WHITE PAPER ON PSYCHOMETRIC ASSESSMENTS

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HR ASSESSMENTS
INTRODUCTION

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CONCLUSION
In order to keep up with the evolving labour market and remain competitive, it is vital for any company to be at the forefront of its field. Maintaining this position involves not only renewing equipment and improving infrastructure, but also enriching and developing human capital.

Human Resources departments have to commit to the highest standards in order to contribute to company performance.

Now more than ever before, professional skills need to be regularly updated and developed. If this does not happen, companies cannot deal effectively with the demands of the working world.

Whether the objective is to detect potential, identify skills or develop a talent pool, psychometric testing can provide key indicators to assist you in decision-making, in ways that are objective and non-discriminatory.

Psychometric tests will help you to assess human behaviour and to better estimate an individual’s chances of success in a particular role.

Whether you are a recruiter, a trainer, an HR professional or a manager, this white paper will provide you with everything you need to find your bearings within the psychometric testing world and thus become proficient in all the assessment processes you use.
1 WHAT IS PSYCHOMETRIC ASSESSMENT?
The aim of differential psychology is to study the psychological differences between individuals from a behavioural point of view as well as an intellectual one.

Its methodology and examining style form the basis of psychometrics and of quantitative psychology and thus allow psychology to be considered a rational science.

**WHY ARE PSYCHOMETRICS IMPORTANT?**

Unlike assessments based on subjective observations, psychometrics use standardized questionnaires based on a statistical approach and make it possible to highlight the differences between individuals or between groups sharing the same characteristics.

Such differences are likely to be:

- **Inter-individual differences** or differences between individuals belonging to the same group, e.g. the differences in IQ in a group of men.
- **Intra-individual differences** or differences which can be seen in one individual, e.g. variations in a subject's degree of motivation depending on changes in context or on the subject's psychological state.
- **Inter-group differences** or differences between different groups of people, e.g. divergent personality traits between those who work in sales and those who do not (sales people might be more likely to show fighting spirit or an aptitude for closing deals).

The term “psychometrics”, derived from the Greek “psyche” (mind) and “metron” (measurement), literally means: the measurement of psychological traits. The resulting psychometric assessment is mainly carried out through standardized tests.

Sir Francis Galton, considered as the father of differential psychology, was the first person to approach personality differences from a lexical standpoint. He made it possible to comprehensively classify human personality traits using a “lexical hypothesis”.

From the data he collected, Raymond Cattell then formulated a test which measured 16 personality factors. A dozen items were designated for the measurement of each separate factor. Later, in 1905, Alfred Binet, working with Théodore Simon, created the first intelligence test. This test, designed for the early detection in children of the need for special assistance, was named the Metric Intelligence Scale. During World War II, the American Army also experimented on intelligence tests and came up with the Army Alpha and Beta Test, whose objective was to distinguish between soldiers and determine the position or role in the army to which they would best be suited.

Thereafter, David Weschler developed the Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) for measuring intelligence.

Today, in the 21st century business world, other tests based on these intelligence and personality theories are used in order to measure individuals’ potential and capacities within the contexts of recruitment, internal mobility and training.
1.1 WHAT IS A PSYCHOMETRIC TEST?

Psychometric tests were initially developed as a response to a social demand, for use in academic psychology. Today, these measurement tools are increasingly present in the world of employment, not just in recruitment but also in internal assessments, and are used to predict behaviour and performance more accurately. They allow the user to appraise candidates’ personality traits, motivation, reasoning capacity and emotional intelligence.

What makes psychometric tests stand out is that they are standardized, measured against norms and subjected to validity studies. The calibration also allows users to situate each person within his/her reference group based on criteria such as gender or the level of education. For example, a reasoning test must be calibrated in terms of level of education, age, gender, in the same way that IQ tests are calibrated in terms of age and gender for children.

The proliferation of personality and intelligence tests, encouraged in no small measure by the phenomenon of the world wide web, does not mean that we should put to one side the demand for high standards particular to the objective assessment of individuals.
1.2 WHEN IS A PSYCHOMETRIC TEST CONSIDERED TO BE VALID?

A test is considered to be a good measurement tool if it can demonstrate sensitivity, reliability and validity. These are the three major validation criteria which are generally used to guarantee the efficiency of psychometric tools. In order to justify its usefulness and effectiveness, a test has to be regularly updated.

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<tr>
<th>RELIABILITY</th>
<th>VALIDITY</th>
<th>SENSITIVITY</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Reliability” refers to the way in which a test measures a given dimension (when considering the stability of results or the consistency of the measurement).</td>
<td>Validity tells us to what extent the test is credible and stable in order to assess a particular situation.</td>
<td>A test's sensitivity refers to its discriminating power, or to its capacity to make distinctions between individuals.</td>
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<td>A test which provides similar scores when a person takes it several times is considered a reliable test.</td>
<td>There are three main types of validity:</td>
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<td>There are two types of reliability which are particularly important:</td>
<td>- content validity, which ascertains how well a test measures the construct or the characteristic it has been formulated to measure;</td>
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<td>- internal consistency, which indicates to what extent different items measure the same dimension.</td>
<td>- criterion validity, which looks at the correlation between a candidate’s performance in a test and his/her performance according to an external criterion;</td>
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<td>- test-retest reliability, which indicates the temporal stability of results obtained by the same individuals for each measured trait.</td>
<td>- conceptual or theoretical validity, each measuring instrument is based on a theoretical concept or model, and this can be verified when the test results conform with model results.</td>
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Social desirability

The phenomenon of social desirability is a bias which results from a person’s inclination to adapt his/her responses so that they will be seen favorably by other people.

For some tests, the analysis of item sensitivity means that one can also ensure that the social desirability level is the same across each of the dimensions that are being assessed. Items in a test need to be examined in a way that ensures that they are not affected by social desirability.
From personality and career guidance questionnaires to emotional intelligence tests, there is a wide range of assessment tools available on the market. But in order to choose the test or tests which are best adapted to what you are looking for, several factors need to be taken into account.

1. **A tool adapted to each target**
Before deciding which test to use, you should take your target audience and your objectives into account. What are the qualities and competencies required for the job concerned? For example, it is not relevant to assess critical thinking when recruiting a data entry clerk, but it is essential to assess this aptitude when recruiting a marketing manager.

2. **Choosing a scientifically validated test**
The development and validation of a test according to psychometric criteria is a long procedure which can take several years, depending on the test’s objectives. A test can only earn its stripes and claim scientific relevance if it fulfils the necessary psychometric criteria.

3. **Looking for a social desirability indicator**
Whether we like it or not, we all have a tendency to want to present ourselves in the best light possible, particularly in a recruitment context. If the results of an assessment tool are to be interpreted correctly, the phenomenon of social desirability has to be taken into consideration. Since it is of the utmost importance when assessing personality, it is important to find out how this notion is taken into account by the people who have conceived the tests that you would like to use. Certain tests control social desirability, while others measure it.

4. **Mastering assessments so you can get the best out of them**
Even if the ergonomics of assessment tools are being simplified all the time, users still need to be trained before taking tests. In order to better understand the administration of psychometric tests and interpret them more effectively, assessors are advised to take the tests themselves.

5. **Choosing tests that can be customized**
Selecting an assessment offering the possibility of setting job parameters and skills referentials fosters a better exploitation of the results both in recruitment and internal mobility.

6. **Debriefing allows for the best interpretation**
A face-to-face debriefing session will help to sharpen and consolidate results. Interviewing candidates makes it possible to have a more concrete idea of the dimensions of their profiles which stand out the most. For example, if a person obtains a high score for stress management, one can put this into the context of reality by asking him/her during the interview to relate a real-life situation in which he/she has had to maintain his/her composure. This interview will also allow for a better understanding of the way a person functions when the results of the personality questionnaire do not show strong tendencies in any particular direction.

Simply taking a test cannot be considered sufficient for providing all the answers to the questions that HR staff might ask when faced with a candidate. Just as multiplying information sources allows for an increase in coherence, so having access to several different assessment tools reduces the risk of misinterpretation.
1.4 WHICH ETHICAL CODES SHOULD BE FOLLOWED?

Where psychometric assessment is concerned, adhering to a code of conduct is not just about adopting a legal framework; it is about demonstrating an ethical approach and a common-sense attitude. You should respect the following rules.

**Precautions to be taken by assessors**

### Test administration
- Make it clear to candidates how tests are taken and for what reasons. Candidates have the right to refuse to take tests and the consequences of a refusal must not be eliminatory.
- Personality questionnaires are complementary to the interview process and using them as screening tools is not recommended.

### Confidentiality
- Test results cannot be forwarded to a third party without the express consent of the person being assessed.
- We recommended to administering aptitude tests on company premises to ensure that the candidate receives no outside help.

### Access to results
- At the very least, assessors should be aware of the objectives of each test and the precise meanings of the assessed dimensions in order to avoid making hasty interpretations of the results.
- The main information is provided in the report, the handbook and through consulting and training offers proposed by the different tests editors.

**POINTS TO REMEMBER**
- Psychometrics uses statistical analysis in the form of standardized “psychometric” tests to study the differences between individuals and between groups.
- Tests are subject to validation and should be designed to counterbalance the bias of social desirability, a phenomenon whereby people modify their answers in order to conform to external expectations, to the greatest extent possible.
- Assessors should be trained in the use of tests and the interpretation of results and should respect the ethical codes.
AN OVERVIEW OF PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING
While experts down the years have not always agreed on the definition of personality, today it is widely accepted that personality traits:

- are relatively stable over time (in adults)
- differ according to individuals
- have an influence on behaviour

Any personality theory developed since 1980 has been designed with a focus on measuring people’s ability to adapt within a professional framework. Employees are required to demonstrate a marked capacity for adapting to different situations and for self-control. A clear link exists between personality and efficiency in the workplace.

Personality questionnaires today are used as much in the field of employment as they are in education or in psychology.

### 2.1 PERSONALITY TESTS

In Ancient Rome, the Latin word “persona” referred to the mask worn by actors when playing a role. Today, the word “personality” represents the psychological characteristics shared by all human beings, both in terms of human nature and in terms of individual differences in behaviour.

The earliest analysis of individual differences dates back to ancient times, when Hippocrates (460-377 AD), used the biological knowledge of the time to identify the humours of the human body, (phlegm, yellow bile, black bile and blood), associating each of these to different temperaments.

Centuries later, in 1971, Eysenck built his descriptive approach of personality on this initial classification of personality types (sanguine, phlegmatic, melancholic and choleric).

The first person to actually use the term “personality” was Gordon Allport, who introduced the theory of personality traits in 1937.

The majority of theoreticians like Allport, Cattell and Eysenck considered traits as fundamental units of measurement for assessing personality.

Cattell defined personality as “that which enables us to predict how a person will react or behave in a given situation”. For Cattell personality was, above all, “the combination of all of an individual’s traits”. Eysenck’s definition of personality was “a combination of traits which a person has a tendency to manifest in different situations and which remains stable over time”.

Since the 1990s, the Big Five model has found consensus in the field of personality analysis. Also known as the Five Factor model, it was made popular by Costa and McCrae, who drew up the OCEAN acronym in 1985. OCEAN stands for Openness to experience / Conscientiousness / Extraversion / Agreeableness / Neuroticism.

The five personality traits make up an empirically stable and efficient classification system.
Barrick and Mount published one study in 1991 that had a great deal of influence on the use of personality tests in assessing employees. The authors proved that the dimensions of the Big Five model could predict with a certain degree of accuracy at least one aspect of performance at work in different types of occupation.

The authors refer to several types of performance analysis:

- overall assessment of performance at work;
- assessments made by hierarchical superiors;
- “objective” performance (productivity data, turnover/sales figures, promotions);
- performance as part of a team at work;
- performance with regards to the capacity to train oneself.

They discovered that the Conscientiousness could predict performance to quite an accurate level, no matter what the type of performance being considered and no matter what the professional group.

Barrick and Mount believed this was due to conscientiousness being motivation-oriented and hence playing a central role in theories which aim to elucidate performance at work. Because it is motivation-oriented, it ought to play a central role in theories which aim to elucidate performance at work. People who demonstrate the characteristics of dependability, perseverance, of being organized and results-driven are generally more successful at work, regardless of their occupation.

These lines of research would appear to be particularly relevant for certain categories of employee, such as those who are in contact with clients or who work in sales or as managers. However, the decisions should be made on the basis of all the information obtained on candidates, including their work experience, their motivations and their life skills.

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THE MAIN PERSONALITY ASSESSMENTS

THE MAIN PERSONALITY ASSESSMENTS

MBTI © (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator)

Developed in 1962 by Katherine Briggs and Isabel Myers, this test measures 16 different personality types.

• Duration: 20-30 minutes
• Taken individually or in groups
• Self-evaluation

This test is based on one of Carl Jung’s theories, which sets out 4 main bipolar dimensions that influence behaviour. Combining these 4 components makes it possible to distinguish between 16 personality types.

16PF

Developed by Raymond Cattell in 1949

This personality inventory makes it possible to assess 16 personality factors, which are grouped under 5 global factors: Extraversion, Anxiety, Tough-mindedness, Independence and Self-control.

• Duration: 30-40 minutes
• Taken individually or in groups
• Self-evaluation

The normative data available today only concern the population of the United Kingdom.

FOCUS ON PROFESSIONAL PROFILE-R

Developed by Central Test in 2002, the Professional Profile-R questionnaire uses a dynamic and global approach to assess personality.

The test assesses 12 opposed dimensions. There are 98 questions and the test takes less than 15 minutes to complete.

Strengths of the test:

- personality analysis using 12 opposed dimensions which avoids item repetition
- monitors social desirability
- matches profiles with 58 occupational groups
- suitability with job positions within the organization
- available in 11 languages: English, French, Spanish, German, Dutch, Romanian, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian and Arabic
Today, personality assessment is commonplace in many businesses, but few of them make a direct connection between personality and performance at work. As much as motivation, intelligence or experience, personality can be an indicator of success if it aligns with the position in question.

Indeed, we all have personality traits that influence the way we see the world and the way we react to events. These traits explain why we are more or less at ease in certain situations and therefore more or less likely to do well.

When using this approach, it is also essential to ask what kind of performance we expect in terms of operational results, quality of service and teamwork.

**Conscientiousness, a key indicator**

The connections between personality and performance at work were discovered largely thanks to the Big Five theory. But it was not until Barrick and Mount's study in the 1990s that the correlation between an individual's performance and his/her level of conscientiousness became clear. It is demonstrated by rigour, dependability and a critical and self-disciplined streak, regardless of the position and function held.

**Performance and personality: it’s all about the role!**

In order to discern the connections between personality and performance at work, one has to look in depth at the job profile and at the candidate's personality. This is why personality tests examine certain traits that are specific to the professional context, such as "determination/being demanding", which is key indicator in the assessment of the ability to manage and negotiate.

Personality is one indicator of an individual's performance, but it is certainly not the only element to take into consideration. One also has to look at motivation, interests, professional experience and a person's resources and strategies. For example, an employee who becomes uncomfortable in conflict situations might be well aware of this and try to overcome his or her feelings when such situations arise.
IS LEADERSHIP A MATTER OF PERSONALITY?

Are you looking for a good manager or a good team leader? When trying to find the first of these, looking at candidates’ technical know-how and skills is a prerequisite. When looking for the second, assessing personality provides a wealth of information.

“Manager” and “leader” do not mean the same thing! Above all, a good manager displays technical know-how, which he/she uses to define priorities and implement actions. But these qualities do not necessarily make for a good leader.

Optimism, a desire to go beyond one’s limits and an ability to keep looking forward are the three personality traits most often found in good leaders. These qualities are very difficult to find unless one uses a smart combination of methods.

Combining assessments

Leadership and personality go hand-in-hand, so it is important to have a personality test to assess this. Depending on the candidate’s profile, it could be either a specific tool devised for those who already have managerial roles, or a test of a more general nature.

For a more in-depth analysis, the first test could be combined with a test that analyses emotional intelligence and helps to delve more deeply into the candidates’ attitudes by examining the extent of their self-motivation, optimism and assertiveness.

The results of these tests will form an interesting basis to build upon, using one-on-one interviews and role-play situations, which will give concrete evidence of the person’s leadership abilities.

 Undertaken by groups of candidates together, these role-play situations will have the advantage of illustrating how candidates interact with one another.

Your one-in-a-million employee will be someone who can lead the whole group to a shared goal without seeking to dominate.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- An individual’s personality is a combination of traits that stay more or less the same over time.
- The Big Five model summarizes the main differences that can exist between individuals, and shows how certain personality traits can be used to predict at least one aspect of performance at work with a certain degree of reliability.
- Personality can therefore be considered a key indicator in identifying a person’s potential and predicting how well they will do at work.
Aptitude tests assess knowledge and performance levels in any given domain, be it attention, precision, ability to concentrate, understanding or critical reasoning.

Intelligence, which is the capacity to find things out, to be creative and to resolve problems, is what enables us to acquire the knowledge required to adapt to our environment and to changes that occur around us.

From the Latin “intellegere” (to understand), “inter” (between) and “ligare” (to link) came the old French word “intelligentare” (the ability to understand), which gives us the modern word “intelligence”. The origin of the word implies that intelligence consists of an aptitude to link separate elements.

In France, intelligence assessment began at the start of the twentieth century, boosted by the French government. Psychologist Alfred Binet was given the challenge of finding ways of identifying children who might be susceptible of facing difficulties in the classroom. Working together with Théodore Simon, Binet developed the Binet-Simon scale, from which the concept of the intellectual quotient, or IQ is derived.

Some years later, the Binet-Simon scale was taken up in the United States by Lewis M. Terman, who developed the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale. When the United States entered the First World War and began recruiting soldiers, David Wechsler showed that there were limits to basing IQ on development alone. He introduced the notion of a standard IQ, positioning individuals within a reference population following a normal distribution.

Since then, the scales devised by Binet-Simon (the current version is the New Metric Intelligence Scale-2) and by David Wechsler (the WPPSI, WISC and WAIS scales) have become standards for IQ test use and an entire industry of intelligence assessment derives from them.

2.2 APTITUDE TESTS

Various psychological approaches have proved that intelligence is a complex notion and that we are still a long way from understanding its subtleties. IQ has been studied since the beginning of the twentieth century and remains the principal indicator of general intelligence. Up to a point, it can be correlated with achievements at school and in the workplace.

But other factors, such as personality, emotional intelligence and motivation also play an important role in success, as has been demonstrated by recent scientific research, such as the study by Anita Woolley. The study, published in 2010, shows how an individual’s intelligence only has a small impact on the performance and cohesion of a group, whereas an individual’s emotional intelligence and social sensitivity have a big impact.

The use of reasoning tests in the HR world is proof that businesses are starting to become aware of this phenomenon. Of the tests taken by Central Test’s 3500 clients in 2012, 8.5% were reasoning tests, 8% were emotional intelligence tests and 50% were personality tests. For the assessment of candidates’ potential and/or that of their employees, businesses now have greater access to a combination of personality and aptitude tests.
THE MAIN APTITUDE TESTS

RAVEN’S MATRICES
Developed by Dr. John C. Raven in 1936

Raven’s Progressive Matrices are multiple-choice intelligence assessments which test observation skills and thinking ability.

• Duration: Untimed, individual or Group: 20-45 minutes
• Administration: Paper and Pencil

Raven’s Progressive Matrices come in a variety of formats to cover educational, clinical and occupational uses.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TEST
Developed by Central Test in 2010, this test assesses the 12 essential factors of emotional intelligence and allows us to have a complete idea of where the person is positioned in terms of emotional skills.

The test is made up of 79 questions and takes less than 15 minutes to complete.

Strengths:

- Social desirability indicator
- Calibrated EQ score
- Analysis of 4 principal dimensions with scores
- Profile summary describing how key competences, such as optimism and leadership, impact well-being and performance.

GMAT (GRADUATE MANAGEMENT ADMISSION TEST)
GMAT assesses a person’s analytical, writing, quantitative, verbal, and reading skills in standard written English in preparation for being admitted into a graduate management programme.

• Duration: 3 hours and 45 minutes

The maximum score for GMAT is 800 and the mean score is 533. The test score is valid for 5 years.
EXPLORING FACULTIES BEYOND THE IQ

IQ tests rely on our ability to reason in a structured environment, posing sets of problems for which there can only be one correct answer. Thus IQ scores do not take into account our behaviour in non-structured environments, although these bear more similarity to our daily reality. It makes sense, therefore, to look at other factors when considering professional performance.

Emotional intelligence: this concept has its origins in the English-speaking world and is gaining prominence in HR processes. Less well-known than the IQ concept but no less important, emotional intelligence defines our ability to identify and control our emotions and to adapt ourselves to the environment around us. It is measured with the emotional quotient (EQ) score, which is the common denominator for emotional faculties just as the IQ is for intellectual faculties.

Creativity: being creative is about thinking outside the box and finding new solutions. It also involves knowing how to ask the right questions while considering things from a new perspective.

Language: understanding and written expression, as well as the arts of improvisation and public speaking are all part of language ability. The “verbal intelligence” factor that is assessed in intelligence tests only measures one part of our ability to communicate.

Critical thinking: This is linked to, but goes beyond, reasoning; it is our ability to exercise good judgement in response to given situations, to observations or to complex arguments.

Intuition: few studies have been carried out concerning intuition, certain capacities of the human brain remain unknown. Information registered by the unconscious mind about our environment can have a sudden effect on our conscious mind, for example alerting us to a form of danger. Intuition is essential to all kinds of roles: a sales person or a journalist might have a sense that it is more worthwhile pursuing one subject than another before having all the information at hand.

Global vision: This refers to our ability to use hindsight to appreciate a situation as a whole. A manager with good global vision will be able to bear all the aims and strategies of his/her company in mind. He/she will also assimilate various approaches and points of view (be they financial, technical or sales-related) and amalgamate them in order to streamline the decision-making process.
Emotional intelligence, which is the ability to control and identify our emotions, is still a relatively unexplored concept. It is, however, gaining importance in the world of Human Resources.

**Emotional intelligence under the microscope**
The two components of emotional intelligence are the intra- and interpersonal intelligence. Intrapersonal intelligence is about self-knowledge and being aware of one’s strengths and weaknesses. It’s also about self-motivation, knowing what one is worth and knowing how one functions. Interpersonal intelligence, on the other hand, concerns our ability to empathize, to manage conflicts and to understand other people’s emotions and react appropriately.

The notion of emotional intelligence was first put forward in the 1990s by Peter Salovey and John Mayer, and the idea gained popularity with Daniel Goleman’s theory that emotional intelligence could be further developed. Reuven Bar-On then devised one of the first ways of measuring emotional intelligence and gave us the term ‘emotional quotient’. He felt that emotional and cognitive intelligence contributed equally to an individual’s overall ability and could therefore be used as an indicator of potential success.

**Why is it useful?**
For certain daily functions, having a high level of emotional intelligence is an important asset. In sales particularly, it makes it possible to analyze potential clients’ reactions and to adapt one’s discourse accordingly. It is just as useful in management roles. A manager with low emotional intelligence will seek to impose changes where a more emotionally intelligent manager will manage to get his team to accept the idea beforehand. We use our emotional intelligence on a daily basis. If an e-mail exchange turns sour, an emotionally intelligent individual will be aware that changing the mode of communication might help and will arrange a face-to-face meeting to resolve the problem.

**How can it be measured?**
Emotional capacities can be identified and measured using emotional quotient (EQ) tests. These are gaining ground in Human Resources departments, where they are used either to assess external and internal candidates for new roles or in order to brief them and therefore help them make progress. They are also popular with life coaches. Dimensions like self-knowledge, self-motivation, conflict resolution and an ability to empathize are each related to different aspects of emotional intelligence. It is therefore important to consider test results in the light of the qualities necessary for the role if this type of test is used in a recruitment context or that of evolving job requirements.

**Can emotional intelligence be developed?**
It would seem that emotional intelligence is partly innate and partly acquired. Anything that is acquired can be developed! Training programmes exist for improving one’s personal efficiency, becoming a better listener, getting to know oneself better, improving assertiveness and becoming a better team leader. But one needs to be aware of a need for improvement in the first place, or progress will not be possible! It is important to know which personal aspects one would like to improve and to be prepared to work on them in order to see a difference.
Together considered to be a dimension of personality and more specifically the motivational sphere, interests can be defined as “relatively stable and durable tendencies and dispositions directed towards different activity fields and experiences in a given cultural milieu”.  

2.3 OCCUPATIONAL INTEREST TESTS

The theory of vocational interests confirms thus the hypothesis that professional interests are an extension of the personality and reflect an individual’s motivations.  

Edward K. Strong was the first to put together a tool to measure occupational interests, with his Strong Interest Inventory (SII) in 1927. Thus began years of research on interests, choices and satisfaction with regard to the professional environment.

The aim of this occupational interest inventory was to assess candidates’ interest in a given profession.

In 1939, Kuder tried to define the principal interest dimensions in order to connect them with groups of professions. His inventory, the Kuder Preference Record, was made up of homogeneous items grouped under 10 fundamental scales, each of which corresponded to a different activity sector.

For American psychologist and researcher John Holland, an individual’s choice of profession or occupation was evidence of the personality expressing itself. In 1966 he defined interests as “the personality expressing itself through work, through pastimes, through recreational activities and through preferences”.

Holland identified six main types of interest, which together covered all existing occupations. They are: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional and are known under the acronym RIASEC.

Any person will be able to identify with the personality types in this model. Clearly, each individual possesses more than one of the typology’s characteristics, but the idea is to focus on the two dominant traits alone. The individual’s working environment can also be characterized using the same approach, with each profession combining several fields of interest.

The person/working environment combination is the most-commonly used assessment method in the world in the domain of scholarly and professional orientation.

\[2\] P.DUPONT, “La psychologie des intérêts”, PUF, 1979
MOTIVATION IN THE WORKPLACE

What is it that encourages us to choose one activity over another? What makes us act the way we do, or go to work?

Motivation, or a combination of conscious and unconscious mechanisms, is what triggers action and is at the origin of individual behaviour.

In 1943, Abraham Maslow published his theory, which posits that all individuals experience needs in the workplace and that these are sources of motivation. Maslow divided these needs into five categories, which can be put in hierarchical order and displayed in a pyramid. This classification corresponds to the order in which the needs appear to the individual – once needs on a lower level have been satisfied, the needs on the next level will have to be satisfied. One can only reach the top of the pyramid if one has managed to satisfy all the needs below.

1. At the bottom of the pyramid come physiological needs (such as hunger and thirst).
2. Next, the need for safety and protection (such as the desire to have a home or a good insurance policy).
3. Then the needs of belonging, which are social needs which reflect the desire to be part of a family, a group or a tribe.
4. Next come the needs of self-esteem (which enable one to look at oneself in the mirror in the morning).
5. Finally, at the pinnacle of the hierarchy, are the needs for self-actualization (which relate to the desire for personal accomplishment through creative acts or having commitments).

Several theories about motivation exist, but most theoreticians agree on the three points below:

- **the existence of “needs”:** the individual feels needs on a fundamental level and seeks to satisfy them. These needs are therefore the impetus for action in individuals.
- **the existence of “objectives”:** an individual is motivated to do something. This means that he/she is in pursuit of a goal through the activity he/she is carrying out.
- **motivation is a personal phenomenon:** since individuals do not necessarily have the same problems or experience the same problems in the same way, they cannot have identical needs or experience needs with the same intensity. Needs being personal, it follows that motivation is also personal.
THE MAIN OCCUPATIONAL INTEREST TESTS

**RMIB**
(The Rothwell-Miller Interest Blank)

Developed by: Rothwell-Miller in the 1950s (3rd version, 2011)

- Duration: 15 minutes
- Taken individually or in groups

The test consists of putting lists of occupations in order and is based on Holland’s typology. It makes it possible to deduce with ease and in a generalized manner a person’s professional interests.

**The Strong Interest Inventory**

Developed by: Strong in 1927

- Duration: 30 minutes
- Questions: 291 items

The test assesses the individual’s interests in a range of roles, activities and leisure pursuits. It compares similarities between the candidate’s interests and those of other people working in similar roles.

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**Occupational Interest Inventory**

Developed by Central Test in 2006 (and revised in 2010), the OII analyses 12 fields of interest according to the RIASEC model and evaluates the candidate’s profile against a standardized reference system of 80 occupation groups.

Based on John Holland’s typology, the questionnaire is composed of 84 questions, 60 of which are in the form of mini scenarios. The test can be taken in under 12 minutes.

**Strengths:**
- general profile analysis plus 15 combined RIASEC profiles
- standardized reference system includes recent occupations.
- comparison of the profile with 80 occupation groups

This test is used in skills assessment centres, universities and specialized higher education institutions and large companies.
THE IMPORTANCE OF OCCUPATIONAL INTEREST TESTS IN INTERNAL MOBILITY

Highly prized by skills assessment centres, professional interest tests are now gaining ground in large companies.

In which contexts are they used?
What are their strengths?
Here we focus on these tools, which are so important for internal mobility and career changes.

In recent years, career progression has taken on a new dimension in the employment market, with skills assessment being particularly encouraged. It appeals to employees with several years of professional experience who wish to change their occupation, to further evolve, or who are unhappy in their current role.

According to Ipsos research carried out in France in 2012, the main reasons for which a French employee moves to a different company are stress levels (38%) and a lack of recognition (47%). The same survey also reveals that people in the 18-24 and 50+ age brackets admit to having considered leaving the company they work for.

Professional interest tests, whether they are used within companies or by skills assessment centres, give both employees and jobseekers the opportunity to find the answers to their questions.

The aim of these assessment tools is to work out people’s areas of interest in order to find activity sectors and roles that are better suited to them. This is why large companies also use these tests when they are planning internal restructuring. Other enterprises, such as certain banking institutions, want their staff to move to different roles in order to remain motivated, and in such cases professional interest tests make it possible to suggest career changes or evolution of current roles, depending on people’s aspirations. Some companies use these tests in tandem with motivation tests, before staff begin in-house training sessions or prior to job changes.
As efficient drivers of motivation and loyalty, these assessment tools are helpful not only for making the right decisions but also for detecting structural changes. Sometimes it is not so much the job as the work environment which can be a source of discomfort for an employee. If professional interest tests are combined with personality tests, it is then possible to align the individual’s areas of interest, values and life skills, and this allows one to see whether it is really necessary for the person to consider changing their job and/or their employer.

These days, the tests most frequently used by skills assessment centres are the RMIB (the Rothwell-Miller Interest Blank) and Central Test’s Occupational Interest Inventory. The test has a distinct advantage where internal mobility is concerned, because there is an option to include existing company positions in the standardized reference system.
The ESIEE is an electrical engineering educational establishment in Amiens in France that trains high-level engineers. By choosing Central Test’s Occupational Interest Inventory, the institution is offering its students the chance to build up a professional project that is adapted to their personalities and behavioural characteristics.

Michele Flipaux, in charge of career guidance at the ESIEE, answered some questions for us.

How do you use the Occupational Interest Inventory?

Central Test's Occupational Interest Inventory is an important part of the ESIEE’s pedagogical strategy: we use it as a tool for support and self-knowledge. It is available to all of our students via our social sciences platform. I use it particularly with first year students in order to find out if they have any particular worries and so as to be able to better help them resolve issues. It also helps with decision-making: some students are not sure which course to take and some feel they have already made the wrong choice.

How are the test results useful to you?

They help me to get to know the students better. Going over results with them face-to-face is very important. It helps to establish a climate of trust and improves communication. The person generally opens up more, and this enables us to dig deeper and then initiate the appropriate plan of action. By doing this, the students are able to get an idea of their own potential and then develop it by taking the professional path that is right for them. I should add that we often combine this test with the Professional Profile questionnaire because this gives the students a good overall view of their interests and life skills, which means they can prepare for the future.

What feedback have you had from students who have taken the test?

They are often surprised at first. But in two years I have yet to receive negative feedback, even from those students who were initially the most sceptical! Indeed, they find that the results, once they have been explained and expanded upon during the interview, enable them to put into words things that they still don’t understand, and to ask themselves questions that will enable them to go further.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Analyzing interests and motivations is complementary to analyzing personality and it is therefore interesting to combine the two approaches, especially in the context of orientation and internal mobility.

- Interests and motivations can evolve over time and may be influenced by circumstances and by working environments.
3 THE USE OF PSYCHOMETRIC TOOLS IN HR DEPARTMENTS
3.1 RECRUITMENT AND INTERNAL MOBILITY

WHAT ARE THE 5 COGNITIVE BIASES THAT RECRUITERS SHOULD AVOID?

All of us, even recruiters, are subject to cognitive bias, which is the human tendency to make errors of judgement and bad decisions. These mental shortcuts can be the result of social influence, prejudice or motivational factors. We might not be able to free ourselves of them, but we can learn to recognize them in order to reduce their influence on our decision-making. There are about 60 cognitive biases.

Patrick Leguide, founder and CEO of Central Test, has identified five principal types of cognitive bias regularly experienced by professionals working in the recruitment world.

The naivety bias

Emotions sometimes have a role to play in the decision-making process, but they shouldn’t be allowed to take over the critical mind. According to Patrick Leguide, the naivety bias “is particularly commonplace in inexperienced recruitment professionals, who are lulled into a false sense of security by some candidates’ relaxed attitude and forget to verify the consistency between what they say and what they do”. Central Test’s founder believes that knowing how to combine intuition with facts is an art that one acquires over time.

The entomologist’s bias

This is the opposite of the naivety bias, and certain recruiters might succumb to it when trying to put their emotions to one side in order not to judge candidates on factual elements alone.

Says Patrick Leguide, “They look at their future collaborators’ technical competence, experiences and qualifications but forget to consider their personality and life skills.”
The confirmation bias

This is the tendency to look for information that confirms our preconceived ideas and hypotheses.

This cognitive bias might lead a recruiter to interpret certain information the way he/she wants to, by minimizing a candidate’s deficiencies, for example. Central Test’s founder points out that, “in order to counter this tendency, recruiters can fix priorities in advance so as not to lose sight of them during the recruitment process”. Faced with a cunning candidate, it is important to remember to ask questions other than those which help to reinforce one’s own convictions.

The projection bias

Going hand-in-hand with the confirmation bias is our tendency to be attracted to people who share our values, thoughts and psychological states.

A recruiter might thus have the tendency to choose candidates who are similar to him/herself. “This in itself is not necessarily a bad thing”, says Patrick Leguide. “The main thing is to know whether the post you are seeking to fill needs to be occupied by someone similar to you or not.”

The stereotype bias

Although we aren’t aware of it, we all have beliefs and prejudices and a facility for associating a collection of characteristics to a group of people. Patrick Leguide goes on, “This means some recruiters might still be inclined to suppose that a candidate who is a graduate from a commercial institution or who holds a prestigious diploma is bound to have all the necessary skills for a post.”

Many other forms of cognitive bias exist, and it would be pointless trying to control them all. But in order to reduce their impact, recruiters can use tools that make it possible to objectify decision making, such as personality tests or role-play situations. Tests make it easier to look at the emotional side of things with greater objectivity.
HOW SHOULD PSYCHOMETRIC TESTS BE USED IN RECRUITMENT?

The use of tests in recruitment has increased significantly over the past ten years. Today, nearly all big businesses and 70% of SMEs in Europe, India and Australia use them. In the USA, tests are even more commonplace, largely thanks to the government-led accreditation scheme devised to regulate testing. Costs have also fallen, thus allowing smaller businesses to use tests as well.

A genuine aid in the recruitment process

With CVs resembling each other more and more, psychometric tests are a valuable aid for recruiters, providing objective information on aspects which are often difficult to assess using other methods. They help to save both time and money by reducing the risk of errors in the recruitment process, which can be costly for employers.

This is not to say that they work like a crystal ball. They are complementary tools and should never be used as a substitute for a recruiter’s judgement. In every case, the recruiter must make the final decision.

When should tests be used?

It is recommended that psychometric tests are taken after the initial CV selection and telephone contact, but before recruitment interviews take place. This allows recruiters to gather a large amount of information that cannot be found on CVs or application letters and to use the results as a basis for discussion during interviews.

Questions asked during recruitment interviews make it possible to confirm and fine-tune test results, which are considered to be “a supplementary aid in the searching mechanism”. If a test shows that a candidate has a capacity for innovation, for example, the recruiter can ask questions to find out how the candidate has demonstrated this capacity over the course of his/her career.

Which tests should you choose?

Ideally, competence tests should be taken at the same time as personality tests, in order to have a 360° view of candidates’ abilities. Tests should be chosen according to candidates’ profiles. As an example, candidates applying for a junior position should take a reasoning test so the intellectual quotient (or IQ) can be calculated, along with a personality test, or a competence test for a specific function such as a sales role.

IQ tests are not relevant, however, to management roles, where it makes more sense to use emotional intelligence tests in order to evaluate candidates’ ability to observe, understand and manage their emotions and those of other people. Candidates for any position requiring frequent interaction with other people should take emotional intelligence tests.
How does one interpret the results?

First of all, the criteria of the role to be filled need to be precisely defined before candidates take the psychometric tests, because the criteria will determine which tests are taken and the way the results are interpreted. With personality tests in particular, the results can only be interpreted in relation to a specific role. There is no such thing as a bad or a good personality. For example, if a personality test reveals that the candidate needs strong supervision, this could be positive for a role within a strict hierarchy, but negative for a manager who is expected to work autonomously.

In order to interpret results correctly, one needs to be familiar with several aspects. For example, scores should be looked at from a particular perspective: if Candidate A’s score is twice that of Candidate B for the discretion dimension, this does not mean that A will be twice as discreet as B when faced with the same situation. It means that A will be discreet in twice as many situations as B. So a score of 90% for discretion means that the candidate will be discreet in 90% of situations. Another point to bear in mind when analyzing psychometric test results is that small differences between scores should be ignored.

We recommend taking a training session in the form of a practical workshop in order to master the various aspects. This will help to have the right attitude when choosing and administering tests and interpreting results.
INTERNAL MOBILITY: 5 HR SYNDROMES TO AVOID

Helping employees to evolve within a company is as challenging as recruiting, if not more so. Knowing staff members often means one can be more subjective.

Below, Central Test's founder and CEO Patrick Leguide reviews those HR syndromes which can lead to mistakes being made.

Internal mobility is about not only hierarchical promotion but also helping staff to specialize in a certain area or to move into a different occupation. At a time when employees are seeking change more and more often, businesses need to bear this in mind. To encourage loyalty, companies should consider all aspects of internal mobility and be aware of what could go wrong.

Just as cognitive errors can lead recruiters to make mistakes, certain syndromes can confuse things where internal mobility is concerned. From my experience as a human resources consultant and a company manager I have identified five such syndromes.

PETER’S SYNDROME

According to Peter’s principal, all employees have a tendency to rise to the level of their incompetence. In other words, an excellent technician will not necessarily make a good technical director. Promoting staff by giving them ever more responsibility, especially in a managerial context, will eventually lead to the wrong person being chosen for a role. What is more, people who feel incompetent in their role will have an unconscious tendency to recruit people less competent than themselves for fear of being replaced! Company performance will then decrease dramatically, ending with an inverted pyramid of competence. In order to combat this syndrome effectively, businesses need to thoroughly assess their employees’ potential, as well as training them.

THE STEREOTYPE SYNDROME

Giving a position of responsibility to a man rather than a woman, choosing an employee for a management role because of qualifications rather than results achieved. We are sometimes influenced by such discriminatory stereotypes without realizing it, and this can lead to a cloning effect at management level. Businesses are becoming more aware of this phenomenon, as is borne out by the professional agreements which mention these discrimination problems.

THE STAGECOACH / FLY SYNDROME

We are all familiar with busybodies who like to claim the credit once a task has been completed. French fabulist Jean de La Fontaine put it well in his fable “The Stagecoach and the Fly”, which ends: “Thus do certain people, making themselves appear very busy, / Enter all affairs. / Everywhere they make themselves seem essential, / And, everywhere a nuisance, should be chased away.”

Some people know how to get noticed by their superiors, but are their results and competence really what they should be?

As with the naivety bias in recruitment, decision-makers affected by this syndrome will allow themselves to be influenced by those staff who are best at self-promotion.
THE OCTOPUS SYNDROME

Directors of small businesses often make the mistake of thinking that everyone should know how to do everything. In my early career I was a victim of this myself. If a salesperson is concerned mainly with developing sales, he/she should not be made to carry out marketing and communication tasks.

Spiderman’s Doctor Octopus might have many arms, but the rest of us only have two! Giving existing employees too many roles can also create confusion in terms of mobility and progression.

CAESAR’S SYNDROME

The Roman Senate had great cause to regret Julius Caesar’s ambition when he seized power in Rome after conquering Gaul.

Expertise and know-how do not guarantee loyalty. Special care should be taken when promoting staff to key positions; you do not want the cat to get among the pigeons.

Staff in important roles ensure a company’s success, but they also need to spearhead its values. Now is the time to remedy all this! You should take as much care over your internal mobility process as you do over your recruitment process. If you set rules from the start, including establishing job descriptions, there will be less room for subjectivity. Using assessment tools helps to find out where the potential is and also helps to explore a person’s motivations and professional interests on an objective basis. Today’s personality tests are also about professional advancement and take dimensions such as ambition or adaptability into consideration. Looking at test results and discussing them in depth during a once-yearly interview, for example, makes it possible not only to avoid putting the wrong person in a role but also to offer each staff member a specifically-adapted career path.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- There is no such thing as a bad or a good personality. Tests are chosen according to the criteria of the role you are seeking to fill.

- Internal career progression is as challenging as recruitment. Using assessment tools is recommended in order to avoid biases where internal mobility is concerned; it helps to explore a person’s motivations and professional interests on an objective basis.
3.2 TALENT MANAGEMENT

HOW DOES ONE IDENTIFY AND HOLD ON TO TALENTED STAFF?

We have entered the era of talent warfare: there is much more movement on the employment market, candidates are increasingly demanding and large numbers of senior staff are retiring. In this new age, businesses must identify and retain their best staff if they want to survive. Each organization has to work out its own strategy in order to rise to the challenge.

The dictionary definition of the word ‘talent’ is “a given disposition, aptitude or particular capacity; an ability either natural or acquired to do something”. This interesting interpretation does justice to the intangible nature of the concept, but it is much too vague for the business world. For talent can assume as many different guises as there are positions and organizations. Having artistic ability might be a precious quality in the world of advertising and marketing, but it won’t be of much interest in a sales role. Therefore, before determining which of their employees has the most potential, a company must decide on its own definition of ‘talent’.

Finding talented staff using psychometric tests

After observing staff at work or obtaining references, there exist a multitude of methods for finding employees with the most potential. But talent is by nature an intangible concept, and the most efficient and objective way of detecting it is via a combination of psychometric tests. One way of attaining an integral view of an individual’s character traits and qualities is to combine critical thinking and personality tests. Perhaps you are looking for a manager with good imaginative potential, someone who will be capable of putting new solutions into practice. Candidates’ imaginative potential will be evident from their personality test results, while the critical thinking test will show their cognitive qualities. Anyone possessing both qualities will be well-equipped to do the job. On the other hand, candidates with a gift for imagination who lack cognitive ability will be capable of imagining new scenarios but will not be any good at putting them into practice.

Managing differently

People with a lot of promise have one thing in common: they lose interest quickly and are not afraid to look elsewhere to see whether the grass is greener. In order not to lose such people, companies need to know how to adopt new management strategies, adapting their approach to individuals to allow them to do what they like doing best on a daily basis.

This can be done by putting individual career plans in place so employees can get a feel for their career progression. If a manager has creative talents, it might be appropriate to provide him/her with challenges such as adapting a product to a new market or launching advertising campaigns to promote it. Management on a case-by-case basis will encourage talented staff to feel that they belong to the company and to further identify with their position within the organization.

Ultimately, there is no point launching a programme for identifying and retaining talent if this does not tally with the company’s global strategy. For such a programme to be successful, businesses need to articulate and align their global objectives.
We cannot ignore the fact that the best salespeople share a common denominator, regardless of the sector in which they work or the specific tasks they carry out, and that is a particular capacity for selling, which is not necessarily easy to define but which can be identified using a variety of different approaches.

A sales person might only have one job, but he/she has a multitude of different roles, and this is something that some companies are inclined to overlook when seeking that one-in-a-million employee. Not content with looking for someone who is a good canvasser, capable of expanding his/her database while maintaining good relationships with his/her clients, some employers also expect a salesperson to be skilled at managing and marketing as well as having four or five years of experience in a given sector. The trouble is, such a creature doesn’t exist.

Rather than looking for something that doesn’t exist, companies would be better off providing a clear job description and defining the task which will take up 80% of the employee’s time. Then, in order to broaden their reach, they should focus on candidates’ sales potential.

Analyzing motivations

It is not unusual to hear candidates, when interviewed, saying that they are incapable of selling a product if they do not believe in it. This argument could be evidence that such candidates are less suited to sales roles than they claim to be. According to some research, an appetite for selling is the attribute that the most talented salespeople share, just like the appetite for negotiation, which they often allow to come to the fore when discussing their own contracts. These traits, much like the desire to self-manage and a preference for telephone contact, can be perceived during interviews, but they might also show through when candidates sit professional interest tests or specific sales tests.

Studying personalities

At the same time as studying candidates’ motivations, it can be interesting to take a look at their personalities using personality tests and interviews. This makes it possible to complete the assessment of a person’s motivations and to find out whether he/she has what it takes to be one of the best salespeople. Salespeople are generally extraverted, dynamic people who like action. Other characteristics include autonomy and a tendency to be less compromising than the average person. Without indulging in stereotyping, such personality traits can be good indicators of a candidate’s sales potential.

Focusing on expertise

Taking both motivation and personality as given, will the candidate have the expertise and competence of a good salesperson? The indicators to watch out for are a fighting spirit, resourcefulness, good interpersonal skills and being comfortable taking centre stage. Role-play situations are an excellent way of highlighting these skills.

By using a combination of the various tools available to them (CVs, interviews, personality and life skills analysis, role-play situations), recruiters can discern a candidate’s sales potential.
Integrity is one of the main virtues that Human Resources look for in a person. Which business leader has never had the nasty surprise of encountering theft, lies, corruption, embezzlement, or loss of clients to a former employee? Actually, integrity issues apply not only to employees, but also to business affiliates. Can these issues be avoided?

What is integrity?

While integrity refers to being in line with oneself, it also refers to a code of honour, of which we may or may not be aware, that is related to culture and education. We cannot dissociate integrity from social context. Playing video games during working hours might be considered acceptable or even normal in certain environments, but unacceptable in others, even though each person tends to interpret things according to what suits his or her ethics. In the end, there is a wide continuum between “borrowing” a pen from work and committing actual fraud, but we must consider culture and the perception of what is acceptable and what is not.

Which tools evaluate integrity?

During the recruitment process, the ideal solution would be a simulation in which the candidate finds a 20-dollar bill on the floor, so that recruiters could observe how he or she reacted! Since it is only actions which count in the end, similar role plays sometimes take place after a person is hired, and may be used, for example, to test the integrity of cashiers or sales clerks. But these role plays must be implemented very delicately. In the search for truth, the lie detector (polygraph) test was invented, but this has been banned for a long time due to doubts about its scientific reliability and its inappropriate use.

What about tests?

Today many integrity tests consist of a large number of questions that are like police interrogations. While they have some validity, their implementation leads to legal and ethical issues, since they are intrusive, relate to the candidate’s private life and may not be relevant to the required job skills. Some tests, such as the Hartman Value Profile, provide evaluations of values and ethics. But this test does not assess the integrity of the individuals themselves: just because a person is conscious of ethics does not mean that he or she would behave ethically.
Other specialized tests are geared to personality, such as those inspired by the Hexaco model, which is similar to the Big Five but has a sixth dimension called “Honesty-Humility”. This approach brings out certain dimensions of personality that are tied to integrity, namely altruism, agreeableness (or tolerance) and conscientiousness (respect for rules).

A set of clues

While the Hexaco model is particularly worthwhile, the main personality tests also provide clues that could be useful in an overall evaluation. We cannot directly tie personality traits to integrity, but we can pay attention to “favourable conditions”.

In personality tests such as the Professional Profile and CTPI-R, we have identified certain factors as potentially unfavourable to integrity: individualism (as opposed to altruism), persuasion (as opposed to the need for objectivity), ambition (as opposed to modesty), the lack of commitment, the tendency to be negligent about process and structure, vigilance (as opposed to trust) and the lack of respect for rules.

Indicators of social desirability, included in certain tests, also give an idea about the person’s tendency to cheat and his or her “chameleon-like” behaviour.

Nevertheless, personality assessment cannot be considered as sufficient way to gauge integrity; just because a person likes to persuade does not mean that he or she is necessarily dishonest.

During an interview, the consistency of what the person says and the quality of his or her references are also essential. In the end, there is no miracle recipe, but we can obtain a set of clues to evaluate the person’s potential and skills.

No-one has to be perfect!

Paradoxically, no company would want a person with excessive integrity, since such a person would not be able to adapt and would be difficult to manage. Lacking integrity does have a natural and social root. For example, lying is a socially-useful form of behaviour. We all learn to lie out of obligation or by empathy, in order not to hurt someone’s feelings. Since the dawn of time, people have worked to create strategies to conquer their enemies, increase their own wealth and achieve world dominance.

It is therefore completely natural that people should be clever and crafty for their personal benefit, whether they are alone or in a group. But a person’s own conscience, morals, and desire to respect and serve others will sustain his or her character. And employees will expect companies and leaders to show the right example!

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Identifying, managing and retaining talent is a challenge faced by every organization.

- Adopting new management strategies based on a personalized approach, encouraging diversity in teams and using challenges to stimulate creativity are all methods that should be utilized side-by-side with psychometric tools to encourage loyalty in talented staff.
THE 3 BEST REASONS FOR USING PSYCHOMETRIC TESTS

The pursuit of data has become a vital part of any decision-making process, and those who work in the field of human resources know this only too well. It is a question of obtaining relevant and objective information about potential employees, putting coherent guidelines in place for tracking employee performance, and having clear ideas about talent mobility.

Psychometric tests are essential for providing complete and objective data in order to make good recruitment and talent-management decisions.

**1. Test results are easily quantifiable**

Having a flawed recruitment policy or taking bad decisions when promoting employees can have catastrophic consequences.

Let’s look, for example, at the actual cost of a flawed recruitment policy: if a bad recruitment choice comes to light during a new employee’s trial period, the cost to the company will be, on average, more than 50% of the employee’s yearly salary, while the cost of replacing an established employee is estimated on average to be 150% of his/her yearly salary. With this in mind, the aim of psychometric tests is to evaluate human behaviour and to better assess the likelihood of a person succeeding in a particular role.*

It follows that the predictive validity of psychometric questionnaires is the main factor in anticipating how well an individual will perform in the workplace. The use of questionnaires in recruitment and in the context of internal mobility makes it possible to identify those people who are most suitable for particular roles. For instance, people who obtain good results in reasoning tests are more likely to use analysis to resolve complex situations.

**2. Tests reduce the effect of cognitive biases**

Evaluation is often limited to the interview alone, which is only useful if it is used together with a range of appropriate objective indicators. A number of scientific studies have shown that there is only a 14% correlation between a candidate’s capacity for “self-promotion” during interviews and his/her performance once employed in a role.* Assessment results might be falsified by, among other things, the assessor’s background and cognitive biases (his/her stereotypes and prejudices), or by a lack of self-awareness in the person being assessed.

Unlike traditional selection methods, psychometric tests provide key indicators, which facilitate decision-making in an objective and non-discriminatory way.

These standardized measuring tools draw on a statistical approach and make it possible to study the differences between individuals using a common calibration.

According to the Schmidt & Hunter study referred to above, using these tools in addition to interviews reduces errors in selection by 24%.

Central Test uses a combined, comprehensive approach in order to better identify potential in terms not only of expertise but also of suitability for vacant positions or for a specific workplace culture.

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Effective training is all one needs to be able to use today’s tests

We no longer live in a time of clinical questionnaires and overcomplicated reports whose results cannot be interpreted without the help of a psychologist.

These days, the majority of test developers offer assessment tools which have been specifically devised for use in the workplace and which, while being ergonomically simple, also respect scientific validation standards. The reports, which are immediately accessible online, make for pleasant reading, with graphs providing a quick overview of the subject’s main traits. Central Test’s reports also include customized feedback, thus reducing the risk of over-interpretation.

But in order to fully grasp the dimensions evaluated by the tool and better interpret the results, training must be given, regardless of the assessment context, whether it involves recruitment, internal evolution, skills assessment or reclassification.

Central Test provides training sessions which enable the user to concentrate on the main points and quickly become self-sufficient.

Whether they are used for candidate recruitment, strengthening employee commitment, retaining the most efficient staff or increasing company productivity, psychometric tools play an essential role in establishing an efficient talent-management policy.
CONCLUSION

Whether it is for recruiting candidates, developing employee motivation, holding onto your best staff or increasing company productivity, psychometric tests are a crucial requirement when setting up an efficient talent management programme.

They have become more and more commonplace in the business world, used by large and small companies alike.

Against a dual backdrop of economic gloom and the war for talent, using a combination of these tests alongside stimulated work situations and personal debriefing sessions considerably reduces the risk of error, and brings objective clarity to the decision-making process.

And the world of psychometric testing is still evolving, through more advanced statistics, improved control of social desirability, the possibility to interconnect with HR software and the integration of situations that are ever closer to reality.

New technology will help to optimize the reliability of tests, which, as decision support tools, will become an essential component of HR processes.