

HRA Psychological Services – Business Consultation FAQ

Why would a company use a Corporate Psychological evaluation in a hiring process?

An evaluation is meant to be supplemental information to be compared with other sources such as interview, reference check, resume etc. It helps provide objective information concerning traits or skills related to the job in question. There are several models, samples and norms that allow for comparison. Examples would include certain aptitude levels for related jobs, interpersonal styles for managers, leadership models etc. An organization has often collected information over the period of time they have utilized evaluations for comparison purposes.

What role does the testing play in the process?

Testing is a source of data, but never the only source. Test data is utilized in conjunction with an interview to produce an evaluation. Testing provides objective readings concerning many attributes such as aptitude, interpersonal skills, cognitive style, motivational dynamics, leadership style, emotional resources etc. An individual's response pattern is compared to representative, researched data bases to produce a profile. Rather than using a sample of just the applicant, the applicant is compared to a sample that generally represents the country as a whole.

What kind of information is collected?

This has been discussed in the above answers. Information concerning problem solving skills, interpersonal style, motivation, cognitive style or other attributes of leadership models, emotional intelligence etc. are utilized. The exact and extent of data collected will vary between packages and the tests administered.

Can I see my report?

The employer "owns" the report and it is their decision if they wish to share the data. This often happens if/when a candidate is selected. It is important that a qualified representative is available to explain the report and ensure understanding. Evaluations are frequently a part of management development programs and thoroughly discussed with a candidate in terms of strengths, orientations, areas of improvement etc.

Who has confidentiality?

The referring company, usually the potential employer, is the client and thus confidentiality exists with the company. Before an evaluator can discuss or provide a report to a candidate, the evaluator would need permission from the company to do so.

How do you know if somebody "faked" their answers?

There are numerous, albeit no perfect validity indicators on the instruments. A vital indicator is the in/consistency of the testing data with other sources. If the interview, reference checks, observations are consistent with the testing, stronger validity is expected. Testing data often sets the stage for a future interview to refute/confirm issues. The profile is compared with other interview experiences, reference checks etc.

A vital component to an effective employee is “self knowledge” or the awareness of one’s strengths and limits. A second component is being a “straight shooter.” If an individual appears to be “faking” within the evaluation process there is a concern if you will get an honest, objective answer in the work place or merely hearing what they think you want to hear. Preferred employees have the confidence to accurately express themselves and how they approach their roles.

Could I ever use this report with another job?

As will be discussed, a report’s window of “validity” is limited. People change and one wants to assess the individual at their immediate status. Past reports at times are reviewed in respect to history yet should not be considered an accurate representation of an individual’s immediate abilities. Certain elements in the assessment are more enduring while others changeable in respect to maturity, experience, and training.

A report is the property of the employer who purchased the service. The decision to release this to another party would be their decision. Evaluations are frequently modified to a particular role and one assessment may not apply to a differing position. If you are seeking a new job and testing is to be utilized, in all likelihood the perspective employer has a particular service in mind while that may differ from a prior assessment. If Human Resource Associates has evaluated the same individual for two perspective jobs, data from one evaluation would not be utilized in an alternate evaluation.

How long are reports valid?

Psychological evaluations are often viewed as “snapshot in time” of an individual. People change with maturity, experience and training. One may review an evaluation from an historical perspective to assess movement or change. An opinion about the “window of accuracy” for a particular evaluation can vary from clinician to clinician. There is a general theme of an assessment being accurate for nine to twelve months is often expressed.

Can/should you prepare for an evaluation?

A corporate psychological evaluation is not like an aptitude test where there are “right/wrong” responses. The goal is to understand, as accurately as possible, the individual and the potential fit or conflict with the particular role or organization. The best preparation is to be honest and open, which represents the most accurate representation. It is important to remember the tests are rather sensitive to attempts to “fake good.” The greater the confidence in the validity instrument, the more valuable is the data.

The best decisions are made with a sound process and data. Personnel decisions are similar. Most confident, secure employees are very comfortable in expressing an accurate view of themselves, how they react to certain situations, their strengths, areas of improvement, etc. A vital component of a preferred candidate is generally the belief that one gets a “straight answer.” One of the first indications of this dynamic is how one represents themselves in respect to resume, reference check, interview, psychometrics, etc.