



# Select once, select right and save.

Jenny Clavio has over 20 years' experience in psychological testing in both consulting and corporate environments. Her company, Jenny Clavio Consulting, works with clients both nationally and internationally in areas such as leadership and management development, culture change, team building and psychological assessment services.

Every business owner will agree that finding the 'right' person for a job is often difficult.

The successful candidate will need to be:

- › able to do the job
- › a good fit with the team and culture
- › easy to manage, and
- › have a positive impact on the profitability of the business.

Before making crucial recruitment decisions selectors need to take the time to get as much available information as possible about individual candidates. Beyond resume screens, interview impressions and favourable reference checks a useful tool to extract such information is **personality and ability testing**. Often also referred to as **psychological assessment** a full assessment usually involves more comprehensive testing.

**Psychological assessment** has beneficial applications where it is necessary to know more about a new recruit such as strengths and weaknesses, potential for derailment or development, training needs, job-match, culture-fit and career direction. To this end, **assessment measures can save SMEs a significant amount of time, cost and hassle** in recruitment and selection processes.

**Tests measure not only what a person can do now, but what they are capable of doing in the future.**

Assessments can also gather information on how to secure optimum performance, emotional stability, reactions to frustrations and what motivates and de-motivates a potential recruit. The breadth of useful information that can be gathered has seen psychological tests used extensively in recruitment and selection practices.

## **Recruitment and selection**

Psychological assessments can provide organisations with an objective opinion on a candidate's suitability for a role by augmenting data gained through interviews, referees and appraisal of a track record. When combined with these, psychological data increases the likelihood of making a successful selection decision. It also highlights specific areas to further explore with referees and cover in detail with candidates at subsequent interviews.

Testing assesses skills and behaviours often difficult to determine through a candidate's experience alone. For example, a marketing/sales position may require a candidate to have an interest in people, ability to persuade and influence, work well under pressure and make decisions based on judgement. These traits may be difficult to assess by looking at a CV alone.

Ultimately, testing will help an organisation to collect broader information about an individual to assist in making a more informed and fairer recruitment decision.

## **Other uses of testing**

Apart from recruitment, psychological assessment can also be used for the following:

### **Employee development**

Combined with effective coaching and

counselling techniques testing can prove highly effective in employee development. Psychological testing can help identify the 'real' or root cause of a performance problem and provide a framework for preparing a realistic and achievable development plan.

### Determining training needs

Individual training needs can be self-evident without testing. However, testing adds another layer of depth to help determine the most appropriate training activity, eg group or one-on-one training. It can also identify underlying issues that may influence training effectiveness: low confidence, learning ability or personal development needs such as time management, organisational skills, assertiveness or lack of confidence.

### Career guidance

Testing is also frequently used for people who are at a 'cross-roads' in their career and need direction. Ability, personality and interest testing can gauge those positions and careers most suited to an individual within and external to a company. This can also benefit both the individual and the company by improving confidence, motivation and enthusiasm once the 'guesswork' attached to career path planning is alleviated.

### Team development

A unique benefit to any SME is a group/team evaluation process designed to assist managers to understand and identify not only key skills and strengths within their team but also weaknesses that can impact a team's effectiveness. Group assessment provides critical information for future training and

development opportunities as well as information that will assist a manager to understand, better manage and motivate team members.

## The test or range of tests can be tailored to address specific position description requirements.

### Benefits of testing

Testing offers the following advantages:

- › Adds depth of knowledge of a person.
- › Objectivity - results are not distorted by personal opinion or bias.
- › Accuracy – far more effective than other methods of assessment as reliable tests have been carefully standardised using large sample groups.
- › Prediction – tests measure not only what a person can do now, but what they are capable of doing in the future. Important in assessing potential for development.
- › Comprehensive approach - testing is not a standalone process and should not be used without knowledge of work history and reference checking. It provides a more comprehensive evaluation so no significant factors are overlooked.

### Range of tests

The range or 'battery' of tests available typically covers:

- › verbal, numerical and abstract reasoning
- › aptitude testing
- › personality assessment
- › attitudes and values
- › leadership inventories

Tests can be tailored to specific position requirements though in general test providers would comment on the following:

- › analytical thinking - capacity to learn, problem solve, make decisions
- › written and spoken communication skills
- › ability to work with numbers, interpret and analyse data
- › customer service orientation
- › sales ability and potential
- › capacity to cope with pressure
- › personal initiative and confidence
- › leadership potential
- › work approach and self-discipline
- › team and people skills
- › willingness to work within company procedures and systems
- › commitment and loyalty
- › ambition and drive

Most organisations are under pressure to do more with less – to improve efficiencies, employee productivity and profitability with fewer resources. For some SMEs psychological assessment may sound unnecessary and expensive. However, what is the real cost to your business if you employ the wrong candidate?

