



# **Top 11**

## **Candidate**

## **Assessment**

## **Methods**

## **For Recruiters**





# INTRODUCTION

Finding suitable talent for your open position is never easy. Although suit-and-tie interviews can decently do the work, it is high time for your company to consider making an investment in [recruitment technology](#) or adopting new assessment techniques.

Below, we put together 11 most effective candidates assessment methods whether we think they are of value to modern recruiters.

In this playbook, we will discuss in-depth about 11 different methods of candidate assessment , including the delineations on the following consideration:

**Validity:** The extent to which the assessment method has been shown to accurately measure a job-related competency and/or predict successful performance on the job.

**Applicant Reactions:** Applicant reactions include applicants' typical perceptions of the face validity of the test as well as overall reactions to the assessment process.

**Administration Method:** Information regarding how an assessment method can be administered.

**Subgroup Differences:** Information about the extent to which the assessment method has been shown to result in varied selection rates, average scores, or prediction errors across groups that are typically based on race, ethnicity, or gender.

**Development Costs:** The amount of resources needed to build an assessment, in terms of time, money, and technical expertise.

**Administration Costs:** The amount and type of resources required to administer an

A photograph of three people in a professional setting. Two men and one woman are shaking hands, suggesting a successful agreement or partnership. The man on the left is wearing a blue checkered shirt, the woman in the middle has blonde hair and is wearing a striped shirt, and the man on the right is wearing a grey sweater. They are standing in front of a window with a grid pattern.

# INTRODUCTION

assessment, in terms of time, money, staff, equipment, facilities, and information technology support.

**Utility/Return on Investment (ROI):** The extent to which the benefits gained from using the assessment method outweigh the costs of development and administration.

**Common Uses:** A description of the settings and/or situations for which the assessment method is most suitable.

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# Accomplishment Record

The accomplishment record is an organized compilation of information about applicants' education, job experience, and past achievements that are related to important job criteria. The accomplishment record are built on the foundation of behavioral consistency principle which states that past behavior is the best predictor of future performance and behavior.

Applicants shall be required to complete a written form describing their personal achievements in detail including the problems/situations that arouse, the specific actions/measures taken and the outcomes or results from said actions. The detailed descriptions are to best demonstrate their know-how on critical job competencies. Accomplishments should not be limited to those illustrating past handling on the specific job in question. Experience gained from volunteer work, university and even hobbies can be a helpful addition to provide examples of accomplishments relating to the targeted position.

## CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Applicant Reactions:** Accomplishment Record are often favored by professionals who feel they should be evaluated on their experience whereas entry-level applicants having relatively modest work experience voice less favorable reactions. It is important that accomplishment gained from other activities (i.e: school, community service) should be included and given credit to when applied to entry-level positions. However, some potential applicants may feel hesitate about writing narratives in details and stay away from applying.
- **Administration Method:** Accomplishment Record can be administered individually via paper and pencil or electronically to a large group of applicants at one.
- **Subgroup Differences:** In overall there are little or no performance differences are found between applicants of different races or between man and woman. However, the subgroup difference may be dependent on specific job competencies being assessed.



# Accomplishment Record

- **Development Costs:** Development timeframe is typically around two- four weeks, depending on the number of dimensions measured; Investment in time and cost are mainly used for benchmark development, scoring procedures, and rater training.
- **Administration Costs:** The scoring and form completion process are highly time consuming compared to other assessment methods with clear right or wrong answers (e.g., job knowledge tests); The number of applicants and competencies measured also have minor influences on the length of rating process.
- **Utility/ROI:** In scenarios when applicants are in favor of being evaluated on the basis of their work experience rather than standardized test, accomplishment record can produce higher return on investment. However, investing time and effort to build up and carry out this assessment method may not be a relevant strategy in situations where applicants have no concern to traditional tests.
- **Common Uses:** Commonly used to avoid applicants' negative reaction to traditional tests or "look-alikes" test. Accomplishment Record is also typically used as a screening device prior to a job interview.



# Biographical Data Test

Developed on the basis of behavioral consistency which states that past behavior is the best representative for one's behavior and future conduct, Biographical data test aims to predict overall performance for a given occupation by using items about past events and behaviors that can be reflections of personality attributes, interests, experiences, interests, skills and abilities.

Often, Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) are usually in charge of developing biodata test items. An item may ask "How many books have you read in the last 3 month?" or "How frequently you prioritize more challenging assignments over unfinished tasks?". These items specify scenarios likely to have happened in a person's life, and draw out about the person's typical action and behavior in such situations. Applicants have to choose one of several provided alternatives to best match their past behavior and experience. While a single response to a biodata item is of little value, responses collected across different biodata items with varied situations can produce powerful biodata patterns to predict future behavior on the job. Biodata measures often contain between 10 and 30 items and some instruments may include a hundred or more items. Response options typically adopt a 5- point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Biodata items are grouped into scales and categories on the foundations of the response from a sample of pretested applicants. In this way, Biodata item can be used to evaluate how effectively applicants performed in the past in competency areas closely matched to job-related criteria.

## CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Applicant Reactions:** Disapproving reactions can be observed from applicants as some bi data items may not appear to be job-related and therefore, considered unfair and invasive.
- **Subgroup Differences:** Biographical data test typically have less adverse impact on minority groups than do many other candidate assessment methods; However, to avoid being biased and stereotyping, biodata Items should be carefully written and should be based on experiences under a person's control (i.e., what a person did rather than what was done to the person).





# Biographical Data Test

- **Administration Method:** Administered individually but can be administered to large numbers of applicants via paper and pencil or electronically at one time.

- **Development Costs**

It takes both time and considerable expertise to develop biodata items, scoring system and validation methods. Large sampling pool of applicants are required to develop and substantiate the scoring strategy and additional samples may be needed to monitor the validity of the items for future applicants.

- **Administration Costs:** The administration of this candidate assessment method can be cost-effective and not time-consuming if an automated scoring system is in place.

- **Utility/ROI:** Benefits yielded by Biodata Tests can outweigh developmental and administrative costs as its high predictive ability can effectively support the identification and selection of top performing candidates.

- **Common Uses:** Commonly used along with cognitive ability tests to increase validity.





# Cognitive Ability Test

Cognitive ability tests is a common candidate assessment method used to evaluate candidates' capacities related to thinking, which usually are reasoning, memory, verbal or mathematical ability.

Cognitive ability tests pose specifically designed questions to assess applicants' competencies in using mental process to handle job-related issues or to gain new job knowledge. Cognitive ability tests commonly sum up the correct answers to all of the items to provide an overall score that can be a measure of general mental ability. Due to its popularity, traditional cognitive tests are commonly well-standardized and carry reliably scored items. Typical item formats are multiple choice, sentence completion, short answer, or true-false. Cognitive ability tests are professionally developed, widely available and should be recruiters' staple assessment method when there is no significant need for more customized tests that refer specifically to the particular job or organization.

## CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Applicant Reactions:** Tests customized and curated to match explicitly to specific jobs or types of jobs within the hiring organization are generally considered as more highly related to the job than commercially available tests.
- **Administration Method:** Can be administered to a large group of people at one time via paper and pencil or electronically.
- **Subgroup Differences:** Larger racial and ethnic differences can be found in Cognitive Ability Test in comparison with other valid predictors of job performance such as biodata, personality tests, and structured interviews.
- **Development Costs:** It is more expensive to structure a customized test than purchasing



# Cognitive Ability Test

off-the-shelf test.

- **Administration Costs:** Costs are generally low as the test requires few resources for administration and does not require skilled administrators.
- **Utility/ROI:** High return on investment if applicants are expected to have specific cognitive ability or high potential to quickly obtain job knowledge from on the job training.
- **Common Uses:** Most suitable used for jobs for which particular cognitive abilities are critical to effective job performance.



# Emotional Intelligence Test

Emotional Intelligence Test is used to measure EI ability by administering a set of questions to candidates and giving scores to the correctness of these responses using scoring systems that are based on either expert judgment (expert scoring) or concord among a group of people (consensus scoring). For example, in one EI ability test, applicants are required to watch a series of faces and give answer to how much of each of six emotions is present. In another, candidates may be required to give responses to specific emotional scenarios (e.g., predict how an anxious employee will react to a significantly increased workload), or solve emotion-related problems (e.g., identify the appropriate response when your colleague got fired and called you to talk about his/her upset over losing his/her job).

## CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Validity:** Emotional intelligence tests have been proven to play a pivotal role in predicting candidates' job performance especially when emotional maturity and development of positive interpersonal skill is critical to job success.
- **Applicant Reactions:** Applicants may face up difficulties when it comes to deciding the best answers to some of the questions.
- **Administration Method:** Emotional intelligence test can be administered manually with pencil or electronically.
- **Subgroup Differences:** It can be inferred that women are more adept at understanding facial expressions of emotions than are men as women tend to score better than men on tests of emotional intelligence.
- **Development Costs:** The cost for development of emotional intelligence test is typically higher than purchasing one.





# Emotional Intelligence Test

- **Administration Costs:** EI tests are affordable, requires very few resources for administration. Skilled administrators are rarely necessary.
- **Utility/ROI:** High return on investment if it is critical that candidates possess strong interpersonal skills.
- **Common Uses:** Used with occupations or positions requiring high frequency and high level of social interaction, cooperation, and teamwork.





# Integrity Test

An integrity test, which has its root in personality test, is a customized test used for evaluation of an applicant's tendency to be honest, trustworthy, and dependable. Counterproductive behaviors as disciplinary problems, sabotage, theft and absenteeism can be considered as indications of the lack of integrity. Integrity tests have been found to be valid measures of overall performance as integrity is in close relation to conscientiousness. It should be noted that Integrity tests can only be used to assess one's tendency toward integrity and can not eliminate dishonesty or theft at workplace. However, many researches strongly suggest that candidates who score poorly on these tests tend to be less suitable and less productive employees.

## CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Validity:** Integrity tests have been proven to be valid predictors of overall job performance as well as many counterproductive behaviors such as absenteeism, theft or violence tendency; It is advisable to combine integrity tests with cognitive ability tests to increase the accuracy of the prediction of overall job performance (i.e., high degree of incremental validity).
- **Applicant Reactions:** Integrity test may contain items that do not appear to be job related or seem to be a violation of applicants' private thoughts and feelings. Therefore, it is not surprising that some applicants may have negative reaction as they consider integrity test unnecessarily invasive. However, strong negative reactions have been found to be rare.
- **Administration Method:** Can be administered manually with pencil or electronically (e.g: video conference, video call).
- **Subgroup Differences:** There are very few, if any, average score differences found between men and women or applicants of different races or ethnicities. Both overt and personality-based integrity test scores seem to be correlated with age indicating younger 27 individuals have the potential to be more counterproductive employees, possibly due to the fact that the youth often



# Integrity Test

gravitate towards drug experimentation and other social delinquency.

- **Development Costs:** Developmental cost is typically higher than the cost of purchasing an integrity test.
- **Administration Costs:** Generally inexpensive, require very few resources for administration. Skilled administrators are rarely necessary.
- **Utility/ROI:** High return on investment in workplaces where counterproductive behaviors (e.g., theft of valuable property or sensitive information, absenteeism) can cause major disturbance and disruption to organizational functioning.
- **Common Uses:** Commonly used to measure applicants have the potential to be successful in jobs where performance requires a high level of honesty and dependability; Frequently administered to large groups of applicants as a screen-out measure.



# Structured Interview

The employment interview is the most popular assessment method of evaluating candidates. Research shows interview questions that are structured around specific job competencies recognized as critical to job success show a higher level of validity. The most common approaches to curating job-related questions are based on either situational or behavioral format.

In situational format, questions are designed to observe candidates' ability to project what they might do in a future scenario. An example can be "You have been assigned to work on a project with some of your coworkers. While on the job, you notice several of them goofing off. You know you are falling behind schedule to complete the work by the deadline. What would you do?"

Behavioral interview questions, which are based on the behavioral consistency principle that past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior, focus on applicants' past behavior demonstrated in scenarios that are relevant to the competency of interest. An example is: "Describe a situation where you analyzed and interpreted information".

## CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Validity:** Scenarios presented in structured interview questions are highly correlated to real-life situations encountered on the job. Therefore, performance in a structured interviews session can predict future job performance.
- **Applicant Reaction:** As this is a popular candidate assessment method, Interviews are typically favored by applicants. However, interviewers and applicants often prefer less structured formats.
- **Administration Method :** Conduct individually face-to-face or over telephone or via





# Structured Interview

video conference.

- **Subgroup Differences:** There are generally little or no performance differences found between male and female candidates or applicants of different races.
- **Development Costs:** Developmental Costs are often low. However, the Costs can slightly fluctuate with the complexity of the job, the number of questions used and development and administration of interviewer/ rater training.
- **Administration Costs:** Administration costs are not too expensive and may vary with interviewers training fee, rater time required, and number of applicants to assess.
- **Utility/ROI:** ROI is high in settings where your ideal new hires need to possess critical competencies upon entry into the job. If the competencies evaluated by the interview can be learned on the job or are not highly critical, the return on investment will be slightly lower.
- **Common Uses :** Most suitable for recruitment, selection and promotion purpose. Typically used in the final selection processes or in situations where candidate pool is modest or small-scale.





# Job Knowledge Test

Job knowledge tests typically contain a series of questions designed to evaluate technical or professional expertise in a specific knowledge area of applicants at the time of taking the test. Job knowledge tests' main purpose is to inform employer what an applicant currently knows and is mainly used in settings where applicants must possess a body of learned information prior to being hired. Therefore, Job knowledge tests are not relevant when applicants will enter training sessions after selection in the critical knowledge areas required for the job.

Tests of basic accounting principles, computer programming, financial management are some fine examples of Job Knowledge Tests. Job knowledge tests' items are typically built on the basis of an analysis of the tasks that involve the job. The staple format for a job knowledge test is multiple choice, written essays and fill-in-the-blank questions.

## CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Validity:** Job Knowledge tests contain knowledge areas that are quintessential of those needed to conduct the job. High scores on job knowledge tests are proven to be a significant correlate of good job performance. Customized job knowledge tests have been shown to have slightly higher validity than off-the-shelf tests.
- **Applicant Reactions:** Candidates often deem job knowledge tests a fair assessment tool as they are specifically designed to evaluate knowledge directly applied to job performance.
- **Administration Method:** Can be administered manually with paper and pencil or electronically (e.g: video call).
- **Subgroup Differences:** Job Knowledge Tests have the tendency to illustrate larger race and ethnic group differences than other valid predictors of job performance (e.g., Cognitive ability, personality tests).



# Job Knowledge Test

- **Development Costs:** It should be noted that job knowledge tests need frequent updates in term of test content and validation to serve the constant changes in the job. Typically job knowledge tests require greater financial resources and time to develop and cost of developing a customized test is usually more expensive than buying an off-the-shelf job knowledge test.
- **Administration Costs:** Generally inexpensive and require few resources for administration.
- **Utility/ROI:** Job knowledge tests can be a good investment if you need to hire candidates who already acquire a good body of technical expertise in specific job knowledge areas.
- **Common Uses:** most suitable for jobs requiring specific job knowledge on the first day of the job (i.e., where the knowledge is needed upon entry to the position)



# Personality Test

For the purpose of eliciting information about an applicant's motivations, preference, interests, emotional make-up, Personality tests are designed systematically and typically in the form of interviews, observer rating or in-basket exercises.

## CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Validity:** Personality tests can be utilized in various settings and for a wide range of criterion types (e.g: Teamwork, leadership, overall performance) and shown to be valid predictors of job performance. However, Personality tests are prone to being less valid than other types of assessment tool such as cognitive ability tests, assessment centers, and work samples and simulation.
- **Applicant Reactions:** Similar to Integrity/Honesty test, Applicant reactions can be negative as many items do not appear to be job-related or seem to be an infringement of applicants' reveal applicants' private thoughts and feelings.
- **Administration Method:** Can be administered manually with pencil or electronically (e.g: video call, skype).
- **Subgroup Differences:** There are very few, if any, average score differences found between men and women or applicants of different races or ethnicities, therefore, it is advisable to use a personality test in combination with another measure with greater potential for adverse impact (e.g., cognitive ability test) in the selection process.
- **Development Costs:** The development of a customized test generally cost more than purchasing an off-the-shelf test.
- **Administration Costs:** Costs are generally low as the test requires few resources for





# Personality Test

administration and does not require skilled administrators.

- Utility/ROI: High return on investment if the organization are in need of candidates who are adept in interpersonal skills or other job-related specific personality traits.
- Common Uses: Often used to evaluate if an applicant has the potential to perform job success in job settings where performance requires constant interaction and teamwork; Less effective for scripted jobs where strong interpersonal skills are not necessary.





# Reference Checking

It is not rare that candidates may attempt to raise their chances of getting a job offer by distorting their training and past job performance information. Therefore, Reference checking is needed to verify the accuracy of information given by candidates throughout the selection process. Reference data consisted mainly of job information given by former peers, direct reports, and supervisors can also be helpful in forecasting how applicants will perform in the job being filled according to behavioral consistency that past performance is a good predictor of future performance

## CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Validity:** Reference checks are helpful in predicting applicant job performance.
- **Applicant Reactions:** Some applicants may think that reference checks are invasive.
- **Administration Method:** Reference checks are typically conducted by phone using a structured interview format.
- **Subgroup Differences:** Generally little or no score differences are found between men and women or applicants of different races; It should be noted that employers should be careful to avoid asking questions that do not appear to be job-related.
- **Development Costs:** The cost to conduct reference checking is typically inexpensive and dependent of the complexity of the job, the structure of the interview (e.g: the number of questions needed) and administration of checker/interviewer training.
- **Administration Costs:** Generally inexpensive. Reference checking via telephone interview should take about 20 minutes to conduct per contact and it is advised to reach out to three contacts at the minimum.



# Reference Checking

- **Utility/ROI:** With proper handling, reference checking is useful in reducing selection errors and bringing about quality new hires at a minimal cost.
- **Common Uses:** Most suitable for the final stages of a selection process when there are a handful of finalists to select for the targeted position.



# Situational Judgement Test

Situational judgment tests (SJTs) are specifically designed to assess candidates' competencies in social functioning dimensions including problem-solving, interpersonal skill, negotiation skill, teamwork, leadership, conflict management and cultural awareness. In a typical SJT, applicants are required to handle the simulation of a work problem or a critical situation related to the job they are applying for.

The most common formats of SJTs are linear format and interactive format. With a linear format, applicants are presented with all situations and questions at once, in the same order. With interactive format, a branching process will play as the foundation for structuring SJTs as the scenarios and response options presented later in the test are dependent on applicant's responses to the options presented earlier in the test.

## CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Validity:** The tasks and activities given in the SJT scenarios mirror of the tasks and activities found on the job so the validity is high.
- **Applicant Reactions:** Candidate often perceive SJTs as a fair and transparent assessment tool.
- **Administration Method:** Can be administered in paper and pencil, computer-based or video-based format.
- **Subgroup Differences:** Little or no subgroup differences are found. Race differences in test scores may be smaller than those observed for other tests.
- **Development Costs:** SJTs are inexpensive in general and the overall cost may depend on cost related to subject matter experts.





# Situational Judgement Test

- **Administration Costs:** The most inexpensive administration method is delivering via paper and pencil but the cost may be slightly higher when using computer or video. Special administrator expertise is not necessary.
- **Utility/ROI:** High return on investment if you expect applicants to possess a high level of social and interpersonal skills upon entry into the job; If the applicants will be provided on the job training in skills measured by the tests, the return on investment will be significantly lower
- **Common Uses:** Can be structured and developed for a wide range of job, but will be suitable for managerial positions or other occupations where effective interpersonal interactions are required for job success.





# Work Samples & Simulations

In Work Sample tests, applicants are required to perform work activities that are similar to the tasks they will perform on the job if they get hired. For instance, candidates for Administrative Assistant Position may be asked to accurately and systematically file a stack of paperwork. Similar to job knowledge tests, work sample tests should be used in situations where applicants need to possess specifically required competencies upon entry into the position.

In addition, performance tests can be designed to mirror very broad aspects of the position that are based on basic competencies identified as critical to job performance. For example, as the aforementioned Administrative Assistant position requires individuals to regularly find specific materials to answer myriad questions from upset or hostile customers, recruiters may build up a single exercise to measure the general competencies such as an interactive role-play between the applicant and a trained actor so that employers can observe and assess applicant's problem solving, communication, and interpersonal skills.

## CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Validity:** Applicants are often asked to conduct tasks that are very representative of the tasks performed on the job and test performance on the tests relates highly to performance on the job.
- **Applicant Reactions:** Applicants often perceive work samples test as being very fair.
- **Administration Method:** Sample Test should be administered individually.
- **Subgroup Differences:** Generally little or no performance differences are found between men and women or applicants of different races.
- **Development Costs:** It is not inexpensive to develop a well-curated work sample and



# Work Samples & Simulations

simulation tests.

- **Administration Costs:** Can be time-consuming and costly to administer. Requires individuals to observe and evaluate applicant performance.
- **Utility/ROI:** High return on investment if applicants are expected to possess critical competencies upon entry into the job. If the applicants will receive on the job training in competencies measured by the tests, the return on investment will be significantly lower.
- **Common Uses:** Best used for positions require a high-level of job-related competencies to acquire job success.



# Conclusion

The strength of your recruiting program is indicative of the company itself. With many businesses using outdated methods of candidate assessment, employing diverse assessment methods can be the one thing that sets you apart and above from your competitors. In addition to strategic planning on our assessment methods, creative digital recruiting techniques like Rakuna can lend you a powerful hand in deeply engaging and understanding your candidate. A combination of traditional assessment methodology and recruiting technology can make it a lot easier to find the perfect candidate.

## About Rakuna

Rakuna is the campus recruiting platform redefining how top employers recruit young people. The Rakuna Platform includes [Rakuna Recruit](#), the simplest mobile app for recruiting events, and [Rakuna Recruit Dashboard](#), the candidate relationship management dashboard for campus recruiting. We are how companies hire millennials.

For more tips and tricks on campus recruiting and millennial recruiting, visit our blog at [www.rakuna.co/blog](http://www.rakuna.co/blog), subscribe to “In & Outs of Recruiting Millennials” vidcast, and join the conversation on our [LinkedIn Group](#).

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The following Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) website contains information on Work Samples and Simulations:

[http://www.siop.org/workplace/employment%20testing/employment\\_testing\\_toc.aspx](http://www.siop.org/workplace/employment%20testing/employment_testing_toc.aspx)