



Topgrading Tips

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Most Personality Tests are Shams

Hi friends,

This issue of Topgrading Tips:

1. Shows why most test are worthless shams, and
2. How to answer people who say that the Topgrading interview takes too much time.

MOST PERSONALITY TESTS ARE SHAMS

We get lots of questions about testing, because clients would love to have some sort of inexpensive screening device that cuts the candidate pool down to just a few to call and then to interview.

Unfortunately, the fact is that most personality tests are validated in a devious way that makes the tests look useful, when they are not. I'll explain why:

I have on my desk the validation manual for one of the many personality tests used to screen candidates for sales positions. It's a thick manual. When the test is "tested," it's administered to *present* employees, with the promise that their score will *not* be known to their employer. OK, so the current employees have no motivation to fake answers; they are honest, and so sales people might admit they are not highly motivated, that they call on present customers when they should call prospects, etc. Then the test purveyors match the results against performance and, VOILÁ, the people who sell the most are the ones with the highest test scores. The test appears valid! But it's *not*.

The only honest way to validate a test is to administer it to candidates for selection; don't even score the test for a year, then pull out the test, score it, and then see how the scores correlate with performance. When *real* selection candidates take the test, they fake it - sales candidates say they are *highly* motivated, that they of course call on prospects, etc.

Years ago I validated several personality tests that were being used by one of the largest retailers. We had 2,000 subjects. The company thought the tests were highly valid, but when I validated them properly (with hiring candidates, not present employees, taking the tests) the value of every one of the tests was ZERO! And unbelievably, the sham test purveyors are telling the truth when they say their methods *are* approved by the American Psychological Association.

Recommendation: get the validation manuals and don't be intimidated by all the statistical mumbo

jumbo. Just look for *how* the tests were validated. If the manual does *not* say that candidates for hire *knew* they were *not* hired yet when they took the test, you have a problem. Call the test purveyor and challenge the validation results. Or, administer the test to 200 candidates the way I described, and see for yourself if the test really works. Don't hold your breath!

"TOPGRADING INTERVIEWS TAKE TOO MUCH TIME"

Recently an executive read the Topgrading handbook and learned that a tandem Topgrading interview of a manager might take two interviewers three hours. "I don't have that much time for just an interview," he said.

He had just admitted that three out of four of his management hires were mis-hires, and so I asked him how much time he wasted on each of those mis-hires, and he estimated 100 hours each. Let's do the math, adding up all the time for one high performer hired, with his results (25% success) vs. a Topgrader's results (90% success). The Topgrader eventually will have a mis-hire, but for any given job filled the chances are 90% that the first person hired will be a high performer; hence - 10 hours wasted on the average, per good hire.

The non-Topgrader has three mis-hires before hiring the high performer. Hmm, 3×100 hours = 300 hours wasted with hiring, onboarding, coaching, training, disciplining, and replacing the three mis-hires. The Topgrader wasted 10 hours. 300 hours or 10 hours. This executive doesn't have time for a three hour tandem interview but can waste 300 hours on mis-hires.

Hmm.

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