CPI 260™ Instrument Ranked Top 10 Best Product by *Training Media Review*

CPI 260™ Onine Training, 2003, CPP, Inc., $32 - $38
Review by Cindy Huggett from *Training Media Review* (TMR)

CPI 260™	
Presentation	★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★
Production quality	★★★1/2
Documentation	★★★★
Value of Purpose	★★★★
Value for the money	★★★★
Overall rating	★★★★

Last week I walked past a crowded restaurant with outdoor tables. Just as I was passing by, a waiter breezed by me with a tray full of delicious-looking food. The appealing scent of the meal made my mouth water, and I envied the diners who were about to enjoy it. As I continued along, I thought about that meal and how good it must have tasted and imagined it was a good dining experience for the guests.

That's exactly how my experience was with the CPI 260™ instrument and its related *Coaching Report for Leaders*. I got just a small hint of what seems to be a delightful experience. I can only imagine what the actual in-depth experience would be. Based upon my glimpse into the overall program, though, I have made some general observations.

An industry leader
The CPI 260™ Instrument is designed to be just one component of an organization-wide development program. The instrument is often used as the starting point, like the first course in an elaborate meal. It "provides the source information for the *Coaching Report for Leaders*, which shows individuals' strengths and identifies areas for improvement." A participant takes the assessment, receives a customized report, and has the opportunity to discuss the revealing results with a coach. In an organizational rollout, the CPI 260™ is often used in leadership development programs, coaching, or performance improvement initiatives.

CPP is already an industry leader in personal and psychological assessments, probably best known for delivering the *Myers Briggs Type Indicator*® (MBTI®), *Strong Interest Inventory*®, and FIRO-B® assessment. CPP's release of the CPI 260™ instrument is significant because it updates the original CPI™ instrument in both format and the way it presents the results.

The instrument is an online true-false survey of 260 questions that is supposed to take approximately 25 minutes to complete. It is easily accessible through a web browser, using a login and password provided in the instructions.

The first screen asks for basic demographic information. They are standard questions, but if I were answering these questions as part of an employer-sponsored training program, I would prefer some assurance of confidentiality. There are links to a privacy statement and a separate confidentiality statement; however, both are full of fine print and legalese (like most statements of this kind). Since I wasn't sure if my answers affected the report outcome, I completed all of the

blanks and hoped it wouldn't come back to haunt me in the future. I figured if I was going to be vulnerable anyway by answering the assessment, I might as well go all the way and tell them everything they wanted to know.

Unfortunately, somewhere in the middle of the demographic questions, something went wrong with my computer. After selecting the "Continue now!" button, my browser displayed nothing. No buttons, no graphics, nothing. So I called the only telephone number I had, left a message, and received a return phone call right away. They directed me to the CPP technical support line.

My experience with the technical support was quick and painless. I dialed an 800 number and was on hold for a short time. Although the recording invited me to fax my question or visit the CPP website, I chose to hold until getting a warm body on the other end. The total resolution time was around 15 minutes, and I discovered that I needed to use the "secure link" login instead of the standard login.

You don't have to answer everything
Answering the assessment questions was very straightforward. I read a statement and chose how I felt about it by answering true or false. Many of the questions I didn't have strong opinions about one way or the other. Yet, I felt obligated to answer each one; leaving a question blank didn't seem to be an option. However, at the end of the exam, I found out that I could have left some of them blank.

Midway through the assessment, a dialog box pops up and tells you that you are 50% complete. I finished in about 15 minutes, which made me wonder if I had skipped over something or answered the questions too quickly.

It took about a week to receive a response from CPP. I was contacted via email and asked to set up a time to meet with my coach. The night before the scheduled telephone call, I received two reports via email. Both reports were in the easy-to-open PDF format. I also received a one-page fax called the "Worksheet to Plot CPI 260™ Scale Scores in Relation to the Normal Range for Executives and Managers." I believe that most users will only receive one report, the *Coaching Report for Leaders*.

However, the *Client Feedback Report* is available for facilitators and helpful for interpreting the results. It is up to the facilitator whether or not the *Client Feedback Report* will be used and shared with the participant. The fax I received is not normally shared, but because I was evaluating the program, the facilitator wanted me to see the detail behind how the reports are generated from the survey. I appreciated the extra information, especially since it helped explain the source data on the report.

Revelations, no; learning, yes
The *Coaching Report for Leaders* uses the CPI 260 instrument to assess 18 leadership characteristics. The report ranks your results against a database of over 5,000 executives and over 50 years of CPI research. My own personal report was 16 pages and included descriptions of my leadership style, strengths, and potential areas for development. A one-page "snapshot" summarized the overall results, and the final report section contained thought-provoking discussion questions and advice for next steps that could be used as a springboard for my personal development.

Because I was a reviewer, the telephone coaching session drifted back and forth between "Here's what we would discuss and how the call would work" to "Here are some insights into your leadership style." During a typical coaching session, the coach would ask directed questions leading toward the organizational program goal.

For someone considering implementing this in their own organization, it is worth noting that the survey can be facilitated by internal consultants, assuming they have the appropriate B-level training necessary for licensing personal and psychological assessments. CPP publishes a "Users Guide to the Coaching Report for Leaders" to assist with the facilitation and interpretation of results.

Overall, the experience was insightful and quite helpful for me personally. The assessment, report, and subsequent coaching process gave me an introspective look into my preferred leadership styles. Although the report seemed frightfully accurate, I also learned a few things I didn't know about myself and got some tips for how to be a better leader.

Now, about that dinner.

Recommendation

Personal improvement is always a good thing, especially when it is part of, and in line with, an overall organizational strategy. The CPI 260™ instrument is easy to use and seems to be easy to interpret. Based on sound long-term research, the instrument gives customized feedback on a person's strengths and areas for improvement. The *Coaching Report for Leaders* suggests areas for improvement targeted to your needs. It also gives action steps and specific advice for leadership development. Human resources and training professionals will appreciate having this tool available for their organization's development programs.