

The Assessment Series



ODGERS BERNDTSON



THE ASSESSMENT SERIES

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Leadership assessment helps organisations make informed, metrics-based decisions around executive selection, high-potential identification, and succession planning.

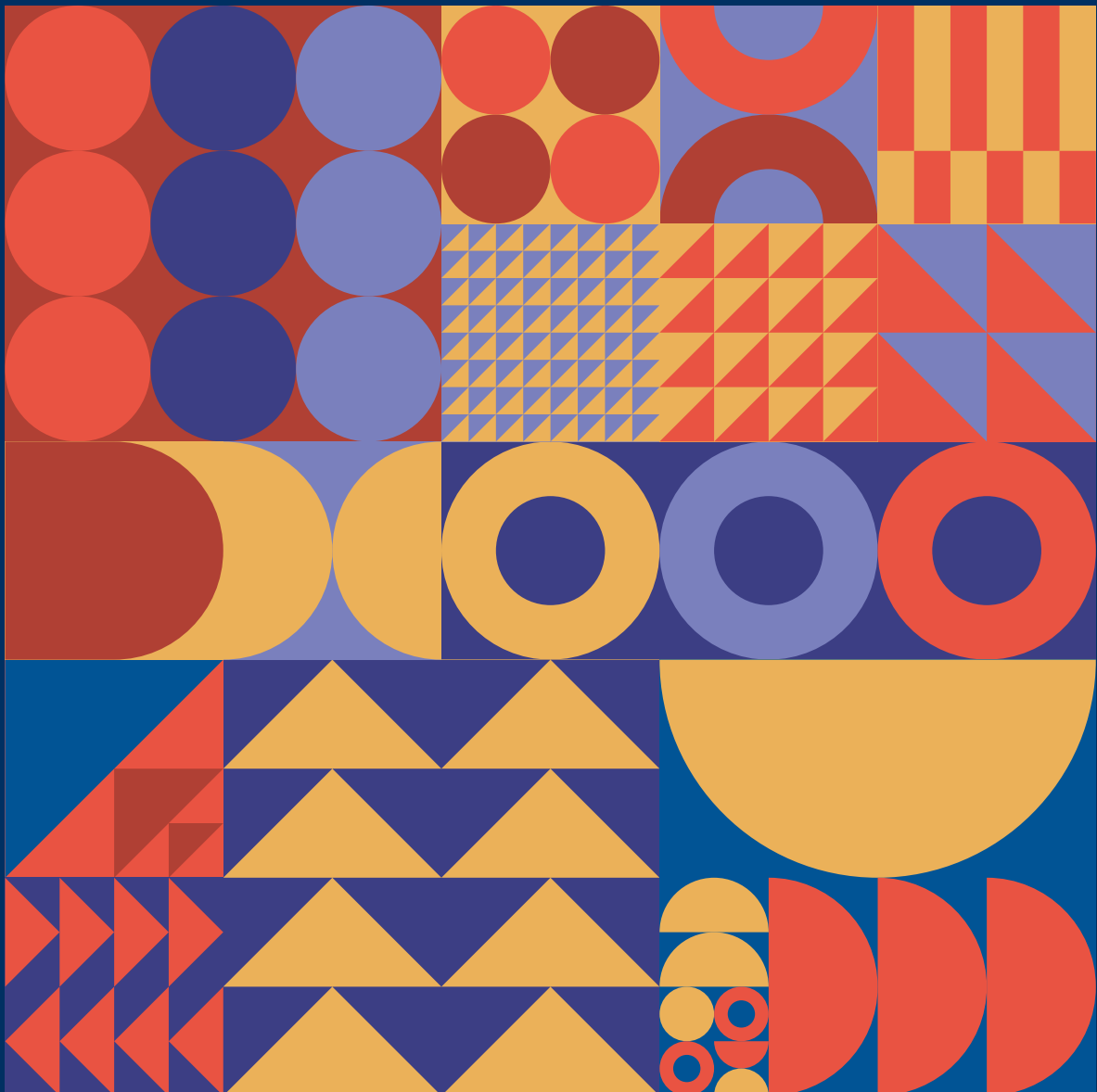
Our LeaderFit assessment suite was designed with a single objective: to help organisations evaluate their leaders' capabilities and identify future growth opportunities. This guide explains psychometric assessment, the benefits of harnessing its scientific power, how and when to use it, and why our bespoke LeaderFit™ assessment differs from generic one-size-fits-all assessments when it comes to adding objectivity and rigour to selection and development.

It also includes a short guide written by Elizabeth Stuart (Head of Executive Assessment and Development, London) that explains how to prepare before completing an assessment.



One:

The Benefits of Utilising Psychometric Assessment



The aim of Psychometric Assessment is to evaluate behavioural traits and performance and to better assess the likelihood of a person succeeding in a particular role. They add quantitative measures to qualitative assessments to reduce risk around decision making. In other words, they measure the science behind our opinion.

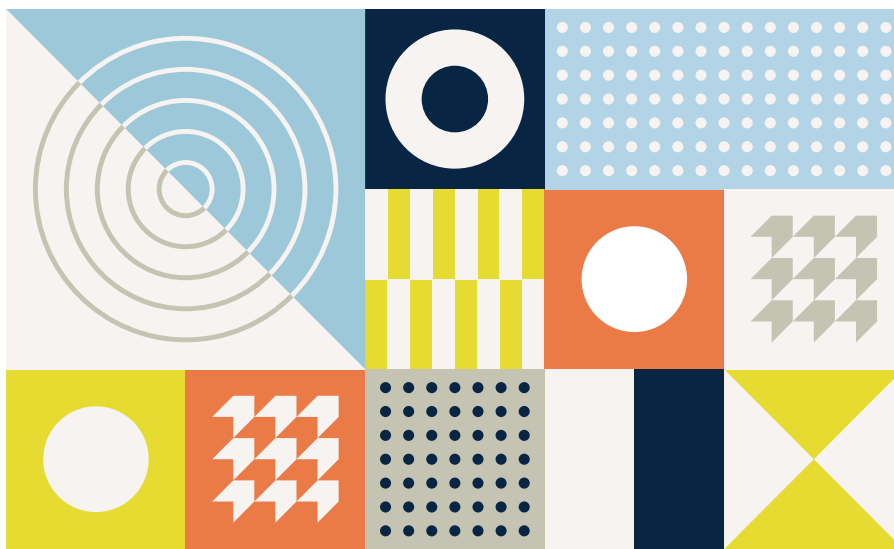
Psychometric assessment is utilised by about 80 % of US Fortune 500 and 75 % of UK Times 100 companies. They offer us an added layer of security or another lens with which to view an individual. Psychometric assessment combined with a structured interview is the simplest, fastest, and most cost-effective way to predict how someone is actually going to perform once they're hired. They also offer a fair and equal assessment of candidates and employees, giving the employers and management teams an impartial and unbiased view of the person's work-related behaviour and style. Relying on interviews alone is too subjective and causes two major problems.

1. Most commonly, the wrong people get selected or promoted.
2. Secondly, often the right candidates are overlooked as they appear to not display the "right traits" in an interview. In this instance, transitioning from subjective to scientific talent identification via psychometric assessment has proven efficacy, and therefore a significant return on investment.

Benefits of Psychometric Assessments

Manipulation Resistant

With the advent of ipsative test design, it has become difficult for applicants to "cheat". The design of the test ensures that the test-taker can see no apparent pattern and hence, is forced to answer honestly. Any effort to rig the assessment is quickly spotted and will put a question mark on the integrity of the applicant.



Time Saving

Often the interviewers' time comes at a premium. A quick scan of a psychometric report can help them quickly come to the point. At interview stage, they can frame very relevant, probing questions around both strengths and problem areas of the candidates highlighted in their report reducing interview time significantly.

Reduces Interviewer Mistakes

Interviews, especially unstructured ones, are among the least valid of all screening methods. The chances of the interviewer's 'gut-feeling' being accurate are only as good as rolling a dice. In other words, entirely up to chance. Psychometric assessment can reduce mistakes by supplementing subjective interviews with quantitative data.

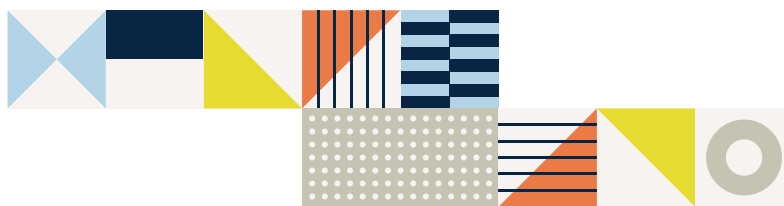
Increases Objectivity – avoiding biases

While it is easy to verify hard facts of professional qualifications and competency, analysing softer elements like motivation, conflict resolution capacity, leadership skills etc., is another matter. When a person is asked to assess these qualities, personal biases creep in unconsciously. When hiring, many people succumb to similarity bias, meaning that we often hire those who we perceive as similar to us, but not necessarily the right candidate for the role.

Psychometric assessments address this bias. A test does not care what an individual looks like, their gender, race, sexual orientation, etc. With the help of these tests an employer can pre-define the 'ideal candidate' and all applicants can then be compared to it.

Here in Odgers Berndtson we use assessment across a number of key areas. These include the below elements which will be discussed in the next issue of The Assessment Series

- Assess executives for senior roles, based on global norms, cultural contribution, and business requirements.
- Identify high potential talent and map capabilities across the organisation.
- Understand the strengths and potential blind spots of leadership teams.
- Determine whether leaders have the capacity to execute against growth plans or strategy.



Two:

How We Utilise Psychometric Assessment



Great leaders all have different competencies, motivations and potential. Assessing strengths, performance risks, and core values help determine an executive's ability to deliver results against a strategy, build a high performing team and manage key relationships

Well-constructed psychometric assessments are shown to be among the most accurate and fair ways of assessing people in the workplace. Our job is to reduce risk in the selection process. Nothing can give you 100 per cent certainty, but with relevant measures you can probably improve your selection by about 30 per cent which proves extremely valuable in a high-stakes appointment.

These tools can bring new depth to a company's assessment of a new hire or an existing employee's abilities or leadership potential. When combined with qualitative assessment such as interviews, psychometrics can also help determine an employee's potential to take on larger or more challenging roles. A major advantage is also that it measures an individual's ability against a comparison group. This allows the assessors to benchmark the candidate's ability against the available talent pool.

Development

One of the biggest challenges that organisations face today is identifying the next generation of leaders. All too often, when we ask business leaders how they know if someone has potential or talent for leadership, the most common answers are "Well, you just know" or "I know it when I see it". While there are clearly some highly intuitive people, who are capable of spotting true potential by following their instincts, most people are less intuitive than they think, which causes two big problems.

The first is that the wrong people get selected or promoted into leadership positions. This happens in every organisation, including companies that invest a huge amount of money in talent management.



The second is that the right people – those who should actually lead – get overlooked. Although these individuals possess many of the critical qualities necessary for a leader, for example, strategic clarity, humility and the ability to build high-performing teams, they are generally less focused on self-promotion, networking and political manoeuvring. The result is a paradoxical system where the drivers of leadership emergence are not just different, but often the opposite of the drivers of leadership effectiveness. In other words, what gets you there won't make you effective; **what makes you effective won't get you there.**

The challenge for businesses is clear. It is to end up with more true positives and less false positives, as well as increasing the true negatives while reducing the false negatives. Although there is no single recipe for achieving this, transitioning from intuitive to scientific talent identification via psychometric assessment helps hugely and therefore has a big return on investment.

It is commonly acknowledged that interviews alone are not a good indicator for employee potential. For example, psychopathic and narcissistic individuals tend to perform well on selection interviews, and they are often described as charming and charismatic by their supervisors. Scientific personality assessments are immune to these manipulation tactics and therefore highlight the true risks associated with such candidates. In a similar fashion, they are also useful in flagging those who may 'shine' in an interview and on paper but fail to perform in a practical role.

Comprehensive testing enables organisations to create job benchmarks based on an analysis of those employees who deliver performance excellence in their role, as well as identifying the characteristics of those employees who under-perform in the same role. In other words it measures individuals against benchmarks created from real, measurable performance factors, not subjective profiles.

Scientific studies have long suggested that investing in the right people will maximize organisations' returns. In sum, most organizations can upgrade their talent identification processes by using a combination of interview and psychometric assessment. Not many employees are highly able, socially skilled, and driven — but if you bet on those who are, which involves evaluating these qualities as accurately as you can, through interview and psychometric assessment, you will end up with a higher proportion of future stars who will contribute disproportionately to the organization. Investing in those individuals will produce the highest ROI.

Our proprietary assessment method, which will be discussed in the next issue of The Assessment Series, provides a comparative view of leadership potential mapped to five dimensions of executive high performance (Strategic Clarity, Execution Savvy, Resilience & Adaptability, Stakeholder Management and People & Team Development). These elements, alongside various individual traits have been linked to leadership success. We are now able to measure where executives fall on these key dimensions, which is ideal for individual selection or assessment, executive succession or similar team development.



Three:

**Why our Leadership
Assessment differs to others.**



Our LeaderFit assessment suite was designed with a single objective: to help organisations evaluate their leaders' capabilities and identify future growth opportunities.

Great leaders all have different competencies, motivations and potential. Assessing strengths, performance risks, and core values help determine an executive's ability to deliver results against a strategy, build a high performing team and manage key relationships.

Using a carefully prepared system, we:

- Help you to identify high potential talent and map capabilities throughout your organisation
- Understand the strengths and possible blind spots among leadership teams
- Assess individual executives for senior roles, benchmarked against your business growth strategies and global standards
- Prepare an informed roadmap charting how you can select raw talent and collectively transform this into a future dream team.

This unique methodology allows us to measure the science behind our opinion and is designed to add an extra layer of security and another lens with which to examine an individual. We combine personality traits, behavioural patterns and leadership experts' judgement to predict individual performance in targeted senior positions. Proven performance and potential for growth are explored in tangible assessments that highlight where development resources will pay dividends.

Our leadership assessment methodology

LeaderFit, our unique leadership assessment methodology, combines personality data, behavioural patterns and leadership experts' judgement to predict individual performance in targeted senior roles. We create a total picture of an individual's leadership performance and potential for growth.

Our high-touch, customized LeaderFit approach takes the art and science of leadership assessment to another level.

The LeaderFit assessment model captures how successful executives will be at:

- Leading the Organisation: Develop vision and strategy, create organisational alignment, and drive results and change through others.
- Leading Others: Develop sustainability in talent capability, build high-performance teams and manage key stakeholder relations.
- Leadership Agility: Operate with resilience and agility in demanding environments.





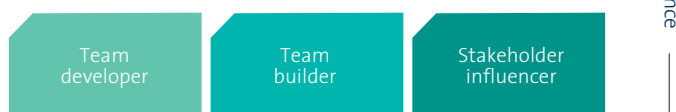
Benefits of LeaderFit

- Lead your organisation into the future with the ability to vision, strategise and unify to achieve the results you want.
- Lead your teams and stakeholders by inspiring loyalty, commitment and effectiveness among high-performing key contributors.
- Lead with agility to ensure you adapt to change in a rapidly evolving and continually challenging business environment.
- Lead with inspiration and sensitivity, creating a culture that attracts the best people to stay with you and builds a stand-out brand.

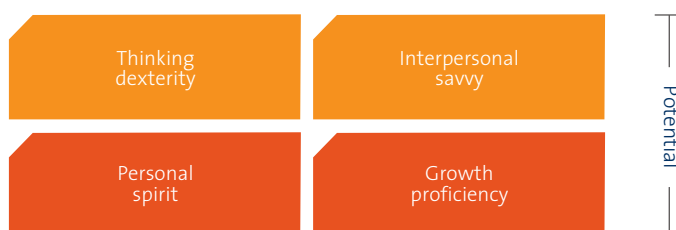
Leading the Organisation



Leading Others



Leadership Agility



Performance

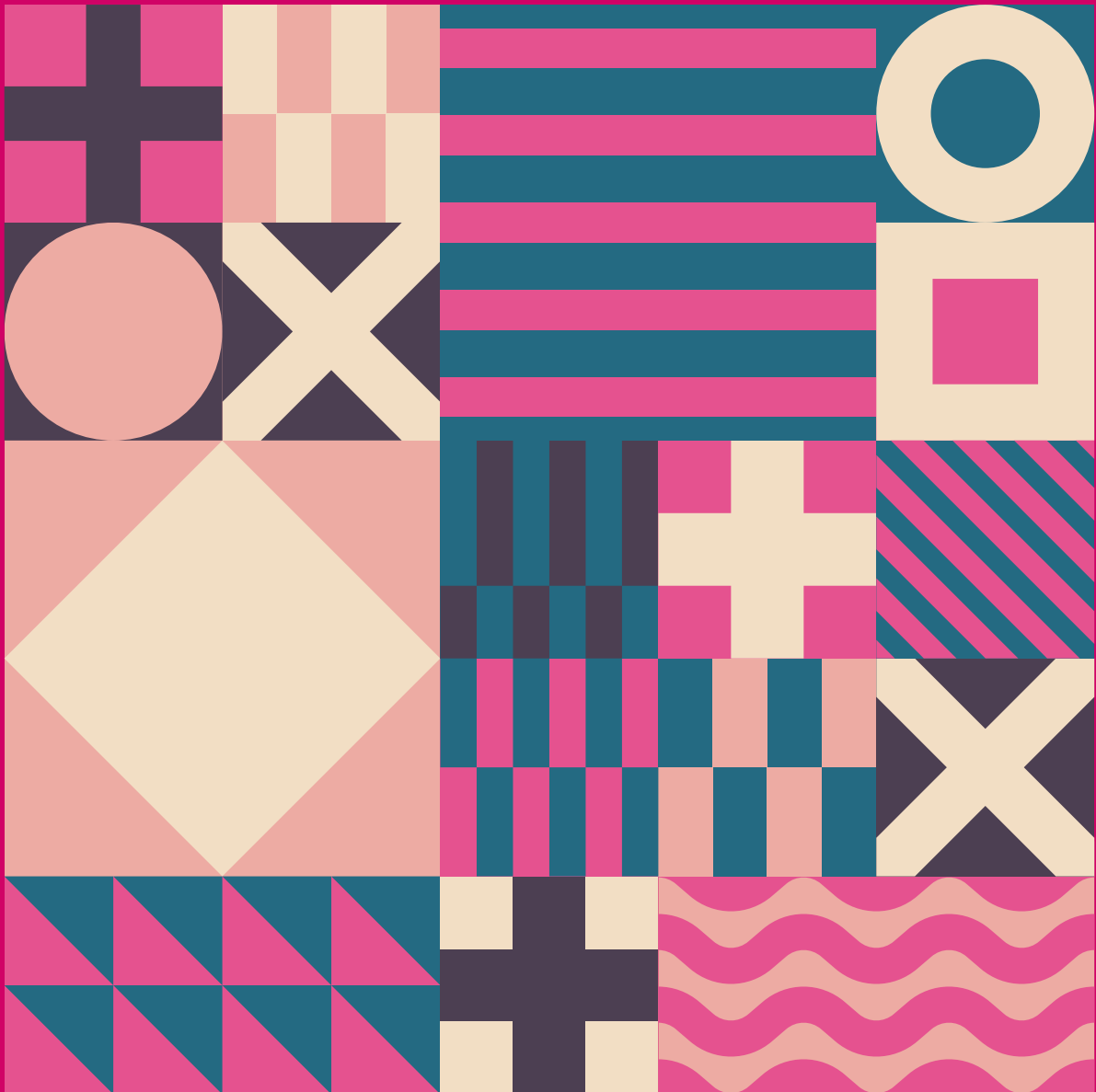
Potential

How we're different:

- Our LeaderFit model links leadership to business outcomes and can be easily tailored to your organisation's business strategy and culture requirements.
- We have experience assessing and developing leaders across the three drivers of the global economy: publicly traded companies, privately funded companies, and government/not-for-profit organisations.
- Our global team of leadership assessment experts is both diverse and integrated, servicing clients on a regional or global landscape.
- Our partnership with best in class organisations, such as Hogan and Saville Assessment, gives us access to in-depth research and benchmarks so that we can deliver high quality, actionable and impactful results to clients.



Four: Preparation



Online psychometric questionnaires help to generate a profile of you as an individual. They offer an extra lens with which to view a person through and help to form a more complete picture of that person.

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Here are a few insights into the process and some tips on how to do your best when completing them:

These questionnaires tend to fall into two categories. They are either personality or leadership profiling tests or aptitude or ability tests. Sometimes, you may have to complete a combination of these.

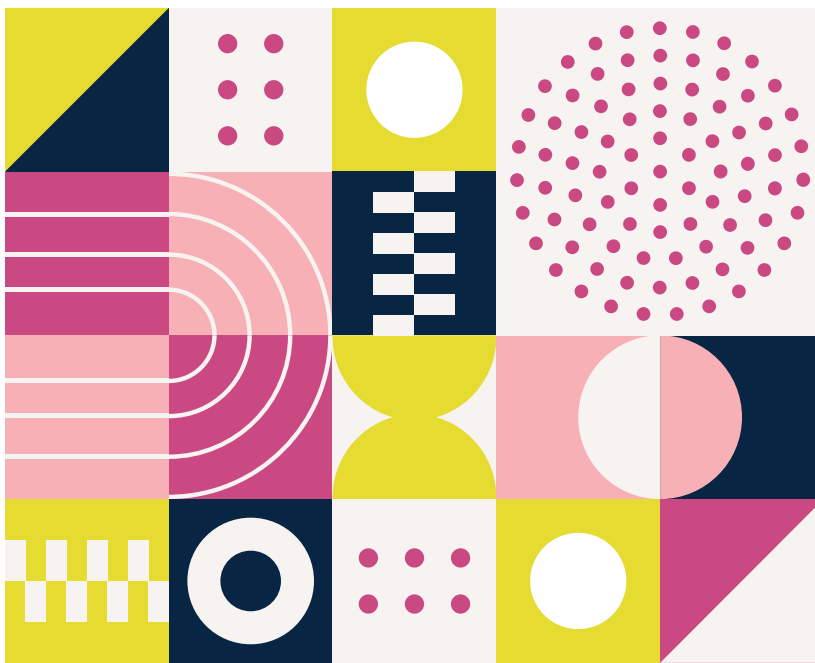
Some questionnaires are available on the general market, whilst others, like our proprietary LeaderFit™ suite, are bespoke and exclusive to an organisation. Although the tips below are designed to help you familiarise yourself with the process and principles, they are not exhaustive and do not guarantee the outputs or outcomes.

Profiling your personality

Personality or leadership profiles provide insight into your personality traits, preferences, motives or drivers, or blind spots. They often identify where individuals can add the most value and where there may be risks to be considered.

Bear in mind the following points when completing such questionnaires:

1. Question formats vary, but typically you will be asked to respond in two different ways. Either you'll be asked the extent to which you agree with a statement, or you'll have to rank statements in order of how much you agree, given how you operate.
2. These are not 'tests', and there are no right or wrong answers. Rather, the profiles generated provide insight into how an individual will approach a role. They do not make assumptions about whether they will succeed.



3. Always make sure you read each statement carefully and respond honestly.
4. Be aware that there are various checks built into questionnaires. These are to prevent cheating and manipulation and validate responses by measuring, for example, their consistency.
5. Whilst most personality profile tests are not timed, it is important you find a quiet space to avoid distractions and interruptions so you can do your very best. If you have any special requirements to complete the questionnaire, tell the organisation or recruitment consultant upfront.

Measuring your aptitude

Cognitive aptitude or ability tests are considered strong predictors of performance in professional roles. The most common of these are the verbal, numerical, and abstract reasoning. These are timed tests where you will be responding to a series of multiple-choice questions.

Here's what to consider when preparing for aptitude or ability tests:

1. Practice. Practice. The most effective approach is to familiarise yourself with the types of questions. Whilst this will not enable someone with limited reasoning skills to outperform others, it will help you to optimise your performance.
2. There are many online resources to practice aptitude tests. If you are undertaking a test with Odgers Berndtson, we will always provide you with practice tests in advance of an aptitude assessment.
3. Practice tests are designed to familiarise you with the format but are not necessarily an accurate indication of the difficulty level of the test you will eventually sit. Here are some examples:
 - <https://www.savilleassessment.com/PracticeTests>
 - <https://www.practiceaptitudetests.com/>
4. Finally, it might seem obvious, but always make sure you read the questions thoroughly for maximum understanding. It is best to move steadily and systematically through the questions. As time is limited, rather than getting stuck on a question, move on, so you complete the test.





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Author

Kate is a Senior Consultant at Odgers Berndtson Ireland. She specialises in assessment and development of senior executives and Board members. She has an innate interest in human behaviour in the workplace.

She began her career in Behavioural Change in a clinical capacity working with the HSE and privately working with individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Prior to joining Odgers Berndtson, she worked in a talent solutions company supporting global organisations including FTSE 250 and Fortune 500 companies with the assessment and development of their key people.

Having attended UCD, Trinity and DCU, Kate holds an Undergraduate degree in English and Spanish, an MSc in Psychology, a PGDip in Applied Behaviour Analysis and an MSc in Organisational Psychology.

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