

Subscale Interpretive Guide

H D S

HOGAN DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

The Hogan Development Survey (HDS) is the industry standard for assessing derailers – counterproductive behavioral tendencies that emerge in times of stress and complacency. Organizations around the world rely on the HDS for identifying behaviors that disrupt or interfere with effective performance. Learning and development professionals understand the value of the HDS for shedding light on critical blind spots, increasing strategic self-awareness, and driving personal growth. They also know coaching, when coupled with HDS results, can help individuals manage problematic tendencies.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE HDS

Hogan updated items and added subscales to the HDS in keeping with our philosophy of Kaizen Psychometrics, which is the belief in continually improving our assessments based on research and experience. These improvements build on the unique measurement properties of the HDS and bring a new level of precision to the assessment of derailment patterns. New features include:

- 1. Subscales: Derailers are multi-faceted.** Derailment behaviors are complex and multi-faceted. Over the years, we have observed a growing need and customer demand for the inclusion of subscales to assist in the interpretation of HDS profiles. Although inherently imbedded within the HDS, subscales were not originally defined or presented in reports. Perhaps the most exciting improvement to the HDS, the new subscales provide in-depth insight into the many faces of derailment.
 - HDS subscale results are available on the Challenge, Flash, and Insight Reports.
 - On these reports, each of the 11 derailers feature a subset of three underlying behavioral themes.
 - Similar to the scoring of HDS primary scales, each subscale is scored as a risk rating indicating the strength of the behavior and degree to which the theme contributes to the overall score.
- 2. Low Score Implications: Deeper insight into underused strengths.** Although high-risk derailers pose the greatest threat to leadership effectiveness in the form of overused strengths, extreme low scores can represent underused strengths. In other words, high scorers may get fired; low scorers may get overlooked. This does not diminish the view of higher scores, but demonstrates the value of examining the full range of scores on a given scale. New low-score features with the HDS include:
 - Definitions for both high and low scores on each HDS subscale
 - Additional training on low scores in Hogan’s advanced certification workshops
 - New options for coaching individuals whose HDS profiles do not include any elevated scores
- 3. Psychometric Properties: Enhanced measurement mechanics.** Hogan regularly evaluates and updates our inventories to ensure they exceed the highest standards of testing excellence. Enhancements are essential to maintaining our commitment to advancing the science of personality assessment. Psychometric improvements made to the HDS include:
 - Replacement of outdated assessment items
 - Updates to the HDS norms
 - Additional validation work to ensure the effective prediction of workplace behaviors

INTRODUCTION

The HDS predicts behaviors critical to career success. The evolution of the HDS builds on what we have learned from years of research and application of the assessment, resulting in greater prediction of critical behaviors and enhanced ability to interpret results.

Interpretive Guidelines

Below are interpretive guidelines and ground rules to keep in mind:

Best Practices	Cautions
The whole is greater than the sum of its parts; as with all Hogan tools, the primary interpretative focus should always remain at the main scale level.	Avoid over-emphasizing or over-generalizing subscales. The validity and predictive power of a single subscale is too narrow to stand alone.
Use the subscales for deeper, more nuanced understanding of behaviors driving the overall scale.	Context matters; avoid over-analyzing individual subscales or interpreting their meaning in a vacuum.
Keep in mind the risk rating for each subscale mirrors the risk thresholds for overall scale scores, ranging from no to high risk.	Avoid drawing conclusions about low-risk scores (40-69%); these fall in an interpretive gray area, which means behavioral inferences cannot be made.
Focus on moderate- to high-risk ratings (70-100%). Advanced users may also evaluate no risk scores (0-39%).	Interpret no-risk (0-39%) scores cautiously if you do not have extensive HDS experience and have not attended advanced Hogan certification workshops.
Use the information you gain through analysis of the subscales to identify specific developmental targets/actions that will deliver the greatest impact.	It is not advised to reference subscales directly during a debrief; rather, incorporate the information into your overall analysis and feedback.
Look for opportunities to draw connections between the HDS subscales, as well as to other behavioral themes emerging on the HPI and MVPI assessments.	Remember: there are 125 sub-dimensions across the three Hogan tools: 42 HPI subscales, 33 HDS subscales, and 50 MVPI item theme scores. It is not useful to examine every one; focus on extreme scores and those with the greatest impact.

SAMPLE PROFILES

Example 1 – High Skeptical score with subscales

Dimension	Score	Percentile
Skeptical	90	
Cynical	Prone to doubt others' intentions and assume they have bad ulterior motives.	
Mistrusting	Generalized mistrust of people and institutions; being alert for signs of perceived mistreatment.	
Grudges	Holding grudges and being unwilling to forgive real or perceived wrongs.	

Interpretation: This individual scored at the 90th percentile on Skeptical. People scoring in the high-risk zone are often described as bright and perceptive, but cynical, fault-finding, and alert for signs of betrayal. This example represents a classic high-risk Skeptical case; all three of the subscales contribute to this individual's scale score. The elevation of all three subscales suggests the full spectrum of negative behavioral themes associated with the main scale are likely to emerge when the person is not actively self-monitoring. The *Grudges* subscale contributes slightly less to the overall score on Skeptical, but is still an area in which the individual should be aware and continue to monitor.

Example 2 – Low Skeptical score with subscales

Dimension	Score	Percentile
Skeptical	3	
Cynical	Prone to doubt others' intentions and assume they have bad ulterior motives.	
Mistrusting	Generalized mistrust of people and institutions; being alert for signs of perceived mistreatment.	
Grudges	Holding grudges and being unwilling to forgive real or perceived wrongs.	

Interpretation: This individual scored at the 3rd percentile on Skeptical. People with extreme low scores are typically viewed as optimistic, positive, trusting, steady, and have minimal risk of exhibiting the behaviors typically associated with the Skeptical derail. With low scores, the challenge is not always found in what the person *is* doing, but rather what he or she is *not* doing. For example, low-score behaviors may include a tendency to let one's guard down quickly or fail to scan the environment for threats. Consequently, they may lack political awareness or be naïve to the point that they allow others take advantage.

Example 3 – Average Skeptical score with subscales

Dimension	Score	Percentile
Skeptical	58	
Cynical	Prone to doubt others' intentions and assume they have bad ulterior motives.	
Mistrusting	Generalized mistrust of people and institutions; being alert for signs of perceived mistreatment.	
Grudges	Holding grudges and being unwilling to forgive real or perceived wrongs.	

Interpretation: This individual scored at the 58th percentile, indicating neither a high-risk nor an extremely low-risk score. Prior to the HDS enhancements, average scores were often deemed uninterpretable; however, this particular configuration of subscales provides more insight into the individual’s attitudes towards others. The elevation on the *Cynical* subscale indicates this person is wary of others’ true intentions and pauses to consider potential ulterior motives. However, the relatively low scores on *Mistrusting* and *Grudges* indicate no risk of demonstrating generalized mistrust, holding grudges, or retaliating against others when wronged. Overall, we might say this person has a “verify, then trust” approach to evaluating others’ objectives, but overall does not demonstrate a high risk of exhibiting the full complement of derailing Skeptical behaviors.

Sample Profile Take-Aways

Notice that in all three examples, the focus remains on the main scale. The interpretation should not deviate dramatically based on subscale scores alone. Rather, the subscales are used to specify which component behaviors will contribute greatest weight and salience to the overall scale score. Similar to the HPI, subscales should only be highlighted when they add interpretive value to the implications for the main HDS scale score.

The following interpretive guide provides an overview of the behaviors measured by each HDS subscale. Each derailer includes a description, sample item, behavior range from low to high, and subscale descriptions anchored at both the low and high ends of the spectrum. The advantage of this structure is it allows for a more precise interpretation of behaviors contributing to a scale score. Definitions for all subscales can be found in the Appendix.

SUBSCALE INTERPRETIVE GUIDE

Excitable

Description: The Excitable scale concerns working with passion and enthusiasm, but also being easily frustrated, moody, irritable, and inclined to give up on projects and people.

Low scorers seem calm to the point of appearing to lack passion or urgency



High scorers display dramatic emotional peaks and valleys regarding people and projects

Subscale	Low Score	High Score	Sample Item
Volatile	Self-controlled; demonstrates strong emotional regulation but may seem overly restrained	Temperamental, easily angered or upset, tendency to lose control of emotions and react in interpersonally harsh ways	<i>I can get angry quickly.</i>
Easily Disappointed	Tolerant and resilient, but may seem to lack passion or “fire in the belly”	Demonstrates initial passion for people and projects, but may be seen as easily disappointed, frustrated, and losing interest	<i>Few people have met my expectations.</i>
No Direction	Seems steady, self-assured, and clear about beliefs; unlikely to dwell on past mistakes	Cooperative and helpful, but may lack energy or have few well defined beliefs or interests; tends to regret past behavior	<i>Sometimes I am not sure what I really believe.</i>

Skeptical

Description: The Skeptical scale concerns being alert for signs of deceptive behavior in others and taking action when it is detected.

Low scorers seem trusting to the point of naïveté



High scorers are negative or cynical and expect to be betrayed

Subscale	Low Score	High Score	Sample Item
Cynical	Seems positive and steady, but may not examine others' true intentions carefully enough; prone to naïveté	Perceptive about others' intentions but tends to assume they have bad ulterior motives; prone to negativity, quarrelsome	<i>When someone does me a favor, I wonder what he/she wants.</i>
Mistrusting	Generally trusting, seems practical and cooperative; follows-through but may get taken advantage of by others	Generalized mistrust of people and institutions; worrisome and alert for signs of perceived mistreatment	<i>People who are in charge will take advantage of you if you let them.</i>
Grudges	Forgiving of others and understanding; others may take advantage of this accepting nature	Prone to holding grudges and unwilling to forgive real or perceived wrongs; unsympathetic and fault-finding	<i>There are some people I will never forgive.</i>

Cautious

Description: The Cautious scale concerns risk aversion, fear of failure, and avoiding criticism.

Low scorers are willing to take risks without adequate risk assessment



High scorers are reluctant to take risks regardless of risk assessment

Subscale	Low Score	High Score	Sample Item
Avoidant	Open, warm, enthusiastic, and eager to meet new people but may overpower others or seem uninhibited	Avoids new people and situations to prevent potential embarrassment; may seem aloof, inhibited, and disinterested in others	<i>I feel awkward around strangers.</i>
Fearful	Willing to try new things, seems original, inventive, and confident; may be overly forceful when expressing opinions and ideas	Afraid of being criticized for making mistakes and reluctant to act or make decisions independently; may seem unoriginal	<i>People sometimes think I am timid.</i>
Unassertive	Decisive, assertive, and willing to express opinions; may come across as abrasive, inconsiderate, or unsympathetic	Unwilling to act assertively; tendency to be indecisive and slow to act; may seem cooperative but overly compliant	<i>People tell me I'm not assertive enough.</i>

Reserved

Description: The Reserved scale concerns seeming tough, aloof, remote, and unconcerned with the feelings of others.

Low scorers are too concerned about the feelings of others



High scorers are indifferent to the feelings of others

Subscale	Low Score	High Score	Sample Item
Introverted	Socially engaging, enthusiastic, and enjoys being around others; may be seen as socially boisterous	Values private time and prefers to work alone; may seem withdrawn, unapproachable, or lacking in energy	<i>I consider myself a loner.</i>
Unsocial	Relationship-oriented, accessible, warm, and highly cooperative; may seem conflict-avoidant	Keeps others at a distance, limits close relationships, and seems generally detached, aloof, and potentially argumentative	<i>I prefer to keep people at a distance.</i>
Tough	Sympathetic, sensitive to others' feelings, but may seem overly diplomatic or too soft on people issues	Seems indifferent to others' feelings and problems; focused on tasks rather than people; may seem cold or unfeeling	<i>Other people's problems don't concern me.</i>

Leisurely

Description: The Leisurely scale concerns appearing to be friendly and cooperative, but actually following one’s own agenda and quietly, but stubbornly resisting those of others.

Low scorers appear to lack an agenda or direction



High scorers are passive-aggressive and agenda driven

Subscale	Low Score	High Score	Sample Item
Passive Aggressive	Seems steady, cooperative, and forgiving; comfortable expressing feelings and opinions	Overtly pleasant and compliant but privately resentful and subversive regarding requests for improved performance; seems moody and easily upset	<i>I sometimes put off doing things for people I don't like.</i>
Unappreciated	Cooperative, efficient, reliable, and willing to help others; likely to believe hard work will speak for itself	Believes that one’s talents and contributions are ignored or under-appreciated; perceives inequities in assigned workloads	<i>People at work expect me to do everything.</i>
Irritated	Open to feedback, willing to assist others; may readily agree to help others which could ultimately distract from work tasks and agendas	Privately but easily irritated by interruptions, requests, or work-related suggestions; not easily coached	<i>It irritates me to be interrupted when I am working on something.</i>

Bold

Description: The Bold scale concerns seeming fearless, confident, and self-assured; always expecting to succeed and unable to admit mistakes or learn from experience.

Low scorers appear to lack self-confidence and resolve



High scorers seem assertive, self-promoting, and overly self-confident

Subscale	Low Score	High Score	Sample Item
Entitled	Unassuming, unpretentious, and helpful; may lack in outward confidence, or not actively seek out more challenging work assignments	Feels that one has special gifts and accomplishments and therefore deserves special treatment; seems combative, self-important, and unrealistically expectant of deference from others	<i>I would never take a job that is beneath me.</i>
Overconfidence	Seems modest and realistic about abilities, but may have low standards for work quality or seem to lack focus and drive	Unusually confident in one’s abilities; believes that one will succeed in anything; highly organized and systematic, but overestimates one’s level of competence and worth	<i>I do many things better than almost everyone I know.</i>
Fantasized Talent	Practical, content, and realistic about abilities; may seem to prefer more routine work or come across as uninventive	Believing that one has unusual talents or has been born for greatness; seems original and inventive, but arrogant, hyper-competitive, and unrealistic	<i>I was born to do great things.</i>

Mischievous

Description: The Mischievous scale concerns seeming bright, impulsive, adventurous, risk seeking, and limit-testing.

Low scorers are conservative, compliant, and likely unadventurous



High scorers are impulsive, limit-testing, and at times, devious

Subscale	Low Score	High Score	Sample Item
Risky	Compliant, conservative, and cooperative; avoids unnecessary risk and makes few mistakes; may seem unadventurous or overly conforming	Prone to taking risks and testing limits; deliberately bending or breaking inconvenient rules; may seem unconcerned with risk	<i>I try things that other people think are too risky.</i>
Impulsive	Dependable, reliable, and focused; may seem overly structured, conventional, or predictable	Tending to act without considering the long-term consequences of one's actions; seems disorganized, impetuous, and unpredictable	<i>I often do things on the spur of the moment.</i>
Manipulative	Seems genuine, straightforward, and trustworthy; may seem overly inhibited, struggle to gain influence or persuade others	Uses charm to manipulate others and demonstrates little remorse for doing so; may be persuasive and interesting but potentially seem insincere or deceptive	<i>When I want to get my way, I know how to "turn on the charm."</i>

Colorful

Description: The Colorful scale concerns seeming gregarious, fun, entertaining, and enjoying being in the spotlight.

Low scorers are modest, unassuming, quiet, and self-restrained



High scorers are attention-seeking, dramatic, and socially prominent

Subscale	Low Score	High Score	Sample Item
Public Confidence	Self-restrained, quiet, and controlled; may seem socially inhibited and lacking in outward confidence	Outgoing, socially confident, and engaging; presents ideas with energy and enthusiasm, but is attention-seeking, dominates conversation, and talks over others	<i>In a group, I am often the center of attention.</i>
Distractible	Focused, task-oriented, and methodical; may seem unable to shift gears quickly or multitask effectively	Energetic, curious, and idea-oriented; but is also easily bored, distractible, and needs constant stimulation	<i>I like to have several things going on at the same time.</i>
Self-Display	Restrained, adherent to social norms and expectations, may not make a strong impression on others	Expressive, entertaining, and dynamic; enjoys the spotlight; uses dramatics to attract attention to oneself; may seem self-absorbed	<i>I sometimes dress so as to stand out from the crowd.</i>

Imaginative

Description: The Imaginative scale concerns seeming innovative, creative, possibly eccentric, and sometimes self-absorbed.

Low scorers are practical, rely on routine, and often lack new ideas



High scorers may seem impractical, unpredictable, and offer unusual ideas

Subscale	Low Score	High Score	Sample Item
Eccentric	Conventional, practical, and organized; may seem unoriginal or lacking in creativity	Curious and imaginative, but disorganized, unfocused, and lacking in follow-through; expresses unusual views that may be creative or strange	<i>People describe me as unconventional.</i>
Special Sensitivity	Seems open to others' ideas and perspectives, but others may not perceive a strong sense of vision	Belief that one has special abilities to see things others don't and understand complex issues that others cannot	<i>I sometimes feel I have special talents and abilities.</i>
Creative Thinking	Pragmatic and grounded; may seem uninspired or lacking in curiosity and creativity	Highly creative, inventive, and idea-oriented; easily bored and potentially overconfident in one's problem-solving ability	<i>Many of my ideas are ahead of their time.</i>

Diligent

Description: The Diligent scale concerns being hardworking, detail-oriented, and having high standards of performance for self and others.

Low scorers have poor attention to detail and tend to over delegate



High scorers are picky, overly conscientious, and tend to micromanage

Subscale	Low Score	High Score	Sample Item
Standards	Seems relaxed and forgiving with respect to performance standards; may seem careless and disorganized	Exceptionally high standards of performance for oneself and others; practical, systematic, and exacting	<i>I have high standards for my performance at work.</i>
Perfectionistic	Action-oriented, works quickly, may neglect important details or seem expedient	Perfectionistic about the quality of work products and obsessed with the details of their completion; precise and competitive	<i>I tend to be a perfectionist about my work.</i>
Organized	Flexible, able to work comfortably in ambiguous situations; seems inattentive to rules/policies, may not demonstrate strong planning skills or adequate follow through	Meticulous and inflexible about schedules, timing, rules, and procedures; organized, thorough, efficient, but management style marked by excessive control	<i>I am fussy about schedules and timing.</i>

Dutiful

Description: The Dutiful scale concerns being compliant, conforming, and eager to please others.

Low scorers are overly independent and seem to resent authority



High scorers are excessively eager to please superiors

Subscale	Low Score	High Score	Sample Item
Indecisive	Independent and self-sufficient; may fail to solicit advice or gain buy-in from others when making decisions; may be too quick to dismiss others' input	Overly reliant on others for advice and reluctant to act independently; careful to seek approval and/or consensus before making decisions	<i>On important issues, I dislike making decisions on my own.</i>
Ingratiating	Self-reliant and tough-minded; may seem insubordinate, may contradict others, or seem unwilling to play politics	Excessively eager to please one's superiors, telling them what they want to hear; seems overly deferential and hesitant to express strong opinions	<i>There is nothing wrong with flattering your boss.</i>
Conforming	Challenging, willing to express opinions, but may come across as rebellious, defiant, or disloyal at times; may be inappropriately challenging or contentious	Takes pride in supporting one's superiors and following their orders regardless of one's personal opinion; seems overly cooperative, obedient, and excessively concerned with compliance	<i>I take pride in being a good follower.</i>

Appendix: HDS Subscale Definitions and Sample Items

HDS Scale	HDS Subscale	Definition	Sample Item
Excitable	Volatile	Moody, often angered or annoyed, easily upset, and hard to soothe.	<i>I can get angry quickly.</i>
	Easily Disappointed	Initial passion for people and projects, who inevitably disappoint, and passion then turns to rejection.	<i>Few people have met my expectations.</i>
	No Direction	Lacking well-defined beliefs or interests, but with regrets about past behavior.	<i>Sometimes I am not sure what I really believe.</i>
Skeptical	Cynical	Prone to doubt others' intentions and assume they have bad ulterior motives.	<i>When someone does me a favor, I wonder what he/she wants.</i>
	Mistrusting	Generalized mistrust of people and institutions; being alert for signs of perceived mistreatment.	<i>People who are in charge will take advantage of you if you let them.</i>
	Grudges	Holding grudges and being unwilling to forgive real or perceived wrongs.	<i>There are some people I will never forgive.</i>
Cautious	Avoidant	Avoiding new people and situations to avoid imagined potential embarrassment.	<i>I feel awkward around strangers.</i>
	Fearful	Afraid of being criticized for making mistakes and being reluctant to act independently or make decisions.	<i>People sometimes think I am timid.</i>
	Unassertive	Unwilling to act assertively and therefore prone to being overlooked or ignored.	<i>People tell me I'm not assertive enough.</i>
Reserved	Introverted	Valuing one's private time and preferring to work alone.	<i>I consider myself a loner.</i>
	Unsocial	Keeping others at a distance, limiting close relationships, and being generally detached.	<i>I prefer to keep people at a distance.</i>
	Tough	Indifferent to the feelings and problems of others, focused on tasks rather than people.	<i>Other people's problems don't concern me.</i>
Leisurely	Passive Aggressive	Overtly pleasant and compliant but privately resentful and subversive regarding requests for improved performance.	<i>I sometimes put off doing things for people I don't like.</i>
	Unappreciated	Believing one's talents and contributions are ignored; perceiving inequities in assigned workloads.	<i>People at work expect me to do everything.</i>
	Irritated	Privately but easily irritated by interruptions, requests, or work related suggestions.	<i>It irritates me to be interrupted when I am working on something.</i>
Bold	Entitled	Feeling one has special gifts and accomplishments and, consequently, deserves special treatment.	<i>I would never take a job that is beneath me.</i>
	Overconfidence	Unusually confident in one's abilities; belief one will succeed at anything one chooses to undertake.	<i>I do many things better than almost everyone I know.</i>
	Fantasized Talent	Believing one has unusual talents and gifts and that one has been born for greatness	<i>I was born to do great things.</i>

Appendix: HDS Subscale Definitions and Sample Items (Cont.)

HDS Scale	HDS Subscale	Definition	Sample Item
Mischievous	Risky	Prone to taking risks and testing limits; deliberately bending or breaking inconvenient rules.	<i>I try things that other people think are too risky.</i>
	Impulsive	Tending to act impulsively without considering the long-term consequences of one's actions.	<i>I often do things on the spur of the moment.</i>
	Manipulative	Machiavellian tendencies—using charm to manipulate others and having no remorse about doing so.	<i>When I want to get my way, I know how to “turn on the charm.”</i>
Colorful	Public Confidence	Expecting others to find one's public performances fascinating and not knowing when to be quiet.	<i>In a group, I am often the center of attention.</i>
	Distractible	Easily distracted, minimal focus, needing constant stimulation, confusing activity with productivity.	<i>I like to have several things going on at the same time.</i>
	Self-Display	Wanting to be the center of attention and using dramatic costumes and gestures to attract attention to oneself.	<i>I sometimes dress so as to stand out from the crowd.</i>
Imaginative	Eccentric	Expressing unusual views that can be either creative or merely strange; tendency to be absorbed in these ideas.	<i>People describe me as unconventional.</i>
	Special Sensitivity	Believing one has special abilities to see things others don't and understand things others can't.	<i>I sometimes feel I have special talents and abilities.</i>
	Creative Thinking	Believing one is unusually creative; easily bored and confident in one's imaginative problem-solving ability.	<i>Many of my ideas are ahead of their time.</i>
Diligent	Standards	Having exceptionally high standards of performance for oneself and others.	<i>I have high standards for my performance at work.</i>
	Perfectionistic	Perfectionistic about the quality of work products and obsessed with the details of their completion.	<i>I tend to be a perfectionist about my work.</i>
	Organized	Meticulous and inflexible about schedules, timing, rules and procedures.	<i>I am fussy about schedules and timing.</i>
Dutiful	Indecisive	Overly reliant on others for advice and reluctant to make decisions or act independently.	<i>On important issues, I dislike making decisions on my own.</i>
	Ingriating	Excessively eager to please one's superiors, telling them what they want to hear, and never contradicting them.	<i>There is nothing wrong with flattering your boss.</i>
	Conforming	Taking pride in supporting one's superiors and following their orders regardless of one's personal opinion.	<i>I take pride in being a good follower.</i>