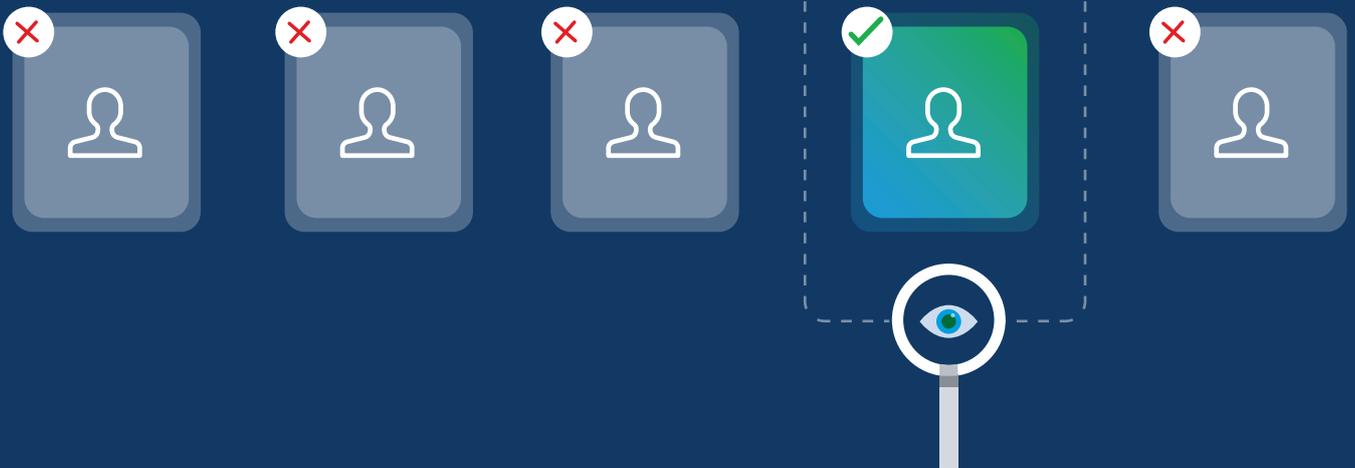


# 12 Types of pre-employment tests that streamline recruitment and selection



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# Introduction

Different types of pre-employment tests have revolutionized the way hiring is being conducted globally. Traditionally, human resource managers have relied on telephonic and face-to-face interviews to fill vacancies. However, this approach has proven to be flawed, eventually, with an increase in the number of bad hires and early attrition rates. Additionally, the incompetence of bad hires costs an organization in multiple ways. When CareerBuilder asked how a bad hire affected its business in the last year, employers cited less productivity (37 percent), lost time to recruit and train another worker (32 percent) and compromised quality of work (31 percent).

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**It is important to note that there's a ripple effect with bad hires. Disengagement is contagious – poor performers lower the bar for other workers on their teams, and their bad habits spread throughout the organization.**

**Rosemary Haefner**

Chief Human Resources Officer, CareerBuilder

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The desire or the immediate need to fill a role quickly is one of the greatest threats to making a good quality hire, but choosing the wrong person to simply get a replacement is risky and may cost the business dearly. It is always better to leave a role unfilled and undertake the recruitment process again, even at the cost of potentially acute short-term operational problems, than to make a poor choice and run the risk of causing acute, long-term operational problems.



→ **30%**

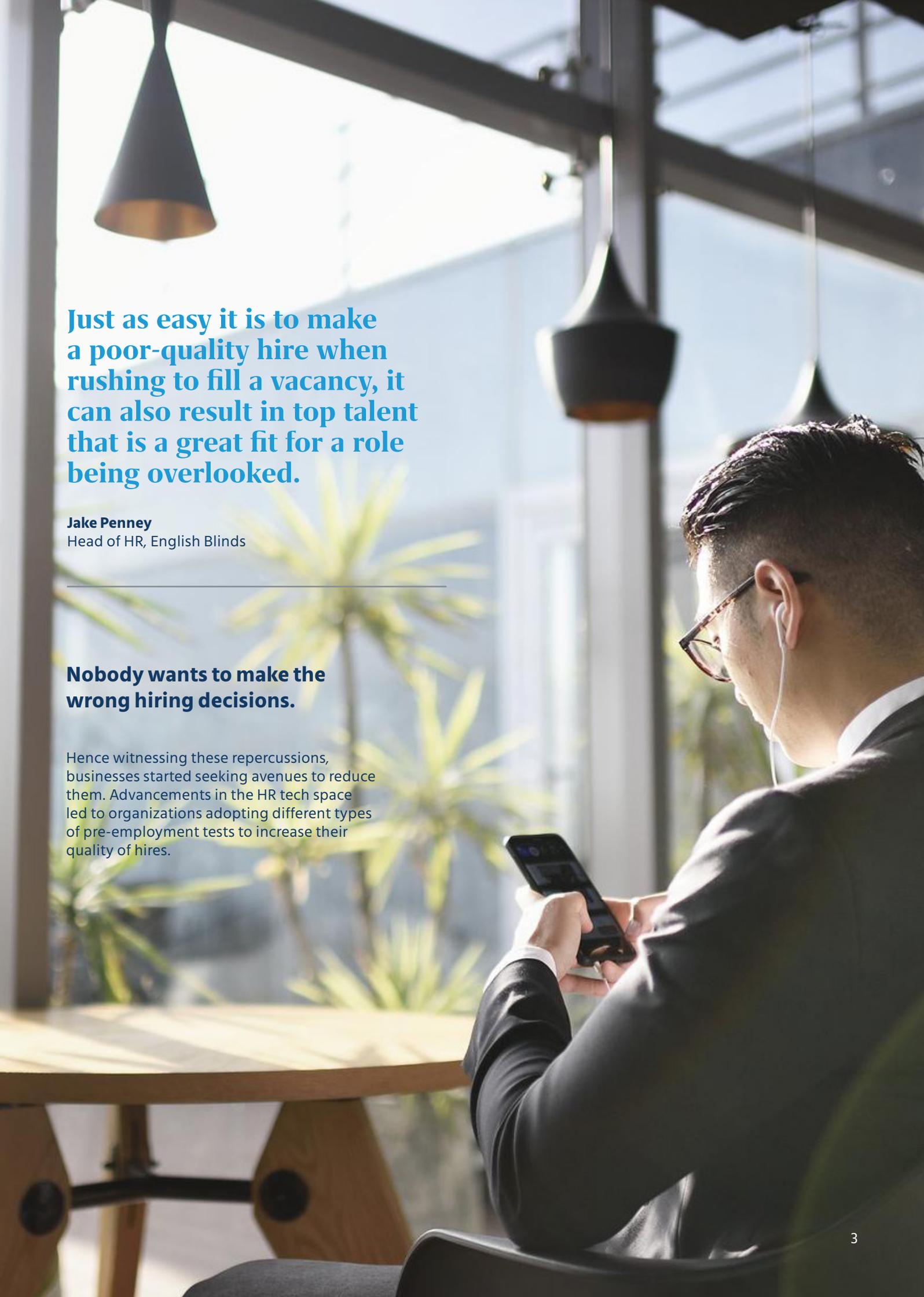
The cost of a bad hire can reach up to 30 percent of the employee's first year's earnings.



→ **74%**

74 percent of companies that made a poor hire lost an average of US\$14,900 per poor hire.

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**Just as easy it is to make a poor-quality hire when rushing to fill a vacancy, it can also result in top talent that is a great fit for a role being overlooked.**

**Jake Penney**

Head of HR, English Blinds

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**Nobody wants to make the wrong hiring decisions.**

Hence witnessing these repercussions, businesses started seeking avenues to reduce them. Advancements in the HR tech space led to organizations adopting different types of pre-employment tests to increase their quality of hires.

# The different types of selection tests

The different types of selection tests are:

## 1. Personality test

The rise of personality testing in the twentieth century was a response to an increase in the number of office workers. HRs started using it to maximize employee potential. One of the most effective types of pre-employment tests, personality tests are used to evaluate the human personality to make the right hiring decisions. They are designed to identify workplace patterns, relevant characteristics and traits and reflect how people may respond to different situations. These types of pre-employment testing help build self-awareness and facilitate team building.

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**Psychometric assessment is one of the types of pre-employment tests that help you find the nerve-strength of the candidates, and how well they can perform in multiple situations. It gives an idea about their performance as a team or individual and how they react in full days and deadlines.**

**Martin Luenendonk**  
Co-founder, Cleverism

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**Personality tests can be divided into two categories:**



## i) Bright side

The bright side of human personality comprises positive personality traits that are easily noticeable and help in honing on-the-job performance. The bright side is based on the Big Five Personality Traits using which Mercer | Mettl has categorized them into behavioral competencies and workplace-specific behaviors.

The bright side of human personality is based on a Big Five Personality Traits of the Five-Factor Model:

- Openness
- Conscientiousness
- Extraversion
- Agreeableness
- Neuroticism

## ii) Dark side

Dark personality traits surface when certain characteristics of a person get triggered. This leads to the display of counterproductive behavior, adversely impacting the workplace and co-workers. This type of pre-employment testing proves efficient in discovering these otherwise hidden traits. Our internal report, 'Uncovering the Dark Traits of Human Personality,' revealed that 60% of organizations use online assessment as the most efficient tool for identifying and measuring dark traits.

Mercer | Mettl's Dark Personality Inventory covers the following traits:

- Opportunism
- Self-obsession
- Insensitivity
- Temperamental
- Impulsiveness
- Thrill-seeking

### These traits get triggered by:



#### Level of dark traits

Different people possess different levels of dark traits. Higher the degree of dark traits present, greater will be the frequency at which they get triggered (with the slightest provocation).



#### Environment

When people are in an environment where they hold power over others, there's an innate tendency to misuse that power. That tendency leads to triggering of dark traits.



#### Situation

Dark personality traits get triggered in situations when people are not on their guard and are not actively monitoring their behavior, i.e., in a relaxed environment and stressed environment.

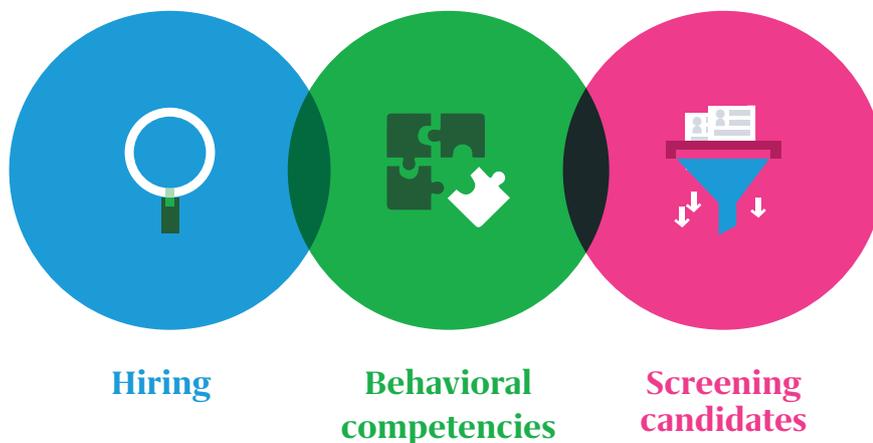
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## 2. Behavioral assessment

A behavioral assessment measures the behavioral competencies of individuals in a simulated work environment. These types of pre-employment testing require individuals to demonstrate behavioral competencies in one or more activities relevant to their job roles and resemble actual organizational situations. Candidates are presented with a series of real work-related scenarios with possible courses of action. They have to select either the best option or rank the possible actions based on their effectiveness.

Behavioral assessment tools can be easily customized for all job levels and use cases. These types of pre-employment testing are created on behavioral competencies, further classified into sub-competencies. In addition to hiring top talent, behavioral assessments are used to strategize coaching plans, ideal for recruiting and identifying prospects who could be groomed into future leaders.

### The benefits of behavioral assessments in recruitment



Such assessments make **hiring** for entry levels an easy process. These tests are designed to work in conjunction with skill assessment tests to address all the essential aspects of screening.

For every job role, employers take specific behavior traits into account. Even though there is an overlap between job roles and behavior traits in some cases, assessments are ideally suited for precise competency mapping. The idea behind measuring **behavioral competencies** is to ensure that candidates whose behavior systems appear aligned with the company's culture are suited best for the job role.

Weeding out hassles occurring due to the exponential rise in the cost from screening candidates until the onboarding has been an area of focus for companies, why behavioral and personality tests are conducted online. This way, applicants can take the test in a user-friendly environment, and the assessor can get full candidate performance reports, thus ensuring a faster selection of a culturally-fit candidate.

## Behavioral assessments can be divided into the following types of pre-employment tests:



### Online behavioral tools

- **Situational judgment tests**  
Analyze rate, rank, or select the most effective response in role-specific scenarios.
- **In-box exercises**  
Choose the best possible response to issues presented in the mails.
- **Caselets sets**  
Solve problems highlighted in the backdrop of a business scenario.
- **Case study simulators**  
Find relevant information, diagnose issues and recommend actions.



### Offline behavioral tools

- **Group discussion**  
Assess the ability to influence, communicate and work in a team.
- **Group activities**  
Determine the ability to handle and solve a problem as part of a group.
- **Behavioral interviews**  
A detailed description of a candidate's understanding of a given business situation.
- **In-tray exercises**  
Assess the ability to prioritize, gather information and call meetings when faced with an influx of tasks.
- **Role-plays**  
Put the candidates within a business constraint where they are asked to play a specific role.
- **Case presentations**  
Assess candidates' confidence and communication skills in front of an audience.



#### Validation

Strongly correlates with on the job performance



#### Reliability

Highly reliable results as assessments are based on realistic job scenarios



#### Customization

Customized according to your organizational requirements



#### Extensive repository

An extensive array of content for each job role, job-level, and industry

## 3. Cognitive ability test

A pre-employment aptitude test assesses individuals' abilities such as critical thinking, verbal reasoning, numerical ability, problem-solving, decision-making, etc. One of the most critical types of pre-employment testing, they are an indicator of a person's intelligence quotient (IQ). The test results predict on-the-job performance and assess current and potential employees across job levels. They also test role-specific IQs across multiple job functions. This type of pre-employment exam helps HRs in improving the quality of hires.

According to Mercer | Mettl's *Assessing Cognitive Competencies at Work*, the correlation between cognitive intelligence and work performance is at least 51% and can go as high as 84%. High intelligence is an indicator of success on the job, measured based on evaluating the performance on tasks similar to those encountered on the job.

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**We use a personality assessment and pre-employment aptitude test for many of our positions and we find them effective in so that they give us jumping-off points to ask deeper questions during the interview process.**

**Lauren Torregrossa**

Media Relations Manager, CareerPlug

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#### **4. Coding tests**

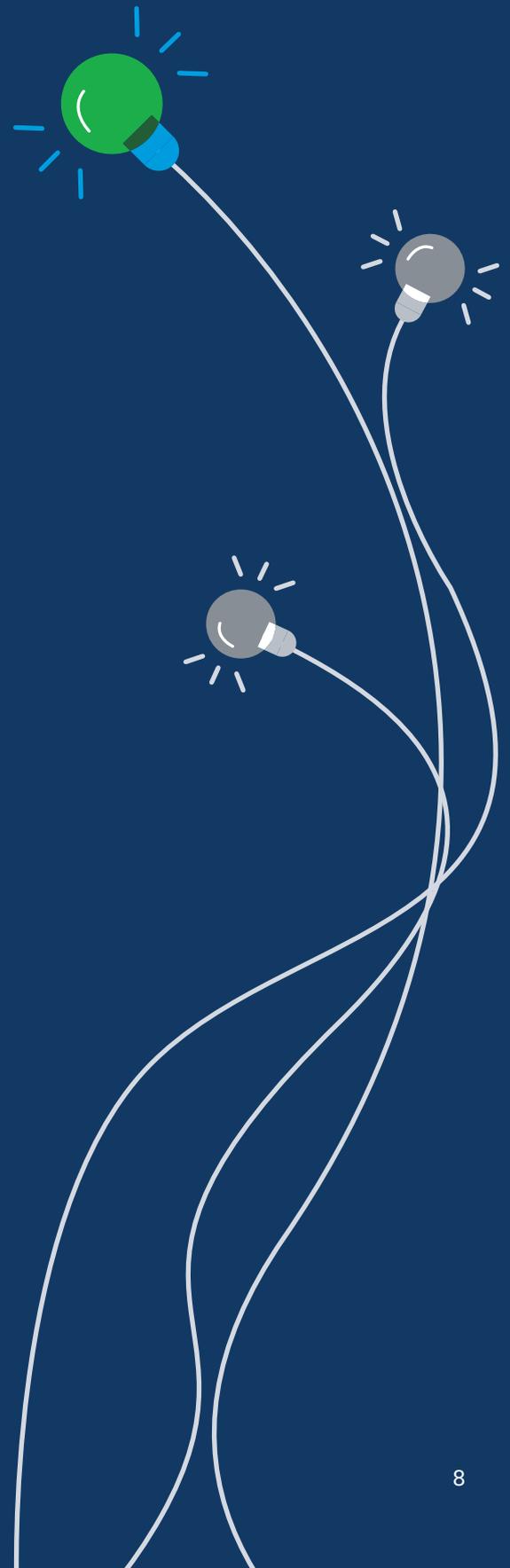
These types of pre-employment testing evaluate the individual's ability to code effectively. Candidates are assessed on various languages and technologies such as AngularJS, Bootstrap, PL/SQL, Unix shell, Spring Framework, etc. Talent acquisition experts prefer coding tests to filter the best techies. Sharing how they ask all software engineering candidates to respond to a coding prompt, *MTEQ Talent Acquisition and Employee Engagement Associate Director Chelsea Stearns* says, "This is highly effective in determining which applicants possess the required problem-solving skills to be successful on the job."

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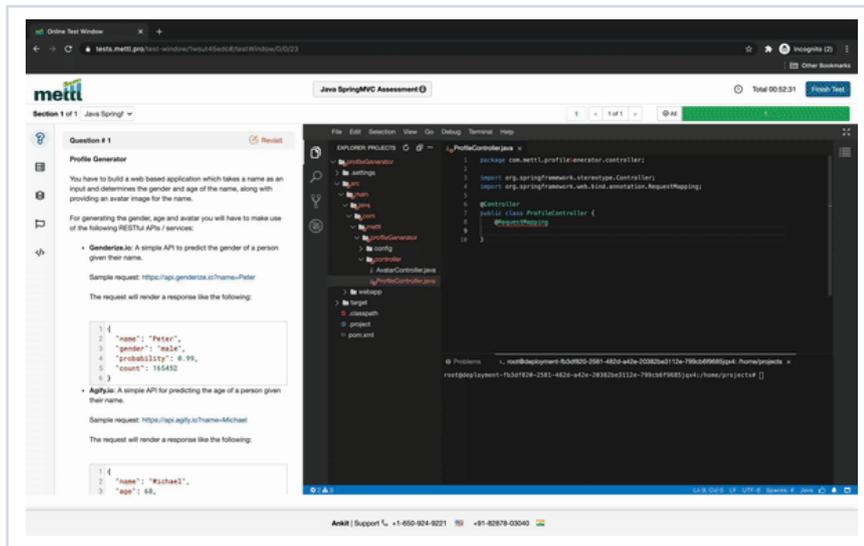
*For our software developers, we have a coding challenge we developed in-house that we find highly effective for testing the skills of potential hires. These types of pre-employment tests provide structured interview guides that we use for all our interviews.*

**Lauren Torregrossa**

Media Relations Manager, CareerPlug



## Use our front-end, back-end and fullstack simulators, among others, to conduct high-quality coding assessments



Front-end simulator



Back-end simulator



Database simulator



Data science simulator



Full stack simulator

## 5. Role-based tests

These types of pre-employment cognitive tests are curated as per job functions and job roles. The competency frameworks in each vary accordingly. They test the expertise job prospects possess in their domain. The three vital aspects that help onboard a quality talent, with the perfect balance of required skill sets, are domain expertise, behavioral attributes and aptitude. These three types of pre-employment testing are the building blocks of a role-based competency framework.

### How to hire an area sales manager

#### Area sales manager

Deals with retailers and distributors, runs day-to-day operations of the sales team, generates revenue and maintains customer relationships in the respective geographical area.

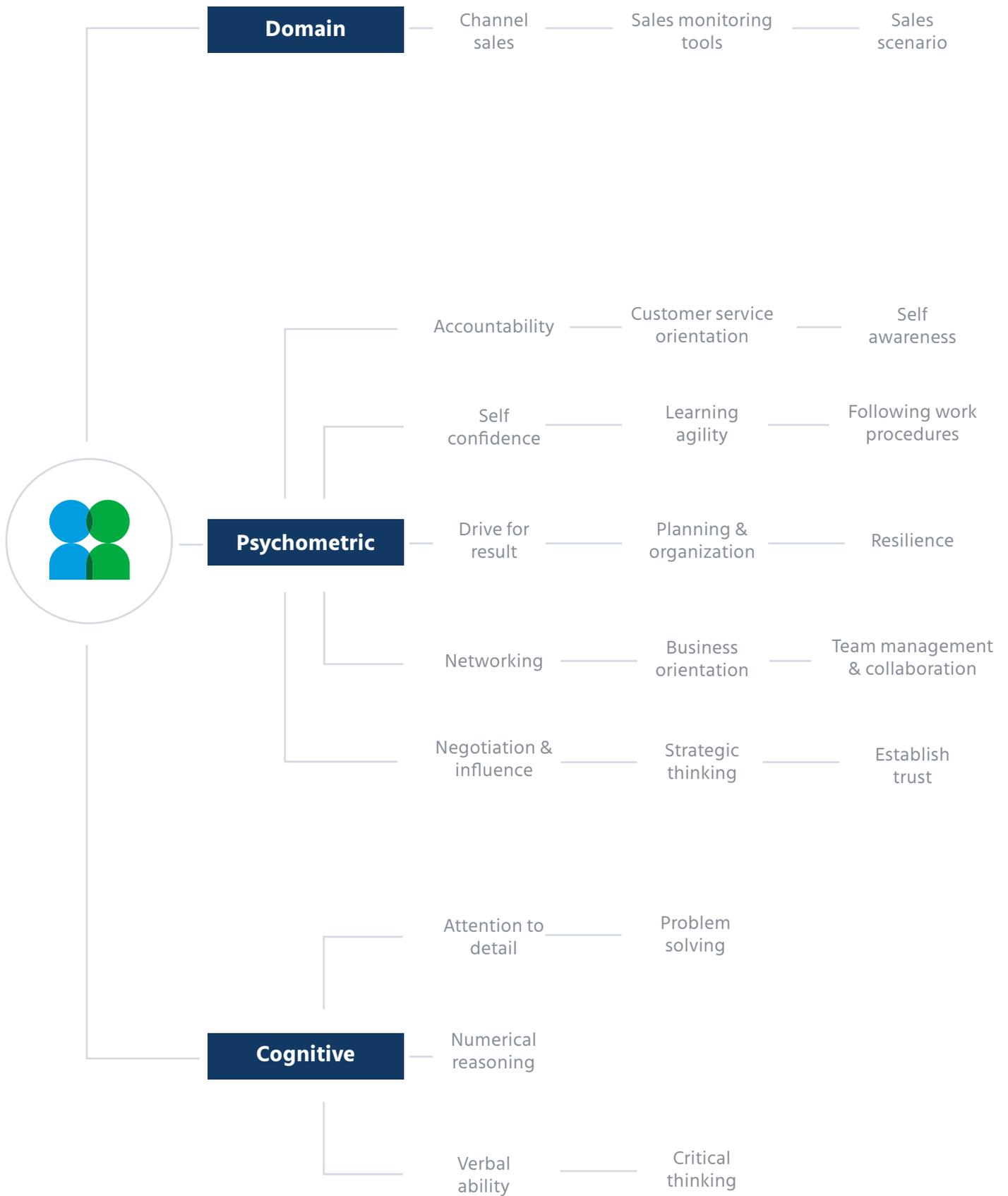
#### Telephonic interview questions

- How would you pitch a new product to a client?
- What measures do you take to scale the performance of your team?
- How do you deal with a sales executive who missed his target two consecutive months?
- Which is the most important part of mentoring someone? What improvement does it induce in the trainee?



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# Critical competencies required to hire an area sales manager



Functional assessment types of pre-employment testing cater to diverse industries and functions. Some of the job functions that these types of employment tests encompass are:

 <b>Law tests</b>	 <b>Retail</b>	 <b>BPO</b>	 <b>Engineering</b>
 <b>Accounting</b>	 <b>Financial services</b>	 <b>Media/PR</b>	 <b>Blue collared roles</b>

## 6. Remote work assessment

Remote work skills and competencies, once considered to be ancillary, are now at the forefront due to COVID-19. At different levels, employees need distinct skills to steer their way through the present remote working environment. As businesses around the world adjust to the fairly new remote work setting, organizations are equipping themselves with best practices, remote work skills and competencies. They are gauging employee readiness to ensure business continuity and productivity of remote workers.

Keeping this in mind, Mercer | Mettl subject matter experts have designed the Remote Work Assessment to assist organizations in understanding the behavioral competencies required to succeed in a remote work environment. The assessment is a means to help managers and leaders get a deeper insight into the remote workers' strengths and areas of improvement and growth. It helps in the recruitment and selection of candidates by determining their standing on the competencies required to work effectively in remote settings.

## 7. High-potential identification

Employees are the principal driving force of organizational growth. Individual employee development is intrinsically linked to organizational growth and, therefore, is a significant concern for human resource professionals. With the need to continually evolve in times of rapid transformation and limited resources, organizations are looking inwards to tap into the job prospect's potential via high-potential (Hi-po) identification.

Pre-employment cognitive tests are clear differentiators of a high-potential employee.

Cognitive skills and an exceptional aptitude, when developed in the right manner, increase the chances of present and future success at work.

**67%**

Our internal report High-Potential Identification Survey 2020 revealed that 67 percent of respondents chose problem-solving, critical decision making, business acumen, etc., as the accurate indicators of high-potential in prospects.



## 8. Learning agility

Since present-day organizations are becoming more complex and dynamic due to increasingly turbulent and fast-changing business, learning agility or mental agility has become one of the most desired competencies for the recruits as well as existing employees. An organization with a learning agile workforce has:

- Improved employee productivity
- Future-ready workforce
- Increase in number of high potentials
- Higher overall organizational productivity and profitability

Naturally self-reflective, high potentials are agile learners. They tend to push beyond boundaries, actively respond to new conditions and objectively evaluate their experiences. The Mettl Learning Agility Assessment helps you identify agile learners, who are the best to lead for your organization's success.

## 9. Digital readiness

Businesses have often seen a digital transformation as being limited to an upgrade in their IT infrastructure and through the internet of things (IoT). However, for businesses to champion the future of work, every aspect of a business, right from processes, strategy, to its building blocks and its workforce should be ready to embrace this transformation. This can be achieved by measuring the digital readiness of your prospects. Damien Martin of Shufti Pro defines digital readiness as the ease with which employees and organizations can transition to digitized workflows, using software and other technology. The eventual goal is to streamline the way business is done, and customers are served.

To help organizations identify how digitally ready their prospects are, our in-house team of experts created a digital readiness assessment that helps organizations identify employees on their level of digital readiness, which can be taken as the first step to lay down a developmental plan. The model gives a clear picture of individuals and their understanding of vis-a-vis digital readiness.

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## 10. Language proficiency assessment

English language proficiency types of pre-employment testing measure an individual's fluency, pronunciation, grammar and listening comprehension. They play a crucial role in effective communication. English language proficiency is becoming increasingly important in the global economy. English proficiency is among the key factors for success, especially for certain roles, jobs and professions. Professionals are expected to communicate effectively in English, even though they may not use English in everyday life.

The primacy of English-speaking skills in any consumer-centric role in the service sector, cutting across industries, is well-established. It plays a critical role in the right communication of a product's nuances or service up for sale. Hence, language proficiency types of pre-employment tests have quickly become among the most important criteria in the hiring process. However, the proficiency level required may be different, depending on the company or the position. Hence pre-employment cognitive tests assume significance in certain job roles.



### Pronunciation

Check for critical non-trainable pronunciation mistakes.



### Fluency

Measured for 10+ dimensions like speaking, rate, intonation, etc.



### Grammar

Check for critical non-trainable grammatical errors.



### Listening Comprehension

Check for fact and inference-based understanding.

### Modes of delivery

 Computer-based

 On smartphones



### Globally recognized & actionable scores

Evaluation methodology incorporates CEFR guidelines and checks for critical non-trainable errors.



### Patented & accurate technology

Speech X is powered by Carnegie Speech's\* world-class speech evaluation & pinpointing technology.



### Identity theft & cheating prevention

Authenticate candidate identity while making your process auditable with our Proctoring Technology.



### Auto-evaluate at scale with real-time reports

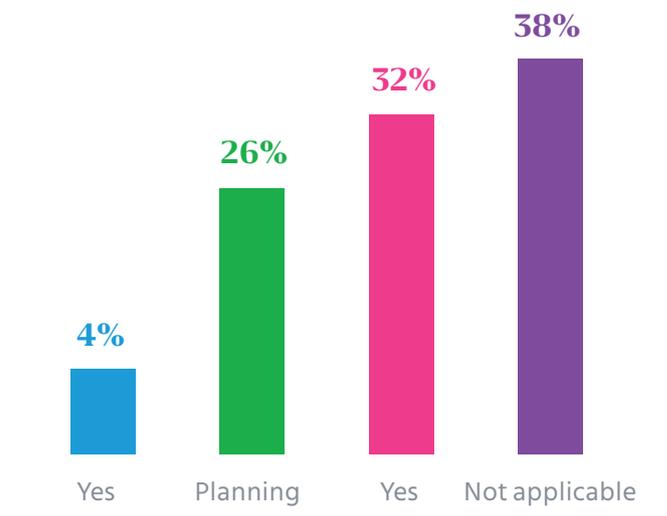
Make data-backed decisions by assessing candidates at scale without any biases.

## 11. Background check

Background investigations and reference checks are employers' principal means of securing information about potential hires from sources other than the applicants themselves. A background investigation generally involves determining whether an applicant may be unqualified for a position due to a record of a criminal conviction, motor vehicle violations, poor credit history, or misrepresentations regarding education or work history. A reference check generally involves contacting applicants' former employers, supervisors, co-workers and educators to verify previous employment and obtain information about their knowledge, skills, abilities and character.

According to Checkster CEO Yves Lermusi, organizations cannot ignore solutions that play further down in the funnel, including interview solutions, assessments, background screening, online reference checking and onboarding solutions. Companies that use technology during these later stages have a better understanding of a candidate and gather more meaningful information beyond what is found in a profile or a resume. Many organizations are currently investing in background screening and interview management providers, he adds.

According to the Background Screening Benchmarking Report, more than half of roughly 300 organizations surveyed either have integrated or plan to integrate their background screening solution with their ATS.



## 12. Drug test

**Records from the substance abuse and mental health services administration showed that drug users are three times more likely to skip work than non-users. They are also four times more likely to have work-related accidents, injuries and commit mistakes.**

Hence, it is critical to undertake the types of pre-employment testing that minimizes the risk. These types of pre-employment tests determine if a job prospect uses any illegal substances or medication. If workplace safety is of the utmost importance to a company, then conducting pre-employment assessment tests can help mitigate drug misuse risks.

### In safety-sensitive workplaces, employers drug test to:

- Reveal intoxication
- Prevent costly accidents
- Prevent employees from undertaking safety-sensitive tasks while impaired
- Dissuade employees from engaging in drug use while on the job

Urine and blood tests are the most commonly used test when prospects are screened for illegal drugs or alcohol use. Urinalysis shows the presence of drug residues that remain in the body after the effects of the drugs have worn off. Drugs screened in these types of pre-employment testing include amphetamines, cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamines, opiates, nicotine and alcohol.

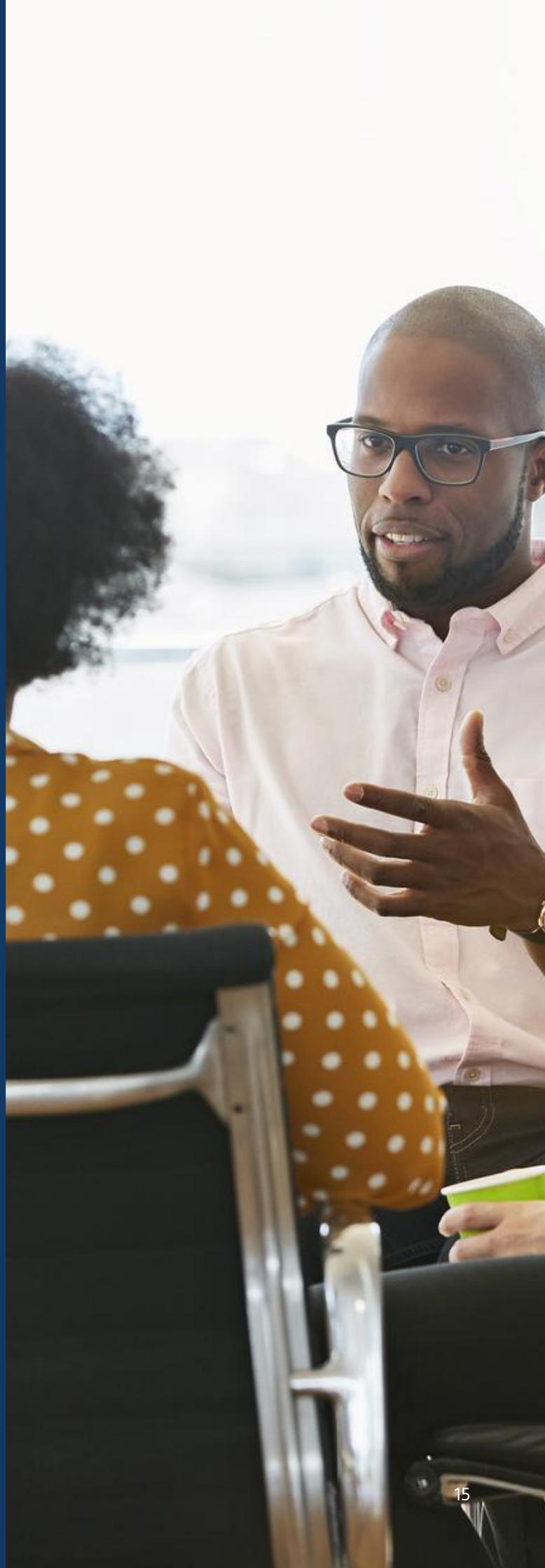


# Conclusion

**The quality of hire is the most critical metric in talent acquisition, yet the most misunderstood.**

More than ever before, talent acquisition professionals are being held accountable for impacting quality, both during the recruiting process and in the first year of employment. Once these characteristics are understood, companies can begin a strategy to define, measure and improve quality. Organizations that will enhance the quality of hire are leveraging the right types of employment tests to make data-driven decisions.

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# How Mercer | Mettl can help

The types of pre-employment tests provided by Mercer | Mettl allows companies and professionals to make measured decisions on recruitment, training, and promotion of candidates and employees. An extensive library of tests and simulators can help you create customized assessments to evaluate the shortlisted candidates' underlying abilities and current skills. Explore a wide range of psychometric, cognitive, role-based and technical assessments to onboard the right individuals.

## Our offerings:

### 1. Psychometric tests

Assess traits that influence cultural fitment, trainability and job performance using personality profiler, dark personality test, motivation inventory, etc. Mercer | Mettl psychometric tools can be divided into:

#### Mettl Personality Profiler

Mettl Personality Profiler (MPP) is an innovative, evidence-based assessment that measures relevant personality traits required for critical work. It links to behavioral competencies, which, in turn, lead to organizational outcomes of interest. These types of pre-employment tests are designed to help employers gain access to otherwise hidden information about job applicants or employees, critical in influencing their behavior at work.

Test Details		
SCALING METHOD USED: <b>Semantic Differential Scaling</b>	TIME DURATION: <b>20-25 Mins</b>	NUMBER OF ITEMS: <b>86</b>
TYPE OF TOOL: <b>Normative Psychometric Assessment</b>		

#### Mettl Dark Personality Inventory

Mercer | Mettl has created a dark personality trait inventory that contains 6 dark traits: Opportunism, Self-Obsession, Insensitivity, Temperamental, Impulsiveness and Thrill-Seeking. Mettl Dark Personality Inventory (MDPI) aims to measure negative personality constructs in potential hires and existing employees. Through this personality diagnostic, we also aim to contribute to a greater goal of ensuring workplace safety.

**Test Details:**

NUMBER OF ITEMS:  
**80**

SCALING METHOD USED:  
**Likert Scaling**

RESPONSE STYLE:  
**Social Desirability and Central Tendency**

TOOL STANDARDIZATION:  
**Overall reliability : .865, Construct validity estimation with EFA and CFA procedures**

## 2. Behavioral assessments

Mercer | Mettl’s behavioral assessments measure behavioral competencies in a simulated work environment using situational judgment tests, caselets, in-box simulations, etc. Mercer | Mettl has a vast repository of behavioral tests and tools that can be used to make seamless recruitment and selection.

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	✓	✓			✓		✓	

## 3. Aptitude tests

Mercer | Mettl’s pre-employment aptitude test assesses a candidate’s thinking abilities such as perception, reasoning, memory, verbal and problem-solving ability. These types of pre-employment testing are designed to challenge applicants’ potential to solve problems when learning new job skills or tackling workplace issues.

	← Fluid reasoning →			← Crystallized reasoning →					
	Abstract reasoning	Spatial reasoning	Visual reasoning	Critical thinking	Logical reasoning	Numeric ability	Data Interpretation	Verbal ability	Decision making
MCQ	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Caselets				✓		✓	✓		✓
Guesstimates						✓	✓		
Case study simulator				✓		✓	✓		
Writing & typing simulator								✓	✓
Audio questions								✓	

#### 4. Coding tests

Mercer | Mettl's coding types of pre-employment assessment evaluates technical know-how and hands-on skills such as front-end, back-end, database, etc., using role-based and coding simulators. Coding assessments elucidate whether the applicant can fulfill the essential criteria and job requirements. A meaningful talent evaluation from the onset ensures that the subsequent steps enable successful hiring. Hence, our coding assessments are best suited before the interview round and are administered as part of technical screening.



##### Huge Array of Technical Questions

A vast repository of 100,000+ Technical Questions for 300+ Skills



##### Customizable reports with organizational developmental plan

Tailored Solutions matching Organizational Objectives



##### Scalable Solutions

Robust platform to assist in exceptional Organizational Growth



##### Quick Process

Ready to use library of questions for all major job roles to quick start your process



##### Impeccable Support

We have your back anytime, anywhere



##### Remote Proctoring Technology

Best AI-based proctoring tool to deliver convenient and safe assessments

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## 5. Role-based tests

Our role-based assessments ensure that new hires have the requisite functional knowledge across different verticals such as sales, marketing, finance, HR, etc. These types of pre-employment tests help organizations build an understanding of competencies based on the job role, industry and organization-specific context. Mercer | Mettl SMEs assist companies in creating blueprints that list skills and subskills to cover each competency. The assessments are designed from a combination of question types and as per the customization request.

## 6. Spoken english evaluator

Powered by reliable Artificial Intelligence speech technology, Mercer | Mettl's Speech X is a machine-administered and auto-graded test to evaluate a non-native speaker's ability to speak and understand English. It is a scalable means of assessing the ability of prospective hires, a ready-to-use assessment solution for corporate houses to hire for critical client-facing roles and sales profiles. SpeechX is a video-proctored assessment that analyzes a candidate's ability to listen and articulate clearly. It reviews linguistics to identify correct and incorrect information in the candidate's speech and detects errors in reading sentences and extempore speech. It also uses para-linguistic voice analytics to measure the quality and clarity of a candidate's statements.



# 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 15+ educational institutions across more than 90 countries.

✉ [mettlcontact@mercer.com](mailto:mettlcontact@mercer.com)

🌐 [www.mettl.com](http://www.mettl.com)

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## Robust Information Security System



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<https://pages.mettl.com/disclaimer>

