Title:
Nine Tips for Cracking the Personality Code

Word Count:
878

Summary:
Personality assessments can help you hire effectively, manage employees better
and deal with difficult people. To help you screen personality tests and testing
companies, this nine-point checklist from the book Cracking the Personality Code
can help you review assessment tools and support.

Keywords:
personality test, management, hiring, employer, employee

Article Body:
Personality assessments can help you hire effectively, manage employees better
and deal with difficult people. To help you screen personality tests and testing
companies, this nine-point checklist from the book Cracking the Personality Code
can help you review assessment tools and support.

1.   Number of rating scales. The assessment company providing the test needs
to address the number and type of ratings scales they are using. A rating scale
is any instrument designed to assist in the measurement of subjective
evaluations of, or reactions to, a person, object, event, statement, or other
item of interest. The more rating scales, the clearer the picture.

According to the Encyclopedia of Psychology, several varieties of rating scales
have been developed. One common form of rating scale presents the rater with a
spectrum of potential responses that includes antithetical elements at each end
of a range of intermediate possibilities, on which the rater is expected to
indicate the position that most accurately represents the rater's response to
the subject in question. Another form of rating scale presents the rater with a
list of characteristics or attributes from which the rater is expected to select
those which the rater believes apply to the subject in question. Rating scale
instruments are used in psychological research primarily to assess qualities for
which no objective answer ("Rating Scale." Encyclopedia of Psychology. 2nd ed.
Ed. Bonnie R. Strickland. Gale Group, Inc., 2001. eNotes.com. 2006)

2.   Amount of time it takes to take the test. How long should it take to
complete a test? That depends on how in depth you need to look at personality.

Here are your typical three options for testing:

* Basic team assessments using four primary scales with 30-60 questions can take 10-20 minutes to complete
* Simple prescreening of candidates/team assessments using up to eight scales with 60-120 questions can take 20-30 minutes to complete
* In-depth personality tests for screening candidates and assessing the team using 12-16 scales and more than 164 questions can take 35 to 90 minutes to complete

3.   Qualifications of the individual who is interpreting the test. In addition, we also believe the best tests require someone with comprehensive psychological training or degrees for proper interpretation of the data. Weekend training programs can be problematic since testing and human behavior is a very complex subject. When making hiring or internal decisions, organizations need as much information and understanding as possible as the consequences can be very costly.

4.   Link profile to resume and job description. It is not enough to just review the data analysis is of a potential new hire's personality. Before you hire this person, you will want to ascertain how the person's past relates to the possible future your position offers. Whoever is assessing the data of the candidate with the hiring manager needs to have the resume and the job description in order to do a thorough job of reviewing the data.

5.   Impression management/faking good scale. In our opinion, a questionnaire needs a minimum of 164 questions to gather enough data for an "Impression Management" scale. Impression management allows you to understand the accuracy of the results and if someone is trying to "fake good." A proper test analyzes personality characteristics in the context of business concerns.

6.   Thought flow. Of course, not everyone thinks and processes information the same way. A good personality test will give you insight into an individual's thought flow. This not only helps with hiring, but understanding how someone's thoughts naturally flow is also a very powerful management tool. Sharing this information amongst the team helps employees communicate more effectively with other members of the team.

7.   Career matching. Certain personality tests help you gain information which may either support the person's present career choices or assist them to explore, consider and plan for another career direction. A personality test can give you an indication of which jobs match the candidate's personality type and which careers they may have an aptitude for. You do need to remember that the

test results are only an indicator and should not be relied on as an absolute assessment of which career is best for the person.

8.   Strengths and weaknesses summary. Personality testing is a proven and effective way to create highly functional teams. This starts with a summary of each person's strengths and weaknesses. Once you know which personality types work best together, you can mix and match your people so that you get the most out of each of them. For every strength a person possesses there is a corresponding weakness. Being assertive is a strength. However, a person can be too assertive and off putting for some people or in some situations.

9.   Detailed interview questions. The assessment company you choose should help you create tailored interview questions based on the candidate's specific personality. The purpose is to probe facets of the personality you need more details on. Many employers are now doing "behavioral interviews". Rather than focusing on resume and accomplishments alone, use the personality test as a jumping off point to ask open-ended questions that will cause the job candidate to describe real circumstances and their responses to them. Ask them to describe in detail a particular event, project, or experience and how they dealt with the situation, and what the outcome was. This type of interviewing is the most accurate predictor of future performance.