



Aaron Wallis

Career Success Masterclass

Day Ten - Psychometric Profiling and Ability Tests

Free Interview Preparation Advice – The easy way to prepare and ‘WOW’ at interviews

Day Ten – Psychometric Tests, Psychometric Profiling, Ability Tests and Perception Tests

Introduction

Called a multitude of things such as Psychometric Tests, Psychometric Profiling, Perception Tests, Personality Evaluators, Personality Questionnaires, etc. In essence they perform the same task. By asking a series of questions they indicate personality traits to assist hiring managers to make recruitment decisions. There are many types of test from those that take 5-10 minutes to those that require an in-depth interview and testing with an occupational psychologist lasting several hours. However, don't be daunted the majority of companies in the UK use 'off the shelf products' such as [Thomas International](#), [Saville and Holdsworth](#), [RPQ](#), [McQuaig](#) and [Myers & Briggs](#).

Types of Testing

The most common form of psychometric profiling is 'ipsativ' testing that asks you to make decisions such as 'what am I most like' and 'what am I least like' out of a choice of four. Each answer is connected by a complex algorithm closely protected by lock and key by the tool manufacturer and provides a complex automated profile that suggests dominant traits.

The other most popular form is constructing the test by analyzing successful performers in a particular sector, creating a 'benchmark' and then comparing your answers to theirs and mapping to the ideal 'successful model'.

All robust tests are verified by psychologists on a regular basis – normally every two years – and the algorithms that produce the results are altered accordingly as society changes. Many are audited and accredited to the [British Psychological Society](#) (all of the tools used by [Aaron Wallis](#) hold the BPS accreditation)

History

The testing of personality traits is a science that dates back to the 1880's in France but has become widely used in the UK as a hiring tool over the last two decades. The most common tools in the UK use technology and benchmarking that was developed by the British MoD shortly after the Second World War. Used as an officer selection tool the algorithms were released into the commercial marketplace in the mid 1980's and tweaked accordingly to the UK workforce. They are now used to some extent in the vast majority of selection processes.

How are the tests used?

It is recommended by all suppliers of psychometric tools that they should only form part of the recruitment process and the hiring decision. They should be used to confirm the required traits rather than as the decision tool. However in many sectors such as sales and accountancy many businesses will turn down potential staff if they don't meet a minimum level of a required trait – for instance in a sales capacity having above average levels of drive and self confidence and in accountancy high levels of accuracy, attention to detail and process compliance.

Psychometric tests form only a part of the recruitment process and are used mainly to affirm that your character and personality will enable you to succeed in the role.

The tests are often used in conjunction with aptitude tests, skills tests, emotional intelligence tests, IQ tests to form a very solid and powerful hiring tool.

Companies use them during their recruitment process as quite simply the tools have been proven to increase success factors and reduce staff attrition by as much as 50%.



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Top Ten Hints and Tips for Psychometric Success

1. **BE HONEST.** If you try to 'kid the system' or answer the questions as you feel you should answer them you will come out worse than if you are 100% honest throughout. The tools are designed to look for inconsistencies in the answers and are very cleverly written to indicate where it feels the answers are not wholly truthful
2. **TURN OFF YOUR CYNICAL MIND!** If you are cynical about the relevance and accuracy of psychometric tools turn off your opinion whilst you complete the tests. I too was a cynic when I first starting administering psychometric tools but having conducted over 2000 can count on a few fingers those candidates who felt that the results were not an accurate representation.
3. **YOU ARE WHO YOU ARE!** The way that I coach candidates is to treat it like a photograph. If someone took your photo you wouldn't argue that it wasn't an accurate representation. In the same way you should approach a psychometric profile with the same attitude – you are who you are, you're happy who you are, answer as you are! Answer honestly and you'll be amazed at how uncannily accurate the results are.
4. **THE RESULTS WILL BE THE SAME AS THE BEHAVIOURS YOU DISPLAY AT INTERVIEW.** If you've behaved honestly throughout the recruitment process then the psychometric tool will simply confirm the traits that you have demonstrated at interview so quite simply there is nothing to worry about!
5. **DON'T WORRY IF THE ADMINISTRATOR/FACILITATOR IS 'FROSTY'.** Test administrators will normally follow a standard set of instructions in verbatim and as such can com across cold or unfriendly – don't be perturbed by this they are simply doing their job to ensure that the tests are completed in exactly the same conditions.
6. **ENSURE YOU UNDERSTAND THE INSTRUCTION.** In virtually all psychometric tools you are given examples to complete before the actual test. If you are in any doubt that you are completing correctly ALWAYS ask. Follow each instruction given and never be afraid of asking questions if you are not 100% certain. It is the role of an administrator to ensure that you 100% understand the instruction and will normally quite clearly detail that 'understanding the instruction is not part of the test'
7. **IS ENGLISH YOUR FIRST LANGUAGE?** If English isn't your first language let the facilitator know – many products take this factor into consideration and in many cases you can conduct the test in your 'mother tongue'
8. **GO WITH YOUR INTUITION.** Don't panic – go with your intuition, your 'gut feeling' – the first answer that 'feels right' normally is right!
9. **DON'T REVIEW YOUR ANSWERS.** Treat each question or row of questions as a separate entity – don't be tempted to look back at previous answers and try and match your answers – an alert will be raised to indicate either inconsistency, excess stress and pressure levels or pure dishonesty. Once you finish, FINISH! Don't be tempted to review your answers you'll be drawn to match the answers throughout the test.
10. **ASK FOR THE RESULTS.** Good companies and psychometric facilitators will give you a copy of the results that can help you become more self aware.

Good luck with your sales interviews and don't worry if testing is part of the selection process!

Tomorrow we shall look at improving memory and memory techniques for sales success