." Unfortunately, these models were rarely revisited in the chapters discussing coaching technologies. It would have been insightful to examine the impact of technology on coaching through the lens of these frameworks. For example, are chatbot technologies more or less effective for different phases of the GROW model, or do self-monitoring technologies that may be useful when used by external coaches create risks when used by manager/leader coaches?

Another place I found myself wanting far more information was the sections of the book that listed coaching technology solutions. These sections frequently failed to provide details on how solutions affect coaching at a behavioral or tangible level. And they almost never discussed risks or problems associated with using the technology. For example, on page 60, we learn that "some digital coaching marketplaces have integrated real-time digital feedback tools like Loupe to enhance the coaching experience." This sounds fascinating, but it does not describe what the solution actually does. What type of feedback does it collect, and how is it measured? How does the solution ensure the accuracy of the feedback? How can companies ensure this feedback is constructive versus being a source of distraction or anxiety? Technology does not create results merely by turning it on. It enables behavioral change and decision-making insight that create results, assuming it is appropriately used. It is impossible to fully understand the impact of digital coaching tools based on high-level descriptions of functionality. When it comes to using technology to improve something as complex as coaching, we need information about the details.

What I Could Have Done Without

Many parts of the book read more like an HR technology vendor marketing brochure than a book intended to educate readers on the use of digital coaching tools. Given the background of the second author, one might expect the book to have a somewhat commercial focus. But constantly touting the same vendor solutions over and over without mentioning other widely used coaching technology solutions was off-putting. For example, the book is 203 pages long and includes over 85 references to the company BetterUp. This amounts to a product placement ratio of one mention per every 2.4 pages. Given the book is ostensibly sold as an educational resource, this level of product marketing strikes me as somewhat repugnant.

Would I Recommend the *Digital Coaching Revolution*?

This is a useful book for people seeking an overview of different ways technology is impacting coaching. It is also the first book to substantively address this topic since AI LLM solutions became widely available for use in coaching applications. The authors are to be applauded for diving into this complex topic and attempting to provide clarity in a world of constant change and considerable confusion. Although the book overly promotes digital coaching tools made by a specific set of companies, it does contain useful information that transcends any specific technology vendor solution.

New coaching technologies are constantly being developed, and every new solution creates a new set of lessons learned. When I contacted the first author and SIOP member Anna Tavis to give her an opportunity to respond to this review, she told me she agreed with many of these comments. She shared that this book was created shortly after the second Coaching & Technology Summit held in 2022. The book was written to make people aware of how quickly technology is changing the field of coaching. In 2026, Anna will be holding the fifth Coaching & Technology Summit. She said it is striking how much more we know now about the intersection of coaching and technology than we did when this book was written. In light of this knowledge, she would make considerable changes if the book were written today. In response, I told Anna I would gladly read a second edition of the *Digital Coaching Revolution*, particularly because the authors are so open to receiving coaching advice.

The Potential of Generative AI in Jumpstarting Content Creation

Derek Burns

***This article was intentionally created using Generative AI (Claude Sonnet 4.5) to demonstrate the potential of Generative AI in jump starting content creation. Although Claude generated the initial draft (approx. 50–75% of the heavy lifting), the intent is to show where humans must step in—to validate, polish, and publish. This piece should not be read as a fully polished article but rather as an example of human–AI collaboration.

AREA 1: TASK IDENTIFICATION AND EXTRACTION

Prompt 1.1

Prompt Title: Initial Task Extraction From Organizational Documents

Purpose: Systematically extract discrete work tasks from unstructured organizational documents while maintaining task-level specificity and avoiding ambiguous language.

When to Use: When beginning a job analysis project with existing documentation (job descriptions, performance reviews, standard operating procedures, training manuals) but before conducting SME interviews.

The Prompt:
You are assisting an industrial-organizational psychologist with a job analysis for the position of [JOB TITLE] in a [INDUSTRY/SECTOR] organization.

Analyze the following document and extract discrete work tasks:

[PASTE DOCUMENT TEXT HERE]

For each identified task, provide:
1. Task statement in standard format: Action Verb + Object + Context/Purpose
2. Source location (which document/section)
3. Estimated frequency indicator (if mentioned: Daily/Weekly/Monthly/Annually)
4. Estimated criticality indicator (if mentioned or implied)
5. Any tools, technology, or equipment mentioned

OUTPUT FORMAT:
Create a table with columns: Task ID | Task Statement | Source | Frequency | Criticality | Tools/Technology

CONSTRAINTS:
- Each task must be a discrete, observable work activity
- Avoid vague language (e.g., “handles correspondence” should be “Responds to customer email inquiries within 24 hours”)
- Do not infer tasks not explicitly mentioned
- Flag any ambiguous statements that require SME clarification

- Maintain the original meaning without adding interpretation

After the table, provide:
- List of ambiguous statements requiring clarification
- Potential task clusters or categories observed
- Tasks that may be outdated or technology dependent

Expected AI Output:
- Structured table of 15–50 tasks (depending on document length)
- Clearly formatted task statements
- Flagged items needing clarification
- Initial categorization suggestions

Human Validation Steps:
1. Review each task statement for accuracy against source document
2. Verify task statements meet SIOP task analysis standards (observable, specific, atomic)
3. Check for over-extraction (tasks too granular) or under-extraction (tasks too broad)
4. Validate frequency/criticality indicators against organizational knowledge
5. Confirm no critical tasks were missed in extraction

Bias/Quality Checks:
- Ensure tasks represent actual work requirements, not stereotypical assumptions
- Verify no gender-coded language (e.g., "man the desk" vs. "staff the reception are")
- Check that tasks don't unnecessarily exclude individuals with disabilities
- Confirm technology requirements are actually essential, not preferential
- Verify extracted tasks are job-related, not person-related characteristics

SIOP Alignment: Follows *Principles for the Validation and Use of Personnel Selection Procedures* (2018) guidelines for systematic task identification using multiple data sources. Supports content validity strategy by ensuring comprehensive work domain sampling.

AREA 2: KSAO EXTRACTION AND COMPETENCY MODELING

Prompt 2.1

Prompt Title: Initial KSAO Identification and Classification From Task Inventory

Purpose: Systematically derive Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Other characteristics (KSAOs) from validated task inventory using established taxonomic frameworks to ensure comprehensive coverage of job requirements.

When to Use: After task inventory validation is complete, when beginning the transition from work-oriented (tasks) to worker-oriented (KSAOs) job analysis. This is the critical bridge between task analysis and competency modeling or selection system development.

The Prompt:

You are assisting an I-O psychologist in deriving KSAOs (Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Other characteristics) from a validated task inventory for [JOB TITLE].

VALIDATED TASK INVENTORY:
[PASTE FINAL TASK INVENTORY WITH PRIORITY/ESSENTIALITY RATINGS]

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT:
- Industry: [INDUSTRY/SECTOR]
- Job Level: [Entry/Mid/Senior/Leadership]
- Selection Context: [Internal promotion/External hiring/Both]

KSAO EXTRACTION INSTRUCTIONS:
For each task or task cluster, identify the underlying KSAOs required for successful performance.

Use these DEFINITIONS:
KNOWLEDGE: Organized body of information, usually factual or procedural, that makes adequate job performance possible (e.g., knowledge of accounting principles, knowledge of SQL programming language).
SKILLS: Proficiencies developed through practice to perform specific observable behaviors (e.g., skill in active listening, skill in statistical data analysis, skill in equipment calibration).
ABILITIES: Enduring attributes of the individual that influence performance across multiple tasks (e.g., oral communication ability, deductive reasoning ability, manual dexterity).
OTHER CHARACTERISTICS: Personal characteristics, attitudes, values, or work styles that influence performance but don't fit above categories (e.g., conscientiousness, stress tolerance, customer service orientation, willingness to work irregular hours).

EXTRACTION PROCESS:
1. For each task, ask: "What must someone KNOW to perform this task?"
2. For each task, ask: "What practiced proficiencies (SKILLS) are required?"
3. Across task clusters, ask: "What enduring personal attributes (ABILITIES) enable performance?"
4. Consider: "What personality traits, work styles, or characteristics predict success?"

OUTPUT FORMAT:
Create a comprehensive table:
KSAO ID | KSAO Type | KSAO Statement | Linked Tasks | Importance (H/M/L) | Day-One Necessity (Yes/No) | Measurability (High/Med/Low)

REQUIREMENTS:
- Each KSAO must link to at least one task (show task IDs)
- Avoid redundancy (merge similar KSAOs)
- Maintain appropriate specificity level (not too broad: "communication"; not too narrow: "writing emails about Policy X")
- Flag KSAOs that may be difficult to assess validly
- Distinguish trainable skills from stable abilities
- Note KSAOs critical for essential functions (ADA relevance)

After the table, provide:
1. KSAO COVERAGE ANALYSIS:

  - Total KSAOs by type (K/S/A/O breakdown)
  - Any tasks with insufficient KSAO specification
  - Potential overlaps requiring consolidation
2. ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS:
  - KSAOs suitable for cognitive testing
  - KSAOs suitable for situational judgment tests
  - KSAOs requiring work samples or simulations
  - KSAOs best assessed through structured interviews
  - KSAOs potentially assessable via biodata or personality measures
3. DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS:
  - Trainable vs. selection-focused KSAOs
  - KSAOs requiring extended development time
  - Critical KSAOs for onboarding focus
4. POTENTIAL CONCERNS:
  - KSAOs that may have adverse impact potential
  - KSAOs that might unnecessarily restrict applicant pool
  - KSAOs requiring business necessity documentation

Expected AI Output:
- Comprehensive KSAO table (typically 20–50 KSAOs for most jobs)
- Clear linkage between KSAOs and tasks
- Coverage analysis and gap identification
- Assessment strategy recommendations
- Training vs. selection guidance

Human Validation Steps:
1. Review each KSAO for accurate classification (K vs. S vs. A vs. O)
2. Validate importance ratings with SMEs using structured ratings
3. Verify that day-one necessity designations align with organizational onboarding capacity
4. Cross-check against job requirements vs. incumbent characteristics (avoid person-based bias)
5. Confirm all essential function tasks have supporting KSAOs identified
6. Review with organizational stakeholders for comprehensiveness
7. Validate assessment recommendations against organizational assessment capabilities
8. Ensure KSAO statements are behaviorally specific enough for assessment development

Bias/Quality Checks:
- Ensure "abilities" don't reflect cultural or socioeconomic advantages masquerading as innate capabilities
- Verify "knowledge" requirements are truly job related vs. credentialism
- Check that "other characteristics" don't embed personality stereotypes or cultural norms
- Confirm physical abilities are genuinely necessary for essential functions (ADA)
- Verify cognitive ability requirements match actual job complexity
- Ensure interpersonal KSAOs don't favor particular communication styles over effectiveness
- Check that "day-one necessity" doesn't unnecessarily restrict candidates who could learn quickly
- Verify measurability concerns don't lead to over-emphasizing easily measured but less important KSAOs

SIOP Alignment: Follows established KSAO taxonomy frameworks (Fleishman & Quaintance, 1984; Peterson et al., 2001). Supports content-oriented validation strategy per *Uniform Guidelines* (1978). Provides foundation for criterion-related validation by specifying predictor constructs. Aligns with *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (2014) requirement for clear construct definition.

AREA 3: JOB DESCRIPTION WRITING AND OPTIMIZATION

Prompt 3.1

Prompt Title: Initial Job Description Generation From Validated Task Inventory

Purpose: Transform a validated task inventory into a comprehensive, legally compliant job description that accurately represents work requirements while supporting multiple organizational uses (recruitment, performance management, ADA analysis).

When to Use: After completing job analysis validation and finalizing task/competency inventories, when creating new positions or overhauling existing job descriptions to align with current work requirements.

The Prompt:
You are assisting an industrial-organizational psychologist in creating a comprehensive job description for [JOB TITLE] at [ORGANIZATION NAME]. Using validated job analysis data, create a legally defensible, recruitment-ready job description.

VALIDATED INPUTS:
Position: [JOB TITLE]
Department: [DEPARTMENT]
Reports To: [SUPERVISOR TITLE]
FLSA Status: [Exempt/Non-Exempt]
Salary Grade: [IF APPLICABLE]

ESSENTIAL TASKS (from validated task inventory):
[PASTE PRIORITIZED TASK LIST WITH FREQUENCY/CRITICALITY RATINGS]

REQUIRED COMPETENCIES/KSAOs:
[PASTE VALIDATED COMPETENCY LIST]

WORKING CONDITIONS/PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:
[PASTE ANY DOCUMENTED CONDITIONS]

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT:
Industry: [INDUSTRY]
Organizational Size: [NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES]
Primary Business: [BRIEF DESCRIPTION]

CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE JOB DESCRIPTION WITH THE FOLLOWING COMPONENTS:

1. POSITION SUMMARY (3–4 sentences):
   - Core purpose of the role
   - Primary contribution to organizational mission
   - Key stakeholder relationships
   - Scope of responsibility (e.g., budget, team size, geographic reach)
2. ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS (8–12 bullet points):
   - Draw directly from highest rated tasks (frequency ≥3.0 OR criticality ≥4.0)
   - Use consistent format: Action verb + Object + Purpose/Context + Performance standard (when applicable)
   - Order by criticality (most critical first)
   - Include approximate time allocation (e.g., "40% of time" for major responsibilities)
   - Mark as "Essential Functions" per ADA requirements
3. ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES (3–5 bullet points):
   - Important but nonessential tasks
   - Clearly differentiated from essential functions
   - Include growth/developmental opportunities
4. REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

   EDUCATION:
   - Minimum required (must be job related)
   - Preferred (if applicable)
   - Acceptable alternatives (e.g., "or equivalent combination of education and experience")

   EXPERIENCE:
   - Minimum years and type of experience required
   - Specific industry/functional experience if essential
   - Acceptable substitutions

   KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES:
   - Required day-one competencies
   - Technical skills and proficiency levels
   - Certifications or licenses (only if legally required or demonstrably essential)
5. PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS (optional):
   - Clearly labeled as "Preferred" not "Required"
   - Limited to genuinely advantageous qualifications
   - Should not create disparate impact
6. WORKING CONDITIONS & PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:
   - Describe typical work environment
   - List physical demands with frequency (e.g., "Occasionally lifts up to 25 lbs")
   - Include sensory requirements (visual, auditory)
   - Note travel requirements (percentage and geographic scope)
   - Specify work schedule parameters (e.g., "Standard business hours with occasional evening meetings")
   - Use ADA-compliant language (essential vs. marginal requirements)
7. SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES (if applicable):
   - Number and types of direct reports
   - Nature of supervisory duties (hiring, evaluation, discipline, budget
8. BUDGET/FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES (if applicable):
   - Operating budget size
   - Purchasing authority
   - Revenue responsibility

OUTPUT FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS:
- Use clear, active language
- Avoid jargon unless it's standard industry terminology
- Maintain 8th–10th grade reading level for accessibility
- Keep total length to 2–3 pages
- Use parallel construction across bullet points
- Include percentage of time for major function areas
- Date the job description for version control

COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS:
- Ensure ADA compliance (essential functions clearly designated)
- Avoid age-related language (e.g., "recent graduate," "digital native")
- Use gender-neutral language throughout
- Ensure all requirements are demonstrably job related
- Include standard EEO and accommodation statements (request if needed)

QUALITY STANDARDS:
- Each essential function should be specific enough to assess performance
- Qualifications must be validated by job analysis data
- Physical requirements must reflect actual job demands
- No vague terms like "excellent" without context or measurement

Expected AI Output:
- Complete, formatted job description (2–3 pages)
- Clear distinction between essential and additional functions
- Legally compliant qualification statements
- ADA-appropriate physical requirements
- Professional, consistent formatting
- Version control notation

Human Validation Steps:
- Verify each essential function traces back to validated task inventory
- Confirm qualification requirements are truly job related (not inflated)
- Review physical requirements with incumbents to ensure accuracy
- Validate FLSA classification with compensation analysis
- Check reading level using readability assessment tools (target 8th–10th grade)
- Review with hiring managers for practical recruiting utility
- Obtain legal review for ADA compliance and protected class language
- Confirm with HR that benefits, schedules, and policies are current
- Pilot test with potential candidates for clarity and comprehensiveness

Bias/Quality Checks:
- Ensure no gendered language (avoid "he," "his"; use "incumbent," "employee," or "they")
- Verify no age proxies (e.g., "energetic," "recent graduate," "seasoned professional")
- Check for culturally specific references or unnecessarily exclusive language
- Confirm education requirements don't exceed actual job needs (credential inflation)
- Verify physical requirements don't unnecessarily exclude candidates with disabilities
- Ensure military experience isn't required unless genuinely essential

- Check that “culture fit” language doesn’t mask discrimination
- Verify no requirements that disproportionately impact protected classes without business necessity
- Confirm preferred qualifications don’t effectively become de facto requirements

SIOP Alignment: Follows SIOP *Principles* (2018) for content validity by grounding all requirements in systematic job analysis. Aligns with *Uniform Guidelines* Section 14C (documentation of validity evidence) by maintaining clear linkage between job requirements and validated task/competency data. Supports ADA essential functions analysis per EEOC guidance.

AREA 4: SKILLS GAP ANALYSIS AND WORKFORCE PLANNING

Prompt 4.1

Prompt Title: Current Skills Inventory Analysis and Capability Mapping

Purpose: Systematically assess the organization’s current workforce capabilities by analyzing skills, competencies, and proficiencies across roles, departments, and levels to establish baseline talent data for strategic workforce planning.

When to Use: When initiating workforce planning efforts, before organizational restructuring, during strategic planning cycles, or when establishing talent analytics capabilities. Essential foundation for all subsequent gap analysis and planning activities.

The Prompt:
You are assisting an industrial-organizational psychologist in conducting a comprehensive current skills inventory analysis for [ORGANIZATION NAME]. Analyze available workforce data to create a systematic capability map that will inform strategic workforce planning.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT:
Organization: [ORGANIZATION NAME]
Industry: [INDUSTRY]
Total Workforce Size: [NUMBER]
Geographic Distribution: [LOCATIONS]
Business Strategy Focus: [E.G., growth, digital transformation, market expansion, operational excellence]
Planning Horizon: [1-YEAR/3-YEAR/5-YEAR]

AVAILABLE DATA SOURCES TO ANALYZE:
[SELECT AND PASTE RELEVANT DATA:]
1. Job Descriptions/Titles: [PASTE OR DESCRIBE]
2. Performance Review Data: [SUMMARY OR SAMPLE]
3. Training Completion Records: [SUMMARY]
4. Certifications/Licenses: [LIST]
5. Educational Backgrounds: [SUMMARY STATISTICS]
6. Self-Reported Skills Data: [IF AVAILABLE FROM HRIS/TALENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM]
7. Competency Assessment Results: [IF AVAILABLE]
8. 360-Feedback Themes: [IF AVAILABLE]

9. Career Development Plans: [SUMMARY]
10. Exit Interview Themes: [RECENT PATTERNS]

ANALYSIS REQUIREMENTS:
1. SKILLS TAXONOMY DEVELOPMENT:
Create a structured skills framework categorizing workforce capabilities:
A. TECHNICAL/FUNCTIONAL SKILLS:
- Core technical skills by job family (e.g., software development, financial analysis, manufacturing operations)
- Industry-specific expertise
- Tools and technology proficiencies
- Specialized methodologies or frameworks
- Professional certifications
B. DIGITAL/TECHNOLOGY SKILLS:
- Data literacy and analytics capabilities
- Digital tool proficiency (by category: communication, collaboration, automation, analysis)
- Emerging technology familiarity (AI, cloud, automation, etc.)
- Technical troubleshooting and adaptability
C. LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT SKILLS:
- People management capabilities
- Strategic thinking and planning
- Change management
- Financial management
- Decision making under uncertainty
D. INTERPERSONAL & COLLABORATION SKILLS:
- Communication (written, verbal, presentation)
- Cross-functional collaboration
- Influence and negotiation
- Conflict resolution
- Customer relationship management
E. COGNITIVE & PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS:
- Analytical reasoning
- Creative problem solving
- Systems thinking
- Critical evaluation
- Learning agility
2. WORKFORCE CAPABILITY PROFILING:
Analyze current workforce across multiple dimensions:
A. AGGREGATE SKILL DISTRIBUTION:
- What percentage of workforce possesses each critical skill?
- What is the proficiency distribution (basic/intermediate/advanced/expert)?
- Where are skills concentrated (which departments, levels, locations)?
- What is the demographic distribution of critical skills?
B. SKILL DEPTH ANALYSIS:
- For each critical skill area, how many employees at each proficiency level?
- Identify single points of failure (skills possessed by very few individuals)
- Calculate skill redundancy ratios (critical skills that should have backup coverage)
- Assess bench strength for key technical and leadership capabilities

C. SKILL VERSATILITY ANALYSIS:
- Identify multi-skilled employees with transferable capabilities
- Map skill combinations that support role flexibility
- Identify employees with rare or unique skill combinations
- Assess workforce adaptability (breadth vs. depth of skills)

3. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT:
Evaluate organizational-level strengths and vulnerabilities:
A. CAPABILITY STRENGTHS:
- What skills are well-represented across the organization?
- Where does the organization have competitive advantage in talent?
- What emerging capabilities have been successfully built?
- What skills show positive development trends?
B. CAPABILITY VULNERABILITIES:
- What critical skills have insufficient depth or coverage?
- Where are single points of failure (key person dependencies)?
- What skills are concentrated in employees nearing retirement?
- What capabilities have been declining (due to attrition, obsolescence)?
C. CAPABILITY DISTRIBUTION ISSUES:
- Skills inequitably distributed across locations/units?
- Critical skills concentrated at specific levels (insufficient junior pipeline)?
- Diversity of skill holders (demographic concentration risks)?
- Geographic constraints limiting skill deployment?
4. ROLE-BASED CAPABILITY ANALYSIS:
Assess capabilities by job family and role:
A. CRITICAL ROLE SUFFICIENCY:
- For each critical role category, are required skills adequately represented?
- What percentage of incumbents meet full competency profile?
- Where are qualification or proficiency gaps most common?
B. SUCCESSION COVERAGE:
- For key positions, how many qualified successors exist?
- What skills would be lost if key individuals departed?
- Which critical roles have inadequate succession depth?
C. CAREER PATH VIABILITY:
- Do skill distributions support internal mobility and progression?
- Are foundational skills being developed at entry levels?
- Can employees progress from current capabilities to next-level requirements?
5. TREND ANALYSIS (If Historical Data Available):
- How has workforce skill profile changed over time (1–3 years)?
- What skills have been successfully developed internally?
- What skills have been lost through attrition?
- Are hiring and development efforts closing or widening gaps?
- What natural skill obsolescence is occurring (technology changes, market shifts)?
6. RISK ASSESSMENT:
Identify talent risks based on current inventory:
- Succession risks (insufficient bench strength)
- Operational risks (single points of failure)
- Strategic risks (capabilities misaligned with business direction)

  - Competitive risks (skills valuable to competitors)
  - Diversity risks (lack of diverse perspectives in critical skills)
  - Retention risks (high-value skills in flight-risk populations)

OUTPUT FORMAT:
SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- Overall workforce capability profile (1-page overview)
- Top 5 organizational strengths
- Top 5 critical vulnerabilities
- Key findings requiring immediate attention
- Strategic implications for workforce planning
SECTION 2: COMPREHENSIVE SKILLS INVENTORY
- Structured skills taxonomy (categorized as above)
- Workforce capability matrix: [Skill | Total with Skill | Proficiency Distribution | Department Distribution | Key Holders]
- Aggregate statistics and visualizations (described textually)
SECTION 3: CAPABILITY DEEP DIVES
For each critical skill domain:
- Current state assessment
- Sufficiency analysis (adequate/insufficient/critical gap)
- Distribution patterns
- Proficiency levels
- Risk factors
- Trends (if data available)
SECTION 4: ROLE-BASED ANALYSIS
- Critical roles capability assessment
- Succession coverage analysis
- Role-specific gap patterns
- Career path viability assessment
SECTION 5: ORGANIZATIONAL RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES
- Ranked capability vulnerabilities
- Single point of failure identification
- Succession risks
- Strategic misalignment areas
- Opportunities for capability leveraging
SECTION 6: DATA QUALITY & LIMITATIONS ASSESSMENT
- Reliability of data sources used
- Coverage gaps in available data
- Assumptions made in analysis
- Recommendations for improved skills tracking
- Suggested data collection priorities
SECTION 7: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT STEPS
- Priority areas for gap analysis
- Recommended assessment or data collection
- Suggested interventions (hiring, development, redeployment)
- Workforce planning focus areas

ANALYTICAL CONSTRAINTS:

- Base analysis only on provided data; clearly note assumptions
- Distinguish between documented skills (verified) and inferred skills
- Flag data quality issues that may affect conclusions
- Avoid making individual performance judgments from aggregate data
- Note where additional assessment would improve accuracy
- Consider statistical significance when working with small populations

Expected AI Output:
- Comprehensive executive summary with key findings
- Detailed skills inventory with taxonomy
- Capability deep dives by domain
- Role-based capability analysis
- Risk assessment with prioritization
- Data quality assessment
- Actionable recommendations

Human Validation Steps:
- Verify skills taxonomy reflects organizational language and critical capabilities
- Validate key findings with business leaders and functional experts
- Cross-reference single points of failure with subject matter experts
- Confirm succession risk assessments with talent management team
- Review proficiency level categorizations with managers of key skill holders
- Validate data completeness by comparing against known workforce characteristics
- Test findings against organizational knowledge (do conclusions match reality?)
- Assess whether analysis addresses strategic priorities and business concerns
- Confirm recommendations are feasible and aligned with organizational capacity
- Review with HRIS/data analytics team for data accuracy and interpretation

Bias/Quality Checks:
- Ensure skill inventory doesn't reflect gender, racial, or age stereotypes
- Verify that "critical skills" identification isn't biased toward traditional leadership or certain functions
- Check that proficiency assessments aren't systematically lower for underrepresented groups
- Confirm that succession candidate identification uses objective criteria
- Ensure analysis doesn't conflate current skills distribution with optimal distribution
- Verify that "high value" skills aren't implicitly defined by current leadership demographics
- Check that technical skills aren't systematically valued over interpersonal skills
- Ensure multi-skilled/versatile employees from all backgrounds are identified
- Verify risk assessment doesn't disproportionately focus on certain demographic groups as flight risks

SIOP Alignment: Follows workforce analytics best practices for strategic talent management. Aligns with competency modeling standards (SIOP *Principles*) by systematically assessing organizational capabilities. Supports evidence-based succession planning and talent development. Implements job analysis principles at organizational scale. Provides foundation for validation of training programs and development initiatives per Kirkpatrick/Phillips evaluation frameworks.

Updates on the 2026 SIOP Annual Conference

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2026 SIOP Program Chair
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

John K. (Jack) Kennedy, Jr.
2025–2026 Conference Chair
Half Moon Consulting

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Note. The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of U.S. Customs and Border Protection or the U.S. Federal Government.

Plans for the 2026 SIOP Annual Conference are coming to fruition. One of the most important parts of a scientific meeting such as ours is the creation of a program covering peer-reviewed science and practical insights. The Program Committee has begun creating the program for the New Orleans conference. The Call for Proposals was launched this summer with an October 8, 2025, deadline for submitting proposals. A total of 1,259 proposals were received, a healthy number consistent with recent years (1,230 for the 2023 conference in Boston, 1,466 for 2024 in Chicago, and 1,368 for 2025 in Denver).

The Program Trio (consisting of the Past Program Chair, Program Chair, and Program Chair-in-Training) and SIOP staff have made several changes in the past 2 years to the submission process. We are now in our second year of using a new program system for submitting proposals, conducting peer reviews, and scheduling sessions. The system worked well, with only a few issues submitting proposals. Most were due to forgotten passwords[1] and slow uploads of proposal files due to high traffic on the system just before the deadline. Submitters were automatically signed up to be peer reviewers for the conference (although they had the option of opting out due to unavailability). This, along with a separate reviewer sign-up for nonsubmitters, led to a healthy pool of reviewers. In total, 1,091 individuals signed up. The number of content areas for proposals was also reduced, and the content areas were broadened.

The new system, automatic enrollment of submitters as reviewers, and the shorter list of content areas allowed the Program Trio to improve the assignment of proposals to reviewers. The new system used an algorithm to assign submissions to reviewers. The algorithm matched the reviewers to proposals based on the content areas a proposal covered and the content areas reviewers indicated they had expertise in. All proposals were assigned to at least one reviewer (oftentimes more) with expertise in the content area. During the sign-up process, prospective reviewers are asked several questions to gauge their expertise in conducting peer reviews (e.g., whether they have served on an editorial board). Responses to these questions are used to identify expert reviewers. Most proposals have one or more expert reviewers. The number of student reviewers assigned to each proposal is limited to one. Each proposal was assigned to three to five reviewers, and most reviewers were assigned five submissions. Reviewers were assigned their proposals on October 22 with a November 14 deadline.

After the deadline, the SIOP Program Trio determines whether any proposals did not receive enough reviews (due to, for example, reviewers failing to provide reviews). Those proposals are then assigned to emergency reviewers. In December, the Program Trio uses the reviews obtained to make acceptance/rejection decisions and build the program. The Program Trio will use the new program system to create a balanced program that better curates content areas by room location, date, and time. Acceptance and rejection notifications will be sent to submitters in early January.

In addition to managing the peer-reviewed portion of the SIOP program, the Program Committee also manages a small number of invited sessions organized by several subcommittees that then invite speakers and facilitators. Any SIOP attendee can attend these sessions. The Special Sessions Subcommittee (led by **Liana Kreamer**) is planning sessions on exploring in- versus extra-role behavior through film, revenge at work, why employees in toxic workplaces remain in their positions, well-being fatigue, and boundary issues for remote and hybrid workers. The Communities of Interest (COI) Subcommittee (led by **Michelle Martin-Raugh**) is organizing 12 COIs, covering topics such as using artificial intelligence in assessment development and scoring, artificial intelligence gone wrong, balancing privacy and people analytics, invisible labor at work, and dealing with employee strain amid workplace stressors, among others. The Competitions and Awards Subcommittee (led by **Mariel Reynolds**) will facilitate seven sessions featuring some of the winners of the 2025 SIOP Awards (see the SIOP Salutes brochure for a sneak peek of some of the presentations at https://www.siop.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2025_SIOP_Salutes.pdf) and the 2026 Dunnette Prize. These sessions are a great way to hear about cutting-edge advances in the field and to meet and learn from SIOP members being recognized for their achievements. The 2026 SIOP Machine Learning Competition and the Student Consulting Challenge will also take place this year and will be featured in two sessions. In addition, the SIOP Executive Board (EB) and Alliance for Organizational Psychology (AOP) are planning invited sessions. The EB is planning sessions on the ethical use of artificial intelligence in practice settings, equal employment opportunity experts' thoughts on artificial intelligence in the workplace, the shifting higher education landscape, and a practitioner needs workshop. The AOP is planning sessions on decent work, worker well-being research (in collaboration with the Society for Organizational Health Psychology), and designing human–artificial intelligence collaboration.

The Conference Committee has also been hard at work planning for the conference, which will take place from April 30 to May 2 in New Orleans. This is SIOP's third trip to New Orleans. The first New Orleans conference was in 2000, the second in 2009. The 2009 conference included the signing ceremony for the AOP, which has continued to today and will sponsor several invited sessions at the 2026 conference (as mentioned above).[2] SIOP attendees also provided volunteer services in response to Hurricane Katrina and made over a school library. Both previous New Orleans conferences were held in hotels; this will be SIOP's first gathering at a convention center in New Orleans.

In addition to the main program of symposia, practitioner forums, panel discussions, and posters, there will be a full schedule of more in-depth events. On Wednesday, April 29, Preconference Workshops offer 10 half-day sessions providing an opportunity to get in-depth presentations by leading experts on important current issues. The Research Community Forums are where people with similar interests can interact to share knowledge, explore new ideas, and enhance collaboration. SIOP's Consortia are tailored to help you connect with other I-Os as you explore the different stages of professional and career development. Friday Seminars (Friday, May 1) are an interactive dive into the latest I-O psychology topics where you can learn from leading scholars and practitioners in the field. Both the workshops and Friday Seminars offer CE credit.

The conference won't be all work. The Welcome Reception after the Opening Plenary is a place to reconnect with old friends or meet some new ones. SIOP's Got Talent and an Art Exhibition will allow you to showcase your artistic skills. Or check out Networking for Introverts to get tips on building your professional network. Finally, close out your conference at our New Orlean-themed Closing Reception. We're working hard to make the 41st Annual SIOP Conference in New Orleans the best ever. We hope to see you there!

Notes

[1] The Program Committee and SIOP staff are pursuing the use of a single sign-on for future years, which would allow SIOP members to automatically be signed into the submission site after logging into siop.org.

[2] Julia Haas, the chair of the Conference Committee for AOP, provided the following description of the AOP for any readers who are unfamiliar with it:

> AOP is a federation of global industrial, work, and organizational psychology associations. Established in 2009 by Division 1 of the IAAP, SIOP, and EAWOP, AOP has since expanded to include C-SIOP, SBPOT, and APS. AOP's special conference sessions are designed to showcase globally relevant topics, bring together contributors with international perspectives, and explore high-interest themes that resonate across cultures and professional communities. These sessions highlight emerging trends and shared challenges facing I-O psychologists worldwide.

Contribute to the New *TIP* Series: I-O at Work,
Featuring the Vast Opportunities and Uses for I-O Across Workplace Settings

Myia Williams, *TIP* Editor,
with collaboration and support from Margaret Breakiron
Chair, Military and Veterans Inclusion Committee

The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist (TIP) is proud to announce a new series of articles, in collaboration with the SIOP Committees, to feature I-O roles performed by the members of the SIOP community. Each article in the series, I-O at Work, will highlight a role within or across industries/work environments to feature how I-O is used, along with the vast opportunities and experiences within our community. The series will offer a perspective on the SIOP community that complements other initiatives, such as the SIOP Membership Spotlight, which focuses on an individual's unique story instead of the work role or function.

The Military and Veterans Inclusion Committee (MVI) partnered with *TIP* to write the first article of the series. **Margaret Breakiron**, MVI's chair, along with **Dr. Michael Schwerin** and **Rear Admiral Ben Baran**, two of MVI's committee members, took the idea for the series and ran with it. **We are all proud to spotlight "Industrial & Organizational Psychology in the U.S. Navy and the Talent Management Center of Excellence" as the first look into what roles members of the SIOP community perform and how they leverage the tools and practices of I-O for career success.** The article is available in this issue of *TIP* at https://www.siop.org/tip-article/industrial-and-organizational-psychology-in-the-u-s-navy-and-the-talent-management-center-of-excellence/.

Introduction to the I-O at Work Series Initiative

The I-O at Work series is intended to help fulfill SIOP's priority of *Committee Collaboration & Unity* by fostering collaboration between SIOP members and committees to bring together multiple perspectives and highlight the work performed by our I-O community. These quarterly articles will serve to underscore the breadth of I-O in work roles, job fields, industries, and customer bases—for SIOP students, members, and affiliates to learn from, leverage for ideas, and expand upon for stronger, more integrated outputs. Contributor stories may be used to illustrate role insights and context without focusing on a single individual.

Keeping the focus of the I-O at Work series on the work role or functions fulfills community requests for more information on the career opportunities and uses of I-O, while remaining distinct from SIOP Membership Spotlight, which serves to capture an individual SIOP member's unique story. *However, contributors could include in-text hyperlinks to Membership Spotlight or SIOP committee pages for readers to pursue if they are interested in additional information on an individual or committee.*

Each article will be unique to the work role or function of interest, including but not limited to

1. ***What is the general overview or background of the role being featured?***
   a. What are the related industries? (e.g., HR, training)
   b. What environment(s) is this role being performed in? (e.g., commercial, military, academic)
   c. What space(s) is the work performed in? (e.g., customer on-site, remotely)
   d. What are the tasks and expectations for the role?
   e. What authority level does the role have?
   f. What are the similar roles in other industries/environments?
2. ***What are the details on how I-O is leveraged in this role or for specific tasks of the role?***

3. ***What are the unique aspects of working in your role/field of I-O within your specific industry?***
   a. What are the key differences to a commonly related role, field, or industry?
   b. What's a skill/ability that is paramount for success within the role, field, or industry that may surprise others?
   c. What are the common misunderstandings or misperceptions?
4. ***What are the general actions to get into the field/prepare for the role?***
   a. Where can interested readers go for more information?
   b. Who would be eligible for a role like this?
   c. Examples or stories collected from SIOP members: How did you get started in the field/industry? What path did you take to get into this role, field, or industry?
5. ***Where/who does this role/specific tasks apply?***
   a. Currently?
   b. Where else could it be applied?

Benefits for the SIOP Community and I-O Stakeholders

Regardless of where you are in your career or how you engage with SIOP and the I-O community, the I-O at Work series allows stakeholders to better understand applications and opportunities in I-O while also building a familiarity with the lexicon for equivalent elements across industries and environments.

Contributor and Consumer Benefits

***Contributor Benefits*:**
★ Collaborate with SIOP committees aligned with your role or interests to build meaningful professional connections.
★ Experience personal fulfillment through collaboration, inspiring future generations, and kindling advancements in the field of I-O.
★ Expand your network, enhance career prospects, and discover new perspectives and leadership pathways.
★ Gain recognition, credibility, and visibility among peers and leaders in the profession.
★ Help explore real-world challenges that can foster research, innovation, and positive change.

***Consumer Benefits*:**
★ Learn from collective knowledge to avoid "reinventing the wheel" and accelerate implementation.
★ Become familiar with lexicon and practices from other roles, fields, and/or industries.
★ Gain clarity, consider novel applications, integrate or build upon ideas, and explore cross-collaboration or leveraging creative solutions.
★ Access shared expertise for faster, smarter, and more confident decision making.

Benefits by Career Stage

Established Practitioners and Academics Benefits:
★ Turn individual expertise into collective intelligence, breaking down silos and improving decisions.
★ Build interest and pipelines for others to contribute, collaborate on, continue, or expand upon the work or initiatives.

***Advancing or Transitioning Practitioners and Academics Benefits*:**

- ★ Reflect on one's own journey or the experiences shared by others for growth opportunities, identify course corrections, and stay future-ready.
- ★ Find a strengthened sense of purpose, confidence, and professional fulfillment.
- ★ Leverage and contribute to a culture of continuous learning and innovation.

***Novice or Early-Career Practitioners and Academics Benefits*:**

- ★ Learn from others' experiences to accelerate growth and confidence.
- ★ Build a foundation of best practices and an understanding of common pitfalls to prepare for or avoid.
- ★ Recognize the parallels to your strengths and experiences—as a source of hope or reassurance, reducing imposter syndrome.

***Research and Researcher Benefits*:**

- ★ Discover new questions and opportunities by learning from a variety of applied experiences within different environments or conditions.
- ★ Enhance collaboration and improve outcomes through shared insights.
- ★ Bridge the divide with practical application recommendations based on findings.

***Current and Prospective Student Benefits*:**

- ★ Gain a conceptualized understanding and exposure to real-world skills, considerations, and practices within the context of the field, industry, or workplace.
- ★ Explore topics of interest and identify potential courses of action, mentors, employers, or workspaces.
- ★ See yourself and your aspirations in others' journeys—inspiring realization, confidence, connection, and growth.

Benefits per Stakeholder Group

***Organizational and Community Benefits*:**

- ★ Drive innovation—organizations that share knowledge are three times more likely to lead in innovation.
- ★ Strengthened professional trust and reputation.
- ★ Improve communication, collaboration, and cross-functional understanding.
- ★ Preserve institutional knowledge, reduce turnover impact, and ensure continuity.
- ★ Foster innovation, agility, and continuous improvement.
- ★ Boosted engagement—through transparency, learning, and shared purpose that drives long-term success.
- ★ Standardize best practices for quality, consistency, and compliance.
- ★ Deliver better customer and client experiences through informed, confident members.

***Committee Benefits*:**

- ★ Champion your community and elevate awareness of key roles and initiatives.
- ★ Capture and explicitly share "implied" knowledge to sustain organizational memory and agility across leadership terms.
- ★ Promote open communication, trust, and alignment across SIOP.
- ★ Accelerate onboarding and training with accessible, shared resources.

***Employer, Worker, and Public Benefits*:**

- ★ Exposure to key performance indicators (KPIs), advantages, use cases, and potential outcomes of I-O methods and procedures—for bolstering buy-in, adoptability, and investment within their organization or departments.
- ★ Resources and lines of communication for constructive dialogue to find agile solutions to traditional approaches that work within the business structure and industry, without compromising data integrity or I-O standards.
- ★ Encourage reflection and recognition of personal and professional achievements, driving motivation and accountability.
- ★ Foster a lasting knowledge culture—one that can fuel innovation, engagement, and excellence.
- ★ Improve transparency, accountability, and considerations for professional, employer, and public interests across workers and skill areas for institutional changes and policy.

TIP Submission Requirements

The purpose of *TIP* is to provide news, research, reports, and noncommercial information related to the fundamental practice, science, and teaching issues in industrial and organizational psychology. *TIP* focuses on three main areas: featured content, report-driven, and editorial content. The I-O at Work series submissions will be considered under the requirements for *featured content*.

Featured Content Standards

Featured content submissions for publication in *TIP* include committee or SIOP member manuscripts, articles, or news items. For this, the submission will need to be Word compatible, can be up to 3,000 words in length, and may include pictures that are sized for final print using a common format (e.g., JPG) while following APA and SIOP Antiharassment Policy guidelines.

Quarterly Submission Deadlines and Publication Schedule

It takes approximately 6 weeks after the *TIP* team receives the submissions to conduct content reviews, return feedback to the authors, and have the requested information or revisions returned in time for publication.

- Spring Issue: due February 1, published last week in March
- Summer Issue: due May 1, published last week in June
- Autumn Issue: due August 1, published last week in September
- Winter Issue: due November 1, published first week in January

For more information on the submission requirements for *TIP* articles, review the *TIP* Policies page on SIOP's website.

How to Get Involved

The MVI Committee has already started to plan their next I-O at Work series article to look at HR, credentialing (training/certification), and/or survey research industries for contractor roles within the DoD and military spaces. If you are interested in being involved or have other ideas for the I-O at Work series, please contact the SIOP committee related to your topic of interest.

Get involved or learn more here.

★ Find a SIOP committee to collaborate with on an I-O at Work series submission.

★ Contact the MVI Committee directly here to submit a request for engagement or further collaboration.

★ Edit your My Account-Profile on SIOP.org to include **Additional Information** on your interests and to identify your Affiliations, Interests, and **Demographic Status*** to receive distributions from SIOP within the area of interest.
The SIOP team will create MIL/VET and MVI distributions from members who have selected Veteran, Actively Serving, or Neither Actively Serving nor a Veteran from the* ***Veteran Status* *drop-down options (fifth input in the last tile). Neither Actively Serving nor a Veteran may include Spouse, Dependents, DoD, and beyond.*

★ Check out and/or submit for a SIOP Membership Spotlight.

Note: Inclusion in the interest-specific communications may be impacted by your opt-in or communication preferences settings. Please contact siop@siop.org for more information on the selections needed to ensure successful delivery of the messages.

Beyond Engagement: Why Your Diversity Climate Holds the Key to Your Managers' Work Passion

Xaulanda Simmonds-Emmanuel
The Xausky Group

As I-O psychologists and organizational leaders, we've become intimately aware of how challenging times may negatively impact employees' engagement at work. According to Gallup Workplace, employee engagement is at an all-time low, with only about 31% of employees engaged (Harter, 2025); this means 69% of the workforce is either disengaged or actively disengaged. Those statistics are staggering.

When work consumes such a large part of one's life, it is disheartening to think that organizational leaders have not created a work environment where employees or managers feel engaged and passionate about their work. Therefore, as I-O psychologists, we must encourage organizational leaders to take an intentional, active role in creating a diversity work climate that nurtures employees' passion for work. More importantly, as the translators of high-level organizational strategy into daily tasks that drive performance, cultivating middle manager work passion is key to achieving optimal outcomes.

As we explore this topic further, this article draws heavily on the empirical evidence in my dissertation, "Predicting Work Passion: A Multiple Regression Analysis" (Simmonds-Emmanuel, 2022). Leveraging the Employee Work Passion Appraisal (EWPA) model by Zigarmi et al. (2009), the study explored how traditional antecedents, such as organizational, job, relationship, and personal characteristics, combine with crucial contemporary variables, specifically diversity work climate, motivation, and mindfulness, to predict passion outcomes. To gain a better understanding of high-demand professions and high-stress work environments, it focused particularly on healthcare middle managers who self-identify as people of color, addressing a crucial gap in work passion research regarding diverse populations and specific occupational levels. The insights from this research can serve as a gateway to further explore work passion in other cultural and occupational contexts, challenging organizational leaders and I-O psychologists to go beyond employee engagement.

Work Passion... Really?

Work passion is one of the most coveted but least understood drivers of workplace success. In our roles, leveraging empirical evidence to address organizational challenges and foster inclusive, thriving environments is a core tenet of industrial-organizational psychology.

Before we go any further, let's level set to ensure that we are all "on the same page" when we refer to employee work passion and the dual model of passion, which are essential to understanding this phenomenon and its application. According to Zigarmi et al. (2009), employee work passion is defined as "an individual's persistent, emotionally positive, meaning-based, state of well-being stemming from reoccurring cognitive and affective appraisals of various job and organizational situations" (p. 310). This means that employees are constantly appraising their work, roles, and organizations, which affects how they think, feel, and intend toward their work. When this definition is explored through the lens of Vallerand's (2012) dual model of passion, it can be viewed as follows:

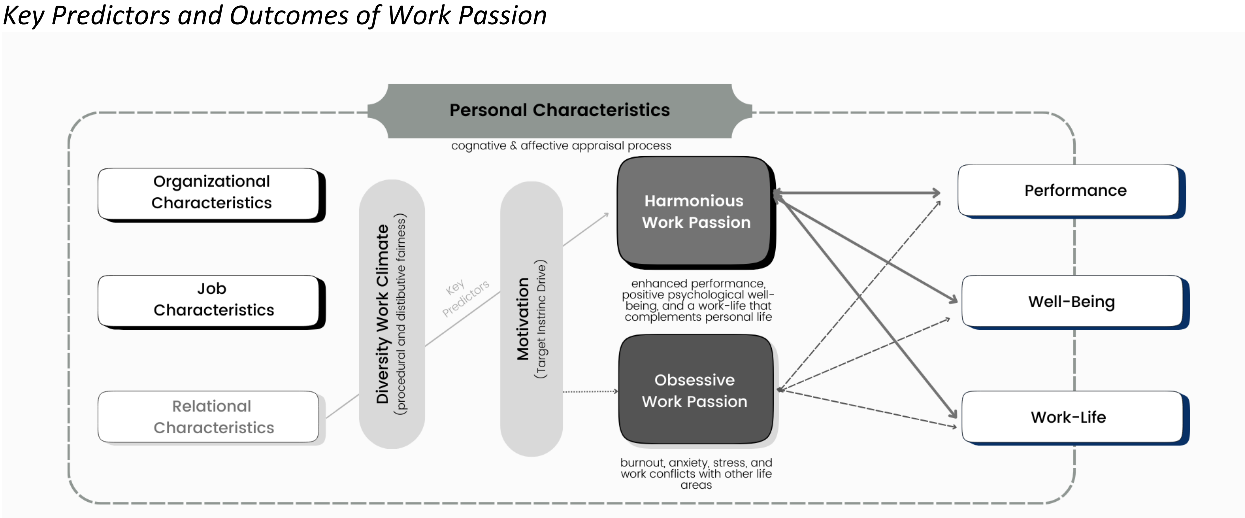
- **Harmonious passion (HP):** The adaptive outcome, where motivation is autonomous and intrinsic. HP is associated with positive psychological well-being, enhanced performance, and a work–life that complements personal life.

- **Obsessive passion (OP):** The maladaptive outcome, driven by external pressures, resulting in a rigid need to engage. OP is associated with negative outcomes, including burnout, anxiety, stress, and conflicts with other life areas.

Regardless of which passion is cultivated, employee performance and well-being hinge on work passion**.** Therefore, to address unpredictable work passion, focusing on identifying specific, measurable levers—most notably, those that influence the dual model of harmonious passion (HP) and obsessive passion (OP)—is critical. The study's findings indicated that motivation and the diversity work climate are statistically significant drivers of *both* forms of passion. Most importantly, the combination of diversity work climate, relationship characteristics, and motivation yields the highest predictive power for harmonious passion—explaining 61.1% of its variance (Simmonds-Emmanuel, 2022). By analyzing these key predictors, we gain actionable, data-driven guidance for creating passionate, thriving organizations. Figure 1 shows the key variables of harmonious and obsessive work passion, along with outcomes (performance, well-being, and work–life complement) based on the study.

Figure 1

Key Predictors and Outcomes of Work Passion



Note. This figure shows the employee work passion appraisal (EWPA) model's antecedents of organizational, job, and relationship characteristics, along with the key variables of diversity work climate and motivation that predict harmonious or obsessive work passion. All variables are viewed through the lens of participants' personal characteristics, as assessed through cognitive and affective appraisal processes, which impact performance, well-being, and work–life aspects.

The Problem: When Lack of Understanding Becomes a Liability

As I-O psychologists and organizational leaders, our primary task is to optimize human performance and well-being within complex organizational systems. Central to this goal is understanding work passion, an attribute that is "highly sought-after, yet poorly understood (and cultivated) work attribute" (Perrewè et al., 2014, p. 145).

How do we predict and nurture the work passion of a growing, diverse workforce? Based on the study, which involved healthcare middle managers who self-identified as people of color, I-O psychologists and organizational leaders must identify and address which organizational factors reliably predict adaptive

HP and limit destructive OP. The central problem has been that traditional approaches have ignored key environmental and cultural factors that affect passion.

The Solution: Targeting the Predictors of Thriving Passion

The EWPA model can be expanded by applying social cognitive theory, which highlights the influence of social and environmental contexts on behavior. It centers on key levers—organizational, job, and relationship characteristics, combined with diversity work climate, motivation, and mindfulness—offering a comprehensive framework for intervention viewed through personal characteristics. The statistical models featured, based on feedback from healthcare middle managers of color, provide three practical insights for shaping human resources, organizational development, and leadership interventions.

Insight 1: Motivation and Diversity Climate Are Dual Predictors of Both HP and OP

Initial analysis indicated that motivation and diversity work climate are statistically significant, unique predictors of both harmonious and obsessive work passion. Motivation pertains to the internal energy or external forces that shape an employee's behavior, intensity, and duration. For leaders, it reinforces the need to understand *why* employees engage—shifting the motivational source toward self-determined or intrinsic motivation to enhance the likelihood of HP. Whereas diversity work climate relates to the employee's perception that the organization supports diversity through fair practices, equitable treatment, and inclusion. The significance of this variable underscores the impact of organizational justice (procedural and distributive) on the passion development process for diverse employees. This is a critical finding because it shows that these two constructs are fundamental levers that determine whether an employee's passion takes an adaptive or a maladaptive path.

For organizational leaders, this finding reinforces the importance of understanding what motivates your people—distinguishing between intrinsic (self-determined) and extrinsic (non-self-determined) drives, which directly predict the passion profile within your teams.

The influence of diversity work climate is especially critical for professionals of color. Leaders should note that when employees perceive fair practices and inclusion, the organizational environment can significantly impact passion development. For HP, a positive diversity work climate is strongly correlated with harmonious passion. Whereas with OP, a supportive diversity work climate can mitigate tendencies toward obsessive passion. Addressing organizational justice—ensuring procedural and distributive fairness—becomes a key lever for reducing stress and rigid behaviors associated with OP. Leaders must not underestimate the influence of the diversity work climate on predicting their team members' work passion.

Insight 2: Relationship Characteristics Uniquely Drive Harmonious Passion

When applying stepwise regression to determine the variables that *best* predict HP, the strongest model excluded job characteristics, organizational characteristics, and mindfulness, and focused sharply on three variables: motivation, diversity work climate, and relationship characteristics. This predictive model was highly effective, accounting for 61.1% of the variance in harmonious work passion.

Relationship characteristics, including collaboration and connectedness with colleagues and leaders, uniquely predicted harmonious work passion when combined with motivation and a diversity work climate. This suggests that for this specific demographic—diverse managers often navigating high-stress environments like healthcare—supportive interpersonal dynamics and rapport with leaders and peers are essential for cultivating self-determined, constructive work engagement. Conversely, relationship characteristics were not found to be statistically significant predictors of obsessive passion, suggesting a distinct role in fostering positive outcomes. As such, even though other factors were studied in the EWPA model, in the final predictive model of HP within this specific demographic, relational environment is a far more effective lever for leadership intervention.

Insight 3: A Positive Diversity Climate Is a Crucial Buffer Against Obsessive Passion

Although the study established that diversity climate is a dual predictor, further statistical analysis reveals its potent role in mitigating the risk of maladaptive passion, which can negatively impact a manager's or employee's well-being. The multiple regression analysis for obsessive passion (OP) showed that motivation was positively correlated (indicating motivation increases the likelihood of OP), but diversity work climate showed a statistically significant negative beta score (-0.258). As such, the risk management implications are such that this negative correlation means that a more positive diversity work climate may lessen obsessive work passion outcomes. Because OP is a recognized antecedent to burnout, anxiety, and stress, investing in tangible, perceived fairness and inclusion acts as a crucial organizational buffer. For leaders navigating competitive talent markets and focused on employee well-being, enhancing the diversity work climate is not just a moral imperative but an empirically validated intervention against psychological distress.

The Call to Action for I-O and Leadership

This research expands the current body of knowledge on work passion and provides necessary insights into its application in I-O psychology, human resources, and talent management. The practical implications are to shift the organizational focus away from less significant factors (such as generalized job and organizational characteristics) and to concentrate resources on the three high-leverage predictors that demonstrably account for harmonious passion and mitigate the risk of obsessive passion: diversity work climate, motivation, and relationship characteristics.

Leaders and I-O professionals must commit to creating work environments that support employees' work passion and promote well-being. The challenge lies in moving beyond generalized frameworks and applying evidence-based tactics grounded in our domain expertise. Further, by going beyond simple engagement, we can use targeted, data-driven insights to support multifaceted, strategic interventions. Our task is to leverage these insights to create thriving workplaces. The theoretical and practical implications are clear: This research expands the current body of knowledge and offers immediate insight into how work passion can be applied. To maximize the reach and impact of our diverse talent, concentrate on these three evidence-based inputs: diversity work climate, motivation, and relationship characteristics. They are the quantifiable foundation upon which resilient, high-performance passion is built. After all, based on the principle of human agency, leaders, managers, and employees proactively create their futures.

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Working in the Wasteland: A Postapocalyptic View of I-O Psychology

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Apocalyptic and postapocalyptic narratives mirror humanity's deepest anxieties about survival, meaning, and the limits of social order. In the 21st century, the prevalence of postapocalyptic media has intensified, revealing collective fears about ecological collapse, pandemic contagion, and systemic fragility (Dickey, 2020; Moon, 2014). These narratives provide more than escapist entertainment; often, they function as laboratories for examining the reconstruction of meaning, leadership, and community in crisis (Roberts, 2020). Nuclear scientists even use a doomsday clock as a measure of dangers within their field of work (Sinclair & Silbersweig, 2025). The postapocalyptic imagination thus offers fertile terrain for industrial-organizational (I-O) psychology, a discipline that seeks to understand how people work together, make ethical choices, and sustain motivation in the world of work.

I-O psychology is itself at a crossroads, facing critiques of fragmentation, overtheorization, declining practical relevance, and concerns around educating the next generation of the field (Dillon et al., 2023; Lefkowitz, 2010; Ones et al., 2017). As workplaces undergo rapid technological, environmental, and existential disruptions, the postapocalyptic metaphor gains new relevance for the study of adaptation, resilience, and leadership under uncertainty. Recent analyses underscore how I-O psychology must evolve to meet volatile political and policy environments that threaten organizational ethics, worker rights, and scientific integrity (Katz & Rauvola, 2025). Future-oriented organizational methods—such as future-oriented job analysis (Landis et al., 1998)—already emphasize anticipation and adaptability, yet even these approaches assume a baseline of stability that postapocalyptic frameworks challenge. In imagining organizations stripped to their human core—resource scarcity, moral ambiguity, and emergent hierarchies—postapocalyptic I-O psychology invites inquiry into what remains essential about work and leadership when formal structures collapse.

Popular culture has long shaped and reflected our understanding of organizational life. From *The Office* to *The Walking Dead*, media texts both parody and theorize human behavior in systems of power, meaning, and control (Mitra & Fyke, 2017; Rhodes & Westwood, 2008). These cultural artifacts can serve as pedagogical tools, what Maudlin and Sandlin (2015) call pop culture pedagogies. These tools teach audiences how to think about authority, cooperation, and identity. In postapocalyptic media, the collapse of civilization becomes a crucible for studying informal leadership, collective efficacy, and group adaptation; all core I-O concerns rendered visible through crisis storytelling (Rehn, 2008). Pop culture is already being used in I-O classrooms and training courses to teach concepts such as leadership (Schmidt et al., 2025) and to disseminate core I-O concepts to lay audiences. As such, using a popular culture lens on organizational scholarship and practice can challenge I-O psychologists to confront questions of ethics, identity, and survival in extreme conditions.

The relevance of such a lens is magnified by real-world global transformations. The intersection of work, sustainability, and the climate crisis, for example, is redefining occupational competencies and workforce demands (Krasna et al., 2020; Rose, 2014). Rose argued that I-O psychology can serve as a bridge between environmental sustainability and strategic human resource management, cultivating “green knowledge” and organizational readiness for eco-conscious change. In this light, postapocalyptic scenarios can be understood as psychological laboratories for resilience—spaces that dramatize how ecological degradation and social breakdown test the limits of leadership, learning, and ethical adaptation.

Other changes specific to the world of I-O psychologists are impacting how the practice of I-O is conducted. Recent changes in the federal government have caused many I-O psychologists to experience massive changes in a short period of time. I-O psychologists have seen pushback against traditional areas of practice, such as DEI training and traditional talent management strategies (Keith et al., 2025; SIOP, 2025). In addition, many I-O psychologists have lost jobs in government cuts due to a contracting economy (Katz & Rauvola, 2025). Abrupt changes in legal guidelines can cause major issues in a field governed by legal statutes (Hanges et al., 2013). These challenges mirror the challenges that organizations are facing in this new legal environment.

As organizations navigate unprecedented times in a VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) environment, the demands upon I-O psychologists will increase. From pandemics to environmental degradation, the future of work increasingly resembles the chaotic, decentralized, and morally ambiguous structures characteristic of postapocalyptic fiction. By considering these imagined futures, I-O psychology may anticipate and prepare for emergent psychological and organizational realities. In this way, a postapocalyptic perspective is not merely speculative; it may prove diagnostic and preparatory. It compels I-O psychology to confront its own existential questions: What does leadership mean when systems fail? How do values endure when institutions vanish? And how can psychological science help rebuild meaning, collaboration, and ethical responsibility in the aftermath of disruption? By considering a postapocalyptic I-O psychology, we reframe the field and ask ourselves how we can be reflective and resilient while maintaining the field’s core identity.

Questions around the core identity of I-O psychology can be found within recent commentaries and critical analyses. These commentaries highlight some concerns about the core nature of our science and practice (Rotolo et al., 2018) as anti-I-O practices take hold. Rotolo et al. recommended looking at expanding areas of practice that include the future, even a postapocalyptic one. Another perspective brought forth by Mumby (2019) questioned the very nature of work and presented a Marxist perspective on work and I-O psychology. Lefkowitz (2019) responded to Mumby’s work by asserting that I-O psychologists may not be familiar with the nature of capitalism and should engage with the injustices of capitalism. Rarely do I-O psychologists look at the field outside of the frame of the present (capitalist or otherwise). The present study sought to assess I-O psychology outside of its current perceived capitalist framework. Studies in social psychology have successfully used postapocalyptic worlds and fiction as a way to understand psychological phenomena (Vezzali et al., 2021) and may help the present study consider I-O psychology through a unique lens. Other fields, such as leadership development, have also seen value in using popular culture frameworks as a developmental tool (Schmidt et al., 2025).

The present study attempted to understand what I-O psychologists perceive to be the value of I-O psychology in a world without the expected technology, legal structure, and corporate attitudes that I-O psychologists have come to expect. Inspired by the work of Rudolph et al. (2021), where researchers evaluated the impact of the pandemic on I-O psychology, and following the work of Vezzali et al. (2021), the researchers use postapocalyptic narratives to allow I-O psychologists to explore the meaning of their work outside of a traditional modern-day, capitalist framework.

Method

An online survey was developed to assess I-O psychology practitioners', academics', and students' perceptions of I-O practice in a postapocalyptic world. Participants were contacted by email and social media (LinkedIn) by the researchers and asked to participate in the study, resulting in 115 participants. The complete survey can be found in Appendix A. Fifty-seven percent of participants worked primarily as practitioners, 21% were current students, and 20% were in academic positions. Two percent of participants placed themselves in roles outside of these three categories into the category of "other."

Participants were initially asked to describe the postapocalyptic world that they envisioned in responding to the survey. Participants were then asked to articulate how they felt I-O psychologists could contribute to a postapocalyptic world. These two questions were meant to allow participants to consider a postapocalyptic world before answering the final question in the survey. The final question involved rating the viability of different areas of I-O psychology practice based on the SIOP's *Education and Training Guidelines* core content (SIOP, 2016). Participants were asked to rate I-O tasks like benefits/compensation/payroll, teamwork, and leadership.

Content Analysis Method

Qualitative data were content analyzed by a graduate-level research assistant and a PhD-level researcher. Using a grounded theory approach to qualitative content analysis, the research assistant read through the comments and identified themes, which were then reviewed by the PhD-level researcher (Cho & Lee, 2014). Qualitative data were also analyzed using computer-assisted text analytic tools, such as Voyant Tools and ChatGPT. As outlined by Wachinger et al. (2025), ChatGPT can be used along with other text analytic tools and human researchers to triangulate the meaning of a corpus. Triangulation refers to a combination of methodologies (Jonsen & Jehn, 2009), analytic tools (Bijker et al., 2024), and data sources (Carter et al., 2014; Cope, 2014) used to analyze a corpus of text. The present study used both human researchers and computer-assisted text analytic (CATA) tools, such as Voyant Tools and AI, to conduct analysis on the data collected.

Results

Participants' responses to the question regarding the type of postapocalyptic world they envisioned were content coded for the type of postapocalyptic world mentioned by a graduate-level I-O researcher. The coding was discussed with a PhD-level researcher until consensus was achieved. The I-O researchers counted the number of times different postapocalyptic worlds were mentioned by participants. These data are summarized in Table 1. *The Walking Dead* was mentioned the most times, with *Mad Max* and *The Last of Us* tied with 10 mentions. A variety of other pop culture topics were mentioned just once, such as *The Terminator, Borderlands, The Hunger Games,* and *The Parable of the Sower*.

Table 1
Post Apocalyptic Worlds Mentioned

Type of postapocalyptic world	Number of times mentioned in responses
The Walking Dead	13
Mad Max	10
The Last of Us	10
Fallout	7
Pandemic	7
The Road	4
AI	3

The corpus was analyzed by ChatGPT using the prompt "analyze this corpus for themes and topic modeling by LDA". ChatGPT has been used to analyze text and has been found to be a comparable text analysis method to other CATA tools (Khan et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2023). ChatGPT was prompted to analyze the corpus for themes using topic modeling with Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) and provide example statements from the corpus. Topic modeling with LDA is defined as "computational content-analysis technique that can be used to investigate the 'hidden' thematic structure of a given collection of texts" (Maier et al., 2018). These themes, along with representative quotes from the corpus, can be found in Table 2 and include such themes as infrastructure collapse, resource scarcity, tribalism, pandemics, and climate collapse. These themes seem to indicate the worst endpoint of many of the current challenges faced by the world today, from phenomena such as climate change.

Table 2
Major Themes in Corpus of Postapocalyptic Visions

Major theme	**Description**	**Example (excerpt)**
Infrastructure collapse/ technological failure	Power grids, internet, supply chains, and modern logistics fail (EMPs, solar flares, generalized tech failure).	"All technology fails and there is no electricity."
Resource scarcity and competition	Shortages of water, food, medicine, fuel; barter economies, raids, and violence over essentials.	"War over water… key resources have become scarce and the remaining people need to band together."
Tribalism/fractured society	Collapse of national government; rise of tribes, communes, warbands, local power structures or corporate city-states.	"Society has splintered into tribes and scavenger enclaves."
Pandemic/biological collapse & zombies	Disease-driven collapse or "infected" scenarios (fungal/viral vectors; slow/fast infection dynamics).	"I think *The Last of Us* most accurately depicts… fungal takeover."
Nuclear fallout/war	Radioactive wasteland, long-term environmental uninhabitability and fallout effects.	"Nuclear holocaust… Most humans have died… coastal lands uninhabitable."
Climate collapse/environmental disaster	Extreme heat, sea-level rise, drought, flooding, mass migration, food system failure; often tied to critique of capitalism.	"Climate change-induced—deserts, deadly heat, flooding, food scarcity."
AI/technofeudal/post-singularity	AGI takeover or corporate technofeudal city-states; economic collapse due to automation.	"Post singularity collapse… mega corporations running city-states… technofeudal slave states."
Desolate/ruined urban imagery and nature reclaiming cities	Empty skyscrapers, vines, silent streets, and nature overtaking built environments.	"Skyscrapers stand hollow, taken over by vines and shattered glass… nature has reclaimed what we left behind."

Major theme	Description	Example (excerpt)
Cultural motifs and reference anchors	Canonical media used as anchors for imagined worlds (e.g., *The Last of Us*, *Mad Max*, *Fallout*), shaping tone and specifics.	NA (multiple media references across responses)
Human dynamics and ethics	Distrust, loss of law, survivalism, tensions between hoarding and cooperation; ethical/regenerative possibilities.	"Survival depends on guarding what you have, but thriving depends on finding the courage to share it."

Participants were also asked how an I-O psychologist might contribute to a postapocalyptic world. Participants provided open-ended responses that were coded for common I-O skills by a graduate-level researcher and reviewed by a PhD-level researcher until consensus was achieved. Table 3 contains these skills and the number of times each skill was mentioned in the qualitative data. The top three skills mentioned were job assignment/selection, training, and team development.

Table 3

I-O Tasks Mentioned

Type of I-O task	Number of times mentioned
Job assignment/selection	39
Training/development	35
Team development	27
Organizational development	20
Leader development	20
Skill assessment	18
Consulting/expertise	13
Conflict management	12
Motivation	11

Voyant tools were used to analyze the corpus (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2016). This tool has previously been used to analyze text in prior studies (Islam et al., 2022) and found to be effective. The corpus was organized into an overall corpus, academic respondents, practitioner respondents, and student responses. Each corpus was analyzed for the top five words using Voyant tools. The results of this analysis can be found in Table 4. The word "world" was common across all respondents. Academics seemed to focus on climate, whereas practitioners used the phrase "walking dead" more than students or academics.

Table 4

Top 5 Words Postapocalyptic World Description

Overall corpus	Number of times words appears	Academic	Number of times words appears	Practitioner	Number of times words appears	Student	Number of times words appears
world	89	world	5	world	26	resources	7
post	44	post	4	post	15	world	6
people	44	Climate	4	apocalyptic	12	post	5
apocalyptic	40	think	3	dead	12	apocalyptic	5
resources	38	life	3	walking	10	scarce	4

Table 5 contains a Voyant tools analysis of the top words used in the question about I-O tasks in a postapocalyptic world. With the major focus of the overall corpus being on helping people. Training appeared as a most often used word in the sub-analyses by academics, practitioners, and students. Practitioners and students focused on survival.

Table 5

Top 5 Words I-O Tasks

Overall corpus	Number of times words appears	Academic	Number of times words appears	Practitioner	Number of times words appears	Student	Number of times words appears
people	79	Leadership	7	training	13	people	8
help	56	skills	6	roles	8	training	7
world	49	training	5	teams	7	new	7
skills	49	psychologists	4	systems	7	teams	5
psychologists	40	Work	3	survival	7	survival	5

ChatGPT was used to analyze the corpus of responses to the question about I-O tasks in a postapocalyptic world. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 6. ChatGPT was prompted to use topic modeling LDA to analyze this corpus for themes. Common themes identified by ChatGPT include organizational design, training and reskilling, practical usefulness and limitations, and skepticism about survival. The analysis indicated that some I-Os were skeptical regarding the usefulness of their skillset in a postapocalyptic world. While the skills that were seen as useful were core skills in I-O, such as organizational design, training, and leadership development. There was some concern about the use of I-O psychology toward negative or harmful purposes (i.e., serving a warlord).

Table 6

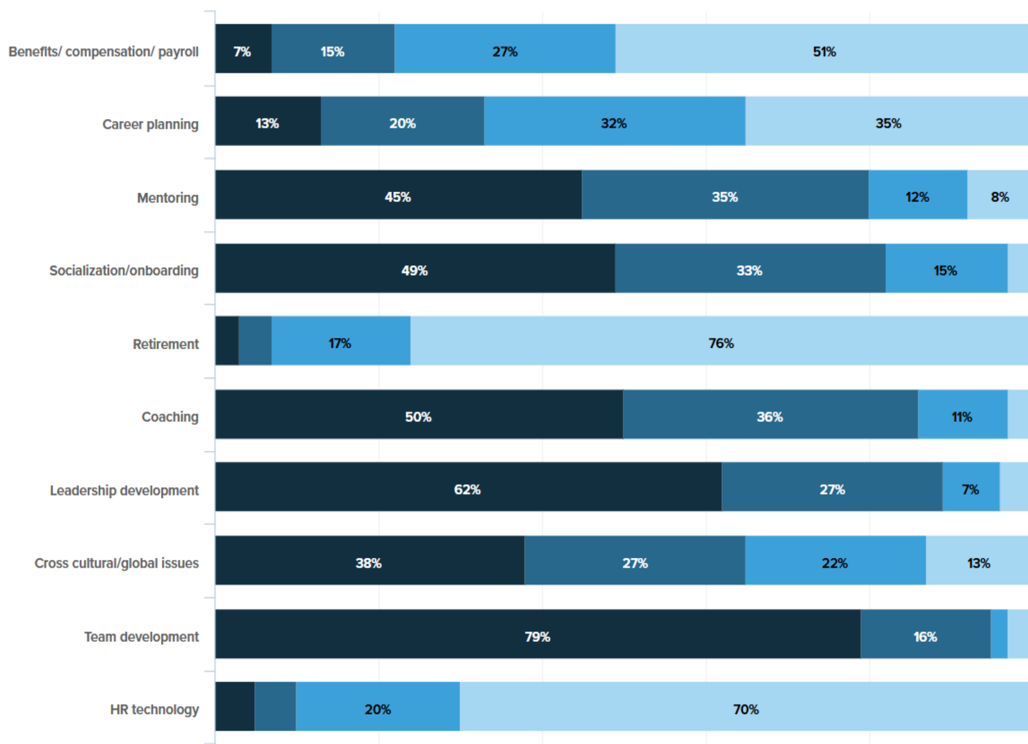
Top Themes, Sentiment Valence, and Illustrative Examples

Theme	Sentiment	Description	Example excerpt
Rebuilding and organizational design	Positive/ constructive	I-O work viewed as essential for rebuilding society, including job analysis, role assignment, organizational structure, and succession planning.	"They could create the ideal organizations and teams… competency models and selection from the beginning."
Training, reskilling, and knowledge transfer	Positive	Emphasis on rapid skill development, onboarding, cross-training, and preservation of institutional knowledge.	"Training programs for these roles… cross-train all members to create redundancy."
Team dynamics, leadership, and morale	Positive/ practical	Focus on trust building, conflict resolution, leadership coaching, and maintaining morale or mental health.	"They would help groups navigate forming connections, fostering trust deliberately and sustainably."
Practical limitations and immediate usefulness	Cautious/ negative	Limited usefulness in the immediate aftermath; lack of tools and greater need for physical survival skills.	"I don't think our stuff generalizes to circumstances that extreme… we'd be of more help by learning to fight, gather food…"
Ethical concerns and co-option by power	Concerned/ negative	Risk that I-O expertise could be used to enhance exploitation or support authoritarian systems.	"Advising warlords how to be most effective in getting productivity out of serfs. Taylorist practices."

Theme	Sentiment	Description	Example excerpt
Utility for governance and resource allocation	Positive/ practical	I-O seen as helpful for designing fair systems for rationing, distribution, and structured community functioning.	"I think I-O psychologists could be helpful in organizing the structure needed for people to contribute… and the rebuilding of society."
Skepticism about status and survival	Mixed (resigned/humorous)	Doubts about survival or usefulness of I-Os; humorous commentary about low status in collapse conditions.	"Oof, I honestly think we would be some of the first to be offed."
Data/analytical value	Positive but contingent	Analytical skills remain valuable (pattern detection, manual assessment) but are hindered by technological loss.	"Data skills good for sorting truth/rumor, looking for patterns important to survival…"

Figure 1 contains the percentage usefulness rating for all I-O tasks. Participants rated usefulness on a 4-point Likert scale with scale points: very useful, useful, somewhat useful, and not useful. Team development, leadership development and training were rated the most useful during a postapocalyptic world. HR technology was the lowest rated I-O task.

Figure 1.
Usefulness Ratings Overall by I-O Task



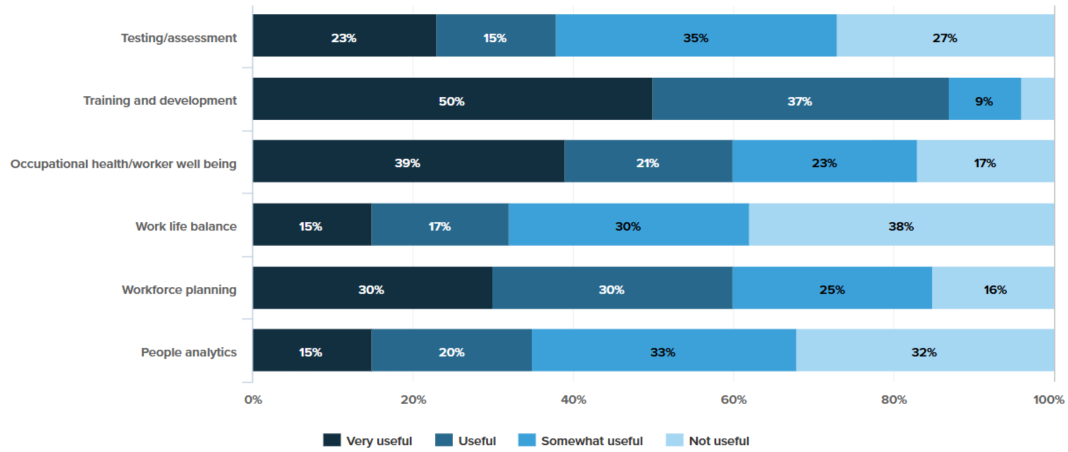


Figure 2 shows usefulness ratings by I-O task in bar chart form by the role of the participants (academia, student, or practitioner). Usefulness scores were calculated by adding the top 2 boxes (very useful and useful) to better indicate the level of agreement on a task. Results reveal that participants saw retirement as the least useful task, along with HR technology, benefits, compensation, and payroll.

Figure 2.

Usefulness Ratings by I-O Task

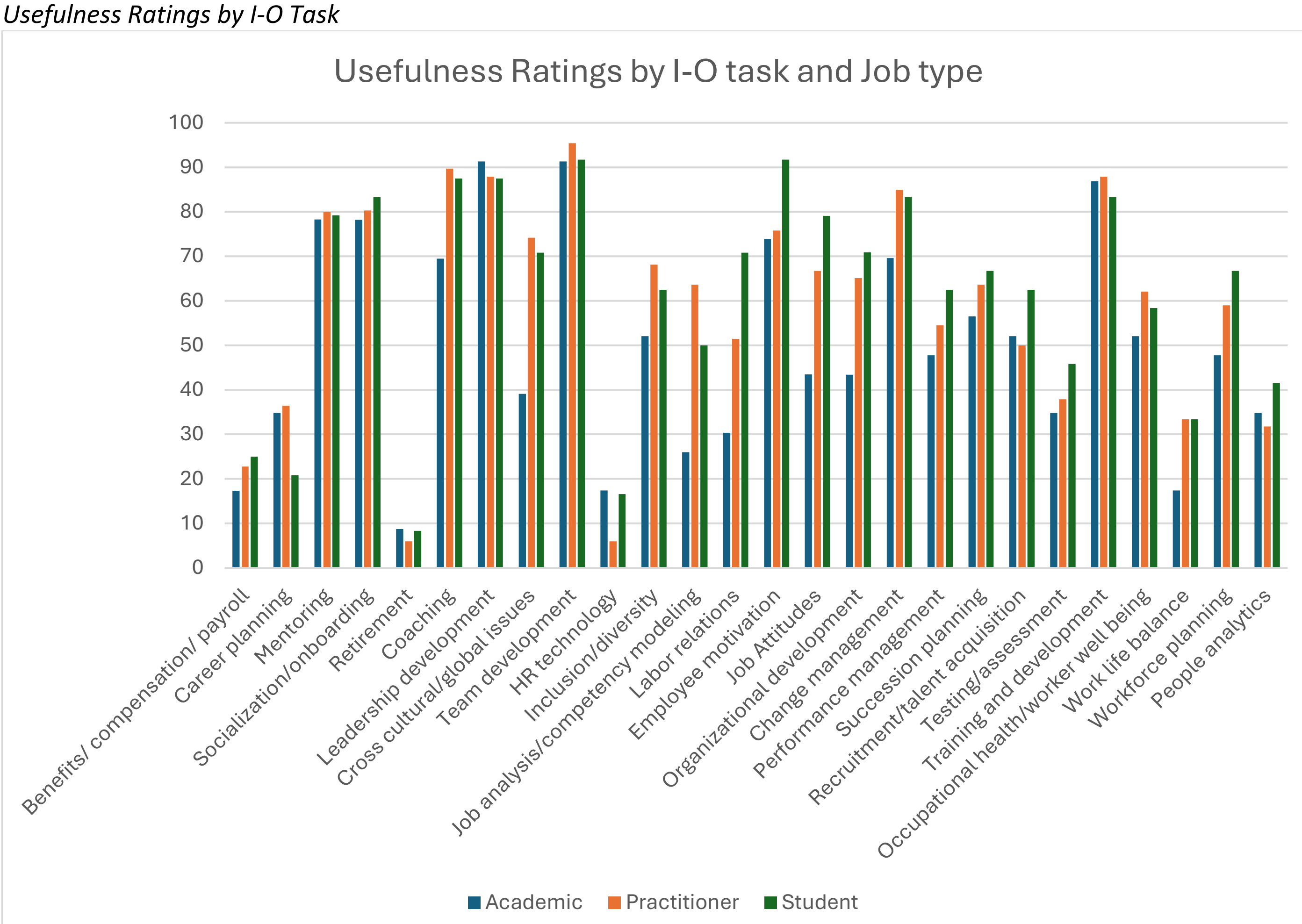


Table 7 breaks down the data by the participants' role (academic, practitioner, or student) and reveals some interesting trends. Ratings of high usefulness were similar across academics, students, and practitioners in five areas: mentoring, socialization, leadership development, team development, and succession planning. Some notable exceptions include job analysis/competency modeling, which was rated lower in usefulness by academics than by practitioners and students. Practitioners rated job analysis' usefulness higher than both students and academics, cementing it as a key skill for practitioners even in a postapocalyptic world. Academics also rated tasks like labor relations, job attitudes, and organizational development as less useful in a postapocalyptic world than practitioners or students. Practitioners and students also rated activities like cross-cultural issues and inclusion higher than academics. As a general trend, students tended to rate all tasks highly in terms of usefulness. This may indicate a lack of experience with these tasks. Academics rated leadership development's usefulness slightly higher than students and practitioners did. Practitioners and students rated coaching higher than academics did and had similar scores on benefits, cross-cultural issues, inclusion, occupational health and work–life balance. Academics and students rated HR technology similarly, but nothing else, perhaps indicating a deeper difference in perspective. HR technology was rated lower in usefulness by all categories, with practitioners seeing it as the least useful.

Table 7

I-O Task Usefulness Percentage by Job Type

I-O skill	Academic	Practitioner	Student
Benefits/compensation/payroll	17.3	22.8	25
Career planning	34.8	36.4	20.8
Mentoring	78.3	80	79.2
Socialization/onboarding	78.2	80.3	83.3
Retirement	8.7	6	8.3
Coaching	69.5	89.7	87.5
Leadership development	91.3	87.9	87.5
Cross cultural/global issues	39.1	74.2	70.8
Team development	91.3	95.4	91.7
HR technology	17.4	6	16.6
Inclusion/diversity	52.1	68.1	62.5
Job analysis/competency modeling	26	63.6	50
Labor relations	30.4	51.5	70.8
Employee motivation	73.9	75.8	91.7
Job attitudes	43.5	66.7	79.1
Organizational development	43.4	65.1	70.9
Change management	69.6	84.9	83.4
Performance management	47.8	54.5	62.5
Succession planning	56.5	63.6	66.7
Recruitment/talent acquisition	52.1	50	62.5
Testing/assessment	34.8	37.9	45.8
Training and development	86.9	87.9	83.3
Occupational health/worker well-being	52.1	62.1	58.4
Work—life balance	17.4	33.4	33.4
Workforce planning	47.8	59	66.7
People analytics	34.8	31.8	41.6

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to explore how I-O psychologists perceive the usefulness of their field in a postapocalyptic world. Drawing upon postapocalyptic narratives as both metaphor and analytic framework, this research sought to illuminate what practitioners, academics, and students consider essential to I-O psychology work under extreme conditions without modern tools (i.e., technology, AI). The findings reveal that although technological and structural components of I-O practice may lose value in postapocalyptic settings, the human-centered skills that form the discipline's ethical and relational core, that is, leadership development, teamwork, and training, remain highly relevant no matter the context. The present study contributes a new perspective to studies of the future of I-O psychology and an understanding of the value of the field of I-O psychology overall.

Enduring Value of Human-Centered Competencies

Across participant groups, training, team development, and leadership development were rated as the most useful domains in a postapocalyptic context. These findings suggest that I-O psychology's greatest contribution may lie not in its reliance on formal systems or data infrastructure but in its ability to cultivate shared mental models, shared purpose, and skill development, even during times of uncertainty. This finding aligns with existing calls for the field to return to its humanistic roots (Lefkowitz, 2008) and to integrate ethics and values more directly into practice (Katz & Rauvola, 2025). In environments where formal HR systems collapse, the ability to identify potential, organize collective effort, and sustain motivation becomes the new foundation for survival and social reconstruction. These are all human capabilities that remain at the core of I-O psychology's identity, no matter the context.

We would also like to echo the calls from Lefkowitz (2008) and others that there needs to be a shared set of values to guide I-O psychology science and practice. Some of the responses to what an I-O psychologist would do in a postapocalyptic world surprised us with their frankness around supporting negative or potentially harmful outcomes. I-O psychology should always be guided towards the good of humanity, and an enshrined set of values would help to guide science and practice in that direction.

Differences Among Practitioners, Academics, and Students

Although general trends were consistent, nuanced differences emerged among subgroups. Practitioners tended to rate applied skills—such as job analysis and change management—more highly than academics or students, reflecting their emphasis on immediate utility and problem solving. Academics, by contrast, rated some organizational and attitudinal constructs (e.g., job attitudes, labor relations) and cross-cultural issues as less useful, possibly viewing them as luxuries of stable times rather than necessities during crisis. Interestingly, academics rated HR technology higher than practitioners. This may indicate an unfamiliarity with HR technology or an overestimation of its worth even in a postapocalyptic setting. These distinctions underscore the various perspectives within I-O psychology between scientist and practitioner. Student ratings were generally high, perhaps due to a lack of experience. This seems to indicate the importance of practical experiences for students, especially those coming from online programs where such experiences may be rare (Islam et al., 2022; Landers, 2017).

What Comes After the Apocalypse?

Although there is always great anxiety about the future of I-O (Bal et al., 2019), there is much hope in the usefulness of the field of I-O psychology. Even without technology or the trappings of the modern world, the community of I-O psychology instructors, practitioners, and students can find ways to contribute. Academics and practitioners should work together to find new opportunities for I-O psychologists. As the world faces numerous challenges and the economy continues to change our field, we must find new ways to apply our knowledge to the changing world of work. Although the authors of this article do not expect to face a postapocalyptic future, it would behoove the I-O psychology community to develop new models of thinking about the work of I-O psychology and to approach future projects with a wider lens of what the field is capable of. Recent calls for the study of concepts such as decent work, meaningful work (Blustein et al., 2023), gig work (Cropanzano et al., 2023), child labor (Fletcher, 2025), and public policy (Follmer et al., 2024). Expanding the field into every area where work is relevant will yield more research opportunities and allow the field to generate meaningful impact.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study includes several limitations. First, the sample size and sample collection method were mostly through those who were contacted by the researchers directly. Additional data collected from a wider range of I-O psychology practitioners, academics, and students may yield more generalizable results. Asking participants to imagine a future setting may not be the best method to elicit the response and consideration needed for this study. Future studies may wish to use other methodologies (i.e., focus groups) to understand what value I-O psychology may have in other settings and environments. Even a future job analysis for an I-O psychologist may prove valuable to the questions posed in this study.

Future work by SIOP or other interested researchers may involve imagining how I-O psychology's capabilities can be utilized in a variety of contexts. Studies explicitly asking about the ways in which I-O psychology can support a world during climate change, war, famine, or pandemics may prove a valuable exercise for the field. Conducting simulation studies or working on projects in non-WEIRD (western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic) may provide deep insights into what can be done with the science of I-O. Humanitarian work psychology provides a key opportunity here for students, academics, and practitioners to expand the field's impact (Carr, 2025). We would also encourage the use of and reflection on popular culture as a medium for science communication, both among I-O psychology practitioners and non-I-Os. As Schmidt, Van Dellen, and Islam (2025) identified ways in which films can support leadership development, popular culture may provide an intriguing approach to communicate I-O psychology's value and as a methodological tool. Other social sciences, including social psychology, have started to utilize pop culture as a way to ground their studies in varying contexts; this technique may benefit I-O psychology research.

We would also encourage researchers and practitioners to continue to focus on these core human elements of the field and expand on what the meaning of I-O psychology work may be. By bringing our science into new contexts and new kinds of work, whether gig work or the fight for decent work, we can help to keep the field of I-O psychology vibrant. No matter what the future of I-O psychology, academics, practitioners, and students would do well to heed the words of Rick Grimes from Season 8, Episode 1 of *The Walking Dead,* "If we start tomorrow right now, no matter what comes next, we've won."

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Appendix A
Survey Instrument

Informed consent
Title of research: I-O psychology in a postapocalyptic world
Principle Investigator: Sy Islam, Talent Metrics Consulting

1. Introduction and purpose of the study
   This study is being conducted to understand how I-O psychology practitioners and academics view the role of I-O psychology in a postapocalyptic world as often depicted in popular media (i.e., *The Walking Dead, Mad Max, Fallout, The Last Of Us*)
2. Description of the research
   This study involves participation in a 10-minute survey that includes both open-ended and close-ended questions about the role of I-O psychology in a postapocalyptic world.
3. Potential risks and discomforts
   There are no known risks to this study
4. Potential benefits

4. Please reflect on how useful you feel each of the I-O psychology skills listed below will be for a postapocalyptic world.				
	Very useful	**Useful**	**Somewhat useful**	**Not useful**
(a) Benefits/ compensation/ payroll				
(b) Career planning				
(c) Mentoring				
(d) Socialization/onboarding				
(e) Retirement				
(f) Coaching				
(g) Leadership development				
(h) Cross cultural/global issues				
(i) Team development				
(j) HR technology				
(k) Inclusion/diversity				
(l) Job analysis/competency modeling				
(m) Labor relations				
(n) Employee motivation				
(o) Job attitudes				
(p) Organizational development				
(q) Change management				
(r) Performance management				
(s) Succession planning				
(t) Recruitment/talent acquisition				
(u) Testing/assessment				
(v) Training and development				
(w) Occupational health/worker well-being				
(x) Work—life balance				
(y) Workforce planning				
(z) People analytics				

The potential benefits in participating in this study is you may enjoy imagining the use of I-O psychology in a nontraditional environment. The field of I-O psychology may benefit from this exercise, and we may find new ways to think about what I-O psychology has to offer.

The researchers intend to submit the findings to *TIP (The Industrial Organizational Psychologist),* the official publication of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology that is posted quarterly.

*1. Please type your name below to indicate consent. Your responses will be kept confidential. Thank you for participating in this study. We are researchers interested in different contexts where I-O psychology may be used. The purpose of this study is to understand how the core skills of I-O psychology may be used in a postapocalyptic context. A “postapocalyptic world” refers to a setting or society that exists after a catastrophic event, like a large-scale war, natural disaster, or pandemic, where civilization has been significantly destroyed or severely disrupted, leaving survivors to navigate a drastically changed and often dangerous environment; essentially, a world after the apocalypse.

2. Please describe your postapocalyptic world. Examples from popular culture include those depicted in *Mad Max, The Walking Dead, The Last of Us,* and *Fallout*. However, feel free to create a unique vision that reflects your own interpretation of a postapocalyptic world.

3. How might an I-O psychologist contribute to the postapocalyptic world you describe?

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5. Where do you spend 51% of your work as an I-O (Select one option)

Academia (i.e. university professor, administrator)
Practitioner (i.e. external or internal consultant)
Current graduate student (MA/PhD)
Other (Please specify) __________

From Cupcakes to Curriculum: A Nontraditional Path Into I-O Psychology

Ten'Niquwa "Nikki" Bryan

I remember sitting, exhausted but grateful, in a movie theater at the *Mea Culpa* Netflix premiere, watching as my team members handed cupcakes to guests. They explained the flavors and offered their personal recommendations with confidence. It was a full-circle moment.

In January 2024, the Netflix marketing team contacted me with a dessert order: over 200 mini cupcakes for the screening. Although it wasn't my first corporate order, it was another clear testament to the consistency, quality, and systems I had built within my cottage-based, e-commerce bakery.

Before the event, I contacted my part-time contractual team, knowing from experience that support would be essential. But on the morning of the event, both team members were unavailable. There I was, at 8 a.m., preparing to bake, ice, and box 200 cupcakes by myself before 1 p.m.

Fortunately, I had spent years building systems that helped prevent burnout and allowed me to pivot efficiently. Entrepreneurship taught me that **pivoting is both a job duty and a skill.** In fact, the skills I was using—systems design, adaptability, stress management, and collaborative work design—are all rooted in core industrial-organizational (I-O) psychology concepts. One team member arrived just in time to help with setup, and the other came later to assist with distribution and brand storytelling at the event. Their professionalism allowed me to rest in their capabilities, even amid the chaos.

Over the years, several of my friends have worked with me in my business. I created roles tailored to their skills and interests, practiced flexible work design, and developed workflows that protected our mental and physical well-being. Without formal training, I was applying I-O psychology principles: **job analysis, work–life boundary management, collaborative leadership,** and **occupational health strategies.** Though I loved the brand I built, I knew early on that baking was a passion but not my purpose.

That's what led me to pursue my master's in industrial-organizational psychology.

(For readers new to the field, I-O psychology is the scientific study of human behavior in organizations, focused on improving workplace systems, employee well-being, and performance.)

From Entrepreneurship to Employment: Reframing the Journey

After running my business for nearly a decade, reentering the workforce wasn't about starting over; it was about repositioning. It required me to translate my lived experiences into the language of workplace behavior, organizational systems, and leadership frameworks.

Reflective practice—intentionally analyzing one's past actions to make meaning of future choices—is a strategy I leaned on heavily. As Gill (2014) suggests, reflective practice paired with emotional intelligence enhances how we understand growth and plan professional movement. That approach helped me not only assess my strengths but also reframe how I saw my place in the workforce.

This experience also reflects what I-O scholars refer to as "protean" or "boundaryless" careers—self-directed, value-driven paths that often move across traditional industry or functional boundaries.

Entrepreneurship equipped me with adaptive competencies that translated into a more purposeful corporate reentry.

Conducting a Personal Audit: Reframing Experience Through Reflection

One key step that helped me navigate my transition from entrepreneur to educator was conducting what I call a **personal audit**. A personal audit is a structured self-reflection tool, a way to make sense of your path, recognize transferable skills, and align your experience with where you want to go.

It's especially powerful for nontraditional professionals or those reentering the workforce after a career pivot, caregiving, self-employment, or simply time away. In executive coaching and career transition programs, personal audits are often used to help individuals recognize their strengths, challenges, and direction. In I-O psychology, this kind of intentional self-assessment supports professional identity formation and informs strategic career decisions.

Here's a simple, actionable framework to follow.

Personal Audit Checklist

1. **List your accomplishments**
   - What have you done that you're proud of? Include work, school, business, family, or community-based achievements.
   - Don't just count credentials—include wins like launching a project, managing stress, or mentoring someone.
2. **Compare to your initial goals**
   - What did you originally set out to do?
   - How closely do your accomplishments match your intentions—and where did you surprise yourself?
3. **Evaluate emotional impact**
   - How did each milestone *feel*? Energizing, draining, motivating, confusing?
   - Your emotions are data. They help point you toward what fulfills or depletes you.
4. **Identify transferable skills**
   - Translate your experience into I-O or organizational language.
     For example,
     - Managing burnout → *Well-being and work design*
     - Coordinating schedules → *Project management and delegation*
     - Handling conflict → *Interpersonal effectiveness and emotional intelligence*
5. **Decide: Continue, pivot, or release**
   - Which paths do you want to keep walking?
   - What roles or responsibilities no longer serve your growth?
   - What new directions are opening up now?
6. **Set a microgoal**
   - Choose one next step based on your audit—whether that's updating your resume, applying for a role, seeking mentorship, or simply learning something new.

This process revealed that my entrepreneurial years were a foundation for my leadership, empathy, and adaptability. The main lesson: A personal audit clarifies your value and power by centering your own voice.

As Gill (2014) notes, reflective practice invites emotional awareness, which helps individuals align experiences with values and better prepare for future leadership roles.

Scaling Impact: Educating the Future of Work

Today, I serve as **a program mentor at Western Governors University (WGU),** supporting approximately 120 students through personal, academic, and professional growth. I also work as **a course facilitator for eCornell**, facilitating **leadership and management courses** to around 100 working professionals monthly, many of whom are emerging or current leaders.

Additionally, through my continued education programs and high-performance coaching, I engage with over 200 learners and leaders every month. These learners are at different points in their careers, but they all seek the same thing: guidance grounded in experience and backed by evidence. That's where I-O psychology comes in.

In these roles, I actively apply core I-O competencies**: adult learning theory, training and development, leadership coaching, emotional intelligence,** and **occupational health psychology.** My instructional design training allows me to create webinars and asynchronous content that's accessible, effective, and grounded in performance outcomes.

Designing for adult learners requires deep consideration of relevance, reflection, and real-world application. Martin and Bolliger (2018) found that engagement strategies, such as instructor presence, interactivity, and relevance, directly influence online learning success. Knowles' adult learning theory (andragogy) also highlights that adults need to see the immediate value and application of learning, which I prioritize in every training and course I facilitate. Therefore, utilizing these principles in all my teaching platforms to support sustained engagement and practical transfer is significant.

Emotional intelligence also plays a critical role in how I show up for learners. Therefore, I lean heavily on emotional intelligence (EI) frameworks, especially for healthcare professionals and early career leaders navigating uncertainty. Augusto Landa et al. (2008) found that emotional intelligence is closely tied to occupational stress management and well-being, particularly in healthcare settings.

These findings support what I've experienced with the hundreds of learners I coach each month: empathy, awareness, and connection consistently foster healthier performance.

From Mentoring to Movement: Creating Institutional Change

Recently, I was selected to be a part of the **Faculty Innovation Champions Program** at WGU, an initiative designed to foster meaningful change across the university. As 1 of 25 faculty selected, I collaborate with colleagues on innovative strategies that directly improve the learning experience for thousands of students.

Had I not first served in an individual contributor role as a mentor, listening closely to students' needs, understanding their barriers, and walking with them through transitions, I don't think I would have had the insight or empathy required to lead change from a broader institutional level.

This kind of organizational contribution reflects what OD scholars call "bottom-up change"—change initiated from frontline employees or contributors who have unique insight into system gaps. In these contexts, mentors and educators become change agents, using their daily engagement to inform larger systemic improvements.

Purpose Over Prestige: Honoring the Unclear Path

Although the two roles I've landed feel like home, I still sometimes feel the tension of being **overqualified but unsure of what direct path I should take**. I know I have the skills, the lived experience, and the passion to contribute meaningfully, but even with all of that, the next steps aren't always obvious.

This is something many professionals, especially Black women, encounter in their careers. There's often the pressure to have a perfectly plotted trajectory, paired with the reality of being overprepared but underestimated in professional spaces. Roberts and Mayo (2020) call this the racial credibility gap—a tension where competence is met with doubt rather than opportunity.

This gap affects how talent is recognized, who gets promoted, and which voices are seen as leadership material, regardless of actual performance or capability.

But I've come to realize **that alignment doesn't always mean prestige; it means purpose**. And sometimes, purpose is discovered more clearly through action than titles. Every step, even the unclear ones, is contributing to something greater.

Five Takeaways for Navigating a Nonlinear I-O Career Path

1. ***Own your story.***
   Whether you're a student, entrepreneur, or seasoned professional, your journey holds value. Don't downplay your experience—entrepreneurship, consulting, parenting, teaching, and leadership outside traditional paths are all forms of applied I-O.
2. ***Translate, don't shrink.***
   Use the language of I-O to describe your work. Managing burnout? That's **occupational health psychology**. Coordinating teams? That's **collaborative leadership**. Designing processes? That's **organizational development**.
3. ***The gap is a gift.***
   Whether you stepped away to run a business, raise a family, recover, or explore something new, you didn't pause your growth; you changed your classroom. Reflect on what you learned and how you led.
4. ***Find the fit, not the flash.***
   Your next role doesn't have to impress the industry; it has to align with your values. This is especially true for seasoned professionals considering a pivot into entrepreneurship or a more purposeful niche. Your expertise is not "too late"—it's exactly on time.
5. ***Stay curious and keep learning.***
   A non-traditional path doesn't mean you're off-course—it means you're customizing your map. Whether you're reentering the field, launching a business, or transitioning out of a long-held role, there is still room for you. And the field is better for your presence.

Final Reflection

I went from **flour-dusted counters to faculty meetings**, from late-night baking to early morning mentoring. And honestly, no one could have painted a better picture of what my purpose-driven path would look like.

Not every career journey is linear—but every valid contribution to this field matters. If we all took the same path, we'd bring the same perspective. Instead, we bring innovation through differences. Through flexibility. Through faith. Through lived experience.

So, whether you start in a corner office or at your kitchen counter, know this:

There is room for you in I-O psychology, and the field is better because you're in it.

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SIOP Practitioner Mentoring: The First Five Years

Rik Nemanick

When I graduated college in 1991 with dual degrees in psychology and marketing, I really did not know what I was going to do with my career. I got a job in marketing, which turns out was really a sales job, and learned very quickly that I did not like working in sales. It was at that job, however, that I met one of my most important mentors, Dr. Marvin McMillan. He was the vice president of human resources and an I-O psychologist. He had served on a board at a college in Saint Louis with my mother, and he generously let a 22-year old kid right out of college spend time learning about what he did professionally. Over the course of that year, Dr. McMillan taught me a lot about I-O psychology and guided me into the field where I have been practicing for over 25 years.

Mentoring has been an important part of career progress as long as there have been professions, with senior practitioners and artisans teaching junior ones skills and the ins and outs of a profession. Although mentoring is formalized in some professions, it has historically not been a central part of I-O psychology beyond graduate school, which is precisely when most of us need some career guidance.

The diversity of I-O psychology careers can make finding a path overwhelming. Graduates are faced with options that include talent analytics, external consulting, academia, training and development, and human resources just to start. Once they start down a career path, there is so much to learn and explore, yet most of us end up doing it on our own. Some of us are the only I-O psychologist where we work, leaving us to get mentoring from colleagues from outside the profession who do not always know the career paths we have available. Others may work with other psychologists but still do not get the mentoring we might want due to heavy demands on our time where meeting with a mentor feels like a luxury.

SIOP Practitioner Mentoring Program

The SIOP Practitioner Mentoring Program aims to meet this need for early to midcareer I-O psychologists. We are concluding the fifth consecutive year of offering mentoring to practitioners, and to date have had 105 pairs complete the 10-month program (there are 15 pairs in the 2025 cohort who will be wrapping up their mentoring experience in December). The program is a traditional one-on-one mentoring program, pairing seasoned psychologists with early to midcareer professionals with a focus on career growth and development for the protégés. The feedback from those who have completed the program has been very encouraging, and the 2024 cohort had net promoter scores (NPS) of 71 for mentors and 65 for protégés. There are several factors that have contributed to the success of the program:

- **Consistent steering committee membership**. The members of the steering committee (which has had 3-4 members over the first 5 years) participate on the committee for at least 2 years of the program. Also, members are staggered so there is always at least one continuing member who can mentor the ones joining the committee.
- **One-on-one partnerships**. The predecessor to the current incarnation was a group mentoring program that ran from 2010-2017, where one mentor would lead meetings for a group of protégés. These discussion-based sessions were valuable to the participants but lacked the personalized guidance that comes with a more traditional approach.
- **Protégé driven program**. Previous program feedback suggested that the mentors often drove all of the sessions and selecting the topics. The engagement from the protégés was inconsistent, which

led to the program coming to an end. The current program asks protégés to “take the lead” with their mentors to foster ownership with the protégés

- **Loose structure**. The program provides structure for the participants in the form of meeting agendas and goal-setting resources to get started but leaves the logistics of how the pairs will meet to the mentors and protégés themselves. The feedback we have gotten is that it is enough structure to help get started but not too much where it would start to feel intrusive.
- **Application based**. To ensure we have protégés will be fully engaged, we have an application that asks prospective protégés to articulate their career goals, what they hope to learn from a mentor, and what they would want in an ideal mentor. The application helps the steering committee make thoughtful matches to ensure the mentors can meet the goals of the protégés.

The program focuses more on career development than technical skill building or networking, and protégés set goals for the program like this goal from a current participant: "Understand what my career path could look like and what opportunities I should be prioritizing. Increase my ability to position myself as a trusted expert and future leader. Build deeper connections with my colleagues and professional network.”

The program has not been perfect, and the steering committee members have learned a lot during the way. The biggest challenge for the committee is protégés who stop reaching out to their mentors early in the process. Although the application is meant to ensure only protégés who are willing to put in the time to meet with a mentor are paired, some protégés still end up “ghosting” their mentors.

That said, the feedback from those who do complete the program has been great. Below are testimonials from two participants who competed the 2024 program:

> I have enjoyed this experience tremendously. I have gained an IO friend/colleague who's not from my grad school program or a past job and that's a nice change! This program is an excellent way to build relationships with other IOs just for the connection. My mentee taught me so much! I believe I helped her too so it was a positive and productive experience for both of us. We look forward to staying in touch and hopefully meeting in person at a future conference. ~ Marie (mentor)
>
> My experience with the SIOP Practitioner Mentoring Program has been amazing! My mentor is supportive and kind. I feel seen, heard, and validated. Our calls sometimes run longer than we plan because there is so much to discuss. I appreciate all of those who worked to make this program possible - Thank you!! ~ Nicole (protégé)

If you are interested in applying for the 2026 cohort, applications will open up for both mentors and protégés in January 2026 with applications due by January 23rd. Application is only open to full practitioner members (not current students): https://www.siop.org/education/for-professionals/professional-practice/practitioner-mentoring-program/. The program kicks off with a training session in March and runs through December. There is a midpoint meeting held in August to get the participants together for knowledge sharing, and a closeout meeting in December. If you have any questions about the program, feel free to contact me.

I’d also like to thank the committee members who have served with me over the 5 years of the program:

- **Antoinette Kohlman**
- **Liz Pavese**
- **Kathy Bittner**
- **Mengqiao (MQ) Liu**
- **Elena Auer**
- **Nchopia Nwokoma**
- **Nicole Ennen**

What We Lose When We Outsource Thinking

Shaloma Logan

As a child, my family took an annual road trip from Queens, New York, to New Ringgold, Pennsylvania. My brother memorized the map of our route and could narrate us there. I was not as committed but still had a general sense of the path.

Last week, I opened my GPS to get home because I would get lost without it. I was only 10 minutes away.

Somewhere between those family trips and this moment, I lost the spatial memory that came more naturally. Mostly, because I no longer need it.

Humans naturally avoid cognitive effort. Studies show that when people can take an easier path, they do (Kool et al., 2010). From an evolutionary standpoint, effort avoidance helps us survive. But when technology like AI and search engines makes learning effortless, our brains stop practicing *how* to learn.

Psychologists have studied this tendency to rely on external tools and call it *cognitive offloading*. Memorizing where to find information instead of the information itself leads to what researchers call the "Google effect" (Sparrow et al., 2011). That's why we can remember the name of an article but not its argument. The brain adapts to easy access and offloads what no longer feels essential.

When I started my talent development career in 2017, I devoured every training book I could find—*The 10-Minute Trainer*, *150 Ways to Teach It Quick and Make It Stick*, *Telling Ain't Training*, and *The Art and Science of Training*. I highlighted pages, hoping to find the secret formula for helping adults learn (and to our point, I remember much of what I learned).

The takeaway from all of them was the same: **Adults learn by doing.** Kolb's experiential learning theory, Bloom's Taxonomy, and decades of research on memory all confirm that learning sticks when people retrieve, apply, and reflect on knowledge in context.

Cognitive psychology shows why this works:

- Retrieving knowledge strengthens long-term memory more than rereading it (Roediger & Karpicke, 2006),
- spacing out learning helps retention (Cepeda et al., 2006),
- generating even imperfect answers improves recall (Slamecka & Graf, 1978),
- and the harder something feels, the deeper it tends to stick (Bjork, 1994; Kang, 2016).

The problem is that we now live in a world designed to remove friction. In efforts to learn faster or work smarter (and, frankly, be more perfect), we use tools that sometimes do the work for us. When that happens, the mental muscles we stop using start to weaken.

Let's use an old principle to solve this problem. Cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1988) gives us a framework. This theory explores offloading *extraneous* load (tasks that don't build skill) while preserving *germane* load (the kind that strengthens understanding).

Here's what that balance can look like in practice:

- A nurse might use AI to handle charting but still take the time to study patterns in patient data.
- A manager might ask a chatbot to summarize meeting notes, then spend their energy thinking about decisions those notes inform.
- A startup founder might use AI to brainstorm possibilities but still evaluate and tailor the top two that best align with their strategy.
- A lawyer could offload case summaries but still write their own opening and closing arguments.

The goal is to lighten the administrative load while keeping the thinking work human.

AI can also support the time real learning takes by tracking progress or offering reminders, but it can't internalize the habit for us. Time and effort is what builds the scaffolding for future knowledge. Each time we resist the temptation to offload too early, we reinforce our ability to think critically, retrieve information, and connect ideas. Those moments shape new wiring in the brain.

The challenge for the everyday leader is to design systems, teams, and workspaces that preserve that kind of engagement and make room for the discomfort that comes with learning.

So here's a question: Where can you allow for more cognitive effort in your work?

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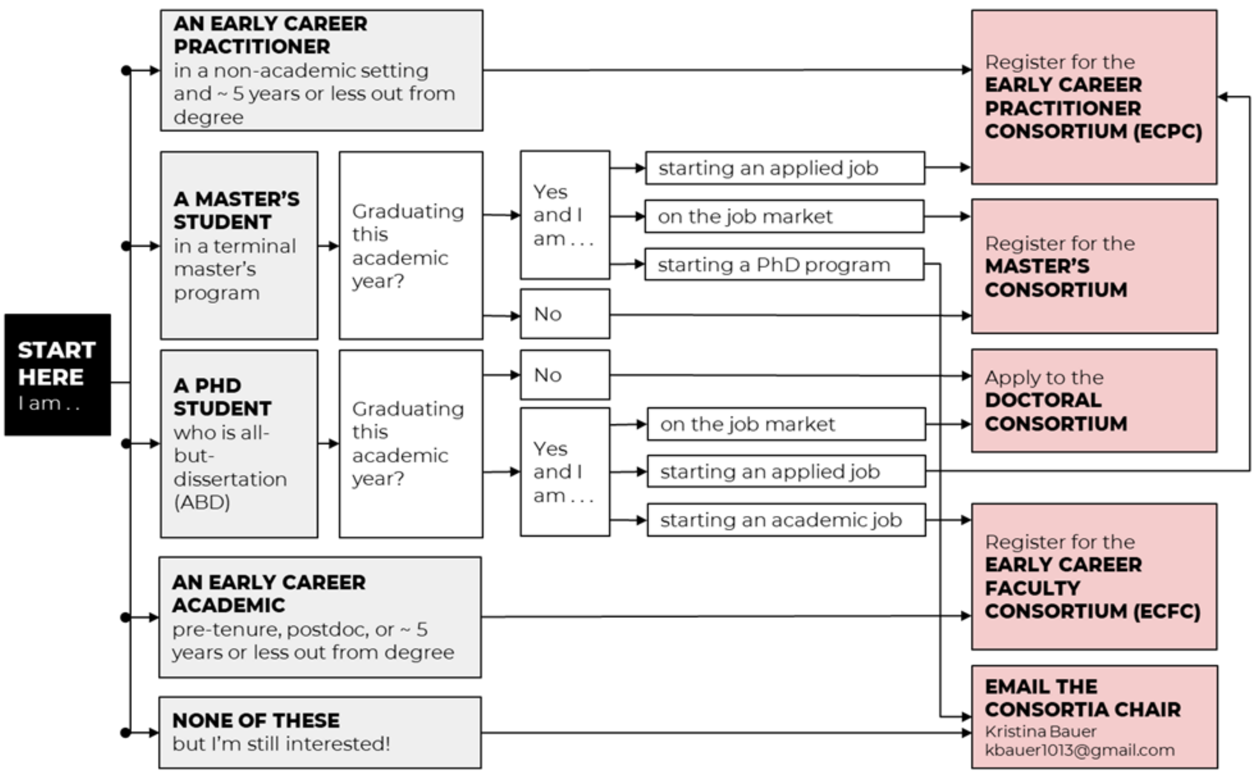
Kickstart Your Conference: Inside the 2026 SIOP Consortia

The SIOP 2026 Consortia is back, bringing targeted, high-impact programming to support I-O psychology students and early career professionals. These preconference events blend professional development, community building, and career insight into an energizing format. Whether you are clarifying your career goals, seeking mentorship, or broadening your network, the consortia are an excellent way to launch your SIOP experience.

Led by **Kristina Bauer** (kbauer1013@gmail.com) and the Consortia Committee, four tracks will again be offered: Master's, Doctoral, Early Career Faculty, and Early Career Practitioner. Registration is completed with conference registration. The cost is $99 for Master's and Doctoral Consortia and $199 for Early Career Faculty and Practitioner Consortia. All consortia are being held on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. Attendees must also be registered for the annual conference.

Which Session Is Right for You?

To help determine which consortium is right for you, check out the infographic and brief details about each consortium below. If you want more information, explore the individual consortium websites, or feel free to reach out to Kristina with questions.



Master's Consortium

The Master's Consortium is open to all students pursuing a master's degree but aimed at 2nd-year students in a terminal degree program. Designed as a practical, career-focused learning experience, it helps participants explore I-O career paths, connect with practitioners, and prepare for the transition into full-time roles.

Co-Chairs: **Juliette Lloyd** (e9juliette@gmail.com) and **Brooke Ackerman-Clarke** (brookeda131@gmail.com)

Doctoral Consortium

The SIOP Lee Hakel Doctoral Consortium is open to doctoral students who have passed comprehensive exams (or their program's equivalent) but have not yet defended their dissertation. This program offers development opportunities for students pursuing academic or applied roles, with content focused on navigating the dissertation process, strengthening communication skills, and preparing for the job market.

Co-Chairs: **Kira Foley** (kirafoley10@gmail.com) and **Ian Hughes** (ihughes@tamu.edu)

Early-Career Faculty Consortium

The Early-Career Faculty Consortium is open to current and future junior faculty. Session content focuses on the realities of starting an academic career (i.e., tenure expectations, teaching strategies, research pipelines, and balancing service), while helping participants build confidence and clarity in their professional identities.

Co-Chairs: **Rebecca Brossoit** (rbrossoit@rice.edu) and **Monique Domingo** (mdomingo@lsu.edu)

Early-Career Practitioner Consortium

The Early-Career Practitioner Consortium is open to those entering applied I-O roles. Programming provides practical guidance on a variety of practitioner roles, along with insight into career navigation, professional growth, and thriving within organizational settings.

Co-Chairs: **Andre Hennig** (andre.hennig@shl.com) and **Casey Witherspoon** (Casey.Witherspoon@target.com)

We look forward to seeing you in New Orleans! Laissez les bons temps rouler (let the good times roll)!

Obituary: Jack W. Wiley

Scott Brooks

Dr. Jack W. Wiley, Fellow of SIOP and pillar in the I-O community, passed away on November 2, 2025. Born on May 24, 1952, in Huntington, Indiana, Jack was the second of four children. He had a deep and profound impact on many members of the SIOP community, both professionally and personally.

A SI-OP, APA, and APS Fellow, Jack's career is symbolized by earning SI-OP's Distinguished Professional Practice Contributions Award. With a PhD from the University of Tennessee, he began his I-O career at Ford Motor Company, then National Bank of Detroit. After 5 years at Control Data Corporation, along with Gail Gantz he bought the assets of CDC's employee survey practice and founded Gantz Wiley Research in 1986 and built a well-respected employee and customer organization. An early pioneer in connecting employee and customer opinions to organizational performance, Jack may have coined the term "Linkage Research" (though truth may be lost in the pre-Internet days). He sold GWR to Kenexa in 2006 and continued as president of their High Performance Institute until 2013. He then became a professor at Manchester University, helping establish an undergraduate I-O concentration. He also stayed active with Jack Wiley Consulting.

Jack is most known throughout SIOP as an employee survey expert. He is the author of several books. His contributions specifically to the SIOP community include several chapters in SIOP books, multiple pre-conference workshops, and notably, endowing the ongoing *Wiley Award for Excellence in Organizational Surveys*. He is a coauthor of the upcoming employee survey chapter in the *Handbook on the Practice of I-O Psychology*.

Jack's impressive resume does not characterize his impact. He was kind, supportive, and impeccably dressed. To watch Jack deliver an executive presentation was to witness a formal command of the room, generating excitement among often cynical leaders—and always with a handkerchief in his coat's breast pocket. His sense of formality led to a slow adoption of Casual Fridays within GWR, and even then, each week was subject to careful approval. Those who knew him casually may not glimpse a subtle coolness underneath his traditional style. If one arrived early enough to work, one might have heard ZZ Top rolling out of Jack's office. He knew his classic rock—artist, album, and year. That trivia topic may only have been surpassed by Jack's grasp of basketball, particularly Indiana basketball. Jack was a model of integrity, and ever values driven. He was a mentor, a collaborator, and a friend.

Outside of work, Jack was deeply involved with the community, most importantly serving as an elder in the Church of Christ. Jack is survived by his wife, Rhonda; four children (Nathan, Luke, Megan, Jackson); and fifteen grandchildren. Funeral services were held last November in Wabash, Indiana. To share a memory, send flowers to the family, or plant a tree in memory of Jack William Wiley, please visit https://lnkd.in/ec63qEUG. Additionally, there are many comments from the professional community in a LinkedIn thread here: https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7391507537289768960/?commentUrn=urn%3Ali%3Acomment%3A(activity%3A7391507537289768960%2C7391599263904043008)&dashCommentUrn=urn%3Ali%3Afsd_comment%3A(7391599263904043008%2Curn%3Ali%3Aactivity%3A7391507537289768960)

Members in the Media

Amber Stark
Senior Brand and Content Strategist

Awareness of I-O psychology has been on the rise thanks to articles written by and/or featuring SIOP members. These are member media mentions found from September 10, 2025, through December 10, 2025. We share them on our social media, in the *SIOP Source*, and in this column, which you can use to find potential collaborators, spark ideas for research, and keep up with your fellow I-O colleagues.

We scan the media on a regular basis but sometimes articles fall through our net. If we've missed your or a colleague's media mention, please email them to astark@siop.org.

Samuel Blacher on how spotting and addressing cultural gaps can help leaders boost trust, collaboration, and performance: https://www.cio.com/article/4041517/bridging-contextual-gaps-how-culture-and-perception-shape-team-success.html

Irina Cozma with methods to help boards strengthen their culture and sharpen their strategic impact: https://hbr.org/2025/09/is-your-board-too-collegial

Nathan Mondragon with nontraditional tactics to spot fake candidates: https://www.bizjournals.com/triad/news/2025/10/03/ai-deepfake-interview-job-market-hiring-manager.html

Nathan Mondragon with insight on hiring practices and employee incentives: https://www.thecentersquare.com/national/article_14e4ded2-2b55-45dd-abf0-cb1158f053d9.html

Gary Johns on the "romance of leadership," the idea that the innate qualities of individuals at the top determine success or failure far more than the environment in which they operate: https://www.economist.com/business/2025/10/23/beware-the-romance-of-leadership

Wayne Cascio on Costco's workforce: https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/10/27/can-the-golden-age-of-costco-last

Dan Russell with a more deliberate approach to effective succession planning: https://qz.com/ceo-succession-planning-changes

IOtas

Jenny Baker
Sr. Manager, Publications and Events

Appointment

SIOP Fellow Elizabeth Kolmstetter has been named to the APA Services Advocacy Coordinating Committee, which guides the American Psychological Association's advocacy priorities each year. See her impressive credentials and meet all the members at https://www.apaservices.org/advocacy/news/2025-coordinating-committee-members

Books

SIOP Member **Sue Ann Highland** is the author of a newly published book, *Reimagining Learning Spaces,* which explores how the design of physical learning environments can profoundly impact student engagement, collaboration, and achievement.

SIOP Member **Iris Kugmeh** has published a number of books on a variety of issues of interest to psychologists in just the past few years. These books cover topics such as communication, lying, diversity, poverty, the workplace, achievement, and resilience, among others. See these volumes on Amazon.

Presentations

SIOP Member **Alyssa Birnbaum** recently had her TEDx talk on her dissertation work picked up by TED and featured on the TED Radio Hour. View it at https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/3-simple-ways-to-build-stronger-relationships-at-work/id160904630?i=1000729535986

SIOP Member **Samuel Blacher** has published his dissertation, Skip-Level Meetings: Perspectives of Skipped First-Tier U.S. Tech Leaders, as well as "Being Bypassed: Uncovering Skip-Level Meetings from U.S. Frontline Technology Leaders' Perspectives" in The Proceedings of the 21st European Conference on Management Leadership and Governance. Links to his research are available at https://www.managementatwork.com/fslstudy