The Recruiting Office
Providing staff that last

The Ultimate Guide to Using **Behavioural Testing** in the Recruitment Process

Hiring and training new employees is a critical process when it comes to scaling an organisation by recruiting the right people.

So, naturally, companies are continually looking for ways to improve the recruiting process.

One method which has prevailed with continuing success is behavioural testing.

The first recorded instance of behavioural testing was in Imperial China in 605 AD. Candidates hoping to be approved for employment in the state civil service were subject to various tests which determined their proficiency through contests, competitions and interviews.

Now, nearly 1,500 years later, the methods of behaviour and personality testing are vastly different, but the principle remains the same – employers throughout the centuries have been eager to ensure that the individuals they welcome into their business operations are the best people for the job.

There are a variety of different tests available to employers and recruiters to ensure that the candidates which are selected are not just suitable, but proficient in their skills and exhibit the capability to perform well in the role.

In addition, increasingly, a candidate's cultural fit is tested and is regarded to be just as important as their skills and qualifications.

In this report, We will be discussing not only the various types of personality testing but how they can benefit your organisation by adding long-term value.

Neil and Adela

What is Behavioural Testing?

Behavioural testing is the umbrella term given to the types of tests that determine personal proficiencies in an individual. They can be generic tests which determine the personality style the candidate has, and much more in-depth tests which can ascertain if the candidate will fit into a particular team, and what type of working environment they will thrive within.

The modern form of behavioural and personality tests as we know them today stem from the armed forces in the 1920s where applicants were psychologically tested to ensure they were fit for the demanding nature of the roles. The 16PF questionnaire, the **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator** (MBTI) and the **Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory** (MMPI) are modern examples which have evolved from the principles born in the early days of personality testing.

These tests give the participant a score or a 'type' which employers can use to determine if the individual has what they are looking for.

There are more in-depth behavioural tests used by recruiters which are used to give a more comprehensive critique of an individual, which we will go through in the next section.

Types of Behavioural Testing

First, let's take a look at the three main types of behavioural testing that are used in recruitment across the world.

As personality testing has increased in popularity in the recruitment and staffing sector, there are now an estimated 5000 versions of these tests employers can use to compare candidates. The three main distinctions of personality testing are - behavioural tests, capability tests and psychometric tests. Let's explore these areas in more detail next.

Behavioural Testing

The most commonly used models are referred to as 'behavioural testing', or 'personality testing'.

Behavioural testing aims to find out what working style a person is, and can reveal things such as a candidate's patterns of thinking, the way they interact with others, and their general behaviour.

Insights Discovery is a behavioural profiling tool and is one example of this. Based on the findings of Carl Jung, the results provide the employer with insights about the candidate including strengths, development areas and potential value to their team, management style, communication style and their ideal working environment.

American analytics company Gallup also has its own behavioural test, **CliftonStrengths Finder.** In this test, candidates are given 177 statements and are asked to choose the ones which describe them best. Candidates are given a profile from one of 34 different themes, describing their personality type and how they appear in their everyday life.

These tests are useful for employers and their recruiting partners in determining more about a candidate than what their CV can provide.

Capability Testing

Capability testing (sometimes referred to as 'aptitude' tests) is when an employer seeks to discover if a candidate has all of the capabilities needed to carry out the role in question.

The individual may be able to talk at length in an interview situation about their skills and knowledge relevant to the position, but how reliably does this translate into their actual working day? Capability tests can prove (or disprove) at some level that the candidate is who their CV says they are.

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These tests will typically include verbal and numeric reasoning, and sometimes a spatial awareness assessment (depending on the role – more on this later).

Psychometric Testing

The most in-depth form of behavioural testing is psychometric testing. These are similar to behavioural tests, except they are more in-depth.

From psychometric tests, employers can gain a more detailed and analytical profile of the candidate, where they can learn about the candidate's core values and beliefs and their identity - what makes them 'tick'.

The Myers-Briggs personality test is favoured by many employers (and recruitment companies) as it is a well-recognised index. This test determines which combination of the eight different personalities 'types' you fit into, with **16 possible outcomes.**

For example, an **ESTP** type has the dominant qualities of **E**xtroversion, **S**ensing, **T**hinking and **P**erceiving, while an **INFJ** type exhibits **I**ntroversion, **I**ntuition, **F**eeling and **J**udging.

Often, applicants who have undergone an MBPI test with a recruiter will include their type abbreviation on their CV for potential employers. Employers sometimes know which types would be ideal in a particular role or department in their organisation, and knowing the candidate's styles can help them in the selection process.

The **DiSC** profiling tool not only determines your personality type (based on four areas – dominance, influence, compliance and steadiness) but provides you with information on how best to work alongside personalities with different styles who might be in their team.

An employer who has several employees with one DiSC type such as dominance will know that in their next hire, they need someone who falls within the steadiness or compliance category, to balance the team out.

Similarly, the **McQuaig** psychometric test not only provides employers with an in-depth profile of their candidates, but they also provide the employer with the right questions to ask the candidate to find out more about any areas for concern that their profile might have highlighted.

Because of the variety of tests out there, it is essential to use the right test for the right roles. Some tests will be invaluable to some roles, but ineffective for others. For example, it is crucial for a manufacturing designer to undergo spatial awareness testing and numeric reasoning, but these are less important for a role in sales.

Let me explain in more detail the different scenarios in which the different types of behavioural tests that I have outlined should be used, and their benefits and drawbacks.

The Benefits of Behavioural Testing

In our experience, using behavioural and personality testing can be incredibly useful for organisations and ultimately, provides your business with a calibre of candidate that less scrutinous methods cannot.

General Skills

In general terms, entry-level personality and behaviour testing can determine whether the candidate possesses the level of verbal and numeric reasoning that they need to work well within your organisation. You might be shocked at the difference we as recruiters sometimes see in the candidate as they are presented on their CV and the candidate that we meet when they arrive for their first interview!

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Many people receive help when putting together their CV, but it is essential to be sure that the candidate has a good grasp of social and analytical skills like reasoning, conscientiousness, time awareness – these can be determined with behavioural testing in a way that a CV or a first interview cannot.

Removing Unconscious Bias

Behavioural and personality testing can be used to eliminate the margin of error that is always present in a human decision based upon judgement and often, 'feelings.

How many times have you heard the phrase *'I had a bad feeling about him/her'* used concerning a person – countless, undoubtedly? We are all guilty of applying our prejudice and biases towards others; most of the time we don't even realise we are doing it.

Unconscious bias could be at play in your hiring process, to the detriment of your organisation. Hiring managers are often guilty of hiring candidates with similar attributes to themselves, through no fault of their own – it is a deep, ingrained snap decision which is almost impossible to spot and even harder to overcome.

While you might be thinking that a workspace where all the employees share the same values and interests would be a productive one – the opposite is true.

Not only is it better for business to have a culturally diverse workplace, unconscious bias, if not checked, could mean your hiring manager is rejecting candidates who would excel and add value to your organisation – behavioural and personality testing eliminates this problem.

Bespoke Testing

As mentioned previously, there are times when a hiring manager, MD or CEO either cannot decide on a new hire or have different, opposing opinions.

In this instance, a recruiter working alongside a behaviour testing specialist can utilise a personality test to either confirm or deny the potential employers' suspicions about the candidate possessing or lacking a specific quality.

Benefits for the Candidate

Behavioural testing is an addition to the recruiting process which benefits the candidate, as well as their potential employer.

A wrong hire can be just as frustrating for the new employee as it is for the company. A recruiter acquaintance recently told me about a young candidate they placed in a start-up. When the employee handed their notice in after just three months, everyone was shocked.

It turns out that the employee had expected that the working style would be more 'exciting' with music and plenty of chatting but was disappointed to find that despite having a contemporary image, the office environment was far more conservative.

They left for somewhere where tales of their previous nights' exploits were welcomed over morning coffee!

Testing to check that your candidate has the right culture fit within your organisation is one aspect of personality testing that benefits everyone.

Now we've covered the benefits, let's look at the limitations of behavioural tests and how to overcome them.

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Limits of Behavioural Testing

As with any school of psychology, it can be argued that behavioural and personality testing cannot be relied on 100%, as no psychological test is irrevocably accurate. Owing to this, behavioural and personality testing have their drawbacks, namely-

- Some people are opposed to the nature of the testing, believing that computer programmes and behavioural 'guidelines' are not reliable methods to ascertain the essence of an individual.

- The candidate might have given inaccurate answers in error because they were nervous, or due to a fault with the system.
- Some candidates deliberately try to pre-empt what the employer is looking for and give false answers, which skew the result so that it is at best, unreliable, and at worst – unusable.

Despite these limitations, including behavioural and personality testing in your recruiting process is hugely beneficial and, in our experience, delivers the exact kind of candidate that the employer has in mind.

Behavioural testing is not limited to one type or size of organisation – all businesses can benefit from using these tools whether you have five or 500 employees. Let's take a closer look at how your organisation can benefit and debunk some of the myths surrounding these tools.

How Can Behavioural Testing Benefit My Business?

In our experience, behavioural and personality testing is a must in any recruitment process, no matter the size or type of the business.

Specific Roles

Behavioural and personality testing can be used to significant effect when you are recruiting for a particular role. The personality tests that your recruiter will use when hiring for a warehouse position will be different from the tests used on a potential salesperson, and again for managerial roles.

There are numerous profiling tools out there, and your recruiter will be able to tell which ones will be best for the role/s you are recruiting for.

Investment

Many companies think – "these tests are expensive – why would we use them?" without realising that behavioural testing is, in fact, more cost-effective in the long run than eschewing them.

The price of a wrong hire is thought to be into the thousands of pounds. No company wants to hire for the same role time and again – it is expensive, time-consuming and has negative impacts on staff morale, and so this is why it is vital to do everything you can to make the right hire the first time around.

Strengthening Your Culture

When used to their full effect, profiling tools can influence and inform the language of your organisation. If you take on several tools and use them, you can cultivate a shared language to be used within your business - this can be an incredibly powerful thing.

Is Behavioural Testing Right for Your Company?

The price of a wrong hire is thought to be into the thousands of pounds.

Many companies fall into the trap of believing that behavioural and personality testing is only beneficial for larger companies, but this could not be further from the truth.

It is vital for small companies – yes, even companies with less than five employees – to include behavioural and personality testing in their recruitment process; wrong hires make even more of a negative impact in smaller places of work.

Different Tools for Different Roles

Each job role in your organisation will have unique behaviour traits. Some companies fall into the trap of hiring people with the same behaviours and characteristics for a variety of different roles, but this is not beneficial.

Even in a small business, the receptionist will need different traits to the forklift driver, and to the sales team. One size does not fit all when using behavioural testing to hire for a specific position -there should be no 'right' or 'wrong' traits to have – only characteristics that match a certain role.

Data

When you use a profiling tool, it generates data. Data is invaluable to every business and allows you to take stock of where you are and where you want to be. Data about your candidates is objective and overrides any subjective thoughts your hiring manager might have had.

Data from previous candidates can be looked over to see how well an individual with certain qualities fits into your established team; you can use this data to decide what kind of candidate you are looking for.

Building a Team

As personality and communication differences are one of the biggest sources of conflict in the workplace, it is crucial that you build a team who not only has the right skills but who can work together harmoniously. This does not mean employing a team of clones – a **diverse workplace is a productive workplace** and diversity encourages mutual respect and will statistically perform better.

Summary

In this guide, we have covered everything you need to know about the way behavioural testing is currently used in the recruitment process – the different types of tests commonly used, their benefits, drawbacks, and the fact that there is a tool for every organisation, no matter the size.

Finally, let me reiterate how important it is to undertake comprehensive testing before offering a permanent contract to a new hire.

A CareerBuilder US study reported that the **average cost of a bad hire is around $7,000 -$10,000** but the cost of a single bad hire reported by 41% of companies was around $25,000 (around £20,000) and for managerial positions it can be as high as $40,000 (around £33,000).

A 'bad hire' is defined as any new candidate not working out, but what is the main reason for candidates not working out?
In a 2018 survey of employees who left their new position within the first 90 days, 32% said the reason was that they didn't fit in with the company culture – these situations could have been avoided if both the candidate and the company knew exactly how the candidate was going to fit in with the company, with the use of profiling tools.

Behavioural and personality testing allows your organisation to gain a comprehensive analysis of the candidate that might otherwise be left to chance, including –

- What strengths and values will this person bring to the business?
- What are their motivations?
- What are their limitations?
- Do their strengths match the role?
- How much detailed work can this candidate produce?
- Will they be successful in a role that is technically or standards-focused?

Profiling tools allow you to expose the subconscious and hidden qualities a candidate has – for better or worse – which cannot be observed through interviews only.

Behavioural and personality testing allows your organisation to gain a comprehensive analysis of the candidate...

In working with a recruitment company like The Recruiting Office, we can help focus your interview efforts on the right candidates, and remove the margin of doubt that many hiring managers experience during the hiring process.

We understand that it is often the last stages of the recruitment process that are the most tricky – you have two great candidates, and are unsure which one will be the best hire.

If you're looking to make the ideal hire, get in contact with us today and see how we can help you using our bespoke service and advanced profiling tools.

Best wishes
Neil & Adela

We can help focus your interview efforts on the right candidate.

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About us

At The Recruiting Office we recognise how hard it can be for non HR staff to fit recruitment around their regular day to day duties and to ensure that job specifications, advertisements, selection and interview processes are without bias and are effective in identifying the best possible candidates.

We know how vital pro-active candidate sourcing can be in an increasingly candidate short market and we understand that many non recruitment professionals struggle to pro-actively identify and engage with suitable passive candidates.

And we know that modern businesses sometimes need to engage skilled personnel on a non permanent basis to support specific projects or changing business needs.

If you are experiencing issues or concerns with any aspect of the recruitment process - from writing job and person specifications to effective on boarding, from engaging with passive candidates to required document checks and when to undertake them - we can help!

At The Recruiting Office we have over 40 years experience of supporting Norfolk employers through every aspect of the recruitment process and our comprehensive, knowledgeable, compliant and ethical recruitment services really work!

For a no obligation discussion of the recruitment issues you are experiencing and the solutions we can offer - call us now on **01603 964816** or email **neil@therecruitingoffice.co.uk**

Your next actions

Connect with us in multiple ways

You can connect with either of us on multiple social media channels including LinkedIn and Facebook

https://www.linkedin.com/in/neil-scarborough-recruiter-for-all-your-norwich-and-norfolk-recruitment-needs/

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https://www.linkedin.com/company/5517696/admin/

Or call 01603 964816 or email Neil neil@therecruitingoffice.co.uk or Adela Adela@therecruitingoffice.co.uk to book a private recruitment strategy call.

Best wishes
Neil and Adela

P.S. Our recruitment services are without charge until/unless our successful candidate accepts your job offer and in the unlikely event they don't work out we offer a 100 day 100% refund guarantee!

Client Testimonials

"What makes The Recruiting Office our agency of choice is the ability Adela and Neil have to fully engage and understand our requirements. They understand that we are looking for people who want to be part of our brand. This is reflected in the quality of candidate they place in both temporary and permanent positions. This is a true partnership and one I believe will be long lasting and important in the success and growth of our depot."
Simon

"The Recruiting Office has found our company a succession of quality staff that are continuing to provide first class service to our customers in East Anglia. The professional and thoroughly well organised manner that The Recruiting Office operate make them a pleasure to do business with."
Graham

Candidate Testimonials

Just a quick email to say thank you for your help in getting me to interview. What makes The Recruiting Office different stand head and shoulders ahead of other agencies is the care and attention the staff put into understanding not only what the potential employer does and requires but also understanding not only the skill set of the potential employee but also their personality thus making the position/employee a match better. This coupled with your attention to detail and contact, updates, feed back and genuine interest in all aspects of the process makes for an outstanding business model.
Mark

"I would recommend to anyone looking for short or long term employment to use the services of the Recruiting Office.
The help and support I received was invaluable-from CV analysis to a better understanding of the current work market (after coming out of a long-term job) I was in a placement within a couple of days.
All consultants I dealt with were friendly, polite and professional.
My placement lead to permanent employment, however, I would not hesitate to use the services of The Recruiting Office again if my situation changed."
Charlotte