Selecting Psychometric Assessments for Hiring

The Art of Selecting Assessments

At the core of fair hiring practices is pre-defining required skills, abilities, knowledge and other criteria for a job and how to measure applicants against those criteria. Not only does this ensure that every applicant is evaluated fairly and equally, it is also essential for building a compliant process that meets EEOC and/or OFCCP standards. Imagine how much easier it will be to justify hiring decisions if the requirements were pre-defined, explained, and measured objectively.

One common method of measuring against required skills, abilities, knowledge and other criteria is through psychometric assessments.

Career.Place, for example, uses embedded assessments to evaluate candidate 'soft traits' – those behavior characteristics that are so critical for job performance, and yet, so difficult to self-identify. Have you ever conducted a job interview where the candidate said;

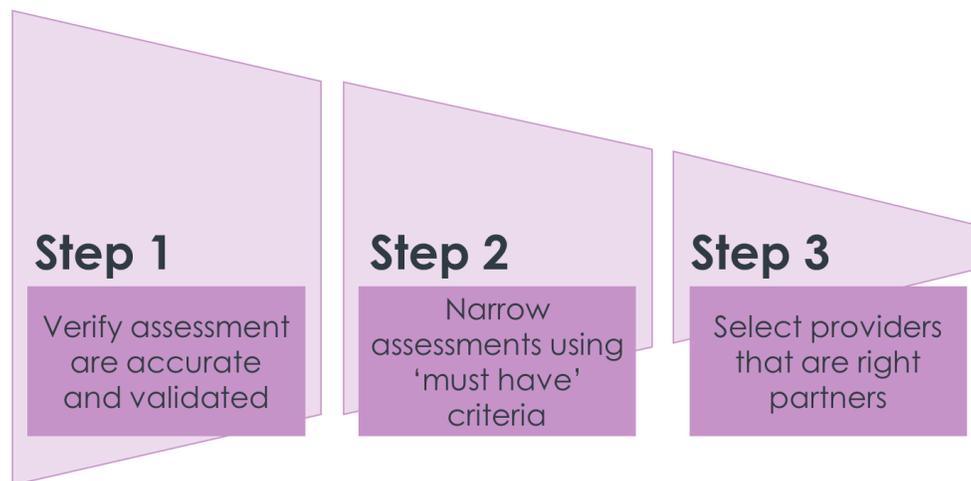*"You know, I am not good at collaboration, I hate following directions, and I am not at all reliable."*

Of course not! And yet, we all know those individuals…

But, because we have assessments as part of our solution, we are often asked how we chose which assessments (and assessment provider) to use out of the hundreds available.

> **The short answer**: Very carefully.

Yeah, okay, I wouldn't accept that answer either. Let's try again:

> **The slightly longer answer:** We used a three-step RFP-like process to systematically evaluate each provider and assessment offering by multiple pre-defined criteria across several facets. We funneled the choices down through each round of evaluation from hundreds, to dozens, to a few, to one.

Step 1
Verify assessment are accurate and validated

Step 2
Narrow assessments using 'must have' criteria

Step 3
Select providers that are right partners

Curious for more detail on exactly what criteria we used, why, and what happened? Well, you are in luck – that is exactly the topic of this paper. Read on if you are (or are going to be) selecting assessments (and their provider) to integrate with your hiring process, want to know more about what we are doing and why, or simply are curious about psychometric assessments and how they can be used (or mis-used) for hiring.

What to skip ahead and just get the answers – we have you covered too. We have the short-short version at the end of the whitepaper to help enable your assessment selection process.

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Step 0: What exactly are psychometric assessments?

Before diving into how to select assessments, it is worth taking a quick step back and answering the question – what exactly are psychometric assessments?

Assessments are tests that measure the level of the test taker's knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics.

For example, think back to school when you took a test – that test was designed to measure your knowledge of the topic (math or science or your understanding of the last book you were assigned to read).

However, unlike those tests in school, psychometric assessments can measure much more than one's memory of what happened in a book. Assessments can measure everything from cognitive ability to level of extroversion, to how diligent someone is.

Assessments are incredible tools to assist in evaluating

> **BACKGROUND: Types of psychometric assessments**
>
> Here are four common types of psychometric assessments.
>
> 1. **Cognitive**: measuring a person's ability to reason and think through problems.
> 2. **Hard skill**: measuring a person's knowledge or proficiency in a specific discipline such as project management, employment law or Excel.
> 3. **Soft trait / personality**: measuring a person's inclination toward a specific behavior such as integrity, persistence, or cooperation.
> 4. **Situational judgement**: measuring a person's decision-making by asking how candidates will react to specific situations.

talent. **The RIGHT assessments used in the RIGHT way** provide objective evaluations of criteria that are far more accurate than interviews alone. Unfortunately, choosing the wrong assessments or assessments used in the wrong way can lead to bad choices, biases, and even discriminatory practices that violates compliance standards. So, before choosing the right assessments to use in the right way, the first step is to get rid of the wrong assessments.

Step 1: Separating good psychometric assessments from the unicorn poop

There are thousands of assessments and hundreds of assessment providers all excited to provide you with their version of the "best assessment ever created". There are long assessments full of colorful results, short, fast assessments that will tell you "everything you need to know" about a candidate in ten minutes, digital assessments that look more like games, and assessments that look more like the SATs from when we were teenagers – complete with number two pencil and oval bubbles. But… let me let you in on a little secret:

> **The little secret**: Not all of those assessments do as claimed… I know, crazy, right!
>
> In fact, some of them are downright bunk – yup; they are nothing but colorful, dazzling, unicorn poop! (can I say 'unicorn poop' in a whitepaper? I am just going to go for it.)
>
> *For example: if the result tells you which Harry Potter character you are… probably unicorn poop.*

Bad assessments that don't do as they claim can add to your expense without improving the candidate selection process. However, the consequences of using bad assessments may be much worse, such as removing great candidates, adding bias, and in some cases, creating a discriminatory process that will give an unfair advantage or disadvantage to protected groups – leaving your company out of compliance and vulnerable to expensive lawsuits.

So before diving into finding the best assessment for your hiring process, the first step is removing the ones that are not good for any professional process.

Before considering any assessment, ask the following questions:

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1) Does the assessment measure what it is supposed to be measuring?

Not all assessments measure what they claim to measure in their flashy marketing material. When evaluating what the assessment is measuring, identify the following:

- **Definition of what is being measured**: whether traits, skills, knowledge, or behaviors, whatever is being measured must include a strong, clear definition.

- **A defined scale**: what is a high vs. a low score, and what does it mean to be high or low.

- **A wide variability**: How much differentiation does the scale provide? If everyone scores pretty much the same, then there is nothing to distinguish one candidate from another.

- **Method of validating the measurements:** Evidence that the data is valid. Common methods include comparing assessments results against a known and validated assessment measuring the same thing, using control groups with known outcomes used (for example a test measuring 'do you know Java' administered to a group of Java developers and non-Java developers), and having recognized experts verify the outcomes.

> **TIP: When evaluating if an assessment is measuring what it claims: Ask for "Validity Evidence"**
>
> Validity Evidence is the technical term for evidence that the assessment measures what it is supposed to measure.

Example: "analytical thinking"

- *Definition: A cognitive trait measuring the ability for an individual to analyze information and use logic to address work-related issues and problems.*

- *Scale: Low analytical thinking means the individual must be provided with step-by-step directions to execute a task and high analytical thinking means the individual can solve complex problems.*

- *Variability: Normal distribution (a curve centered around what is defined as 'average')*

- *Method of validation: Comparison against other known 'analytical thinking' assessments*

When evaluating what is measured, if you don't understand what is being measured, the scale, or the distribution of results – **ASK**! If it still doesn't make sense after the provider explains it to you, that is a yellow flag. Either get a third-party expert to help you evaluate the assessment or walk away – if the provider can't explain what the assessment is doing clearly, they are probably not the provider for you.

2) Is the assessment accurate?

Once you know what the assessment is measuring, evaluate the accuracy of that measurement. Here are some questions you should be asking:

- **How reliable are the measurements?** Reliability is another term for "consistency", the more reliable an assessment, the more it will consistently produce the same results (someone taking the assessments today will get the same results if they take the test tomorrow). Assessments will never be totally accurate, but the more reliable, the better. *Note: reliability is one reason why "how" you use the assessments is very important, but more on that later*.

> **TIP: Reliability on a 0.00 – 1.00 scale: shoot for 0.70 +**
>
> Reliability is measured on a scale that measures from 0.00 to 1.00 where:
>
> 0 = no consistency (a random number generator)
>
> 1 = complete consistency (a ruler)
>
> The higher the better, but the industry standard is a reliability of at least 0.70.

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- **How big was the data set?** Was the assessment validated with a hundred data points? A thousand? Ten thousand? The larger the data set, the better, however there is a minimum required before the results become meaningful (i.e. showing a clear pattern and not just lucky guesses).
    - **For normative data** (i.e. general data): several hundred if not thousands.
    - **For job-specific data**: depends on job – could be dozens – could be hundreds.
- **Who is represented in the data?** Data points are the individuals who took the assessment. Just as important as how many there were, is who they were. For example, an assessment that measures cognitive ability (intelligence) given only to Harvard graduate students, will not have an accurate distribution because it is only measuring relatively smart people. Look for a representative sample – i.e. a distribution that reflects who you want to measure in terms of location (same country you plan to use it in), demographics, types of roles, education, etc.
- **How are the results protected?** Assessments are no good if there is too much cheating affecting the results. Understand how the assessments are being protected from cheating. Common techniques include monitoring for leaked questions, monitoring results for anomalies, and randomizing question order. More sophisticated techniques also include randomly selecting questions from a larger library for each test taker or remote proctoring.

Just like with what is measured, don't be shy to ask a lot of questions when determining assessment accuracy, especially if you don't have an expert handy.

3) Does the assessment have minimal inappropriate adverse impact?

Many assessments have differences in performance between two defined groups. This is not within itself a bad thing. For example, women are, on average shorter than men – it is not bad, it just is. A tape measurer is not inherently biased against women just because it measures women as generally shorter. When the results are used to determine who is selected for a job, this difference is called **adverse impact**.

Adverse impact is when members of a protected class (such as women) are selected at a lower rate than another class (such as men).

Inappropriate adverse impact is when members of a protected class are selected at a lower rate than another class for reasons that do not pertain to the job.

Inappropriate Adverse impact happens when either:

1. The assessment is not accurately measuring what it claims to measure; i.e. biasing the results to give an unfair advantage to one group over another.

    Example: an assessment that uses references to popular 80's movies to measure ethics (which has nothing to do with 80's movie knowledge) will put younger applicants at a disadvantage because they are less likely to have seen them.

2. What is being measured by the assessments has performance differences between two groups and the results are unrelated to what is needed for the job, biasing the results to give one group an unfair advantage over another.

    Example: higher height values (where men are generally taller) are used to rank engineer candidates.

BACKGROUND: Illustration of group differences.

Group differences exists when one group consistently measures differently than another group.
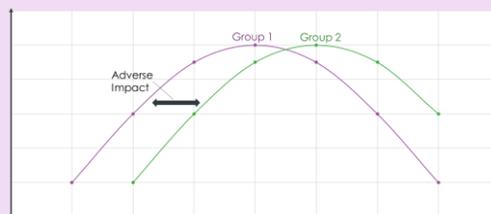
Example: a tape measurer will consistently measure women as shorter than men. Not all women are shorter than all men, but on average, women will score 'lower' on height.

Choosing assessments with the lowest group differences while still accurately and reliably measuring the required trait/skill will minimize the risk of inappropriate adverse impact.

4) Is the assessment linked to job performance?

Tools can be perfectly designed, masterfully built, and perform flawlessly, but none of that matters if what it performs is not what you need. The best made blender in the world isn't going to help you if the goal is to grill a steak. The same goes for assessments. It isn't enough that it does what it is designed to do and does it well, it also has to be designed to do what you NEED it to do. In this case, how well the assessment results predict who is most likely to be successful on the job. This is called **criterion-related validity** and is the gold standard of evidence you want to see.

Of course, the critical element here is knowing what success actually is for the job – what is it the applicants need to be (or be able to do) to be successful. And that brings us to step 2: defining what exactly you need so you can find the assessments that meet those needs.

Step 2: Narrowing Assessments by 'MUST HAVE' Criteria

After removing the wrong assessments in Step 1, Step 2 takes a deeper dive to find **the RIGHT assessments used in the RIGHT way.** Of course, to do this, you need MUST HAVE criteria. Every MUST HAVE criteria list will be different as every company and job is different. For example, the requirements used to find a Vice President of Sales is very different than the requirements for an entry level support representative.

There is a difference between MUST HAVE (yes, I am putting it in all caps for a reason) and nice to have. MUST HAVE are the criteria that will make or break a deal. If an assessment doesn't have it, you will not use it – period. On the other hand, "nice to have" (also known as preferences, should have, etc.) are all negotiable. It is best to have a list of both MUST HAVE's and other desirable requirements, just make sure they are clearly identified so you don't remove a great candidate because it is missing a nice to have.

Identifying true MUST HAVEs is critical. Just as picking bad assessments can introduce bias and discriminatory practices, so can selecting candidates based on the wrong criteria.

> *For example: as described in the Adverse Impact section above, an assessment that accurately measures height is still going to introduce discrimination if that metric is applied to a job where height doesn't matter as men are on average taller than women.*

BACKGROUND: Career.Place MUST HAVE criteria

The career.place goal for integrated assessments was to measure soft-skills accurately enough to identify those who would not likely be successful while providing an easy, integrated experience for both applicants and employers with an added value for applicants.

1. **Measures a wide range of job traits:** With a wide range of applicable traits, we can mix and match traits based on the job occupation to predictive success for a wide-range of disciplines, occupations, and roles.

2. **Very low group differences**: Within the scope of measuring impactful traits, we looked for assessments with minimal demographic differences, minimizing adverse impact.

3. **No time limits**: Time limits can negatively impact results for particular groups independent of the trait being measured, such as those with disabilities or with English as a second language.

4. **Digital format with APIs**: To create an easy, seamless experience, we required technology that could 'talk' to career.place and share results.

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Here are some guidelines for identifying MUST HAVE criteria:

1) Identify what is required to be successful at the job

As stated earlier, there are assessment to measure just about anything. However, not everything matters for each job or each company. Before looking for the right assessment, you must know what "right" means. What are the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics required to be successful at the job and in the organization? When you do this:

- **Separate what candidates must have vs. what is trainable/teachable**. While it is great to have someone who can do it all on day one, do you really want to pass up great candidates because they lack a skill that can be easily taught?

  Identify assessments that measure what cannot or will not be trained/taught.

- **Identify what is objectively measurable versus preferences**. Being a great writer, for example, has elements of both. Knowing grammar and sentence structure is objectively measurable. Having that style that fits in perfectly with the team is preference and better served through writing samples then assessments.

  Assessments are a good tool for objective requirements.

> **BACKGROUND: Causality vs. Probability**
>
> Here is the difference between causality and probability.
>
> **Probability: Overlap in data**
> If you are A, you are likely B
>
> *Example: cat lovers tend to prefer chocolate chip cookies*
>
> **Causality: Because of one, the other occurs**
> Because you are A, you are going to be B.
>
> *Example: if you're standing in the rain, you'll get wet*
>
> In hiring, a great example how this is often confused is the Myers Brigg personality test. ENTJs (Extraversion, Intuition, Thinking, Judgement) are more common in C-suite executives than some other personality types. But being an ENTJ does NOT make you more likely to be a successful C-suite executive. This is probability, not causality.

Understanding the needs of the job will give you a list of must-have traits that are objectively measurable and matter for success on the job. Now it is a matter of finding assessment(s) that measure those traits.

## 2) Define how the assessments will be used in the hiring process

I know what you are thinking…

> "How it is being used? To assess candidates to see if I should hire them, of course"

And yes, hopefully you are not considering using assessments just for entertainment (though, there are assessments that are good for that too). However, the 'how' is much more than simply to 'assess candidates'. How the assessments are used within the process determines how accurate you need the assessment to be, and the depths of the results.

There are two basic ways to think about using assessments:

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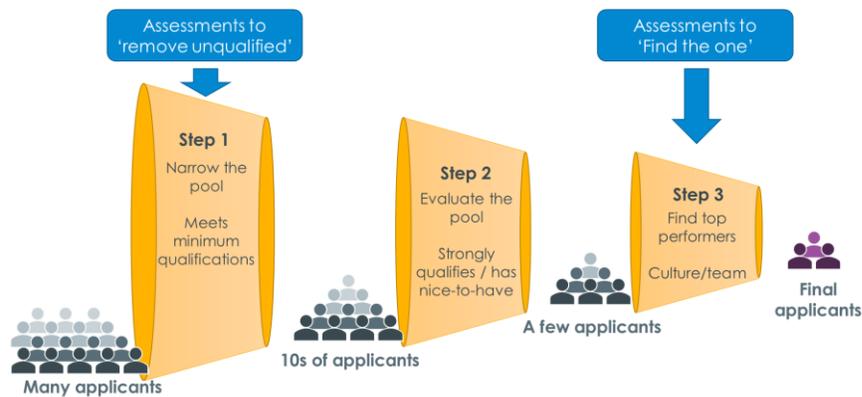
1. **Remove unqualified**. In this case, assessments are used to **screen out** candidates by ensuring applicants meet basic thresholds rather than finding those who are strongest at what is being measured. Administer this assessment to everyone who meets minimum requirements. Don't weed out candidates based on resumes first to save money as that introduces needless bias.

   For assessments to remove unqualified applicants, optimize your selection based on speed and cost rather than depth of results and reporting, as you only need 'good enough' to assess if someone meets basic thresholds to remove applicants who will be clearly unsuccessful. So, in this stage, it doesn't matter if they are 90 vs. 100 on a 100-point scale, but rather if they are generally on one end or the other of the spectrum.

   Note: this does not mean that you want to use 'unicorn poop' (i.e. the assessments still need to measure something that matters, accurately, with low adverse impact), but you don't need the two-hour long assessment at $100/each to get down into minute result details.

   For assessments to remove unqualified applicants: prioritize speed & cost over detailed depth

2. **Find the One**. In this case, assessments are used to **screen in** candidates by ranking or selecting the strongest candidates based on what is being measured to help with final selection. When possible, only administer these assessments to the final short-list of candidates, saving money while respecting the time and efforts of your candidate pool.

For assessments to select the best candidates, select assessments with depth in the results and clear, actionable reporting (in this stage, a 90 vs. 100 on a 100-point scale could mean the difference between hiring or not hiring).

Note: Don't measure everything, especially if you have a long list of required knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics. Select and assess only the most important things as these assessments take time and tend to be more expensive. Be cognizant of how much you are asking from both your candidate and your budget with the assessment battery. These assessments tend to be very job specific, so you may have different assessments for each position.

For assessments to find the few or the one: prioritize granularity, depth, and clear actionable reporting

> **Execution TIP: Apply for your job**
>
> *Are you asking too much from your applicants?*
>
> There is an easy way to evaluate this: go through the process yourself. Apply for the job and do all the things you are asking of applicants to make sure it is not too much.
>
> *Are you testing for the right things?*
>
> Ask subject matter experts, managers, and top performers what the top critical traits are for the job, and measure for that.
>
> Note: be careful – you don't want to confuse copying top performers with copying things that are not relevant, such as sex, or race, or favorite baseball team.

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These two basic ways to use assessments can also be used in combination – with high-level assessments to narrow the talent pool at the beginning of the process and specific, granular assessments to select the final few at the end of the process. Just be cautious of time and money and make sure what you are getting is worth the investment.

3) Identify requirements for your process – how your organization hires

Knowing what to measure and when to measure it is a great start, but you must also consider how the assessments will fit into your organization's hiring process and experience. For example, while many assessments are digital, some are still paper-based, which means they require a proctored environment. Some are games, while others look more like old-school multiple choice. They are offered at different reading levels and complexity, timed or untimed, and with different types of interfaces.

Here are a few things to consider:

- **How the assessment is administered**: For example:

    - **Proctored**: Assessments are given digitally or on paper in a room with someone watching the test takers to make sure there is no cheating.

    - **Virtually-proctored**: Assessments are given in a virtual 'room' where everyone signs in and shows credentials to a moderator and are recorded while taking the test.

    - **Un-proctored**: Assessments are taken digitally whenever the test taker wants and there is no visual capture of the test taker's identity or activities while taking the test.

    Assessments are proctored for two reasons: 1) to minimize risk of cheaters and 2) if the assessment is paper-based and there is no other way to administer them. However, proctoring adds a lot of expense and inconvenience to the process without necessarily improving the results.

    If you have huge concerns with cheaters or you are testing for something so specific it is only found in proctored assessments or so sensitive it can't be done digitally, go ahead with the proctored assessments. Otherwise, a well-designed talent evaluation process that combines assessments with other steps should be more than enough risk mitigation to catch cheaters.

    Select proctored assessments only if necessary

- **Assessment experience**: For example:

    o **'Traditional' assessments** with multiple choice bubbles or scales.

    o **'Interactive' assessments** with avatars (cartoons) asking the questions and the selections in dialog boxes like 90's style video games.

    o **'Game' assessments** that literally feel like playing a game on your phone – such as popping bubbles or swiping at objects.

    While there may be some benefits to one version over another (such as the common wisdom that younger applicants will like the game-based assessments), don't let the marketing fool you – ask the same questions that you would for any other (see step 1).

    While the marketing material may not matter, some assessment experience may fit your culture and hiring process better than others, choose the experience that is the right fit for you.

    Ignore the marketing, choose the Assessment experience that fits your organization

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- **Assessment accessibility**: Some assessments are more accessible than others – and I don't mean how fast the website loads. Attributes such as timed vs. untimed, reading level, ease of selecting answers, and multi-language options all make the assessments more or less accessible to certain groups.

  For example: consider people with dyslexia, or a physical disability that slows or inhibits hand movements, or those with English as a second language. Having assessments with time limits will put individuals in these groups at a disadvantage because they can't move as fast as others. In this case, the assessments may score them as lower than their actual level (capabilities/qualifications).

  When selecting assessments, make sure they are accessible to your target talent pool. Here are some other assessment attributes to be aware of when considering accessibility:

  - **Timed vs. untimed:** Timed assessments will put those who move slower for reasons other than knowledge at a disadvantage such as those with reading or movement disabilities or English as a second language. If what is being measured doesn't require speed, or if it can be measured in a way that does not require time limits, consider if timed is the right option.

  - **Reading level:** The more sophisticated the language, the harder it will be for those with reading disabilities, lower levels of education, and English as a second language. If what is being measured does not require high reading levels, consider finding assessments that are written with more basic language – a common bar is a sixth-grade reading level.

  - **Ease of interface:** Popping bubbles, swiping objects, or rapidly pressing the "F" vs "J" keys may be fun, but it could also be difficult or impossible for someone with a physical disability, such as difficulty moving or blindness. Evaluate the interface to make sure it is not unnecessarily difficult for particular groups to use.

  - **Color:** Some assessments have a beautiful, colorful interface and use techniques like green is good and red is bad. However, not everyone can see the difference between green and red (color blindness). A handy little trick – if the assessments are still easy to understand in grey-scale, then they are accessible independent of what colors people can or can't see.

Selecting Psychometric Assessments for Hiring

- **Assessment technology**: For digital assessments, providers may offer a lot of additional features to support the assessments. Based on your process and needs, the right set of features could save a lot of time and greatly improve the user experience for both the organization and the applicants.

  Here are a few potential features to consider:

  - **Integration:** If you are using assessments alongside other technologies as part of your hiring process (such as an applicant tracking system or interview platform), you may benefit from integration capabilities. Integrations can be used, for example, to automatically send you results for candidates, tell your system that a candidate is in progress, and to let your system automatically tell the assessment provider to send tests to a candidate.

    To evaluate integrations: Start by defining what information you want shared, processes you want automated and possible integrations with other technologies. Then see if the assessment providers can do it.

  - **Applicant Login:** Asking applicants to remember login credentials (user name / password) can be a sticky point in user experience. If the assessment provider requires credentials and this experience is important for you, there are providers that offer technologies to minimize this problem. For example, solutions that use credentials from another site, like a job board or solutions that provide the option for candidates to use credentials they already have with common interfaces such as Google or Facebook.

  - **Alerts & email notifications:** How are you planning to tell your applicants that the assessment is ready for them? If you don't have an answer (or a good answer), your assessment provider may have you covered. Some technologies include automatic notifications, notifying your applicants when it is time to take an assessment. There are some that will also send reminders if the applicants don't start or complete the assessments as well as thank you messages to let the applicants know when they successfully completed and submitted the assessments.

    Automatic notifications can extend internally as well, letting your hiring team know when assessments are submitted and that results are ready to be reviewed.

> **Execution TIP: Integrated vs. integrate-able**
>
> Asking if assessments (or any technology) **CAN** integrate vs. if it **DOES** integrate are two different things.
>
> > *CAN integrate: the provider can build it.*
> >
> > *DOES integrate: the provider already built it.*
>
> **CAN** is not a bad thing; career.place is built on modern APIs so it CAN integrate with many things, and we build integrations as we need them. The great thing about CAN, it is an opportunity to make sure the integrations are exactly as you want them.
>
> When looking at **CAN**, consider the following:
>
> 1) How easily can the provider build the integrations – get a good sense of time and effort.
> 2) How much will it cost you?
> 3) How long will it take to get the integration (not how much time they need, but when they will deliver it).
>
> When looking at **DOES**, consider the following:
>
> 1) How exactly does the integration work – is it doing what you want it to do?
> 2) How much does it cost and what is the cost structure?
> 3) How is it supported –what happens when there is a problem or the solution it integrates with changes?

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Step 3: Selecting the right partner

Welcome to Step 3! You are down to the short list of great assessments that meet your needs. Now let's shift the focus from the assessments to the provider. Just like assessments, not all assessment providers are created equally. For example, some are very hands-on partner types with great consultative offerings. Others are more hands-off, self-service type of providers. Picking a provider that will meet your needs is just as important as picking the right assessments. Pick wrong and you may find yourself wasting a lot of money or time.

Here are some basics for evaluating the provider:

1) The cost

If you are like pretty much everyone else, you are on a budget. While I have yet to meet anyone who doesn't want an unlimited budget, I have also yet to meet anyone who has an unlimited budget. So, before wasting any of your or the provider's time, make sure what they have to offer makes sense with your budget.

To calculate costs, be sure to consider the following:

- **Assessment costs**: This could be a per-assessment or per-candidate cost, an annual subscription, a per-report model, or a per proctored-event model to name a few. Whatever the cost structure, calculate what the likely total cost is going to be per year.

  For example, an assessment is $100 per candidate. You are planning to hire 100 people this year, and you are planning to use the assessment as a SCREEN OUT (or remove unqualified). Meaning you would give it to an average of 20 candidates per job to help weed out the bad fits. The assessment costs per year would be: $100/candidate * 100 jobs * 20 candidates per job = $200,000.

- **Set-up costs**: Some providers require various 'set-up' costs. Examples of this include technology set-up (such as cost to integrate), assessment set-up (such as cost to evaluate the job and recommend the right assessments), and training (such as cost of a training program for certification to use the assessment).

- **Maintenance / support costs**: Some providers may require a monthly or annual fee beyond the assessment costs for continued usage of their solution. For example, if annual training is required to renew certifications or if there is an annual fee for maintaining an integration.

- **Internal costs**: An often-overlooked cost factor for assessments is the time and resources it will take to drive adoption internally. What resources are you going to need within the organization (or through a third party) to design, implement, test, roll-out, and maintain the assessments. How much are those resources costing (i.e. hourly rate of each resource * the number of hours they will likely spend).

2) Support availability

Questions are going to come up as you start using assessments from both the organization and the candidates. Questions will cover everything from a hiring manager asking how to interpret a number on a report, to a candidate getting confused with how to answer a question, to a recruiter dealing with a technical problem that, if not addressed, is going to royally mess up a career fair they have been planning for months. Make sure the providers are capable of handling whatever support needs your team and candidates have.

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When reviewing support policies, consider the following:

- **Hours of operation:** When will your internal teams likely have questions or need help? What about your candidates? Does this match when the provider will be available?

- **Primary support method**: This could be phone, email, or an integrated messaging system. Be sure to ask for both you and for your applicants – applicants will have questions too.

- **Available support staff**: Most providers will have a group of support staff that will answer questions as available, however some may offer a dedicated customer success / support representative with a direct line for their employers. Note: a dedicated representative is only necessary if you expect very high volumes of usage or if you have time or data sensitive requirements.

- **Escalation path**: what the provider will do when the primary support method doesn't work.

- **Emergency policy**: What the provider will do when there is an emergency, especially outside the hours of operation. Be sure to understand how the provider defines 'emergency'.

- **Technology maintenance policy**: What the provider will do when there is a problem with the technology – i.e. a bug. Understand how the provider will handle bug fixes (steps, communication, time to resolution).

3) Consultative services

So, how comfortable are you with correctly using assessments in the hiring process? Specifically, when to use them, how to use them, how to interpret the results, and how to weigh those results alongside other data to make a hiring decision?

If your answer is: "*Totally comfortable, I got this!*" that's great… maybe. If that statement is followed by:

"*We have IO psychologists on staff who have a well-developed plan*"

Or

"*We are using a solution that properly integrates the assessments into the right place, using data-driven mapping to ensure relevance to the jobs*" (like career.place!)

Then fantastic.

But… if your follow-up is:

"*I mean, how hard could it be?*"

Or

"*Wait, what was the question again…*"

That could be a great indication that you may not "got this".

For those that don't "got this", no problem (you are not alone!). Don't let that deter you from using assessments, rather, look for providers that offer the guidance that you need in the form of consulting offerings or partnerships with well-trained consultants.

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4) Security

Assessment providers (especially those with digital offerings) may collect a lot of sensitive data about your applicants. Information can include personal identifiable information (PII) such as name, email address, home address, demographic information, and assessment results. When they are your applicants, candidates will view it as your responsibility, even if you aren't the one who accidently leaks information.

Understand what information is collected and how it is protected. This includes how it is stored and secured as well as retention policies. Don't forget, different states and countries will have different laws governing data privacy, so make sure the provider adheres to all of the requirements in the locations that you are evaluating candidates.

This is a good place to get a quick review from an internal or external data security expert(s).

5) Fit

In the world of hiring, we all know it is not just a matter of finding someone with the right skills, it is also finding someone who will be a good fit with your organization (without negatively impacting diversity – which is a whole different topic).

This is the same with partners. There will be challenges with the partner, such as when you have a disagreement, or a difficult situation comes up with a disgruntled applicant. In these situations, when the pressure is on and tensions are high, you want a partner that will be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

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Pulling it all together - the Art of Selecting Assessments

Finding the right assessments and using them the right way can make a huge difference in the effectiveness of your hiring program, and it is worth the up-front time to do it right. And, just like with hiring, spending the time up front will save you a ton of time in the long run from the selection process itself to avoiding having to find new assessments later. All it takes is three steps.

REVIEW: The three steps of assessment selection

Step 1: Remove 'bad' assessments from consideration

1. Does the assessment measure what it is supposed to be measuring?
2. Is the assessment accurate?
3. Does the assessment have minimal inappropriate adverse impact?
4. Is the assessment linked to job performance?

Step 2: Narrowing Assessments by 'MUST HAVE' Criteria

1. Identify what is required to be successful at the job
2. Define how the assessments will be used in the hiring process
3. Identify requirements for your process – how your organization hires

Step 3: Selecting the right partner

1. The cost
2. Support availability
3. Consultative services
4. Security
5. Fit

I know what you may be thinking, but seriously, **you got this!**

Career.Place provides incredible 3rd party assessments as part of our solution so you don't have to go through this (we already did it for you!).

Happy assessment hunting!

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