THREE CORE PILLARS OF EFFECTIVE TALENT ACQUISITION

ASSESSING PSYCHOMETRIC, COGNITIVE AND DOMAIN SKILLS

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In our interactions with HR specialists, we have realized that psychometric assessment is becoming increasingly popular for short-listing and managing a large pool of qualified candidates. With this eBook, we intend to spark some insight into you on the three important parameters that help HR recruiters in making the right hiring decision. This eBook is available for general release and can be easily downloaded from www.mettl.com.

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

HR recruiters spare no effort to hire the most competent candidates, who would prove productive to their organization in the long run. Since job-applicants often tend to conceal authentic information in their CVs, modern HR recruiters do not rely on the conventional methods of detailed analysis of resumes as these methods often fail to yield the best insight. Similarly, evaluating candidates on the basis of unstructured interviews also do not help in filtering the best talent. Therefore, to make better and more reliable hiring decisions, HR recruiters nowadays count on behavioral assessments, domain knowledge, and cognitive skills as a reliable means of accumulating information about a candidate's traits and capabilities. These well-structured pre-employment tests act as a yardstick for assessing if the job applicant would be a great fit for the organization.

Assessment of Behavioral competencies, Domain Knowledge, and Cognitive Skills utilize validated metrics to derive additional insight about job applicants, thus, enhancing the defensibility of the recruitment process. What's more, pre-employment assessments have been offering endless benefits to HR Recruiters, besides helping them to avoid the traditional time-consuming hiring procedure.

To derive the best outcome from pre-employment assessment, 21st –century HR recruiters count on pre-employment testing software like Mercer-Mettl designed by recruitment specialists to analyze the skills and behavior of prospective job applicants efficiently.

OVERVIEW

The Pre-employment assessment adds a competency framework to your talent management system. A competency framework helps organizations determine which employee behaviors are recognized, valued, and rewarded. In simple words, it outlines the fundamental skills, knowledge, and capabilities required at junior-level, mid-level, and senior level, for running an organization successfully. Additionally, a bunch of questions based on behavioral attributes, cognitive skills, and domain skills further assists in making prudent recruitment decisions.

This eBook aims at shedding light on the three parameters of assessing a job applicant. You can choose the parameters depending on the job role, and evaluate job applicants on the basis of their behavioral indicators.

Recruitment mistakes can prove to be disastrous for organizations. A research conducted in 2017 by AuthBridge, a leading background verification company in India, reveals that the number of job-applicants fabricating facts on their CVs has been rising by leaps and bounds. Keeping this factor in mind, recruitment firms, and organizations of all sizes are embracing pre-employment tests to identify the best job applicant. A job applicant can be assessed on three parameters— Behavior or Personality, Domain Knowledge, and Cognitive Skills.

WHAT ARE BEHAVIORAL COMPETENCIES?

Nowadays, measuring behavioral competencies forms an important step in the recruitment process.

Behavioral competencies refer to the personality traits of a candidate, such as his/her skill sets or knowledge, the analysis of which helps HR recruiters determine if he/she is suitable for the job they have applied for. Behavioral competencies fall under the following categories –

- **Individual Competencies:** This refers to a job applicant's personal qualities such as creativity, impact, influence, innovation, analytical thinking, decision-making, conflict management, negotiating, resource management skills, emotional intelligence, etc.

- **Analytical Competencies:** These include problem-solving skills, technical knowledge, digital literacy, data literacy, etc.

- **Managerial Competencies:** These refer to leadership skills, team building skills, financial skills, etc.

- **Motivational Competencies:** These include the ability to lead or motivate others with example.

- **Interpersonal Competencies:** Communication skills, networking skills, and partnering skills fall under this category.

HOW TO GAUGE BEHAVIORAL COMPETENCIES?

Behavioral Competencies can be measured with the help of Psychometric Assessments or Psychometric Tests, which form an integral part of the recruitment process. Psychometric Assessments are structured tests used for assessing the different facets of a candidate's personal traits. The major objective of the

Psychometric Test is to assess an individual's ability of working in a team, along with his/her ability to deal with stress at work.

Psychometric Tests measure four key facets of a candidate's personality:

- Positive Personality Traits required for critical work.

- Dark Personality Traits such as impulsiveness, opportunism, insensitivity, and self-obsession that hinder one's productivity.

- Motivation, Values, and Preferences that help recruiters identify the factors that motivate candidates to become productive at work.

- Cognitive Ability to measure candidates' logical thinking skills.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENTS

The process of evaluating job applicants is no less than science. Behavioral assessment is a methodical assessment of a job applicant's personality report that measures his/her capabilities based on several factors such as his/her work style, talents, culture fit, etc. A candidate's personality traits represent his/her constantly exhibited characteristics that do not change with the changing circumstances. On the other hand, behavior indicates a candidate's reaction to a particular environment, stimulus, or action.

Since the personality traits of a candidate do not change over time, they echo his/ her behavior, feelings, and thought patterns which act as the foundation for predicting their future behavior. In simple words, you cannot change your personality traits, but can modify your behavior to some extent; and this proposition perfectly explains the science behind behavioral assessments.

According to psychologists, since every individual can be categorized on the basis of their behavior or personality, behavioral assessments form a great way of gauging candidates' personality. For example, behavioral assessments help you comprehend the behavioral factors that have flourished in your company culture or identify the type of personalities that perform best as marketing executives, sales representatives, etc. Similarly, skills tests enumerate how good a candidate is at specific jobs. These tests generate a crucial deal of data (predictive analytics) that can be leveraged for making your final hiring decision.

ROLE OF PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS

When HR recruiters make use of data-driven predictions, they count on predictive analytics. When done correctly, predictive analytics enable HR recruiters to focus only on best-fit talents.
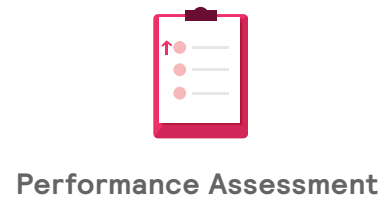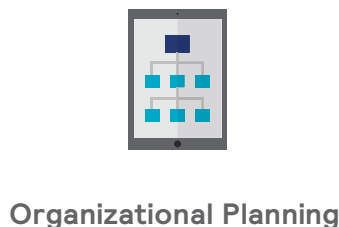
Predictive analytics help recruiters determine if the shortlisted candidate has expertise in task X, or if the candidate has performed well in Y, or if the candidate would be able to successfully accomplish task Z.

When trying to find out the best candidate, you should have reliable data at hand so that you leave no room for doubt. Predictive Analytics not only helps you derive precise answers, but also plays a key role in mitigating hiring risks.

This is why HR recruiters are increasingly using predictive analytics software like Mercer-Mettl which utilizes algorithms for identifying patterns in humongous volumes of data so as to make predictions about the future.

APPLICATIONS OF PSYCHOMETRIC TESTS

HR recruiters are increasingly incorporating behavioral assessments in workplaces for streamlining the process of:

Recruiting deserving candidates

Leadership Hiring

Sales Hiring

Campus Recruitment

Organizational Planning

Employee Engagement

Employee Retention

Training & Development

Performance Assessment

WHAT ARE COGNITIVE SKILLS?

Cognitive Skills refer to mental abilities such as logical, visual, and critical reasoning, decision-making, problem-solving, perception, etc., necessary for acquiring knowledge. Since an individual's cognitive skills influence his/her job performance, these skills play a vital role in an employee's career success. Currently, HR recruiters give high priority to cognitive ability tests for recruitment purposes.

A thorough evaluation of a job applicant's cognitive skills helps recruiters understand if he/she is capable of:

- Adapting to new situations;

- Understanding new and existing concepts;

- Thinking conceptually;

- Learning from experience; and

- Finding solutions to problems.

Job applicants who score well in cognitive skills test are more capable of completing job training successfully and adapting themselves to rapidly changing work environments.

HOW IS A COGNITIVE TEST CREATED?

Though cognitive ability test is a powerful forecaster of job performance, HR recruiters should keep in mind that cognitive demands vary depending on the complexity of different jobs. For example, the role of a software engineer calls for a high level of problem-solving and decision-making skills. Similarly, personal financial advisors require strong analytical skills for recognizing trends and analyzing data.

Cognitive Tests are created to analyze the four core brain functions— attention, speed, memory, and visualization. Such tests consist of questions that are designed to evaluate job applicants' potential of utilizing their mental processes for solving job-related problems or acquiring knowledge for upgrading professional skills.

Cognitive Tests are a combination of numerical, verbal, and abstract reasoning questions. These tests are applicable for various job roles—be it entry level or experienced level position. Cognitive Tests fall under the following categories:

- **Abstract Reasoning Test:** This test evaluates candidates' lateral thinking skills for problem-solving. Mettl's abstract reasoning test is inspired by Raven's Progressive Matrices, developed by John C. Raven in 1936. This non-verbal test is ideal for testing candidates' ability to think creatively. Abstract Reasoning Test is best suited for CXO-level roles, sales profiles, mid-management level roles, marketing, and creative designing profiles.

- **Spatial or Visual Reasoning Ability Test:** This test evaluates a candidate's ability to quickly visualize two-dimensional or three-dimensional shapes, patterns, and designs. Strong spatial reasoning abilities help candidates to analyze things quickly besides making them the perfect fit to work on complex design set-ups.

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- **Language & Comprehension Test:** This test assesses the verbal skills of candidates to determine if they can communicate messages in a business environment with clarity. The test takes into account the candidates' ability to use the right words for expressing his/her ideas and opinions. It also analyses their grammar skills and the ability to construct sentences without any grammatical mistakes.

- **Problem –Solving Skills Test:** Hiring employees with strong problem-solving skills can prove beneficial for your organization. Problem-solving skills test analyses candidates' problem-solving, decision making, and numerical reasoning skills that are necessary for the smooth functioning of business operations. It also evaluates if a candidate is capable of providing effective solutions during complex situations.

- **Decision-making Skills Test:** This test has been specially designed for recruiting management professionals to determine how good they are in making complex decisions in times of crisis.

SUPERCHARGE HIRING AND TRAINING EFFORTS WITH COGNITIVE ASSESSMENTS

Cognitive assessments significantly enhance the chances of recruiting only outstanding talent, thus helping your organization gain a competitive edge. Moreover, cognitive tests can be easily customized to assess specific skills that your organization expects from its productive employees. Since cognitive assessments can be conducted remotely via online platforms, it saves your precious time as well as money. This is why HR recruiters are increasingly embracing cognitive assessments to accelerate the efficiency of their organization's hiring process.

WHAT ARE DOMAIN SKILLS?

In the modern business landscape, jobs are becoming highly specialized; therefore, businesses prefer hiring industry-specific talents.

Domain Skills Assessments help HR recruiters determine if the job applicants have the functional knowledge and ability to perform specialized jobs. Domain skills are gauged by creating scientific tests. For example, based on job role, industry, and competencies, HR recruiters create a list of skills and sub-skills covering each technical competency. Based on the skills and sub-skills, competence-wise content is created for measuring the right skills for the right jobs.
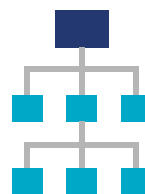
ROLE OF COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK IN ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS

Currently, HR Recruiters are embracing competency framework model with open arms as it offers countless advantages. Competency framework model consists of a number of competencies that are applied to numerous professional roles within an organization. Assessment questions pertaining to behavioral, cognitive, and domain skills are carefully designed to analyze specific behaviors, skills, and experiences that are required for succeeding in a specific job position.

The essential components of the competency framework are -

- Functional competencies that refer to the responsibilities assumed by staff members for a specific job.

- Core competencies that illustrate behaviors to be displayed by the entire workforce; and

- Core values or standard of conduct that influence the actions and choices of employees.

Competency-based recruitment is result-oriented, and also reduces the risk of discrimination, besides minimizing recruitment costs.
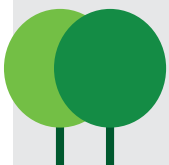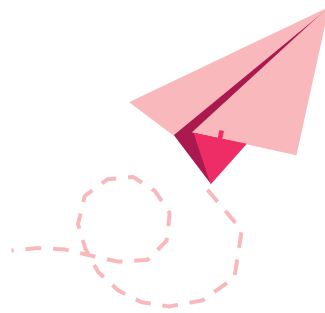

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PARTING NOTE

Today, a job applicant needs to undergo three categories of psychometric tests—personality assessment, cognitive assessment, and technical skills assessment. These three tests consisting of behavioral, cognitive, and technical assessment techniques for recruitment are dependent on each other.

While personality assessment is used for evaluating the characteristic traits of a candidate, the aptitude test is used for identifying how a job applicant interprets data. Similarly, the skills test or domain expertise test helps recruiters understand how quickly a job applicant can grasp new professional skills to efficiently carry out the job they are applying for.

These tests are conducted for an objective evaluation of a candidate's personality, interests, and aptitudes. HR recruiters review the combined results of these tests to pick the most efficient candidate for specific posts. Each test is structured to precisely evaluate a candidate's competence of working with others, and ability to handle pressure at work.

Conducting different types of psychometric tests with the help of Mercer–Mettl's recruitment assessment software is quite convenient, as it helps employers identify the extent to which a job applicant's skills match those required for the position they are applying for. Depending on the type of psychometric test you choose, you will be able to measure a wide array of skills, such as logical, numerical, and abstract reasoning, along with personality traits, knowledge, and educational achievements.

ABOUT US

At Mercer I Mettl, our mission is to enable organizations to make better people decisions by making credible people decisions across two key areas: Acquisition and Development. Since our inception in 2010, we have partnered with 2900+ corporates, 31 sector skill councils/ government departments, and 15+ educational institutions across 90+ countries.

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