CIRCUIT 3
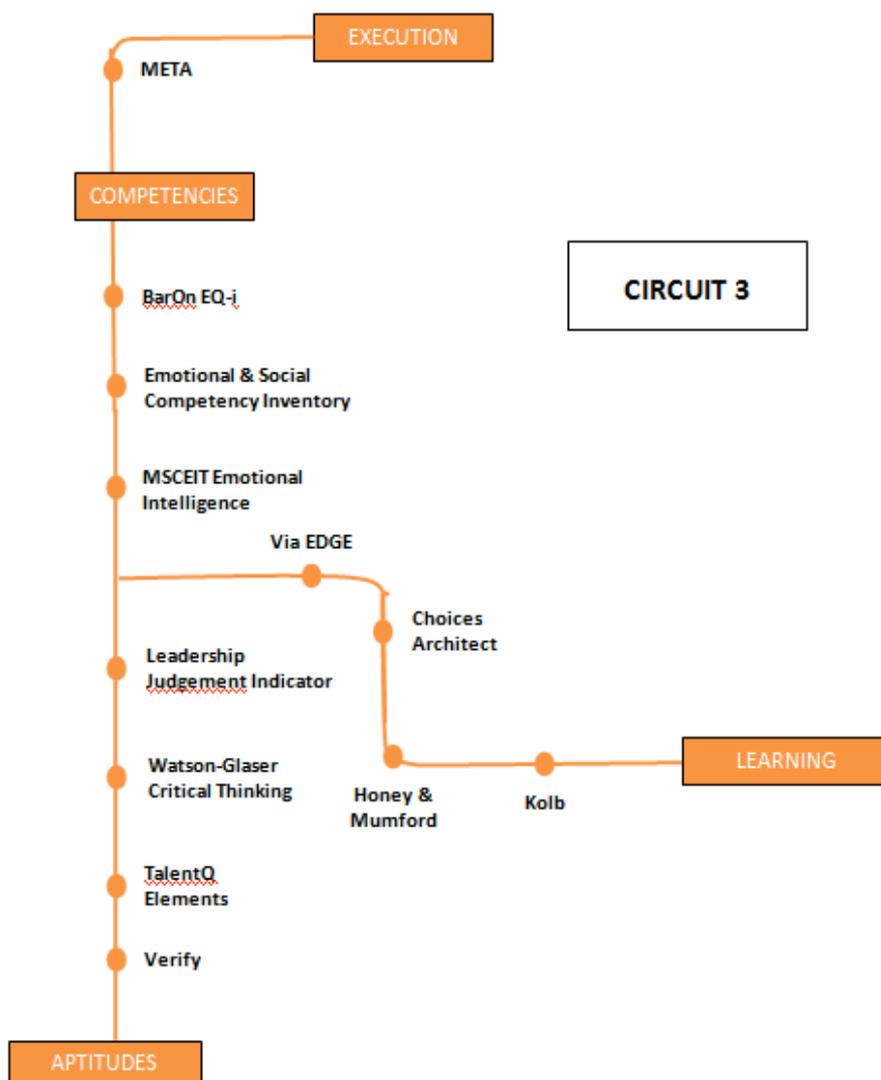
APTITUDES –
LEARNING –
COMPETENCIES –
EXECUTION

Twelve tools are featured in this circuit, which follows a coherent pattern: aptitudes, learning (style and agility), competencies, potential and quality of execution are research areas that are linked, sometimes causally.

As we go along the circuit, we start with purely cognitive aptitudes (reasoning, verbal, numerical, etc.) - *knowledge* - and progress to what is known as "situational" intelligence - or *knowing how to* behave according to the demands of a situation. This is followed by emotional intelligence - knowing *"how to be"*. On the way, we can spot the value of tools that measure learning, especially learning agility, as a competency in itself, and a differentiating indicator of true potential. The journey continues, as we take in a tool that measures entrepreneurial spirit – the *will to do* - and leads up at execution.

EXECUTION
META

COMPETENCIES

BarOn EQ-i

Emotional & Social
Competency Inventory

MSCEIT Emotional
Intelligence

Via EDGE

Choices
Architect

Leadership
Judgement Indicator

Watson-Glaser
Critical Thinking

Honey &
Mumford

Kolb

LEARNING

TalentQ
Elements

Verify

APTITUDES

CIRCUIT 3

COMPETENCIES VS PREFERENCES

When it comes to psychometric tools, a competency is quite distinct from a **preference**. The latter is a predisposition to do, act or think in a certain way, which is independent of the context in which a person might find himself. A preference stays constant across a wide variety of situations, and has a generic value, as it belongs to the individual. A preference is more closely associated with the personality. A preference is natural, instinctive, spontaneous, comfortable and undemanding in terms of energy and is often expressed without the person really being conscious of it. A preference is somewhat innate, despite being partly developed during childhood.

A **competency**, on the other hand, represents something done or learnt. It is usually defined in terms of knowledge, aptitudes and attitudes, skills and behaviors. A competency can have broad applications, such as interpersonal relations, or be very targeted, such as using a particular machine. In general, a competency is developed through practice in situations that require its use for the sake of efficiency. Thus, competency leads to quality of execution. Success can reinforce the practice of competency. However, as the emergence of emotional intelligence models demonstrates (with regard to cognitive intelligence), we might be wrong - even collectively and for a long time - as to the type of competency that is appropriate for certain performance levels!

Competency development is thus a result of action and reflection throughout life . As a competency is learned, learning is potentially endless. In a world of ever-increasing and accelerating change and uncertainty, the sort of competencies necessary for the future are also constantly evolving. Competency contributes to individual development and sometimes to individual transformation. With the **MBTI**®, we can see that a competency can be so well learnt that it can be confused with a natural, instinctive preference.

However, most of the psychometric tools presented in this book claim improved individual competency in an extremely broad sense ("better team work" - circuit 4; "how better to motivate others" - circuit 2, or even "know yourself better" in circuit 1 can all be seen from the competency angle). In light of our circuit's needs, we will focus on a more precise interpretation of this concept, by describing the tools that measure a supposed causal link between targeted competency and quality of execution.

What is more, by travelling this circuit, we go from measuring qualities that are inherently individual or indeed unique in a person (eg reasoning, cognition), to qualities that are increasingly linked to and influenced by the context in which the person finds himself (situational judgment, learning agility, emotional intelligence, entrepreneurial spirit).

REASONING VS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

We have traditionally been brought up to judge a person's value by their intellectual and cognitive abilities. Cognitive abilities can be objectively tested via school tools - intelligence quotient or IQ, reasoning, logical and analytical abilities tests, and so on - assuming that there is a direct causal relationship with performance. But this relationship, while real and necessary, is not always sufficient and is certainly not the only way of assessing contribution. Other factors contribute as much, if not more, to performance in today's complex world.

Emotional intelligence - or EQ, which is invariably in opposition to IQ - is the subject of much recent study. There are now several tests in existence which aim to reinforce the idea that emotions are another form of "intelligence". Increasingly, the primacy of interpersonal relationship management, understanding the motivation of others, communication, change management etc, are all seen as **predictive competencies in organizational performance**, and appeal to our own emotions as well as others'. Emotional intelligence is now considered an essential success factor for any important company role, and features prominently in many business school leadership programmes.

However, even though emotional intelligence is important for organizational **leadership** values today, the maturity of the tools available to measure it lag far behind. Their relevance is still contested, and there are those who see them as a trend towards behavioral conformism and a development of personality sub-traits rather than a new type of intelligence. Psychometrics has a long way to go before it will be able to establish a validation study that makes these tools more widely accepted.

The **Verify™** tool is aimed at evaluating cognitive, verbal, numerical and inductive competencies, focused on talent recruitment or identification. It consists of a battery of seven different tests, each one targeting a separate job level. This is crucial, as the results are shared with a reference population. Measuring the time taken to complete the test also allows a gauge of the candidate's work rhythm. The candidate's speed in answering the questions is compared to the accuracy of the answers. Since it is a test with right answers, Verify™ is built around a two stage method - controlled and non-controlled - which aims to identify the respondent's true level without him being able to copy or even be replaced during the test-taking.

The **Talent Q Elements™** tool is a three-area cognitive competency test: verbal, numerical and logical. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that it is fully dynamic - which means that the questions evolve throughout the test, according the capacities of the taker. Those who reply fast and correctly move on to more complex information and questions, while those who take longer and make mistakes move on to