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Ace at assessment

Was your last assessment process effective? How do you answer this question? And can you evidence your response? Martin Kavanagh makes sense of the metrics.

Within any organisation there are differing viewpoints on what makes for an effective assessment process. To the finance director the answer may be whether the process has reduced cost per hire, while the marketing director may be more interested in what is being said on Glassdoor.

The CIPD (2016) tried to make sense of this question by bringing together 250 metrics, which can be used to assess resourcing initiatives.

Understanding the metrics

With the aim of simplifying this complex picture, and developing a more coherent approach to evidencing assessment effectiveness, we analysed all the criteria identified by the CIPD (2016) and established a mapping into five core areas:

- **Quality** - e.g. assessment processes must identify the right people, of the right calibre, for the right roles.
- **Engagement** - e.g. after completing an assessment process, candidates should be positive about their experience.
- **Efficiency** - e.g. assessment processes should minimise the demand they place on recruiters and other stakeholders (including candidates). Candidates should be asked to spend as little time completing an assessment as is necessary to assess them in a robust and fair way.
- **Cost** - e.g. assessment processes should be cost effective.
- **Diversity and Inclusion** - e.g. diversity in the candidate pipeline should be maintained through each stage of the assessment process.

Evidencing success – a question of breadth

Using this model we reviewed 140 case studies from the websites of 10 major assessment providers to help understand the extent current assessment processes seek to establish success criteria in these five core areas.

The clear majority (86%) only reported on the effectiveness of the assessment process in one or two of the five areas. Can you truly say an assessment is effective when you are not considering three of these five areas? In essence, we often know assessment processes are effective in some ways, but we would benefit from having a broader appreciation.



Our review of the assessment processes found an interesting shift over time. Newer entrants to the assessment market are more likely to focus on engagement. This is a positive development given the increased awareness we are seeing from clients of the impact of Net Promoter Scores and presenting a positive employer brand. Unfortunately, greater focus on engagement has been coupled with a similar-sized drop in assessing the quality of talent.

Why is this important?

The increased focus on candidate engagement is a positive trend, but it should not come at the expense of measuring the effectiveness of an assessment in delivering quality of candidates, through robust validation research.

By measuring all five areas of the model we can ensure that we can answer whether an assessment process was effective with a definitive, convincing, and evidence-based response.