

Chapter 4: Personality and self-identity

OB in focus

Psychometric testing: ensuring the right fit

In spite of their best efforts, many organizations struggle with consistently finding and hiring successful job candidates. To make better selection decisions, many firms are turning to a less traditional tool: psychometric assessments. Psychometric assessments are scientifically designed to provide a standardized measure of a candidate's general intellectual ability, competencies and personality traits. While there are many different tests available, they can generally be classified into two broad types: ability and personality.

Ability is a measure of 'can do'. An ability assessment measures a person's current level of knowledge and her or his capability to acquire further knowledge and skills. It also reveals a candidate's capabilities and learning potential. Examples of assessments that fall in this area include measures of intelligence, verbal ability and mechanical aptitude. Ability assessments are among the best predictors of job performance.

Personality is a measure of 'will do'. A personality assessment measures typical behaviour, and discloses what candidates are likely to do on a daily basis. It is designed to measure a person's preference for behaving in certain ways. Personality measures also reveal whether the individual is easy to manage, works hard, offers innovative solutions and works well with others.

Psychometric tests are also used for assessing characteristics that cannot be developed through training but are acquired over long periods of time, such as personality traits or in-depth knowledge of a profession. The use of well-constructed assessments can improve organization fit and address counterproductive behaviours.

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