

Psychometric Tests - Can You Prepare For Them?

Psychometric Tests

In the current job market, being invited to a job interview almost always entails taking psychometric tests. The two main elements in psychometric testing consist of – personality tests and aptitude (IQ) tests.

Personality Tests

Personality tests are the most mystifying element of the selection process. Most people don't know much about them.

One of the main reason personality tests are used is that they provide insight that is often lacking in the interview process. One known weakness of the interview is that the interviewer's personal preferences can prevent him/her from having impartial judgment. Research has shown, for example, that physically attractive candidates have a better chance of succeeding in the interview compared to less attractive candidates. Unlike the interview, personality tests are both more objective and more resilient to the assessors' biases. This is a clear advantage for you, the test-taker. It means that you'll face the personality test without any judgmental bias from others.

Bad Advice: "Just Be Yourself".

The worst advice you'll ever get before taking a personality test is,

"On the day of the test, just be yourself".

It assumes that if job candidates behave as they normally do during the job selection process, it will increase their chances of success. According to this philosophy, if you're generally a shy person you should be shy during the job interview and selection tests, and if you're impulsive by nature you should answer impulsively on the test.

Our day-to-day behavior is strongly influenced by the situation we're in. The nature of the situation influences our stress level, which in turn has an impact on our behavior. For example, you can be intolerant in one stressful situation but courteous in another. Which side of your personality do you want to show on the test?

Our experience at Job Test Prep, gained from preparing thousands of job applicants tells us that the recommendation to "just be your self" is potentially harmful. On the day of the test you should emphasize your strengths, not your weaknesses. A spontaneous "natural" response is not necessarily the best one, neither in life nor on a selection test. For example, if your boss has treated you rudely at work, telling him or her off would likely be a foolish mistake that might cost you your job. It's usually best to swallow the insult, cool down and approach the situation in a more rational manner later on.

The rule is the same during a selection test – do the smart thing and be calculated.

Be honest but sensible.

Imagine that the personality test was a conversation with your boss: would you tell him/her everything about your personal life? The personality test is not the forum to mention hidden fears, doubts or occasional mood swings. In the personality test you should express honest, work-related behavior. Ultimately, that's the only thing the assessors are really interested in.

During the test you need to be calculated, focused and determined to do well. Be honest, but be sensible.

Learn, practice and familiarize your self with personality tests - the more you know the better your chances of success!

Aptitude Tests

Aptitude tests fall into three broad skill categories: verbal, numerical and abstract (or diagrammatic). Additional skills are assessed in specific fields and for specific positions.

Can we develop our aptitude skills?

Some academics argue that it's impossible to prepare for abstract reasoning tests because they are based on innate abilities. This is not something that should be accepted at face value.

Your chances of doing well on any test increase if you:

- are familiar with the test format and type of questions asked.
- practice solving aptitude questions.
- improve your verbal and numerical skills – your crystallized intelligence.
- learn the key rules that underpin each test, and practice effective strategies for dealing with specific question types.

There are over a thousand different aptitude tests on the market. However, because there are only a few major publishers that develop these tests, while they may vary slightly in format and in appearance there is very little variation in the types of questions. When you prepare for these tests you should focus on the essence, format and type of questions on the test. It would be a waste of your precious time to concentrate on a specific set of questions. Even if you ended up taking the same test that you prepared for, the questions would likely be different and only the format the same.

You have the ability to improve your performance dramatically. Our experience at Job Test Prep has taught us that 80% of the people who practice thoroughly pass the selection process. On the other hand, only 15% of those who come unprepared complete the selection process successfully.

The key to success is in your hands. With enough practice, you should feel confident and relaxed on the day of the test.

About the Author

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