

DON'T BE SCARED OF A PSYCHOMETRIC TEST

Psychometric testing can give the test taker the same insight into his or her personality type and compatibility with certain jobs as it does the company administering the test and this information can be invaluable for a person's long term career growth and job satisfaction, says PAG managing director Lawrence Wordon.

Psychometric testing is used extensively during the recruitment process to evaluate the compatibility of the candidate's personality type for the job at hand as well as the organization's culture. However, it is also used on existing employees to assess team dynamics in the company and how best to utilize the talent at its disposal. "Psychometric testing helps companies establish answers as to why some individuals may not be performing optimally in their roles and why others are better suited for a particular position; what areas in the company require attention and how best to go about developing these areas; who to consider for succession planning; and where best to harness the skills and potential of employees in the company," says Wordon.

Psychometric testing usually falls under three categories. These are ability testing, aptitude testing and personality testing. Ability testing measures a person's potential to learn new skills or to cope with the pressures of a specific job. Aptitude testing is also job related, but focuses on specific job areas and how the test taker would perform in a defined role. Personality testing covers how a person acts in the workplace in relation to different personality types. It can determine how the test taker would deal with someone of the direct opposite personality type, and suggest to management how to get the best results from someone with a certain personality type.

Wordon says there is no pass or fail in these tests. "Every person is unique with their own sets of strengths and weaknesses. The purpose of psychometric testing is to get an objective, scientific assessment of what these strengths and weaknesses are so that a company can make a decision of how best to use you," he says.

Many people complain that these tests are no more than a snapshot of your mood on a particular day and are therefore not an accurate assessment of a person's personality. Furthermore, they say that a personality changes as a person grows and that the tests do not account for that. Wordon disagrees, however, arguing that the tests have been developed by certified psychologists and that these concerns have been accounted for in the tests. He also says that psychometric testing is not the be-all and end-all: they are viewed in conjunction with a person's qualifications and CV.

Wordon offers the following advice to psychometric test takers: "Be completely honest. Don't answer questions based on what you think the company wants to hear. Discrepancies in your answers will be picked up. Relax. After all, it's just a test and you don't want to go into it looking like you are hiding

something. Lastly, keep your answers simple if it's a face to face test. You don't have to volunteer information that could give the psychologist additional lines of questioning.”