

What pre-employment tests can do for you...and what they can't do

Using personality and job fit assessments can be really useful when trying to find the right employee for your company. They're easy to administer, objective, and insightful. Like all hiring tools though, they have their advantages and disadvantages. This is why the recruitment process needs to incorporate a multi-faceted approach. Just like you wouldn't buy a car based solely on one factor, like fuel efficiency, you can't hire someone based on the information you attain from one aspect of the hiring process.

What assessments CAN do for you

- ❖ They can cut hiring costs and save time by improving the size and quality of your candidate pool. You can assess a large number of people during the pre-screening process, all at the same time.
- ❖ They can narrow down the candidate pool and enable you to focus on candidates who are a good fit
- ❖ They can assess traits and skills that are relevant to the job



- ❖ They can identify a person's strengths and areas that will need development and training
- ❖ They can improve the objectivity of your selection process by painting a more complete picture of a person's skills and personality, aside from what is offered in résumés or references. They also provide an objective, standardized evaluation of an individual that is free of interviewer bias.
- ❖ They can create benchmarks based on your existing top performers
- ❖ They can give a chance to real diamonds in the rough whose potential may not shine through during an interview



What assessments CAN'T do for you

- ❖ They can't replace human judgment. Don't ignore messages from your gut that something is not quite right with a candidate. Personality, for example, doesn't change all that much. So if you feel that a person just won't fit into the company atmosphere, trust your instinct.
- ❖ They can't make hiring decisions for you. Assessments are meant to be a supplemental tool to offer you more information. They should not be taken as the final verdict on whether a person is right for a job. People prefer structure and direction, others want autonomy. Some people thrive on feedback and praise, others prefer more tangible motivators. Learning about an employee's personality can go a long way to increasing job satisfaction and productivity.
- ❖ They can't assess all factors that might possibly play a role in an individual's performance or guarantee a candidate's future success. Assessments can offer insight into a person's potential, but there is always the possibility of unexpected factors having an impact on his or success. Some candidates may not be as prepared as they think they are for the reality of the work environment. For example, the work load and stress level may be higher than expected.
- ❖ They can't guarantee accuracy for everyone. In some circumstances, what is going on in a person's life could skew his or her results. For example, if a job candidate is struggling with a problem (unrelated to work), he or she may rate his/her ability to cope with pressure lower than under normal circumstances.

- ❖ They can't prevent people from choosing test answers that will make them look good. There are ways, however, to minimize cheating and bias, through the use of:
 - **A validity scale:** This involves asking specific questions that the majority of the population would not agree with or endorse (e.g. "I never tell lies.").
 - **Situational or behavioral questions:** Rather than simply asking a person whether he or she is patient, test-takers can be given a likely work scenario where their patience will be tested, and asked how they would react. For example:

You're having a heated debate with a colleague who insists that you complete a task his way. He absolutely refuses to hear you out. How would you deal with this situation?
 - **Well-designed questionnaires:** This means avoiding leading questions ("Almost everyone enjoys working on a team. Do you?"), double-barrelled questions ("Did you enjoy working with your colleagues as well as your boss?"), and unclear or ambiguous questions ("Is the way you do things better than the way other people do things?
- Proctored test sessions: While it may be less practical than online administration, proctoring ensures that the test-taker cannot get help from others. This may be important for skill assessments and IQ tests.



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