

# **Evaluating Selection Tools For Use In Your Business**

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## Evaluating Selection Tools

It is common practice in job selection to estimate what psychological characteristics are required for any particular occupation and then use a reliable and valid measure of these characteristics to assess them in individual candidates (Kline, 1993, p. 377). Scores on selection tools provide valuable objective information to help determine the suitability of a candidate for a specific job or position.

Some questions that are useful when evaluating a selection tool or the organization providing the service, for use in your company, are presented:

**1. Does the profile provide an assessment of the skills, attitudes, etc. specific to the industry that is being selected for as opposed to general ability assessments?** It is important that the profile measures those characteristics that are most applicable to the occupation. Kline (1993) argues that measuring job-specific factors rather than general variables will improve the selection process.

**2. Are the profile results based on fully established norms?** These norms should be based on large samples that closely resemble the population that the profile is being utilized on (Kline, 1993).

Do they provide a description of their normative population?

Are the norms continuously validated and updated if necessary?

**3. Does the profile contain ipsative scores?** Ipsative scores are found in any test/assessment in which there are forced choices in responses or every response is scored (Kline, 1993). For example, selection profiles which ask respondents to choose between a Yes/ No or a True/False responses constitute ipsative scales.

The major disadvantage of an ipsative scale is the inability to collect normative data as the scores generated by ipsative scales are rank-ordered and not comparable across individuals. It is impossible, therefore, to validate the effectiveness of these profiles. Hence, by virtue of their psychometric property, ipsative scales are Aonly useful as a basis of discussion with the individual candidate who has completed them (Kline, 1993, p.61).

**4. Is the profile fair and free from bias?**

Has the organization conducted updated research to demonstrate that the profile does not discriminate against minority groups?

**5. Does it provide a reliable and valid assessment of the characteristics or factors that it was designed to measure?** For example, a measure of stress-coping should measure one's ability to deal effectively with stress rather than the relative amount of stress that is occurring in one's life. These measures should also have demonstrated reliability and validity.

How have they demonstrated this? Do they conduct validation studies? Do they provide reliability estimates?

**6. Is there a valid method to detect deliberate distortion?** For example, personality measures often incorporate so-called lie scales as they identify those candidates who fake good by trying to present themselves in a more favourable manner. These scales enable you to screen out candidates who achieve high scores on them.

Kline (1993) suggests that advising candidates that deliberately distortion can be spotted in the general instructions of the measure will reduce faking (p. 387).

**7. Does the consulting organization provide a high level of customer service and support?**

Do they provide one-on-one profile consultation?

Do they conduct annual validation studies with the goal of continuously improving their client's selection system?

## **The Self Management Group Profiling and Selection Systems**

The profiling and selection systems developed by the Self Management Group meet all of the above criteria. Specifically, these profiles (MPP, POP, Sales Pro, QSP, etc.) have been designed to measure those characteristics which predict performance in various occupations. Most importantly, the profiles are specific to a certain occupation or industry rather than being for general career usage. For example, the Personal Orientation Profile (POP) assesses candidates specifically for competitive sales potential and is used to select individuals for such occupations as insurance sales agents and automobile sales consultants.

The SMG profiles have demonstrated reliability and have been validated on thousands of candidates continuously over the past 20 years. The SMG profiles do not contain any ipsative scoring, as all of the scales are based on normative data. Hence, valid comparisons can be made across groups. Norms have been established using SMG's large database of candidate profiles. Given that the profiles are designed for specific industries and they have been validated on people working in these industries, the norms are based on populations which are highly similar to the population that the profile is being utilized on. The Self Management Group also has conducted a number of EEOC studies which have demonstrated that their profiles do not have an adverse impact on minority groups.

There are three methods which are used to detect distortion in responding, high scores on social desirability measures, contradictory pairs, and too many neutral responses. For example, a candidate who scores above a certain level on the Uncertainty Coefficient (UC) scale of the POP may have inflated his or her results and, therefore, caution must be used when interpreting the profile results.

The Self Management Group provides a high level of customer service and support. Our profiles may be scored on-line, in-house, or in our office via fax, courier, and mail. The SMG profiles can be used in recruiting, selection, training, development, and succession planning. We provide consultation on all of our profiles and systems. In addition, the SMG research consultants assist all our clients with the collection of data and data base management to track their recruiting, screening, selection, and development processes. Our validation services help clients move from data to information to knowledge to strategy.

### **References**

Kline, P. (1993). The Handbook of Psychological Testing. NY: Routledge.