

Ten Considerations for Choosing the Best Assessment Provider

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Searching for the perfect match for an assessment partner can be dizzying. With technological, psychometric, and service and support questions at play feeling confident in your choice can pose a challenge. We narrowed the decision to ten key considerations to guide your journey.

Evaluate the right characteristics for your needs

What are the job requirements? Specifically, what do you need employees to deliver on day one for your culture, customers, and operations. Consider capturing, even roughly, the competencies and traits required for the role (or company-wide if considering a global assessment for all positions). Competencies are clusters of abilities, behaviors, values, mindsets and skills. Competencies provide an understanding of job requirements giving you the ability to more strongly evaluate assessments. Nearly 70 percent of organizations are doing now more than ever before to build [the connection between skills, competencies and how they select and develop talent](#) now more than before the pandemic.

2 Technically sound assessments

Any assessment that is used for selection and decision-making must be **reliable** and **valid** to deliver sound and accurate hiring and promotion decisions as well as provide legal defensibility and support fair hiring decisions. If an assessment is **reliable**, it means that it delivers consistent results. This is important because if the result changes for the same person every time they take the assessment, for a trait that should stay fairly stable, it isn't possible to know which result is true for the candidate. For an assessment to be **valid**, it means the assessment's result is linked to the behaviors and performance it should be based on the definition. For example, we would expect a measure of empathy to relate to customer service outcomes.

All assessments for hiring, promotion, or development should come with a comprehensive technical manual that supports their reliability, validity, scope of use, and absence of adverse impact. If an assessment lacks such a manual or a validation study with your population, its suitability should be questioned. Remember, a technical manual alone doesn't guarantee quality; decision makers must evaluate the group characteristics, sample size, performance relationship, and other relevant details.

3 Evidence-based

Assessment partners should readily offer to prove the **effectiveness of an assessment** through either a **validation study** or subsequent **analysis** of the impact of their assessments on meaningful business results. If the assessments have not been documented to have an important impact on another business or your own, you cannot be confident they will produce a meaningful **ROI**. Be upfront and ask potential assessment providers if they are willing to demonstrate an assessment's effectiveness and how they will accomplish this.

4 Fair and unbiased assessments

Assessments should not include culturally biased language or result in any particular demographic group passing at a higher rate than another. If a particular age group, sex, or race passes the assessment at differential rates, it is fair to assume the assessment is somehow biased against that particular group by measuring something that is related to protected classes. A validation study, or testing the tests and gathering protected class information, is necessary to answer these questions. Make sure you're asking candidates, appropriately, to share relevant demographics and protected class information. Linking this personal data to your own test results provides the greatest confidence that you're creating a fair and inclusive hiring process and that your tests are not inadvertently causing adverse impact against a specific protected class.

5 Clear, understandable assessment results

Assessment results should be straightforward and easy to understand. Because [assessment results](#) often must be properly and consistently interpreted by people without a background in psychology or an in-depth understanding of psychometric assessment design, they should provide clear recommendations for action in terms that are understandable. Ask assessment providers to show you what the results might look like for each position you are hiring for.

6 Strategy - measuring culture fit

Both job requirements and the work culture should be considered when developing [assessments](#). There should be a clear and overarching strategy to the use of the assessment(s) that considers the organization's culture, what it is trying to achieve, and how to select individuals who will help the organization achieve its objectives. [An organization's culture](#) – its values, standards, and expectations – can be predetermined and measured through customized assessments to predict the likelihood of a candidate's fit with your organization. Ask assessment providers to describe their process for measuring and hiring for your culture.

7 Complementary tools

Some assessment providers will offer a single test that is purported to provide everything necessary to hire stellar performers, but the reality is that any one assessment is likely to measure only some of what is required for the job. As a result, it is best to combine assessments with additional tools that evaluate the candidate in other ways and on additional characteristics that are important for the job. Examples of these tools are [structured interviews](#), [realistic job previews](#), job observations, and work samples. By using a combination of tools, you end up measuring more of the candidates' potential for performance on the job and the best assessment providers guide you through the design of these complementary tools tailored to the needs of your positions and business.



Expertise

The science of assessment requires an understanding of cognitive, social, industrial-organizational psychology, psychometrics, business, and technology. Best-in-class assessment providers will be staffed with professionals in each of these areas. There are numerous technology companies that deploy an array of talent management components

on their platforms, but the technology-focused providers do not necessarily have the expertise in psychology and psychometrics (the science of measuring performance) to carry out [validation studies](#) or to continually develop new and relevant assessments for a constantly changing workforce. Vet the expertise and backgrounds of assessment providers to ensure you receive the business, assessment, and technology support and accuracy you need.

Responsive service and support

When selecting an assessment provider, make sure they are eager to understand your organization's specific needs and challenges. A reputable partner will see your potential collaboration as a long-term relationship, emphasizing the importance of learning about your industry, culture, and business practices. Verify that the assessment provider will track your assessment data, offering insights into overall scores and results while ensuring a fair and positive experience for individuals from diverse backgrounds and protected groups. Their support should also encompass continuous analysis of return on investment and the quality of hires. We usually set in place a monthly or quarterly connect with our clients to accomplish these goals.

The candidate experience

Hiring assessments should create a positive experience for candidates. Candidates should leave feeling they had the opportunity to perform, were evaluated fairly, and that the experience was job-related. While assessments should be mobile responsive, delivering a candidate experience goes beyond that making sure communications are timely and candidates receive meaningful feedback on their status in the hiring process.



Questions to ask potential assessment providers

Technical competence

1. Is there a comprehensive assessment manual available that describes how the assessment was developed?
2. Does the manual include sections covering both assessment reliability and validity?
3. Does the manual describe the potential outcomes of using the assessment?
4. Are sample assessment reports/results pages available?
5. Are there definitions of specific competencies measured by the assessment(s)?
6. What specific job performance dimensions were targeted in the development of the assessment?
7. What positions can the assessment be used for?
8. How will you ensure the assessment is job-related?
9. Do you have information regarding the validity of the assessment across relevant demographic groups?
10. Do you conduct ongoing adverse impact analyses? Can this evidence be provided?
11. Have you conducted research to test the performance of the assessment across cultures?
12. Are specific standards around cultural sensitivity and inclusion strictly adhered to? If so, how?
13. What are the credentials of your assessment development professionals?

Proof

1. Are you willing to conduct a validation or pilot study within our organization?
2. What evidence can you offer as evidence of the effectiveness of the assessment?
3. What other research studies have you conducted with other organizations? Can you share a summary of your findings?

Contextual Performance

1. What research or conceptual framework was used to develop the assessment?
2. Are there benefits to using the assessment beyond improving task-based job performance? If yes, what are they?
3. Does the assessment measure the functional, interpersonal, and cultural requirements of the role? [If you have a competency model or framework, make sure the provider can assess each competency.]
4. How do you ensure the assessments and delivery methods remain valid, reliable, and meaningful for organizations?
5. What other solutions for hiring, promotion, and development are available and how might these other tools add value?
6. How do the assessments connect with our interview process?

Support

1. What does training look like for our hiring managers, recruiters, and people team?
2. What training and education is available on an ongoing basis?
3. How will we track the impact and ROI of the assessment?
4. Who will be supporting us? What are their professional backgrounds?
5. What reporting and analytics do you provide?
6. Will we have a dedicated point-of-contact?
7. What does implementation look like? What is your experience in deploying these types of solutions in my size organization?

Organizational Credibility

1. How long have you been in business?
2. What industries have you worked with?
3. Can you provide references?

Candidate Experience

1. Can I take the assessment?
2. What are your average completion rates? Do you have evidence to support the quality of your candidate experience?
3. Are the candidate instructions easy to understand and follow?
4. Is the length of the assessment reasonable for your organization and population?
5. What safeguards are in place to protect candidate privacy?

Intangibles

1. Does the provider make you feel special or do you feel like they are just providing another proposal?
2. Does the assessment appear job-related?

Your culture, organization, and operations are unique. This means what you need to support hiring, developing, and promoting remarkable people will be as well.

[Access an editable compare and contrast decision-making tool \(in Excel\) to make the best decision](#)

Takeaways

The candidate experience is not just an isolated part of the hiring process; it's the foundation of your relationship with potential employees. Building positive candidate experiences is not only ethical but a strategic advantage that drives employee well-being, productivity, and retention. By fostering trust, transparency, and personalized interactions, you can create a workforce that is engaged, committed, and passionate about contributing to your organization's success. So, invest in the candidate experience and witness the powerful impact it can have on your company's growth and reputation.

Conclusion

The candidate experience, fundamentally, is a relationship: from first impression, application, communication, interviews, to hiring or concluding the process. The more we focus on nurturing a relationship between our organization, culture, employees, and the candidate the more likely we'll forge a positive connection. The candidate experience is the face of the company's culture, values, and brand as perceived by potential employees. This experience plays a pivotal role in shaping a candidate's view of an organization and can significantly influence their decision to accept a job offer, or even to continue through the recruitment journey.