Mastering Personality Tests

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With **Kathy Bernard**

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Today’s Purpose:

To improve your chances of **successfully** answering personality tests to get the job!
Today’s Breakdown:

1) Why companies use pre-employment tests
2) The most used tests
3) What companies seek
4) Best answers
5) Practice tests
Part 1: Why companies use pre-employment tests
Why companies test candidates

- Select best candidates
- Save time/cost
- Decrease turnover
- Increase productivity/morale by picking right people
- Minimize theft and violence
Common uses

- Measure applicants’ potential
- May indicate if someone will be good fit or good leader
Flawed, but popular

• Fallible because people are unpredictable
• Some good people test badly
• Some bad hires test better than they should
Job seekers hate them!

- Inflexible/impersonal/irrelevant
- Applicant doesn’t typically learn results
- Don’t believe: “There are no right answers”
- Don’t believe: “You can’t game the system”
On the rise

• 2001: 26% used pre-hire personality tests
• 2013: 57%
• 2015: 60-70%
Why?

• Employee turnover is down 25%. Hires are working out ... partly because of testing
• Screening has gotten cheaper/easier
• Employers are more selective; averaging record 26.8 days to hire
Pre-hire assessment tests

• Cognitive ability (knowledge)
• Job knowledge test (proficiency)
• Performance assessment (knowledge/skills)
• **Personality Tests** (fit + behavioral/mental health)
  – Including integrity tests,
• Situational judgment tests (hypothetical situations)
Personality tests  (As per PSI)

• Assess aspects of a person's character (behavior, thoughts, feelings) that make us who we are.

• Generally accurate, personality tests are not usually recommended or legal for pre-hiring assessments.

• Most employment laws demand that only skills that can be proven to be requirements for success in a position may be tested.
Personality tests

Assesses a combination of “Big 5” traits
1) Extroversion
2) Emotional stability
3) Agreeableness
4) Conscientiousness
5) Openness to experience
Part 2: The most used personality tests
Top tests (In alphabetical order)

- **Sixteen Personality (16PF) Questionnaire**
  - Measures 16 “normal range” personality traits and assesses candidates vs the norm

SAMPLE QUESTION:
“I can usually adapt my behavior according to who I am with.” TRUE / FALSE

PRACTICE: [http://www.dandebat.dk/eng-person3.htm](http://www.dandebat.dk/eng-person3.htm)
• DiSC Assessment
  – 4 quadrant behavioral test assesses **Dominance, Influence, Steadiness** and **Conscientiousness** in certain situations

SAMPLE QUESTION:
“People say I have a strong personality.” YES / NO

PRACTICE: [https://www.123test.com/disc-personality-test/](https://www.123test.com/disc-personality-test/)
• **Caliper Profile**
  – Measures 25 personality traits to assess strengths, limitations, motivation and potential

SAMPLE QUESTION: (Choose only one):
- [ ] I am responsible  - [ ] I am a leader
- [ ] I am resourceful  - [ ] I have great communication skills

PRACTICE: [http://psychologia.co/caliper-test/](http://psychologia.co/caliper-test/)
• California Psychological Inventory
  – Measures social skills, intellectual flexibility and interests under certain conditions
  – 53 true/false questions

SAMPLE QUESTION:
"My home life was always happy." TRUE/FALSE

PRACTICE:
http://www.insideprison.com/article_assessments_California_Psychological_Inventory_Socialization.asp
• **MMPI** (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory)
  – Most widely used. Assesses mental health and identifies personal, social, and behavioral problems

SAMPLE QUESTION

“I enjoy detective or mystery stories.” TRUE / FALSE

PRACTICE:
https://antipolygraph.org/cgi-bin/forums/YaBB.pl?num=1109032158
• **Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)**
  – Assesses basic preferences of 16 distinctive personality types

SAMPLE QUESTION:

“You are more interested in a general idea than in the details of its realization.” YES / NO

Quote from Myers Briggs:

“Using the MBTI as part of hiring is unethical. An assessment is supposed to be voluntary. If you force people to take a psychological test, you're essentially saying that you expect all aspects of their lives to be open to your scrutiny and use. It's a great way to tank morale and scare off many talented candidates you might otherwise attract.”
“People of many different types excel at the same job for different reasons. Individuals should not be pigeonholed based on their personality preferences.”
• PSI (Personnel Selection Inventory)
  – Measures attitudes, such as honesty and identifies people likely to engage in unsafe, negligent or violent acts
  – PSI provides tests for various industries/jobs

SAMPLE QUESTION:
"A person who uses marijuana illegally is acceptable."
YES / NO

GUIDANCE:
# Assessment Results: RECOMMEND

## Personnel Selection Inventory (PSI7ST)

### Scales

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### VALIDITY SCALES

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### VALIDITY SCALES

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### COMPOSITE

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<tr>
<td></td>
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### Significant Indicators

#### Positive Indicators

- **Honesty**
  - Has not taken any money, without authorization, from jobs in the last three years. (110)
  - Has never taken company merchandise or property from jobs without permission. (96)
  - Believes he/she is definitely too honest to steal. (39)
  - Thinks he/she will never take something of value from future jobs without permission. (88)
  - In recent years, has never thought about stealing money. (89)
Perhaps it works? PSI stats:

• 35% reduction in employee theft
• 18% reduction in employee turnover
• 34% decrease in workers compensation claims
• Improved employee productivity
• **Reid Risk Report**
  – Evaluates attitudes / behaviors associated with ethics, responsibility and work habits (Integrity, violence/drug/alcohol avoidance, stress tolerance)

**SAMPLE QUESTION:**
"Will you frequently come to work hungover?"
**YES / NO**

Multi-test provider

Wonderlic

- Cognitive Ability Tests
- Motivation
- Knowledge & Skills Tests
- Prescreen & Interview Questions
- **Personality & Integrity Tests**
  - Measures productivity and risk
  - States that their tests are legally defensible
SAMPLE QUESTION

“Assume the first two statements are true. Is the final one: Tom greeted Beth. Beth greeted Dawn. Tom did not greet Dawn.”

a. True
b. False
c. Not certain

GUIDANCE: https://hapiland.net/wonderlic-personality-test-sample-free-online-questions-and-answers/
Part 3:
What companies are seeking through tests
Purposely awkward and vague

- A single answer holds little meaning
- They seek overall traits
- They look for inconsistencies and dishonesty
Employers seek …

• Consistent answers

- "I have never stolen one thing in my life" TRUE
- "I once took office supplies home without permission" TRUE FALSE

- Being inconsistent signals dishonesty
- Answer consistently
Employers seek ...

• Wholesome answers
  – Consistently state that you’ve made the right legal and ethical choices

Be “honestly” good
Spot control questions

• Don’t strongly disagree or agree with common emotions:
  “I have never been jealous.”

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE
Employers seek ...

• **Excellent fit answers**
  – Consistently state that you get along well with superiors and coworkers
  – Reflect what’s wanted for the job:
    • Sales – outgoing, optimistic, successful
    • Accounting – attention to detail, compliant
    • Artist – creative, experimental, unique
Answer relative to the job

Programmer

Desired trait: **Conscientiousness**, so always answer questions to reflect that:

- I am always prepared
- I pay attention to details
- I get chores done right away
- I like order
- I follow a schedule
Employers seek ...

- **Speedy / natural responses**
  - Don’t take too long on a question
  - They sometimes judge slow response time per question as being conflicted
Part 4:
Best answers to personality test questions
Answering “yes / no” questions

• “Do you believe that children or spouses are far more important than anything?”  NO
  THINK: Will your family life interfere with your job?

• “Do you exercise regularly?”  YES
  THINK: Are you high risk for health insurance?

• “Do you maintain close contact with friends from high school?”  YES
  THINK: Do you get along with people for long term?
• “Have you thought of getting even with someone who hurt you?” **NO**  
  **THINK:** Are you vindictive?  
• “Are deadlines to you are of relative, rather than absolute, importance?” **NO**  
  **THINK:** Do you miss deadlines?  
• “Do you rarely deviate from your habits?” **NO?**  
  **THINK:** Are you consistent ... or are you set in your ways?  
• “Do you feel at ease in a crowd?” **YES?**  
  **THINK:** Yes if in sales; no (possibly) no for other jobs
Best response? “Yes / NO”

• “You enjoy having a wide circle of acquaintances”
• “You are usually the first to react to a sudden event”
• “You think that everything is relative”
• “You tend to sympathize with other people”
• “You value justice higher than mercy”
Rating questions

Rate the extent to which you agree:

• “I prefer things to stay the same.”
• “Over the course of the day, I can experience many mood changes.”
• “I dislike yelling, but sometimes it’s necessary.”
Either / or questions

Which adjective best describes you at work:
- “Artistic OR responsible”
- “Unique OR orderly”
- “Prompt OR persistent”

Pick the one most right for job/company
Multiple choice questions

1. “On television, I usually prefer watching an action movie than a program about art.”
   A) Often
   B) Rarely
   C) Never
Just plain weird questions

• “Would you rather be bald or fat?”
• “When you were a child, did people think you were really cute?”
• “Do you make your bed?”
• "I have diarrhea once a month or more.”

YES / NO
Part 5:

Practice tests
Prepare for testing!

- **eTest**
  http://www.etest.net/

- **TestPrep Online**
  https://www.testprep-online.com/

- **SHL Group**
  http://www.cebglobal.com/shldirect/en

- **Kogan Page**
  http://www.profilingforsuccess.com/kogan-page/
Practice test books

- *Employment Personality Tests Decoded* by Anne Hart with George Sheldon (Career Press, 2007)
- *How to Master Psychometric Tests* by Mark Parkinson (Kogan Page, UK, 2004)
- *Ace the Corporate Personality Test* by Edward Hoffman (McGraw-Hill, 2002)
Best practices ...

• Ask the company what tests you’ll be taking
• Research the tests on Google
• Take practice tests
• Answer consistently
• Be “honestly” good in your answers
• Match your answers to the job/company
• Ask for feedback
Job seeking is hard. Get help!
Services

• Resume creation/revamp
• LinkedIn profile creation/revamp
• Career coaching / interview prep
• Individual LinkedIn training

Contact
Sue Lopez - 847-606-5160 or Susan@WiserU.com
Visit Services on WiserU.com

Invite me to connect – Kathy@WiserU.com
Job Tips by Topic

Step-by-step guidance on every aspect of the job search

Applying for jobs
(Applying online, changing careers, applying for jobs in a different city, finding and using the best job sites, explaining job terminations, determining what you want to do, how to stand out, various ways to land a job, completing paper forms, and much more)

Cover letter, emails and phone calls
(Fast fixes to improve your cover letters, email messages and phone calls to improve your chances with hiring companies: using keywords in your messaging)

Inspiration / improving yourself
(Overcoming discouragement, mistakes; determining what you are really trying in your job search, re-energizing)

Interviewing and salary negotiation
(Handling phone, Skype, panel and individual interview questions, responding to difficult negotiating salary, and much more)

Networking/researching companies
(In-person and online networking, setting up referral and informational interviews, researching companies to impress hiring managers, and more)

Older worker / new grad strategies
(How to de-age your resume, make up for a lack of experience, show that you are wise/vibrant beyond your years, and much more)

Printable resources
(Download free printable materials including a job search action plan, an application form preparation sheet, a career search checklist, a referral interview success sheet, an interview preparation checklist, and other forms and documents.)

Recruiters and how to work with them
(How to find, select, impress, and work with recruiters, executive search firms and headhunters. Also what to say when you meet with them and how to ensure that recruiters will be really helpful to you in your job search.)

Resumes and references
(Crafting your resume to get results and to best match the job description, fast resume fixes, developing a strong reference list, learning how to find prepare your references for reference calls, and much more.)
Watch recorded webinars

http://goo.gl/9D9GYX

Landing a Job After 40
If you are an experienced person in job transition, then "stack the odds" in your favor! In this webinar, Kathy Bernard, creator of the GetATip.com website, lists 40 things that job seekers over 40 could be doing to land the great job. Hosted by James Beal of ILostMyJob.com, Download Slides | Download Tip Sheet

Kathy Bernard http://linkedin.com/in/KathyBernard

Kathy Bernard is a public speaker, career coach, resume writer, and expert LinkedIn profile optimizer who has helped thousands of college students, as well as the unemployed and miserably employed, land satisfying careers. She is the author of Game-Changing Interviews and other e-Books and is a weekly regular on Job Transition TV. Kathy is also the creator of WiserU.com, where you can find career and LinkedIn services and tips.

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