

Using Personality Tasks to Boost the Validity of Assessment Centers

Presenter: Alan Howard, Director, Quest Assessments, Ltd.

Research on assessment centers has been indicating that the predictive validity of assessment centers has been dropping. Yet, more and more organisations are adopting the assessment center (AC) approach due to the 'richness' of information they can provide, and it is difficult to obtain similar information through other assessment methods. But what if your ACs are not working as well as you think they are? Here are some reasons why ACs have been dropping in validity: Poorly designed ACs, unconscious bias, ACs assessing too many ill-defined competencies, assessors finding it difficult to distinguish between competencies and assessors being over-worked.

With all these potential issues when running an AC, how can we eliminate some of these with the use of personality tasks? Research has shown that personality is closely correlated with the Great Eight Competencies. ACs focusing on these well-researched competencies will improve validity.

Traditionally, personality assessment currently utilizes self-report questionnaires. Yet there is a lot of evidence that shows that distortion/faking is a key issue. Also, people have 'blind spots' that introduces further error.

We, therefore, present a new and more accurate way of measuring personality – Objective Personality Tasks (OPTs). OPTs use real-time behavior—that is participants' reactions to the tasks are completely natural, and multiple data sets are collected as they complete them. There is no self-report element, no questions to answer about oneself. The approach makes extensive use of technology and provides a more engaging experience. And unlike AC exercises, OPTs do not rely on assessors to rate the behaviors of candidates, and do not assess ill-defined competencies. This significantly reduces the room for error which can help boost the validity of your assessment center.



Alan Howard
Director, Quest Assessments, Ltd

Alan is an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society (BPS), and member of the BPS's Division of Occupational Psychology. He is a Chartered Psychologist and a Registered Occupational Psychologist with the UK's Health Care Professions Council. He has 27 years' experience as an occupational psychologist which includes managing and delivering large consultancy projects in 6 continents. He is a former Vice President of Assessment & Development at Dubai International Airport and Director of Assessment & Development Centres at IHS Dubai. With Max Choi, Alan has co-authored three situational judgement tests which are published worldwide by SHL and have been completed by participants from over 100 countries.

He is currently leading a team of psychologists in the development of Mosaic, a task-based personality assessment. Mosaic measures personality without the need for questionnaires or self-

report, methods that are open to deliberate and unconscious distortion by individuals. Mosaic also produces a competency potential profile for individuals which can be used as part of an assessment or development centre.