12 pre-employment testing hacks

that 99% of recruiters aren't using

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The recruitment and selection process can be a lengthy ordeal, but thanks to pre-employment testing you can drastically reduce the amount of time you need to spend evaluating resumes. That means you'll decrease time-to-hire and increase the amount of time you have for other essential hiring tasks.

This quick guide will cover 12 tips you can use to get the most out of online skills assessments.

1. Ask for video responses

Interviewing candidates is a crucial part of the hiring process. That's because interviews allow you to get an unfiltered understanding of a candidate's knowledge and experience. It's easy to embellish your skills on a resume, but it's harder to fake it when you're on the spot.

That said, the interview process is time-intensive. It requires coordinating multiple schedules and hours of conversations with candidates. Asking questions that require a video response can save you some time by giving you some of the insight you would get during a one-on-one discussion with a candidate so that you can better determine who you want to invite for a formal interview.

These interviews will give you a better idea of which candidates have the qualifications they claim, and even give you a bit of insight into their personality.

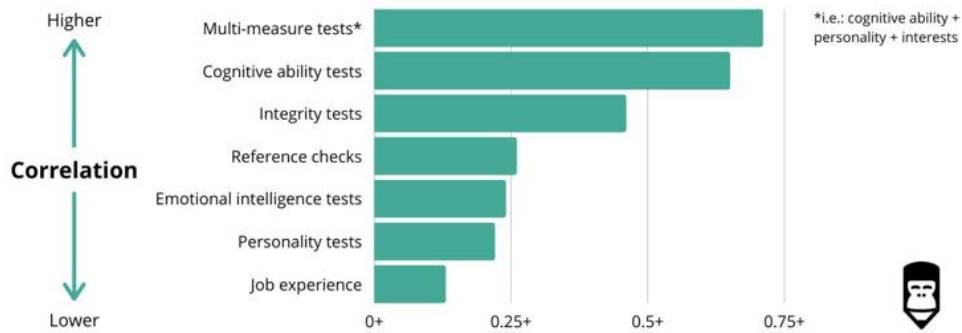# 2. Create a multi-measure assessment

Don't just test for one thing (e.g., personality or language). You'll get more meaningful results by combining multiple test types.

Extensive research has been done to understand what hiring methods actually predict job performance.

One of the most important studies in this area is Frank Schmidt's meta-analysis of a century's worth of workplace productivity data. Based on that study, the table below shows the predictive validity of some commonly used test types, ranked by effectiveness.

The most effective hiring selection practices

And those that don't work so well, based on validity coefficients ranging from 0 to 1. The higher the number, the higher the correlation between test scores and predicted job performance.

Higher — Correlation — Lower

Multi-measure tests*
Cognitive ability tests
Integrity tests
Reference checks
Emotional intelligence tests
Personality tests
Job experience

*i.e.: cognitive ability + personality + interests

0+   0.25+   0.5+   0.75+

Source: Based on data shared by Frank L. Schmidt in a Nov 6, 2013 address to PTCMW as an update to: Schmidt, F.L. & Hunter, J.E. (1998)

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As it turns out, multi-measure tests, combining different types of tests, are the best predictors of whether candidates will be successful on the job.

3. Keep the process short

You'll lose candidates with a 3-4 hours assessment at the start of the recruiting process. As a rule, the later in the process you conduct the assessment, the longer it can be (but, as a general rule, try to keep all assessments under one hour).

By keeping your assessments under an hour, you'll ensure that your candidates have a positive experience and you don't miss out on top talent.

4. Leverage existing internal tests

Many companies or departments already have tests that you can use to assess candidates. Check with relevant teams to make sure you're not reinventing the wheel. At the very least, you might find some valuable questions to get you started.

5. Brand your assessment

First impressions count! If you haven't already chosen a pre-employment testing platform, make sure you choose one that allows you to brand your assessments. This way your assessments will serve as an extension of your brand and personality.

Add your logo, colors, and, if you've got one, include a well-produced video to introduce candidates to your brand.

6. Have proctoring measures in place

It's no surprise that candidates are more likely to cheat on an online assessment. Of course the majority of candidates you test will likely have no intention of cheating.

However, you should find an online skills assessment platform that includes anti-cheating measures to protect you from making a mishire.

Look for features like:

- Disabling copy and paste during an assessment. This minimizes the risk of test questions being shared online.

- Cycling questions for each test. Every time a candidate takes a test, they should receive a small subset of questions that come from a much larger set constructed specifically for that test. This way the test isn't the same for anyone.
- Monitoring and preventing candidates from registering as new candidates to take practice tests ahead of your assessment.
- Recording the approximate location of the candidate using their IP address.
- Detecting if a candidate is using a second email address to take an assessment twice.
- Detecting if a candidate exits full-screen mode at any time during the assessment.
- Detecting if their mouse leaves the assessment window; for example, to browse the internet on a second screen.
- Taking snapshots using a candidate's camera. This is done to verify that the candidate is the one taking the assessment, without any outside help.

7. Use assessments at the top of the hiring funnel

According to a 2018 study by Ladders, recruiters spend an average of 7.4 seconds per resume. That's 1.4 seconds more than reported in earlier Ladders study, but not by much! Of course, there's a reason for that. There are too many other important hiring tasks that have to be done to spend days on resume evaluation.

By using pre-employment assessment tests at the top of the hiring funnel, you can be sure that you're only shortlisting the best candidates.

8. Make first contact a link to an assessment

According to research by Glassdoor, the average job post attracts 250 applications. And that's just the average. At TestGorilla, we regularly work with companies hiring for roles that receive that many resumes in a day! That makes the resume evaluation process very challenging, especially for smaller teams.

Out of all those resumes, Glassdoor's research indicates that only 2% of applicants will actually be invited for an interview. That means that out of 250 candidates, only about five are invited to the next stage of the process.

By replacing first contact by email with a public link to a skills assessment, you will be able to find those top candidates more efficiently. That way you can dedicate all of your time to qualified applicants.

9. Test for culture fit

A culture fit test assesses how a candidate's values, traits, and interests align with the values of your company and the traits and interests that would make a new hire successful in a specific role.

Whether you're a rising startup or an enterprise-level organization, developing and maintaining a strong culture provides one of the greater competitive advantages you can have on the market. Testing for culture fit will help you do that.

10. Use personality tests

Personality tests are empirical assessments that measure a candidate's non-behavioral characteristics. Use these tests to get a better understanding of a candidate's underlying characteristics like their motivations, communication style, temperament, character, personal identity, and more.

For example, a personality test can reveal how someone prefers to interact with others, their preferred way of handling stressful situations, and how flexible they are to change.

11. Include competency-based questions

If you need a candidate with certain skills, test for them! That's what pre-employment tests are for, after all. Find an online skills assessment platform that includes role-based tests that will help you assess whether a candidate has the skills you need for the role.

12. Anonymize your assessments

Well meaning members of your hiring team can be subject to conscious and unconscious biases, whether they realize it or not. By removing names and other identifying information from the results of your assessments, you can improve your ability to build a diverse team.

This allows your hiring team to evaluate candidates based on the quantifiable data provided by your assessments with less risk of bias.

See how TestGorilla can help you make these changes today

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