

## PSYCHOMETRIC SELECTION ASSESSMENTS

**T**he use of psychometric assessments to evaluate job candidates is increasing in North America. Not only do psychometric assessments provide a cost-effective and efficient way to gather information about applicants, they're standardized and objective, which makes it easy to compare candidates. Plus, the data is provided in a format that lets you easily track your hiring successes and failures.

A common concern is the legality of using these assessments in personnel selection. But the legal standards that ensure your interviews are above-board are the same for psychometric tests. In the eyes of the law, psychometric tests are simply another way of evaluating candidates

enable them to work well with others, deal with stress, manage change and set goals.

With a clear understanding of what the job requires, put together a list of attributes to look for when evaluating job candidates. This list forms the basis for using assessments. To determine the appropriateness of your selection assessments, you should be able to link the things the assessments measure to what the job requires. If you can't, then you shouldn't be using the assessments.

Last year, I worked with an accounting firm that was experiencing high turnover of its auditors. In the past, the firm preferred candidates who were outgoing, sociable and liked spending time with people; but a job analysis revealed that the position

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and are treated the same as application forms, resumé reviews and interviews. What is illegal for all forms of evaluation, including psychometric tools, is unfair discrimination.

Selection should be based on measuring the skills, traits and abilities that predict job success in a fair way, not by using criteria that have no impact on how someone could do the job. What makes for a legal and fair selection process is also what makes for an effective one.

### Measure what matters

For every position there are key tasks that must be successfully completed and it is the characteristics required to do these key tasks that should be measured in a selection process. Consider the job of a senior executive. That role requires someone with the skills and intelligence to make good decisions and the necessary personality traits to

involved working with data and had little interaction with others. As a result, the firm was evaluating candidates on characteristics that appealed to their interviewers but were detrimental to job performance. They should have been looking for people who enjoyed working on their own.

Engaging in this analysis will help you put together an assessment process that is defensible and select candidates with a good chance of success. If you find yourself in need of expert advice, labour lawyers and industrial/organizational psychologists can answer questions about fair selection and areas of unfair discrimination, while good assessment companies can provide evidence about the fairness of their tools. **HR**

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