A comprehensive guide to aptitude assessments

Why you need them and their benefits

Hiring a new resource is fraught with risk as companies gamble on the selected candidate's ability to do the assigned tasks.

50%

Research by Brad Smart and others puts the average number of mis-hires as high as 50%.

Mis-hires can raise costs, going as high as US$240,000, per the U.S. Department of Labour research. They can also lead to dissatisfaction and low employee team spirit, hampering work.

One way to improve hires is to integrate aptitude assessments in the hiring process, which are a strong indicator of a candidate's on-job performance, as per research by Frank L. Schmidt.

Companies can also use these assessments to chart employees' career paths and plan L&D initiatives.

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What are aptitude assessments?

Aptitude assessments measure mental faculties such as reasoning, problem-solving, memory, verbal skills and mathematical ability. Depending on the demands of the job role, these tests provide a fair overview of a candidate's ability to understand tasks and solve work-related problems.

The following usually are a part of aptitude tests:

Numerical reasoning

A mix of mental mathematics and critical reasoning questions to assess a candidate's mathematical ability.

Verbal reasoning

A mix of grammar, vocabulary and comprehension helps assess the candidate's English language skills.

Abstract reasoning

Questions with symbols, diagrams and number progression with missing items assess the candidate's ability to draw conclusions based on the information presented.

Logical reasoning

Complicated texts to draw inferences are used to assess critical thinking skills.

Aptitude tests usually have a proportionate mix of all questions for better candidate evaluation.

One of the advantages of using aptitude tests is that companies can put applicants through assessments that measure competencies specific to the job role. In such cases, companies get a reliable metric to assess candidates' suitability for the position. For instance, a candidate's score in abstract reasoning and verbal ability helps the recruiter determine suitability for a sales or marketing role. Similarly, companies can focus on the candidate's data processing and decision-making skills for an analyst role.

How to effectively use aptitude tests?

The most effective way to use an aptitude assessment in your hiring process is to introduce it in the initial stages of hiring. Testing candidates early in the recruitment process saves time by eliminating unsuitable candidates. This way, employers can focus on interviewing only shortlisted candidates. Also, keeping the test short, between 10-30 minutes, is suggested as a longer test may discourage candidates, especially in the initial hiring stages.

Seven reasons to use aptitude tests

The primary reason for using aptitude tests for hiring is their proven success as a strong predictor of job performance. While the educational background and work experience showcase the candidate's achievement to date, aptitude assessments focus evaluation on their potential and core skills.

Other benefits of using aptitude tests:

1. A reliable indicator of candidate performance

Traditional hiring methods rely on candidates' academic backgrounds and work experience to judge their suitability for the role. They need to factor in the candidate's problem-solving and soft skills. Aptitude tests offer detailed insights into candidates' mental capacities and talents that recruiters can analyze. Recruiters can swiftly make data-driven, well-informed decisions by including aptitude evaluation in the talent assessment process.

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2. Easy to use and administer

Recruiters have the option of using online assessment tools for hiring. These tools are easy to use and automate the whole assessment process end-to-end, making it easy to administer these tests. Recruiters can also customize assessments and reports as per their requirements. Additionally, they can integrate the online proctoring tool to ensure candidates don't get involved in unwanted practices.

3. Shortens the hiring process

As per LinkedIn research, it takes between 33 to 49 days for recruiters to fill up vacant positions.

As a result, companies are looking for innovative methods to shorten the time of hiring. Traditional hiring processes can get exponentially long and drawn out for various reasons. However, implementing an aptitude skill test speeds up the recruiting process. These tests swiftly narrow down the choices, making the next step, interviewing and hiring the selected applicant.

4. Removes unconscious bias

Often during the hiring process, unconscious bias creeps in. This can cause recruiters to reject suitable candidates. On the other hand, aptitude tests ensure that hiring is objective and data-driven. HR has more data on hand to make a selection. Furthermore, they can get a customized report for each candidate and evaluate them accordingly.

5. Cost-effective in short and long-run

Aptitude assessments are an economical way to shortlist candidates. They can be administered online and are far less expensive and time-consuming than conventional interviews. Furthermore, they are also cost-effective in the long term, as they help hire the right candidate that adapts to the work culture.

6. Helps avoid making bad hires

A significant problem recruiters face when recruiting is making hiring judgments leading to wrong candidate selection. About 81% of new hires fail to perform as per expectations, a number that HRs need to improve. Furthermore, a poor hire may cost one-third of the position's compensation. With aptitude tests, recruiting can substantially be improved by selecting the right person for the right job, helping organizations avoid bad hires and save money.

7. Improves retention rate

While a certain amount of employee turnover is expected, companies of late have been dealing with higher attrition rates than usual.

As per Gartner, yearly voluntary turnover in the United States is expected to increase by about 20% this year. According to the same report, companies can expect a 4% increase in annual employee turnover.

The easiest way to improve retention rates is to improve hires and invest in employees' skills and development.

Aptitude tests ensure that candidates with the necessary skills are hired. Also, the assessments help identify skill-gap in the current workforce. Companies then can work on bridging that gap or creating a custom L&D strategy for upskilling the workforce, helping increase retention.

How Mercer | Mettl can help

Mercer | Mettl's aptitude software is an all-in-one virtual assessment system that gives insights into an applicant's abilities. It automates the whole assessment process end-to-end, from setting up the tests to administering them and creating reports.

Fully automates aptitude assessment process:

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**Provides crucial insights:**

Online assessment software provides a detailed overview of the candidate's abilities. The test assesses the candidates' on-the-job skills, personality and behavior, helping recruiters decide if the applicant is suitable for the role.

Quick evaluation:

Online assessment systems do away with the manual effort to analyze the test results by automating it. Mercer | Mettl's aptitude assessment platform automatically grades candidates' responses and creates detailed, data-driven test reports.

Automated scheduling and invites:

Mercer | Mettl allows scheduling assessments during different timeslots and facilitates sending bulk and customized invites to applicants.
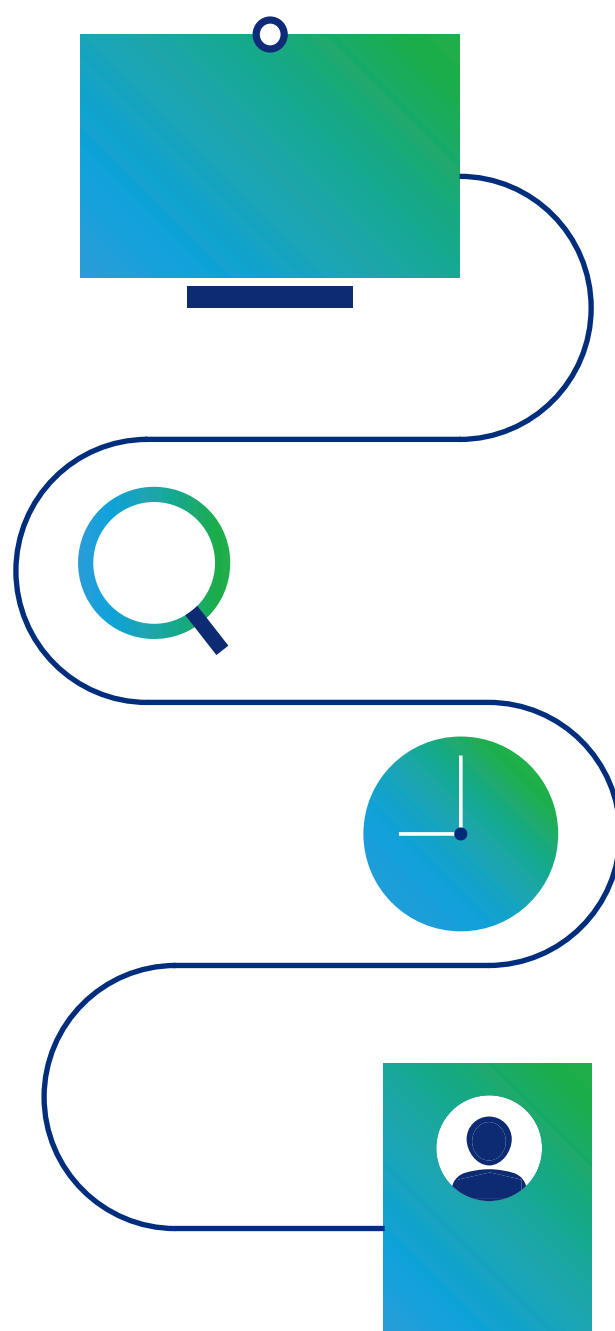
Conclusion

Aptitude tests employ highly predictive instruments that are quick and easy to comprehend. As a result, the recruiter saves the interviewing panel's time as only individuals with high potential are interviewed. Aptitude assessments create a future-ready workforce by bridging the skill gap and giving organizations a competitive edge for years to come.

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About us

At Mercer | Mettl, our mission is to enable organizations to make better people decisions across two key areas: acquisition and development. Since our inception in 2010, we have partnered with more than 4,000 corporates, 31 sector skills councils/government departments and 500+ educational institutions across more than 90 countries.

✉ mettlcontact@mercer.com

🌐 www.mettl.com

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