



Using Personality Assessments to Hire Employees

Personality assessments provide a measure of how individuals work with people, approach their tasks, communicate, approach change, and deal with stress. Differences between people in these various areas can make them more or less effective in different jobs. For example, an outgoing person will tend to be more successful in a job that requires frequent interaction with other people. On the other hand, a less outgoing person tends to be more successful in a job that primarily involves independent work.

When an organization uses personality assessments to match an individual's skills to the job requirements, the person will learn quicker, be more satisfied and successful, and stay in the job longer. The economic benefits to an organization include faster and cheaper recruiting, less turnover, and better job performance.

WHAT IS PERSONALITY?

There are many different personality traits that can be reliably measured and directly impact an individual's work performance. Personality traits influence the types of work people are good at, and the work environments they are successful in. Some personality assessments measure as few as five traits, while others measure more than thirty.

In general, most personality traits can be grouped into the following categories.

Working with Others

These personality traits show how an individual interacts with others. They help you identify individuals who are outgoing, warm and consultative, and those who are quiet, reserved and independent.

Traits measured: Teamwork, Outgoingness, Democratic, Concern for Others

Energy and Drive

These personality traits explain how individuals set goals, work to achieve those goals, and move forward in their careers. They show you which people are energetic, persistent, and ambitious and who gravitate toward leadership.

Traits measured: Ambition, Persistence, Energy, Leadership

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Work Style

This category sheds light on peoples' dependability, attention to detail, and desire for structure and guidance. Some people work well in structured environments and pay close attention to details. Other people work well in flexible environments and focus on broad issues.

Traits measured: Attention to Detail, Dependability, Rule-following

Problem Solving

These personality traits describe how people analyze information and develop solutions. Some people are very analytical and try to develop solutions that are well researched and practical. Other people rely on their intuition to interpret information and develop solutions that are creative and original.

Traits measured: Innovation, Creativity, Analytical Thinking

Dealing with Pressure and Stress

The traits in this area show how people deal with pressure and stress. People who have a high level of self-control and can cope with many demands work well in high pressure jobs. People who experience stress quickly generally find success in less demanding occupations.

Traits measured: Stress Tolerance, Self-Control, Emotional Resiliency

Identifying and Managing Change

These personality traits tell you how an individual takes initiative and deals with change. For work that involves a lot of change, people who are flexible and future oriented are better suited. In work environments with greater stability, people who are consistent and focused on the present are more effective.

Traits measured: Initiative, Flexibility

HOW TO USE PERSONALITY ASSESSMENTS IN SELECTION

- 1 STEP ONE — Identify the type of person you want to hire**

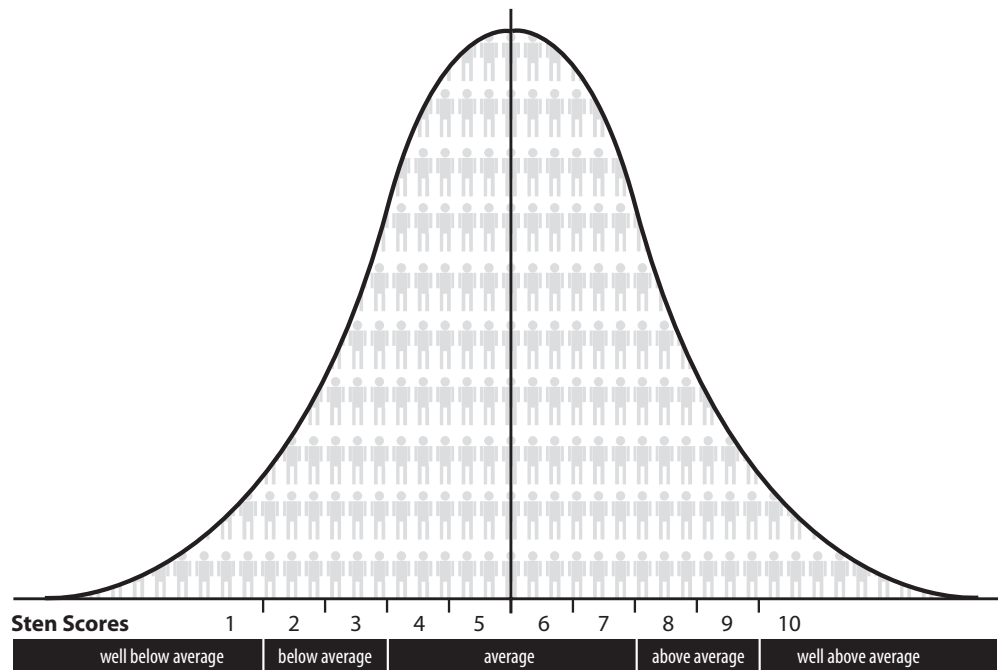
You need to begin by determining what personality traits are related to job success. That way, when you begin assessing candidates, you know what to look for. For example, if you are hiring an accountant you would look for someone who pays close attention to details, and has good math skills. On the other hand, if you are hiring a salesperson you would look for someone who is outgoing, enjoys helping people, and has high stress tolerance. Most test publishers can help you determine what personality traits you should look for. When you know what it takes for a person to be successful on the job you can then begin assessing candidates.
- 2 STEP TWO — Administer the assessment to candidates**

Personality assessments can be completed online or by paper-pencil. Choose what works best for your organization. If your job candidates are far away and have computer access, an online administration often makes the most sense. However, if the number of candidates is greater than the availability of computers, you can have them complete the assessment in a paper-pencil format.
- 3 STEP THREE — Interpret the candidates' results**

After job candidates complete a personality assessment, you receive their personality trait scores. These scores are like a measuring stick, except instead of telling you a person's height, they tell you what level of a trait a person has. With these scores you can compare individuals and determine whether a person is above average, average, or below average on any given trait.

The most popular type of personality assessment score is called a sten score. These scores range from 1 to 10. The diagram below illustrates how sten scores allow us to compare people. Sten scores in the middle are quite common and people who receive scores that range from 4 to 7 are described as average. People who receive sten scores at either end of the scale are less frequent, indicating that they have a significantly greater or weaker preference for the behavior measured by the trait.

When you are hiring an employee, the ideal score will change depending on the needs of the job. Take the measure of outgoingness as an example. If you want to hire an outgoing salesperson, you would look for individuals with a sten score of 7 or higher. However, if you are hiring a machine operator who spends most of the time alone, you would look for someone with a sten score of 4 or lower. Finally, if the job requires some interaction with people and some independent work, you would want someone with a sten score in between 4 and 7.



4 Step Four — Make a decision on who to hire

After the candidates have completed the assessment, you need to choose who you want to hire. When using personality assessments, you need a way to compare how well a candidate matches with the ideal traits you identified in Step One. This can be done automatically, with benchmarked reports that you can easily set up with a test publisher, or manually, where you examine the candidates' scores to see how well they fit the ideal personality profile.

To make the best selection decisions, it is most effective to incorporate the personality assessment results with other sources of information. Measures such as interviews, practical exercises and previous work experience provide additional details about a candidate's strengths and weaknesses. When these different techniques are used together they can provide a fuller picture of the candidate's skills and abilities, allowing you to make better selection decisions.



If you are interested in using personality assessments in your organization,
and would like more information

please call 800.661.5158