MERCER | mettl

Behavioral assessment tools: the secret sauce to better

talent decisions

welcome to brighter

Contents

Introduction

The individuals you hired have taken to the organization like ducks take to the water. They immediately embraced the culture, are up to speed with the organization's workings, and perform in the least possible time-frame. This is every recruiter's dream scenario.

Let's consider another possibility. You meticulously identified a set of high-potential employees in your organization, trained them to assume critical roles for the present and future requirements, such as heading different business verticals, leading strategy teams. And then you eventually groomed them to take up CXO-level jobs.

Have we painted the ideal picture for you?

> **Do you want to know what is common in both the situations mentioned above? It is the extensive use of behavioral assessment too**

Every potential employee offers an array of skills, but assessing if they are in line with the organization's and role's requirements is critical. Some employees are enthusiastic; others are high on empathy; some can think longer-term; some can be impulsive and temperamental; some can easily buckle under pressure. These are just a few examples of personality and behavioral tendencies that must be assessed when making important talent acquisition and development decisions.

A bad hire can have inevitable consequences, such as the loss of valuable time, financial resources in the hiring process, and potential damage to the organizational or team's culture. Wouldn't you instead want to know, from the outset, if a particular individual suits your organization's requirements?

If you answered yes, you're in for a treat as you scroll down and read about multiple behavioral assessment tools that can help you zero in on the right people for the right jobs.

Connect with an expert

What are behavioral assessment tools?

Behavioral assessment tools are advanced tools that measure behavioral competencies in a simulated work environment. Behavioral assessment tools require candidates to demonstrate chosen behavioral skills in one or multiple exercises that mirror actual workplace situations.

Behavioral competencies are a combination of skills, knowledge and traits in an individual. They are components of a job that are reflected in behavior and are observable in the workplace.

What are the different tools and types of behavioral assessments?

Behavior assessment tools are widely used in the workplace for recruitment and development. They combine innovation and scientific rigor to assess the role fitment. Different types of behavioral assessments can be used independently or cumulatively for a holistic overview of an individual. Behavior assessment tools are customizable, robust, quick and engaging. They provide a realistic insight into the workings of a job role and the organization.

Online behavioral tools

Situational judgment tests/ questions (SJT/Qs)

Situational judgment tests present test-takers with a series of real-life scenarios relating to the job and organization they are applying. Each question contains many different actions from which to choose, and the test-taker must decide the most effective course of action in a given situation or rank them in order of its effectiveness. It can be used to assess problem-solving skills, customer service orientation, decision-making, judgment skills, team orientation, etc.

SJTs present hypothetical and challenging situations that are interactive and job-specific. No specific training is required to respond to this test. Instead, the answers draw from individual attitudes, general knowledge, and work experience acquired by the individual.

SJTs are a great tool that can cater to different roles and situations, and present test-takers realistic scenarios faced by job-holders daily. They may include dealing with the workplace's dilemmas and working in a team.

Since SJQs mimic realistic scenarios, the questions require test-takers to place themselves in the shoes of the characters of the SJQ. This leads to higher engagement in the assessment process. SJQs are usually extremely role-specific and offer test-takers profound insights into their desired role and the organization's culture.

The response options are pragmatically feasible, meaning there are no wrong options. The test-takers gauge the order of effectiveness or priority, assess each answer option's pros and cons and rank them. This format provides a precise measure of the candidate's judgment-fit with the organization's role and culture requirements. SJTs are best suited for mid-level managers.

Caselets

Caselets include a detailed scenario with multiple questions arising from different problem statements in a situation. Candidates are presented with a brief description of the organization and the crucial issues faced by the role-holder. The case description may also include the problem statement's data-based information or background on which the questions are based. This is followed by numerous questions on the case scenario to measure one or multiple competencies. These questions include problem statements and possible actions to solve the problem. Candidates are required to either select the best response or rank them in the right order of effectiveness. Caselets are useful in evaluating the decision-making and the individual's judgment skills in a role-specific context.

The questions in the caselets represent real-life and day-to-day work situations experienced by the role-holder. They assess the candidate's ability to handle the task situation if it were to occur on the job.

The response options are a set of possible actions to be taken to solve the problem. They are designed in a way where all response options are pragmatically feasible. The candidate assesses the pros and cons of each answer option and ranks the options on their effectiveness. This format provides a precise measure of how well a candidate's judgment fits with the role requirements and the organization's culture.

Caselets are short and quick tools to test the candidate's business knowledge, aptitude, reasoning, and decision-making ability. Caselets are used to assess behavioral competencies in individual contributors, first-time managers and even mid-level managers.

Case study simulators

A case study simulator factually presents a managerial dilemma. It includes a brief description of the events and organizational dynamics of a situation. A case can concern the industry, an organization or part of an organization. The candidate is required to diagnose issues described in the case, brainstorm and recommend appropriate action steps to resolve them.

The candidate may be given supporting fictional documents, such as annual reports, P&L statements, product research reports, etc. to make business decisions based on the information. Often used for senior-level managers and CXOs, case study simulators encapsulate quantitative skills. They include data analysis, analytical mindset, financial understanding, strategic thinking, business acumen, statistical knowledge, innovation and judgment. Consultancies and business management firms widely use case study simulators.

In-box

In-box exercise is an online assessment in which individuals assume fictional roles in a fictitious organizational context. They receive background information about the role and the organization in which they are supposed to perform the function. They are also presented with a series of emails accumulated in their mailbox. It is an exercise in which they are asked to select the best possible responses to the mails. They are also allowed to delegate tasks to others.

The most common example of an in-box exercise is when the test-taker has returned from a holiday with an in-box full of emails requiring immediate attention and action. The in-box exercise assesses time management, delegation skills, performance under pressure, information processing and assimilation, prioritizing tasks, etc. Due to their relevance to most job levels, they can be used for first-time managers, team leads, supervisors, mid-level managers and executive-level managers.

Offline behavioral tools

Group activities & group discussions

Group activities assess candidates' interpersonal skills. They assess their ability to handle a problem in a group and effectively work with all the members to solve an issue. They help determine their ability to lead a debate confidently, influence a group, promptly generate ideas, communicate them effectively, and be assertive yet work in a team.

The group plays the role of a think tank and is expected to solve a problem. The task can be anything, from laying out a comprehensive plan of action while adhering to budgetary and resource limitations to analyzing all available options. It may also include providing a thorough report with calculations and promising data insights.

It is undertaken with assessors as observers who evaluate the candidates' competencies. Group discussions often require them to share their views, simultaneously considering others' opinions and reaching a shared solution that is acceptable by everyone in the group.

Group activities assess social skills, leadership propensity, influence, inclusivity and other values. Candidates are evaluated on active participation and the quality of ideas and perspectives brought forth by them.

Behavioral event interviews or competency-based interviews

A behavioral event interview is an effective tool to understand the likelihood of applicants' performance in a role. Candidates are asked to draw a detailed description of their deeds, thoughts and feelings about a past situation or event. Behavioral interviews are based on the premise that past behavior is the best predictor of future actions. Hence, it attempts to uncover past performance by asking questions that require the interviewee to provide a detailed description of their past experiences that demonstrate their ability to handle a situation and perform on the job.

Interviewing is as much an art as it is science. The most common questions like "tell me about a time when you had a conflict at work or implemented a project from scratch…" are examples of behavioral questions. Behavioral interviews are used across job roles and levels to gain an in-depth understanding of a candidate.

Connect with an expert

Role-plays

A behavioral event interview is an effective tool to understand the likelihood of applicants' performance in a role. Candidates are asked to draw a detailed description of their deeds, thoughts and feelings about a past situation or event. Behavioral interviews are based on the premise that past behavior is the best predictor of future actions. Hence, it attempts to uncover past performance by asking questions that require the interviewee to provide a detailed description of their past experiences that demonstrate their ability to handle a situation and perform on the job.

Interviewing is as much an art as it is science. The most common questions like "tell me about a time when you had a conflict at work or implemented a project from scratch..." are examples of behavioral questions. Behavioral interviews are used across job roles and levels to gain an in-depth understanding of a candidate.

Case presentations

Case presentations help assess a candidate's ability to communicate with a group of people and convey ideas. The background information of a business case and its problem statement is shared with a group or individuals. Candidates have sufficient time to prepare a reasonably detailed presentation. This exercise can also be a continuation of the case study simulator, where participants are asked to present their findings and solutions in the presentation format.

It can also assign a real business-related topic with competitive dynamics that require the participants to look at multiple problems with a wide lens. The task requires the candidate(s) to experience critical interdependencies, implement best practices, and investigate alternatives to deliver an all-encompassing strategy.

Since this is a presentation-based exercise, it requires an assessor's intervention. Candidates examine the problem statement and devise a modus operandi to address the situation in a PPT format. A formal presentation and a question-answer session with the assessors follow, which can happen face-to-face or virtually via web conferencing.

Case presentations test candidates on communication skills, confidence, public speaking, ability to interpret and organize information, time management, persuasion, etc.

How to choose suitable behavior assessment tools?

Here are a few tips on choosing the most favorable out of the available behavior assessment tools:

Close emulation of the job role

Choose a combination of behavioral assessment tools that mirror the job role by evaluating the required behavioral competencies. You may want to combine two or more tools for a holistic assessment. Make sure the chosen behavioral tools do justice to both the job-role and the job-level. For example, case study simulators are better suited to executive and senior-level positions, while situational judgments tests are ideal for individual contributors and mid-level or first-time managers.

## User experience for employers, assessors and participants

Pick tools that are easy to use for all stakeholders. Make sure the behavioral assessment tools you choose are simple to understand, easy to administer, easy to score, use realistic content, and are engaging for all the parties involved.

Reports

Online tools generate instant reports, while offline tools require assessors to collate their results and might take a few hours or days, depending on the number of participants. Look for tools that come with reports that are easy to understand and interpret. Reports should easily help you filter out candidates, stress on individual development plans or advise candidates on improvement areas.

Cost

Lastly, depending on the scale, choose the one that fits your budget, but don't compromise on content quality and user experience.
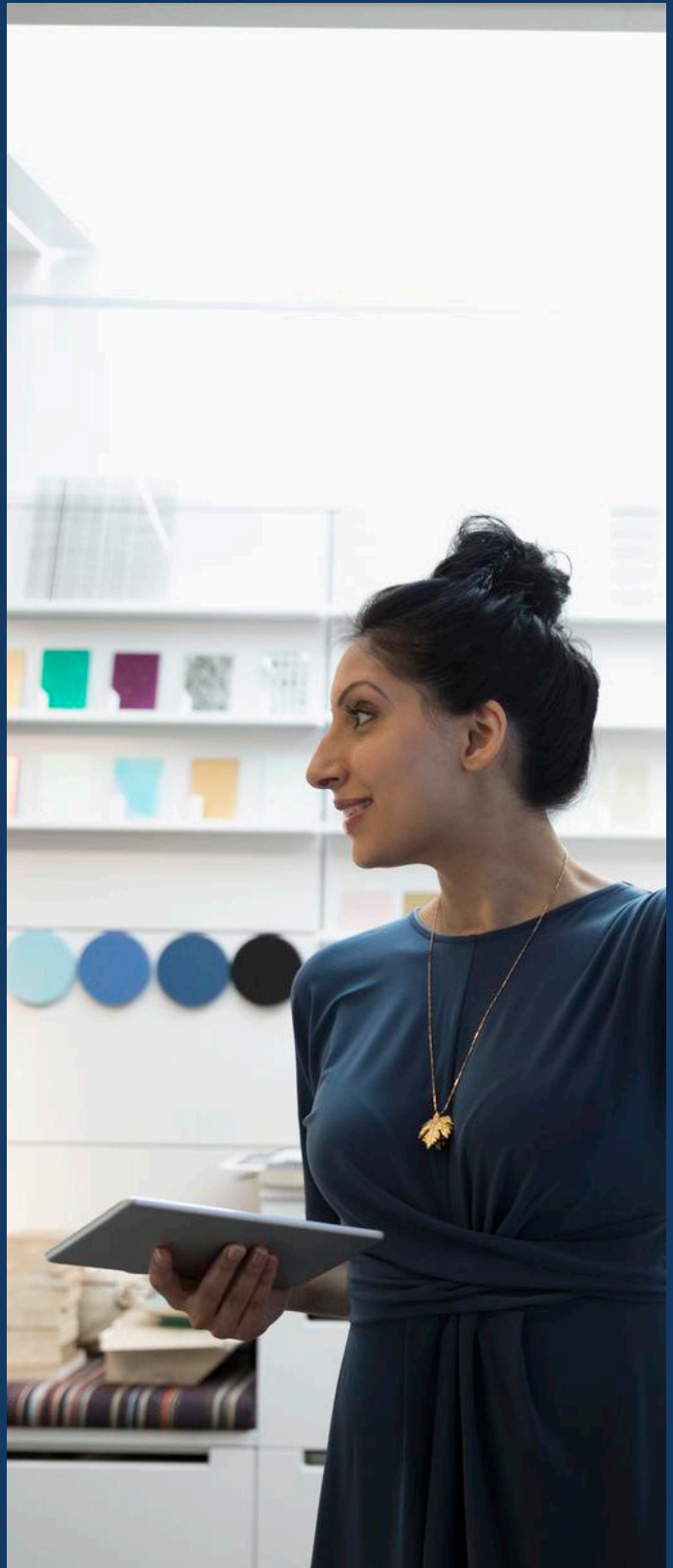
Why you should use behavior measurement tools

Behavior measurement tools are reliable predictors of performance and help organizations in the selection and development process by

- eliminating subjectivity and individual bias in the process,

- analyzing cultural fitment,

- reducing time-to-hire through easy filtration,

- identifying training needs and intervention requirements,

- improving retention rates.

> **The interactive and practical nature of behavioral tools draws favorable reactions from participants and offers realistic job previews.**

Behavioral assessment tools are a prominent method for employee development since there is no right or wrong. Participants are more likely to accept the feedback from behavioral tools due to their relevance and close emulation of the job role.

Behavioral assessment tools are bespoke to your organization and are a great way of employer branding and marketing its culture. Additionally, they offer a high return on investment by helping you make the right talent decisions.

How Mercer | Mettl can help?

Mercer | Mettl's suite of behavioral assessment tools can be implemented in any phase of the employee lifecycle, starting with hiring, promotion, and development. Mercer | Mettl's behavioral tools are validated and reliable. They can be easily customized for all job-levels and use-cases.

The following table helps you understand how you can choose suitable behavior assessment tools by different job-levels:

Job levels	Online assessments				Offline assessments			
	Situational judgment tests	Case-lets sets	Case study simulators	In-box exercises	Group discussion	Group activities	Behavioral event interviews	Role-plays
Executive Officers (CXO)			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Senior managers/directors (CXO-1)		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Managers/supervisors (CXO-2)	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
Non-management/ individual contributor	✓	✓			✓		✓	

*This is a suggestive representation. Competency-tool mapping is done on a case-by-case basis.

The Mercer | Mettl process

Stage 1: Job and role analysis

Focus group discussions with stakeholders help us understand the broader organizational goal and vision with a specific focus on the job role and level. This is used to create a behavioral competency framework and essential behavioral indicators for each job role. In case an organization has an existing competency framework, we help refine it by focusing on the relevant competencies.

Stage 2: Tool selection & development

Post identifying behavioral indicators, a suite of tools are mapped and developed to measure the required behavioral competencies. A combination of complementary behavioral tools is customized for each role and competency. Mercer | Mettl also has a repository of generic and role-based behavioral tests and psychometric tests that can be chosen by organizations as supplementary to the behavior measurement tools.

Stage 3: Content validity

Mercer | Mettl meticulously employs subject matter experts for test content standardization, following which it is sent to your organization for an extensive review and modifications.

Stage 4: Test administration and reporting

Post administering behavioral assessment tools, Mercer | Mettl's detailed reports provide the candidate's performance summary and individual evaluation of all the competencies assessed. The reports also lay down individual development plans and qualitative feedback from the assessors.

Behavior assessment tools attempt to furnish the 'why' behind workplace behavior, empowering you to recruit, train, and develop employees optimally to achieve the best results. What sets apart high-performing organizations from the mediocre ones is understanding your employees' strengths. Organizations must also know how their employees will behave when confronting their job demands and their ability to work together to propel their company toward success.

About us

At Mercer I Mettl, our mission is to enable organizations to make better people decisions by making credible people decisions across two key areas: Acquisition and Development. Since our inception in 2010, we have partnered with 2900+ corporates, 31 sector skill councils/ government departments, and 15+ educational institutions across 90+ countries.

Contact us

India Office

+91-9555114444

Plot No. 85, Sector 44, Gurgaon,
Haryana, India - 122003

Australia: +613906 99664
Indonesia: +6285574678938
Singapore: +6531386714
South Africa: +27875517192
UAE: +9718000320460

✉ contact@mettl.com

🌐 www.mettl.com

Be sure to carefully read and understand all of the disclaimers, limitations and restrictions before using the assessment services, reports, products, psychometric tools or the company systems or website.

Read the complete disclaimer here
www.mettl.com/terms-of-services