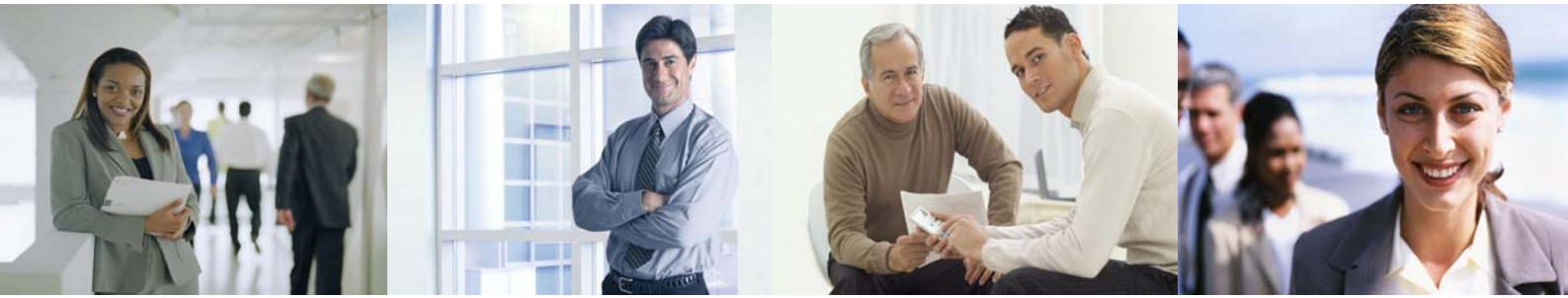


# Psychometric Testing



## What is Psychometric Testing?

Psychometric testing is designed to provide insight into an individual's personality, and can indicate things like leadership potential, decision-making ability, and general temperament. Whilst a resume can give a clear indication of your skills and abilities, your level of education and work experience, it cannot indicate your character traits, and traditionally it has been the job of the interviewer to assess these, through the interview itself and by asking questions about character when undertaking reference checks. The psychometric test is intended to give an unprejudiced assessment of these traits.

It is recognised that one of the most crucial aspects of successful employment is for the individual employee to fit well into the organisations cultural environment; that is, they share similar values and work ethics. Also it is essential that the new employee blend into the team and they are no personality clashes. Job profiles can therefore be specific about the type of personality a successful candidate must possess and psychometric tests are just another way of objectively matching the right candidate to the right position. Tests are developed over a number of years by occupational psychologists and tested on thousands of subjects. And they are not designed to trap you; there are no right and wrong answers.

## What Psychometric tests are used in the market?

There are a number of tests available, and some companies may have their own in-house tests. These are some of the most commonly used:

- The Myers-Briggs test. Based on the theories of Jung, and designed to identify eight different types of personality, indicating how the individual perceives information and makes decisions.
- 16 PF - The Sixteen Personality Factor questionnaire. This is designed to measure levels of: warmth, reasoning ability, emotional stability, dominance, liveliness, rule consciousness, boldness, sensitivity, distrust, abstractedness, privateness, worrying, openness to change, self-reliance, perfectionism and tension.
- The SHL Decision Maker. This involves both job profiling and candidate assessment matching and examines general work preferences - such as motivation, customer service attitude, task orientation and response to authority.
- The California Psychological Inventory. This claims to measure 14 different behaviours as well as levels of achievement, independence, intellect, and flexibility.
- The Prevue Assessment System. This generates four reports attempting to answer the following questions: Can the person do the job? Will the person do the job? Does the person have the personality to enjoy the job? Does the individual fit the job?

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- OPO - Occupational Personality Questionnaire. Generates reports for each individual, identifying his or her strengths and development areas based on 'key dimensions' related to success in management and leadership positions.
- PA2000. In depth character trait assessment - designed to match candidates to jobs using a percentage scoring system. Examines 9 overall personality qualities and 70 individual character traits.

## What is the test format?

All psychometric tests have a similar format and similar questions, though some take only half an hour to complete, whilst others may take half a day. Some tests may ask you to describe what kind of animal you are; some may give you a statement and ask you whether you strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree that this could apply to yourself. Some will give you a choice of statements from which you must choose which is most, and or least, applicable to you.

An example of the kind of statements used in the last two types of tests described would be:

- I like to be creative.
- I find it easy to make friends.
- I talk more than I listen.
- I prefer my own company.
- I find it hard to control my temper.
- My first impressions are always correct.
- I like to finish things I've started.
- I prefer excitement to routine.
- I pay attention to details.
- I tend to follow my instincts.
- I find it hard to relax.

## What are the advantages of Psychometric Testing?

- It is impartial and objective
- It bases results on complex variations of multiple answers, so it is quite difficult to "cheat" these tests
- It is generally pretty accurate

## What are the disadvantages of Psychometric Testing?

- Tests can be confusing - you must follow the set format, and may have to choose an option when in reality you feel none are applicable
- Older tests may be based on data that is now archaic in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- It does not accommodate candidates who do not have English as a first language and therefore may misinterpret the options

An interesting note - most of these tests allow for candidates attempting to sell themselves by a built "fakometer" which shows either inconsistency in response or over-exaggeration. Where a person has tended to oversell him or herself this is a trait in itself, and for certain positions, sales or marketing for example, this may be a desirable quality!

