

# The Psychology of Selection and Assessment

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## Purpose of selection

- To fill positions
- To identify the best person for the job
- To find the person who can perform the job tasks most effectively
- To find people who fit the organisation
- To rule out unsuitable candidates
- To allow managers to choose their staff
- To ensure appropriate people are given jobs

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## Relevant psychological theory

### Individual differences

- Human attributes
  - Physical ability
  - Intelligence
  - Personality
  - Ability
  - Knowledge and skills
- Theory of measurement

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### Additional theories

- Perceptions of justice
- Diversity theory
- Performance Management
- Team Working
- Organisational Culture
- Values
- Job design

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### Good Practice in Selection

- Well Defined Criteria
- Assessment Design
- Training of Assessors
- Documentation
- Integration
- Monitoring & Review
- Follow-up

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### Example Person Specification

- Good with people
- Common sense
- Shows initiative
- Has personality
- Two years' sales experience

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### Good with people

- Easily builds relationships with others
- Works cooperatively
- Understands customers and their requirements
- Can cope with conflict
- Speaks persuasively
- Good listener
- Assertive

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### Problems with Person Specification

- Terms undefined
- Based on assumptions
- One informant
- How the last person did it
- Who the last person was
- Someone like us

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### Developing Criteria

- Start with understanding the job
- Formal Job Analysis
  - Observations
  - Questionnaires
  - Critical Incident Technique
  - Repertory Grid
- For selection the focus is on elements that differentiate levels of performance

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## Job Requirement Specification

- Individual characteristics or complex constructs
- KSAOs – Knowledge, skills, abilities and other personality characteristics
  - Conscientious
- Competencies - A set of behaviours that are instrumental in the delivery of desired results or outcomes

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## Example Competency

- Working with others
  - Proactively builds relationships with others
  - Works cooperatively and for common objectives and goals
  - Participates fully when working with others
  - Networks and develops contacts across the organisation

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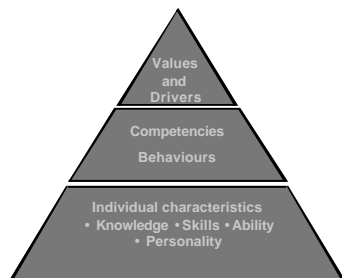
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## Human Attributes



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## Assessor Biases

- Understanding of role
- Similarity of Candidate to Interviewer
  - Gender, Race, Age...
- Stereotypes
- Information processing bias
  - Differential focus on positive and negative information
  - Recency and primacy effects
- Quality of previous/next candidate
- Physical attractiveness
- Verbal fluency of candidate
- Harsh versus lenient assessors

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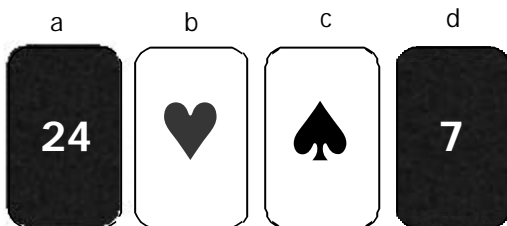
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Red cards have an even number on the back

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## Assessor Training

- Understanding criteria
  - Frame of reference training
- Assessment techniques
  - Interviewing, Rating etc
- Specific assessment exercises
- Minimising bias

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### Selection Strategy

- Selecting out or choosing the best
- Arithmetic combination of scores or qualitative decisions
- Exercise or competency based
- Weight assessment according to importance of what is measured
- Appropriate comparison group
- Influential assessors versus objective behaviour

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## Integration Paradoxes

- Meta-analysis suggests individual exercises (ability tests) have higher validity than assessment centres
- Numerical integration of scores from different exercises have better validity than integration discussions

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## Monitoring and Review

- Effectiveness
  - Validation
- Impact on different groups
- Efficiency
- Candidate perspective
  - Recruitment as PR
  - Legal liability
  - Procedural Justice

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### Follow up

- Assessment generates rich information which could be used to:
  - Support induction process
  - Evaluate development needs
  - Inform management effectiveness
  - Provide feedback to candidates

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