

Psychometric appraisals

Ever wonder why good old fashioned interviews and review of written applications do not find you the best people?

The answer is both simple, and yet, complex. You see, gone are the days when you could read a CV and assume the author was necessarily the applicant; you also find applicants can be well versed in persuasive interview techniques, yet on the job, they can be a disaster.

We have often heard managers say *"if only he performed as well on the job as he did in the interview!"* CVs and interviews certainly have their place in selection, but they are only part of a complete range of inputs into finding the best people.

In organisational psychology, there has been a great deal of research into ways to improve organisational performance through selecting and developing the best people. There is conclusive evidence that ***psychometric appraisal of job applicants is the most effective way to identify the best people.***

In contrast, employee performance in unstructured interviews and other more common selection methods have been shown to have little predictive power in selecting applicants who will perform well on the job. In other words, applicants who perform well on psychometric tests, also tend to perform well on the job. Unstructured interviews, reference checks and other selection methods, in contrast, give relatively **little** information about how a person will perform in your specific job with your team.

For these reasons, organisations seeking the best people and teams are incorporating psychometric appraisals into their selection process. The tests are objective, fair and **anti-discriminatory** (e.g. performance is based on skills and competencies not race, gender, physical appearance etc.).

McDonnell-Phillips uses **psychometric appraisal** to help clients select the best people and teams. In fact, we have used psychometric appraisal for some of Queensland's largest organisations.



Benefits of psychometric appraisal



The **benefits** of psychometric appraisal include:

- enabling organisations to select applicants who are in the **top 10% or 25% of all managers**, thereby building a better foundation for future organisational performance
- a much more scientific and **objective assessment** of the potential candidates' ability and personality fit within the organisation and your team
- **a strong counselling vehicle** for the 'non-successful' applicants (particularly for internal applicants)
- each candidate can be provided with **individual feedback** about their performance, likely job fit, strengths and areas for improvement etc
- psychometric appraisals (as validated tests) are **legally defensible in court**, whereas unstructured/informal interviews are not.

Psychometric tests can also provide a foundation for team and personal development. Within Queensland government, psychometric appraisals are preferred and recommended by the PSMC recruitment and selection processes.

Psychometric benchmarks

McDonnell-Phillips uses a psychometric testing system which benchmarks applicants against both the normal Australian population and a population of Australian managers.

Measures of these norm groups are updated in May each year. The performance of individual applicants are compared both against the pool of job applicants and these norm groups.

Process of psychometric appraisal

Typically, the process of psychometric appraisal consists of two simple stages:

- completion of aptitude (ability) tests
- completion of a personality questionnaire.



Both the aptitude tests and personality questionnaires are for business contexts and are designed to tap the skills required for your team and the specific job.

We select the tests in alignment with the key selection criteria of the position - i.e. building and managing working relationships with clients, staff, suppliers and stakeholders; communication ability; complex problem solving capacity; ability to improve operations; facilitate business development etc.

Aptitude tests.

We test both the numerical and verbal ability of applicants. Test results are then compared against both the applicant pool and norm groups. A candidate who scores within the top 5% of the professional norm group, would be likely to perform in the top 5% on the job.

Personality profiles.

Personality profiles are also scored against norm groups, and are matched with the personal characteristics required of your team and the specific job. For example, being persuasive may be a desirable personal attribute for CEO, yet an irrelevant attribute for a plumber.

The personality profile also lets us identify those with undesirable characteristics - which is very valuable in these days of large compensation claims and court costs for unfair dismissal cases.

Individual feedback

In our experience, testing is invariably very well received by prospective applicants. All applicants are invited to attend a **one-on-one confidential feedback session** about their results. This is conducted by our in-house Organisational Psychologist.

The feedback session is also a **good self-development exercise** (particularly for in-house applicants), as the candidate receives objective information about their strengths and areas for improvement. These feedback sessions also reduce grievance claims against unfair process.

Finding the best people

In summary, psychometric appraisal provides you with a very accurate profile of an applicant's abilities and talents. These are quantitatively justified by the science of psychometrics and will help you to find the best people for your team.

Our recruitment and selection services

McDonnell-Phillips can support all stages of the selection process including:

- **recruitment** advertising and management
- applicant and **resume screening**
- **resume writing** and training staff in **resume writing**
- development of **structured interviews** and participation in interview panels
- **work samples** tests which evaluate applicant performance on sample work tasks
- **inbasket exercises** which measure management applicants' capacity to prioritise, time manage and complete tasks
- full **graduate recruitment** screening and selection which reduces the burden of large scale applicant review
- development of entire **Assessment Centres**

