



MAPIEN RADAR WHITEPAPER SERIES #3

# The value of personality assessments



**MAPIEN**  
WORKPLACE STRATEGISTS

# The Value of Personality Assessments



**Personality assessments (behavioural-style assessments) represent a broad category of psychometric assessments, and are utilised in a diverse array of activities.**

Personality assessments are developed to measure an individual's natural behavioural preferences and tendencies, and provide an indication of the way in which they are likely to interact with tasks, people, and the environment of the workplace.

For example, they can provide insight into the likelihood that an individual will diligently focus on details and accuracy within a task, that an individual will be supportive or considerate towards team members and stakeholders, and/or that an individual will remain calm in high-pressure situations.

## Why use personality assessments?

Whilst personality assessments are not as strongly associated with likely performance & effectiveness as general mental ability (GMA),<sup>[1]</sup> these assessments are instead intended to provide hiring managers and organisations with a deeper understanding of their current and/or potential future workforce. In fact, research has consistently shown that personality accounts for about 30% of behaviour.<sup>[2]</sup>

This understanding is valuable for identifying whether there is likely to be a sufficient level of 'fit' between the individual and the requirements of the role, the values of the team, and the culture and environment of the broader organisation.

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ONE OF THE BENEFITS OF USING PERSONALITY TESTS IN THE HIRING PROCESS IS THAT IT ALLOWS YOU TO DISCOVER PERSONALITY TRAITS THAT REPRESENT THAT PERSON. THIS IS IMPORTANT WHEN HIRING FOR CULTURE FIT BECAUSE CERTAIN KINDS OF TRAITS BECOME SET OVER TIME & DON'T REALLY CHANGE.

Aptitude.ph<sup>[3]</sup>



[1] Schmidt and Hunter: <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1998-10661-006>

[2] Funder 2004

[3] Aptitude.ph: <https://www.apptitude.ph/benefits-of-personality-testing-for-companies/>

# Getting the right 'fit'



Individuals with a higher level of 'fit' are typically likely to be more engaged in their role, which can result in improved motivation, team morale, and productivity when compared to those with lower levels of 'fit'.

Lower levels of 'fit' can also lead to individuals exiting a role, which then presents the potential for considerable operational and financial detriment to an organisation due to:

- Reduced productivity
- Training time for the incorrect hire, and then their replacement
- Higher workloads and fatigue for existing team members
- Poor culture fit which disrupts the cohesion of the existing team
- Reduced engagement, overall satisfaction, and commitment across team members, which may ultimately lead to further turnover and hiring costs

Outside of a recruitment and selection context, personality and behavioural-style assessments also provide valuable information to support an individual's development.

For example, if an individual's results on their personality assessment suggests that they are likely to be less detail-focused and meticulous in their approach to tasks than their peers, then they may benefit from receiving additional time when working on nuanced tasks and/or from having leaders communicate clearly on where and when accuracy and precision needs to be a strong focus.



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THE DEPTH OF INFORMATION PROVIDED ULTIMATELY ALLOWS FOR TALENT TO BE IDENTIFIED AND DEVELOPED FASTER WHICH WILL HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON ANY ORGANISATION'S FINANCIAL STANDING.

Saville Assessment <sup>[4]</sup>

[4] Saville Assessment: <https://www.savilleassessment.com.au/resources/articles-white-papers/benefits-of-using-psychometrics/>



# Which assessment to choose



**It can be overwhelming when deciding on a personality assessment to use for your specific purposes.**

Without any prior knowledge or training, we are likely to simply take the recommendation of the consultant or supplier who is advising us. There are, however, a couple of key elements to keep in mind to give yourself the best chance of making the right decision.

Personality assessments tend to come in two very broad categories:

## 1 Trait-based assessments

Trait-based assessments acknowledge that personality is made up of a number of behavioural traits, like spectrums, on which we all feature somewhere. These trait-based assessments tend to be based on the 100+ years of academic research, and usually measure approximately five higher-level personality traits (the 'Big Five Personality Factors'), along with a lot of sub-traits. As everyone falls somewhere on each of these trait spectrums, this gives an enormous amount of detailed predictive power, and can be used to greatest effect in selection processes to gain the most accurate insight into likely future behaviour as possible. With that said, with such a fine level of detail in behavioural prediction, it can be difficult to use trait-based assessments when comparing multiple people at once in a group environment. This is where type-based assessments come in.

## 2 Type-based assessments

Type-based assessments are quite common in the development space, with examples including the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), DISC, Social Styles, and more. These assessments are very good for understanding broad, common behavioural trends and approaches, particularly when working in a team. This allows for teams to acquire a shared language for their own behavioural approach, to explore how to frame and engage with other styles with better understanding, and to identify how to work best with each others' diverse views and strengths. These assessments are less refined in dimensionality, and are often atheoretical in nature and therefore do not have the backing of scientific research and can sometimes be less reliable and consistent in accuracy and quality. This is somewhat beside the point however, as the higher level view of behaviour patterns is perfect for those exercises designed to promote joint understanding. As the evidence base is narrower and the predictive quality less detailed, it is recommended to shy away from using type-based assessments in a rigorous selection process. They are, however, great for facilitating team dynamics and development.



# When to use Personality Assessments



**Whilst personality assessments would ideally be included in all recruitment and selection processes, this is rarely feasible from both operational & financial standpoints.**

This is particularly true within the context of volume recruitment and, as such, Mapien instead recommends personality assessments may be best utilised at times when candidate pools have been reduced to a small number of suitable candidates.

It is, however, noted that ideally personality assessments are not used in isolation, but rather integrated with various other sources of information, such as interviews and ability assessments, to arrive at a more holistic understanding of an individual and their likely 'fit'.

The integration with interviews and reference checks also provides an opportunity to further explore potentially concerning preferences and tendencies, and to identify whether the individual has any strategies that they tend to implement to address these when required.



Further, as outlined, personality can also be measured using type-based assessments to understand behaviours within teams, where there is synergy, where there are potential clashes, and how these styles can best understand each other and fit best to maximise team dynamics, workflow, & culture.

Whilst we can sometimes feel that we know our colleagues, team members, and direct reports quite deeply – perhaps particularly after working with them for a long time – we can be surprised by what we can learn about what our people's preferences really are, allowing us to work with and for them best.



## Connect with us!

If you would like to further discuss psychometric assessments, and how they may benefit you &/or your workplace, please contact us:

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