

S ELECTION TESTS

Selection tests are used in a large amount of selection processes. These tests may be psycho technical tests, professional tests or group dynamics.

This document reflects those aspects that have to be taken into account to pass this type of tests.

Selection tests aim at gathering information over and above what is learned through job interviews, evaluating at a practical level, the candidate's capacities, attitudes, and aptitudes in relation to the vacant job post and the company's own style.

In this way companies can simultaneously compare various candidates in a straightforward way, appraising not only their professional knowledge and their personal characteristics, but also their behaviour as part of a group.

Tranquility and being well-informed are good allies when it comes to taking the selection tests. We should not forget that being aware of what the tests are like and preparing for them will, no doubt, give the candidates a significant advantage

PSYCHO-TECHNICAL TESTS

Once this stage of the selection process is reached, it is a good idea to reflect on the fact that the company needs to analyze the individual differences between the candidates aspiring for a job position.

A test is only a method for gathering together information about a person, and therefore the psycho-technique tests are standardized instruments which measure aptitudes, capacities and aspects related to personality, interests, professional values, etc.

Psycho-techniques are used in their selection processes by 75 % of the companies in Spain. These tests can be divided into two types: aptitude tests and personality tests.

Aptitude Tests

These tests evaluate natural, innate or acquired abilities to check an operation or to carry out a job. They study factors such as



verbal reasoning, creativity, memory, numerical aptitudes, spatial aptitudes, attention capacity and perception, etc.

These tests are carried out to a time limit. Therefore they are interpreted and corrected by two criteria, right or wrong answers, and the candidate's speed.

Aspect which should be borne in mind when answering:

- ✓ Follow the instructions carefully.
- ✓ If there is something in the instructions the examiner gives out you don't understand, ask before the allotted time begins to run.
- ✓ Read the questions and the multiple-choice answers offered to you with attention.
- ✓ You cannot leave the room during the test.
- ✓ While doing the test, if you don't understand a question it is better to move on to the following ones and then to come back to the others if there is time.
- ✓ If you make a mistake on one answer, cross it out and mark the correct answer.
- ✓ Work as quickly as possible, taking into account they are timed tests.

Personality tests

Personality tests: evaluate aspects such as anxiety, self-control, independence, emotions, aggressiveness, how dynamic the candidate is, their influence over others (power of persuasion), priorities and motivations, etc.

These tests are presented in the form of questionnaires with a considerable number of questions and no fixed time in which to answer them. In the personality tests of today there are no good or bad answers, everybody has a set of determined characteristics and each job position calls for a particular type of personality or another.

For example, an office worker who is going to work in a commercial department must have certain personality characteristics (how social they are, how outgoing) different to those needed by an accountancy clerk (thoughtful, tranquil...).

Aspects to be taken into account when answering:

- ✓ Do not try to manipulate your answers to give a pre-conceived image. All the tests have systems for evaluating the sincerity of your answers.
- ✓ Be spontaneous. Do not think about the answers too much. If you go over an answer repeatedly you will take a long time to finish the questionnaire and they will think you are a very doubting, hesitant person.
- ✓ If none of the multiple-choice answers offered matches up with what you are like, choose the nearest one.



PROFESSIONAL TESTS

Professional tests are used to evaluate the candidate's knowledge about a specific profession. These tests can be carried out in the form of exams, technical questionnaires, simulation exercises, etc.

The objective with these tests is to obtain information about their experience, what they have learned about the profession, and the candidate's specific knowledge which makes them a valuable candidate.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Before starting the test it is necessary to be sure you have understood the task you must carry out.
- ✓ Plan the tasks according to the time you have been given to do each one. If before starting you do a work plan, the test will be better structured and easier to do well.

GROUP DYNAMICS

As time goes by more and more companies are including group exercises as part of the selection process.

In these exercises different candidates hold a meeting observed by the technical personnel responsible for carrying out the selection process. The latter evaluate the performance of each candidate participating in the meeting.

Sometimes these exercises simulate professional situations, and at other meetings dilemma or moral questions are put before the candidate's.

These exercises evaluate the candidates' leadership capacities, defense of ideas, dialogue capacities, capacity to convince and persuade, verbal expression, ability to argue a case...

Practical recommendations for the participants:

- ✓ Try to act naturally.
- ✓ Participate actively and contribute to the group achieving its objectives.
- ✓ Be as polite and courteous as possible.
- ✓ Don't be aggressive.
- ✓ Don't get obstinate or tied up with your own ideas.
- ✓ Be considerate with the other group members.
- ✓ Seek to get the group to make progress, rather than seeking your own personal recognition. .
- ✓ Pay attention to the written material you are given.
- ✓ Listen attentively to the others.
- ✓ Try to offer solutions.

Normally when one of these sessions starts there is a moment of silence, a certain uneasiness. It is a good idea to break this silence in a natural way, with



an expression such as: *“Well if it’s ok with you, we could start by doing....”*. This makes clear you are a decisive person, easily able to adapt to new situations.

It could also be the case that at first there are moments of confusion, which could call for a person who establishes a certain work method by saying: *“One moment, I believe that for everybody to give their opinion and to reach a conclusion, we should speak one at a time and then give our opinions...”*.

Invite the quietest candidates to participate, addressing them by their name, ask: *“what’s your opinion?”*

There are no defined good profiles or bad profiles, everything depends on the personality characteristics the job position requires.

THE EVALUATION CENTRE

The evaluation centre is a selection method which is being increasingly used by companies. It lasts one or two days and is used to evaluate the candidate’s skills in a variety of situations simulating what it could be like working in this company. The centre evaluates the candidate’s motivation, their work capacity under stress, oral and written communication, leadership, team work, powers of persuasion, analysis and interpretation of data abilities...

The activities that could be asked of the candidates are very varied and could include:

- ✓ Preparing a report : you will be given written material, normally related to one of the company’s activities and from this base you will have to prepare a report with your recommendations. This exercise has a time limit. They will evaluate analytical capacity, reasoning and written expression.
- ✓ Make a presentation: to the other candidates and / or in front of the evaluating personnel / board. They will evaluate your capacity to structure a presentation, oral expression capacity, and ability to speak in public, etc.
- ✓ The in-tray exercise: this activity consists in supposing that they have already contracted you for the job position to be covered. For the test, you will be given an in-tray full of documents, clients’ letters, accounts, requests for reports, calls received, emails, etc. The objective is for you to carry out this work within a time limit. It evaluates your planning capacity, time management, decision making capacity, written and oral communication...
- ✓ A meal or dinner with directors: remember that at the meal your objective is neither to eat nor drink. Give off a positive and optimistic attitude which makes them think it will be pleasant working with you. Try to remember the names of the people interested in your work. Take advantage to ask questions that could be of use later on.

