What Can We Do to Help You Improve Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (D,E&I)

Top Tips for Assessment Users

As assessment users, you can take several steps to help improve D,E&I when using assessments in selection. Take some time to review the following areas to see if you are taking the right steps to increase D,E&I where you can and understand what we are doing to help you achieve positive outcomes in this area.

1. Training

Our formal training and practitioner User Guides provide business users with the requisite information they need to help them make decisions in a consistent way, and gain clarity on how to interpret test results accurately. Training is designed to help accredited assessment users understand the importance of validity and ensure that only assessments relevant to the job role in question are used.

Are those who are regularly using and interpreting assessments in your organization up to date on their training and referring to any User Guides available? If a test provider does not provide you with relevant training information, question whether it should be used. Efficient training should always advocate the use of a thorough job analysis prior to implementing assessments.

2. Preparation

Applicants want information that allows them to adequately prepare to take assessments. In a survey we conducted on 2,000 active applicants, being provided with information to prepare for an assessment was rated as the most important factor in whether an individual would choose to complete an application for an organization.

Do you encourage your candidates to prepare for assessments? Do you know if they are undertaking the practice tests available? Access to preparation materials should give candidates sufficient time to practice and prepare prior to completing any live assessments. This allows candidates who may have any specific issues to understand the assessment process, the assessment materials being used and to flag any concerns they have to the hiring organization.

We have integrated preparation guides for our behavioral assessments and practice tests for our aptitude assessments directly into our Oasys assessment platform candidate portal. When a candidate reaches the 'My Tasks' page on the Oasys platform, they are provided with direct access to the relevant preparation guide/practice test for the assessment they will subsequently complete, in the language they will be completing the assessment. For assessments run via an ATS integration, clients can choose to have practice assessments built into the candidate's workflow.

3. Accessibility

Are you using assessments that consider the accessible needs of diverse candidates? Does your process do enough to accommodate the needs of diverse candidates? Becoming familiar with the many possible adjustments that can be considered for candidates with diverse needs will help D,E&I. Improving your understanding on the diverse needs of candidates will enable you to adjust the process where required.

Think about accessibility from the moment at which the candidate is first invited to complete an assessment. If you are using email invites, make these clear and concise, and, where possible, ensure they can be read with plain text. The assessment portal used to complete tests should be simple and easy to navigate, optimized for the user's chosen device to make it accessible to different users.

Candidates who have a disability or neurodiverse needs may find that the test administration, instructions or medium of delivery require accommodations to be made. Ensure that the process provides an opportunity for candidates to disclose any specific concerns they may have. The process must be able to provide all candidates with the opportunity to give a realistic estimate of their aptitudes or behaviors required for the role. Disability and neurodiversity represent a very wide variety of needs, assessment users therefore need to treat each case/request individually and take time to understand/ discuss specific requirements.

Some disabilities or neurodiverse needs may have no appreciable impact on a candidate's ability to take a test. If the assessment can accurately estimate their level of ability or behaviors required for the role under standard conditions, then an accommodation is less likely to be required. Where there is any doubt, it is the responsibility of the organization to consult a relevant expert. There may be rare occasions where an appropriate accommodation is not possible. In this event, the organization should attempt to assess the work relevant attribute in another way.

We have numerous accommodations available for our Aptitude tests and specific measures that are available for all candidates when completing Wave and Situational Judgment Tests.

4. Validity

Validity is fundamental to the effective application of tests in the workplace and in ensuring that an assessment is fair; that is what the assessment is measuring validly effects performance on the given task/role. It is particularly important to have evidence that demonstrates that the attributes measured by an assessment are relevant given the content of the work role. A structured job analysis provides a solid foundation for the demonstration of content validity. Make sure that those responsible for choosing assessments in your organization fully understand the concept of validity and know the validity of your chosen assessment methods.

We support our clients on large volume assessments by conducting local validity studies linking assessment scores to different work criteria. These can include overall ratings of performance and potential, individual competencies, or strengths and where it is available, harder quantitative performance criteria – such as sales results. The use of such an approach can optimize the prediction of performance by producing an algorithm to minimize any potential adverse impact to protected groups and maximize the benefit from selecting higher calibre applicants who have a better fit to the role.

5. Reducing Differences

We cannot work to improve approaches to D,E&I in assessment without acknowledging that average differences often can and do exist between different groups on certain types of assessment. For example, general research literature shows that there are consistent, albeit typically relatively small differences between genders at the group level on some workplace abilities and measures of personality and strengths. Small differences can also be seen relating to age. The Flynn effect has demonstrated that, on average, IQ test scores worldwide have been increasing over time. This effect is also manifested in workplace cognitive ability tests where younger people can, on average, perform slightly higher than the previous generations.

However, it should be noted that average differences between groups are much smaller and there is a great deal more variation within each group.

Make sure that assessment users are aware that some differences may exist. However, it should be remembered that differences by themselves do not indicate bias in a test or a questionnaire, which will lead to an individual from one group being treated less favorably than individuals from other groups.

Aptitude test users should have an awareness of what differences should be expected between different ethnic groups, and it is therefore important to consider what steps can be taken to mitigate any differences when using aptitude tests e.g., low cutoff scores and combining aptitude tests with other measures which only show small or no appreciable differences, such as Wave.

6. Monitoring

Monitoring the performance of different assessments is a critical part of an active D,E&I strategy. We continuously monitor our assessment data to ensure their ongoing fairness in application and we advise our clients to actively monitor all of their assessment data. This should not be limited to scored psychometric data but also to data from applications, CVs, scores and progression through the selection process.

We monitor not only assessment scores but also, for certain client organizations, we investigate what percentage of candidates pass at each stage of the assessment process. We look at what the data tells us about the relative proportions of candidates who pass to the next stage, who drops out of the process voluntarily, who fails to reach the required standard and who does not progress at each stage. It can be that there is no appreciable difference in assessment scores at a particular stage but there are differential rates of who is being progressed from a particular group that may show that there is perhaps some implicit bias in decision making. It is important to identify this.

How do you monitor your selection practices? What active strategies have you put in place? It is important to define which groups are the demographic variables that you seek to monitor i.e., age, gender and ethnicity are more common, but you may also want to look at the impact on other minority groups who may be socially disadvantaged.

It is best practice for assessment developers to publish any data they collect regarding monitoring for differences which Saville Assessment has done since inception.

Ensuring good D,E&I practices is a process that requires constant attention. A good D,E&I assessment strategy in selection recognizes that there is always the potential for improvement in how assessment is applied fairly and equitably across group

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