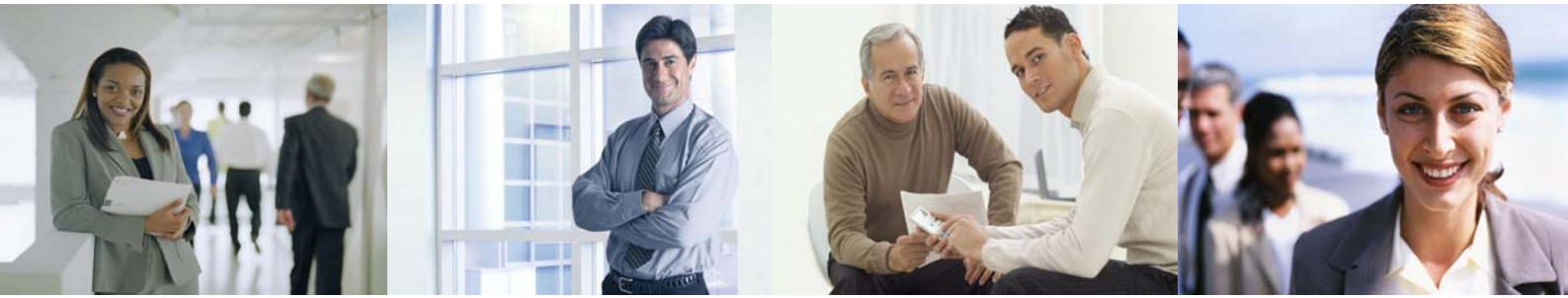


Psychological Testing



What is Psychological Testing?

Psychological testing adds another dimension to the recruitment process and is used to provide a much broader picture of a candidate's potential. Psychological testing involves assessing an individual's cognitive ability by asking them a series of complex questions in a timed environment.

Psychological tests are designed to assess a range of candidate ability, including:

- Mathematical skill/mental arithmetic
- Verbal skill
- Spatial awareness
- Logical reasoning
- Pattern Recognition
- General knowledge
- Short-term memory/Information Recall
- Classification skill
- Computational speed

And are used therefore to indicate the candidate's ability to:

- Think critically
- Solve complex problems
- Reason in logical and abstract ways
- Process Information
- Verbally communicate
- Pay attention to detail
- Make decisions when under pressure

These traits have long been identified as key elements for successful performance in many professional roles regardless of skill requirement. Cognitive testing has been used extensively in the USA and the UK for many years; Research supporting the effectiveness of cognitive ability tests in identifying the individuals who are most likely to excel in a position in the future is compelling. Most obvious is the way they test a candidate's ability to continue to stay rational and think clearly when under pressure.

What is the test format?

Standard tests are composed of a series of mixed multiple choice questions, logical and mathematical problems, true/false questions, and general knowledge Q and A's, which must be completed in a strictly set period of time. The aim is not necessarily to complete ALL the questions, rather to complete as many as ACCURATELY as possible within the time limit.

Psychological Testing

An example of some of the different types of questions:

Mathematical Skill/Pattern Recognition:

Numerical sequencing - Adding to a succession of numbers the number that logically follows, e.g. 1 3 6 10 15.....

Numerical Patterning - Completing missing numbers within a geometric shape (like Sudoku)

Logical Reasoning:

If a train travelling at 40kmph leaves station A at 15.25pm, what time will it arrive at Station B, which is 100Km away?

Spatial Awareness/Pattern Recognition:

Geometric Pattern Recognition - Choosing the correct picture to complete a given sequence

Finding a negative/reverse image of a picture from a given selection

Verbal Skills:

Word analysis/classification: E.g. Which word is the odd one out? *Cow Cat Dog Tiger Animal*

Linguistic ability - E.g. HOPE is a synonym for ANGER (TRUE/FALSE)

General Knowledge:

Standard quiz fare questions - E.g. *what is the Capital of Argentina?*

Some tests include an information recall test component, for example showing you a name and address to memorise and then asking you to recall certain parts of the information, such as the postcode. Tests which include ALL the above elements are a better general indication of ability than the purely mathematical/verbal/spatial, which can only identify a more limited range of strengths/weaknesses.

What are the advantages of using Psychological Testing?

- The assessments give purely objective rather than subjective results
- The tests create a 'level playing field' for comparing candidates (although this lack of differentiation can also a negative factor, as discussed later)
- Answers are either right or wrong, so results cannot be faked

What are the disadvantages of using Psychological Testing?

- It can only test a certain range of abilities
- They are invariably written in English and do not differentiate to accommodate candidates who do not have English as a first language
- They disadvantage candidates with learning challenges such as dyslexia
- Like all exams, it tests a one off experience only

Whilst the questions are similar to what has been traditionally termed an "IQ" test, it is important to remember that these tests do not give an indication of a person's overall intelligence, only an indication of their abilities in a certain direction, in this case rational and abstract thinking, information processing, mathematical ability and effective verbalisation. However, if these are essential attributes for a role, psychological testing can be a good method of determining candidate suitability.

