# **VALUES BASED RECRUITMENT TOOLKIT**

# **VBRT**

**MODULE 4** 

USING A VALUES BASED APPROACH IN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS



#### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Caroline Alcorso

National Manager (Workforce Development)

**National Disability Services** 

Level 19, 66 Goulburn Street

SYDNEY NSW 2000

Phone: 02 9256 3111

Email: caroline.alcorso@nds.org.au

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# USING A VALUES BASED APPROACH IN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS

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# INTRODUCTION

Incorporating values into the recruitment and selection process can be conducted through a number of means. One method, which has gained popularity in recent years, is by incorporating psychological assessments in the recruitment process.<sup>1</sup>

Psychological assessments offer the opportunity to assess qualities relevant to the role, which may be difficult to measure through other means. Simply asking someone 'what do you value?' may be difficult to quantify when comparing candidates. NDS has, in consultation with the disability sector, defined five values that demonstrate a commitment to person-centred practice that can be used to seek information through different recruitment techniques, including psychological assessment. The standardised format used in psychological assessments allows consistency of assessment and a simpler and more objective comparison between potential employees.

## PREDICTING CANDIDATE PERFORMANCE

Psychological assessments typically use questionnaires that ask candidates to indicate traits that most accurately reflect their preferences and tendencies. Assessment functions on the premise that responses can predict real world behaviour and therefore indicate candidates' likelihood of performing well in the role. An example of sample questions using an agreement scale is shown below.<sup>2</sup>

STATEMENTS TO CONSIDER	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree
I enjoy meeting new people	0	0	0	0	0
I like helping people	0	0	0	0	0
I sometimes make mistakes	0	0	0	0	0
I am easily disappointed	0	0	0	0	0
I enjoy repairing things	0	0	0	0	0

Once a candidate's preferences for certain traits or types are analysed, their scores are compared to the scores of others. Inferences about candidate results are drawn through comparison to norm groups, which contain a representative group of similar test takers. If a candidate scores higher than the norm (otherwise known as the 'typical' response), it can be assumed that they are more likely to display that trait. If a candidate scores lower, it is predicted that they are less likely to possess that trait.

# BENEFITS OF USING PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS

The inclusion of psychological assessments in recruitment often involves an initial financial investment. Research has provided evidence that psychological assessments predict higher performing employees than the collection of other information such as education, experience and reference checks.<sup>3</sup> Recruitment techniques differ in their ability to predict performance. Psychological assessments (such as personality and ability tests) were found to better predict performance than more traditional techniques such as gathering information on education, assessing job experience or carrying out reference checks. By investing in a predictive selection technique such as psychological assessments, organisations are able to avoid costs that may arise later as a result of poor selection. Costs incurred as a result of, for example, low working morale, productivity and staff turnover.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to being a relatively good predictor of candidate performance, the inclusion of psychological assessments in a selection process offers other benefits. Some of these include:

#### The ability to screen large numbers of candidates

Technological advancements allow assessments to be administered, scored and reported electronically. Assessments allow a greater number of candidates to be screened in a way that may place less demand on human resources than other cognitively demanding methods. This means that staff can dedicate their efforts to later stages of the selection process, such as interviewing people who meet minimum criteria.

#### Promoting opportunities to candidates that may otherwise be missed

Relying solely on factors such as education, previous experience or interview performance may mean that potentially suitable candidates are missed. Psychological assessments promote the identification of people with potential to perform well in the role, promoting diversity and fairness of opportunities for applicants of all backgrounds.

#### The standardised form of questions promotes fairness for candidates

The consistency of questions and response options provides all candidates equal opportunity to demonstrate their suitability to the role. This uniformity helps ensure that candidates are being assessed on the same criteria and are scored in the same way.

#### Insights can be used to direct other recruitment processes

The information gained from psychological assessments can be used to direct other recruitment practices. Having identified potential shortcomings of candidates, recruiters can confirm a candidate's suitability for the role through other methods such as structured interviews or reference checks.

#### Provides the opportunity to promote performance

While psychological assessments are used primarily for screening, the information gained may be used for further development if the candidate is employed. Knowing what motivates candidates, their particular area of interest, or work environments they work best in can be used to better place employees in roles they are likely to thrive in.

### **POTENTIAL RISKS**

While psychological assessments clearly offer several benefits, there are also potential risks associated with this approach. These include:

#### Scepticism of candidates

Some candidates may be sceptical of undertaking a psychological assessment and may not see the relevance to the role. Such candidates may see the selection process as unfair, which points to the need to use psychological assessments alongside other selection techniques.

#### False responses

While most assessments incorporate indices or techniques to prevent or identify 'faking', there is a possibility that this may go undetected. Depending on the quality of the assessment, candidates may be able to identify the type of answers recruiters are seeking and respond untruthfully to falsely demonstrate suitability for the role.

#### Cultural and class bias

Candidates may respond to assessment questions differently based on their cultural or class background, as opposed to their individual traits. Some personality assessment tools may not account for these differences, and may pose a disadvantage to certain groups.

# TYPES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS FOR VBR

Psychological tests can assess a number of attributes, such as intelligence and cognitive ability. Assessments that are of particular importance to VBR focus on personality, values and motivation. These terms are often used interchangeably as they all represent intrinsic aspects of a person that are likely to impact their behaviour. It is, however, important to distinguish between these terms, as assessments exploring different aspects of these terms provide different insights of the candidate.

Motivation is an energising force that induces action. It relates to decisions that involve how, when, and why people allocate effort to a certain task. The literature indicates that motivational processes are primarily influenced by both personality and values.<sup>5</sup> Personality refers to the relatively stable or typical feelings, thoughts and behaviour patterns a person has, which are relatively consistent despite environmental influences. Values refer to the beliefs that underpin people's behaviour patterns, reflecting what is important to them. Values are differentiated from personality in that they represent what people feel they ought to do, whereas personality reflects what people tend to actually do.

As can be seen in the figure below, motivation relates to what we choose to pursue (goal content) and how we pursue it (goal striving). Values have been noted to play a strong role in the content of goals, and why individuals are motivated to achieve some goals more than others. Personality, on the other hand, relates to the amount of intensity, effort and persistence individuals engage in when perusing these goals.



Bearing in mind the relationship between these terms, assessing each of these concepts in VBR provides valuable insights into candidates' goodness of fit for the organisation.

**Values** are used to assess a direct alignment between the values of the organisation and candidate, for example, a person may value collaboration.

**Personality** can be used to assess a candidate's tendency to engage their values, for example, a person might be extroverted when collaborating with others.

**Motivation** can be used to assess situations that increase engagement with values, for example a person might be more likely to collaborate with others when this collaboration leads to recognition of their input.

Psychological assessments can also be used to measure aspects of candidates other than these. Aptitude tests can be used in recruitment and selection to measure candidates' intellectual abilities, such as verbal, numerical and literacy skills. Aptitude tests have been found to have high predictability of candidate performance.<sup>6</sup> It is recommended that aptitude tests are only included as a part of your selection process when there are concerns that the candidate pool may include a large number of applicants who do not meet the baseline criteria of abilities to perform in the role.

# **USING PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS IN VBR**

When using psychological assessments as a part of your selection process, it is recommended that the following four steps be undertaken.

#### **STEP 1: Define critical values**

In order to establish the values of the ideal candidate, you need to firstly identify the values that are important to your organisation and clients. It is recommended that you use values that demonstrate a commitment to person-centred practice. These are available as part of the VBR Toolkit. You can however, incorporate other values that are important to your selection of candidates.

#### STEP 2: Select an assessment tool to assess values

Once the values critical to your organisation and client base have been identified, an assessment tool should be selected to assess these. While the selection of an assessment tool will be driven by consideration of a number of factors, it is critical that attributes relevant to the values identified in step 1 drive the selection of an appropriate tool. A guide to common assessment tools is included as part of this Module.

#### STEP 3: Map constructs measured to values

It is likely that assessment tools will use different (although related) attributes to assess the values identified in step 1. It is therefore advised that you create a 'map' aligning the attributes assessed in the assessment to the values of importance to your organisation or client base. This map will act as a reference guide for assessing a candidate's goodness of fit to the role.

#### STEP 4: Assess and compare candidates for goodness of fit

Once the groundwork has been done, you can compare candidates based on their alignment with the attributes identified in the mapping process. Note that it is likely that different candidates will display different strengths and divergences from this map. It is therefore recommended that you use this information to leverage further information and assess candidates' suitability for the role, such as in the form of a structured interview, or through simulation exercises such as standardised role plays and group meetings.

#### **CASE STUDY**

'Care Corp' is a disability service provider employing 3,000 support workers across Australia. As a part of Care Corp's VBR, it has decided to incorporate psychological assessment. The human resources team at Care Corp undertook the following processes.

#### √ Identified critical values

In consultation with senior management, HR staff identified that the industry-defined values of respectfulness, collaboration, integrity, resourcefulness and accountability were appropriate for their organisation. Care Corp decided to also include passion as an additional value, as this was something their HR team saw as particularly important to their organisation.

#### √ Selected an assessment

Once values were confirmed, staff used the guide to common assessment tools provided in this Module to contact a number of test providers. They requested information regarding assessment content, pricing options, the time and methods for administration, training requirements and scientific support for the assessment and the representativeness of the norm groups used. Based on these criteria, Care Corp selected an assessment tool.

#### √ Mapped constructs measured to values

The assessment measured a number of aspects of personality, some of which related more strongly to the values than others. HR staff at Care Corp worked with the test provider to create a 'map' of which personality aspects were of most relevance to the values and how this aligned to the role, in order to guide the interpretation of reports.

The following table shows how Care Corp mapped the organisation's values against the personality attributes addressed by the selected assessment tool.

VALUE	PERSONALITY ATTRIBUTE	RELEVANCE TO ROLE
Respectfulness	Sociability, personal relations, benevolence	Support everyone's worth and value, regardless of their differences
Accountability	Responsibility, independence	Taking personal responsibility for the direct support and services provided and the impact this has on clients
Collaboration	Team orientation, support, leadership, communication	Seeking to share skills and resources with others to pursue common goals
Integrity	Honesty, value	Representing the sector well and carrying out the role with honesty and transparency
Resourcefulness	Original thinking, practical mindedness, decisiveness	Actively seeking creative solutions to solve complex problems in the delivery of supports and services
Passion	Achievement, vigour, goal orientation	To engage and deliver supports and services in a skilled and energetic manner

#### √ Assessed and compared candidates

Once they had identified potentially suitable candidates, Care Corp sent them an email invitation to complete the assessment. The email outlined the rationale for using a psychological assessment, discussed the confidentiality of information and directed candidates to a preparation webpage.

Once the assessment had been administered, candidates were compared based on the relevant personality attributes identified in the comparison map. Information from reports was used for other recruitment practices, including structured interviews and reference checking of candidates indicating potential suitability for the role.

### SELECTING AN ASSESSMENT TOOL

With many options to choose from, it can be hard to choose. There are several considerations when selecting an appropriate assessment tool. Answering the following questions should help direct you towards the assessment that best fits your needs.

As noted earlier, assessment tools can measure attributes other than values, such as intelligence and aptitudes. It is important that your assessment tool assesses attributes related to the values of your organisation and the role. The values that demonstrate a commitment to person-centred practice are presented in the table below. While it is recommended that these values are the key focus of your VBR process, the incorporation of additional or alternative values may be appropriate depending on your organisation.

VALUE	EXAMPLES OF RELEVANT PERSONALITY TRAITS
Respectfulness	Openness, tolerance, sensitivity, communication, benevolence, support, attentiveness, willingness to involve, acceptance
Collaboration	Sociability, personal relations, leadership, teamwork, confidence, influence, assertiveness
Integrity	Honesty, conformance, tradition, universalism, values orientation, principle
Resourcefulness	Original thinking, problem solving, proactivity, flexibility, adaptation, resilience, autonomy, stress resistance
Accountability	Responsibility, achievement, ambition, goal orientation, decision making, customer focus, conscientiousness

# What investment is required?

The cost of assessments varies depending on the type of tool. On the less expensive side are 'off the shelf' assessments, typically designed for broad-scale use, and generally not designed for a specific role or industry type. Alternatively, it may be appropriate to custom build assessment tests to look at factors relevant to your organisation's strategy, values and job profiles. Custom design is generally a more expensive option. Some providers provide cost incentives to bundle a number of assessments, where the price is reduced for a larger number of tests.

# Is training or accreditation required?

Some assessment tools require training or accreditation of the personnel administering them. This ensures that administrators have a strong understanding of the purpose of the assessment and the constructs being assessed. Administrators are trained in accurate interpretation of results and skills relating to presenting feedback. For low volume uses, outsourcing test administration is possible to avoid costs associated with training. Test providers should be able to provide contacts for personnel to outsource administration. If assessing high volumes of people, it could be more economically viable to have an

internal person who is trained to administer, report and interpret results. It is important that you consider whether your organisation has someone who is already accredited in a certain assessment or, if training is necessary, who the most appropriate person or position would be.

# How should the test be administered, scored and reported?

Assessments can be conducted in person or online. The majority of test providers offer online platforms as a means for assessment. These assessments allow candidates to access the assessment at a time of their own convenience, without placing resource demands on assessors. Online platforms are of particular use for profiling large numbers of candidates, where assessments can be automatically scored and reports generated for interpretation. Some test developers offer paper versions of their assessments at a cheaper price, although these require manual scoring and reporting.

# How long/complex should the assessment be?

Assessments vary in their level of comprehensiveness, and therefore the time it takes for individuals to complete them. The time to complete assessments typically ranges from 10 to 40 minutes depending on the assessment used. While there is no rule for the ideal time of administration, it is recommended that your assessment takes as long as necessary to derive the relevant information, whilst placing as little inconvenience on candidates as possible.

#### What is the scientific basis for the tool?

As with any recruitment method, the quality and usefulness of tools varies. While psychological assessments have generally been found to have high predictability of performance, this depends on the assessment tool. A detailed description of the scientific requirements is outside of the scope of this Module. However, it is recommended that you analyse the evidence of the reliability and validity of the tests you are considering. This information should be available from test providers.

- Reliability refers to how consistently the assessment measures the characteristics. That is, its ability to yield the same score if the test was administered again.
- Validity refers to the accuracy of the assessment in measuring the characteristic of interest. That is, whether it is in fact measuring what it intends to measure.

If you are unsure about the scientific evidence of an assessment tool, you may choose to consult an organisational psychologist, purchase a test review book or visit a test review website. Some test review resources of note include the "Mental measurements yearbook", "Tests in print", the British Psychological Society search engine and the Buros test review website. 10

# Is the comparison group representative of candidates?

The insights gained from psychological assessments are based primarily on the norm groups that candidates are compared to. To ensure credibility of the inferences made, it is important that the norm group that candidates are being scored against is representative of the role's requirement.

People may differ in their personality, values and motivation depending on factors such as age, gender, cultural background, and industry type. Consideration needs to be given to ensure fairness and cultural sensitivity for all candidates so no-one is disadvantaged. Accessing test manuals or consulting test review websites is recommended to consider the sample of people included in the norm group. Some test developers will offer a number of comparison groups for you to choose from based on the criteria above, while others will have a 'global' group that includes people of mixed demographics. Good test providers will typically update their norm groups every few years as changes in industry requirements occur.

# ADMINISTERING THE ASSESSMENT TOOL

The way in which your assessment is administered is likely to have an impact on candidates' responses, as well as their perceptions of the organisation and the recruitment process. Candidates might have some hesitance completing psychological assessments. You can reduce uncertainty by explaining the following to each candidate.

- The purpose of the assessment, and how it aligns with VBR
- How confidentiality is maintained; specify who will have access to the report
- Other sources of information will also be used for the decision, and scores are contextualised to build a picture of them as a potential candidate

You should also provide candidates with information to help them prepare for the test, such as some sample questions. Many test providers will have this information available on their websites.

For guidelines on good practice in test use, see the International Test Commission (2001) "International Guidelines for Test Use". 11

# **SUMMARY**

Psychological assessments can be a useful part of your recruitment process to assess candidates' values and their related qualities relevant to the role. The selection of a psychological assessment should be driven by the values that are being assessed and your organisational resources in purchasing and administering assessments. Considerations should be given to the scientific support for the tool and whether its comparison groups are representative of candidates. Assessments should be administered and scored in an ethical manner, and reports should be combined with other assessment techniques, and not used as the only selection tool.

# A GUIDE TO COMMON ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The following table was created as an aid to familiarising yourself with potential assessments available in guiding your selection of a psychological assessment. The following considerations are necessary when using this guide:

- The information provided was obtained during June 2016; some might have changed since then
- This table includes a sample of some popular assessments available in the market; a number of other assessment tools are available and might be appropriate for your use
- The information provided does not represent a detailed description of the assessments – more information is needed to base a business decision upon

Please note that prices are not included in this table. Prices are subject to change depending on the circumstances in which assessments are purchased. It is recommended that you contact individual test providers to discuss pricing options.

ACER I www.acer.edu.au		
Customer Service Aptitude Profile	Evaluates candidates in terms of strengths, potential strengths and areas for development specific to customer service roles. Some relevant characteristics assessed include patience, cooperativeness, achievement, motivation, initiative, teamwork and many more.	
Gordon Personality Profile Inventory	Assesses nine major areas of personality that have been identified as indicators of job performance including ascendancy, self-assuredness, responsibility, emotional stability, cautiousness, original thinking, personal relations, vigour and self-esteem.	
Non-Verbal Personality Questionnaire	A measure of personality ideal for cross-cultural comparisons and people with language, reading and hearing difficulties. Assesses aspects of personality related to Murray's (1983) system of needs, including achievement, autonomy, understanding, nurturance and many more.	
Work Personality Index	Measures personality traits that are directly related to the work environment and job performance, including energy and drive, work style, working with others, dealing with pressure, problem solving and management, leadership and sales potential.	
Caliper I www.caliper.com.au		
Caliper profile	Assessing over 25 traits related to job performance, the assessment provides information on an individual's strengths, limitations, motivations and potential.	

#### CEB-SHL I www.cebglobal.com/shl/us **Customer Contact** Assesses behaviour styles for sales and customer service roles **Styles Questionnaire** including relating to customers, persuading and negotiating, working with others, problem solving, organisation, reliability and resiliency. Motivation Measures 18 factors that affect motivation, divided into four Ouestionnaire main areas. Some of these factors are activity, achievement, power, personal growth, status, financial benefits, recognition, fear of failure and more. Occupational Assesses 32 personality traits linked to behaviours likely Personality to impact performance at work. These cover traits related Questionnaire to relationships with people, thinking style, feelings and emotions. Covocate | www.covocate.com Assesses strengths and values specific to the provision Measures of disability services (i.e. the values which demonstrate a Respectfulness commitment to person-centred practice, included in the VBR Collaboration Toolkit), as well as the addition of optimism. Note that this Integrity assessment has been specifically designed for the industry and Resourcefulness will be amended and updated following the collection of more normative data. Accountability **Optimism** Facet 5 Global | www.facet5global.com Personal Profile Assesses the five 'building blocks' of a person across domains of will, energy, affection, control and emotionality. This report style is intended for selection and highlights candidate strengths and areas that require development. Searchlight In addition to assessing the five personality domains in the personal profile, Searchlight includes analysis of six workrelated competencies of leadership, interpersonal abilities, communication, analysis and decision making, initiative and effort, planning and organising. **Work Preferences** Assesses individuals' intrinsic motivators as well as demotivators in the domains of power, participation, people and processes. Identifies specific job elements that are likely to appeal to candidates.

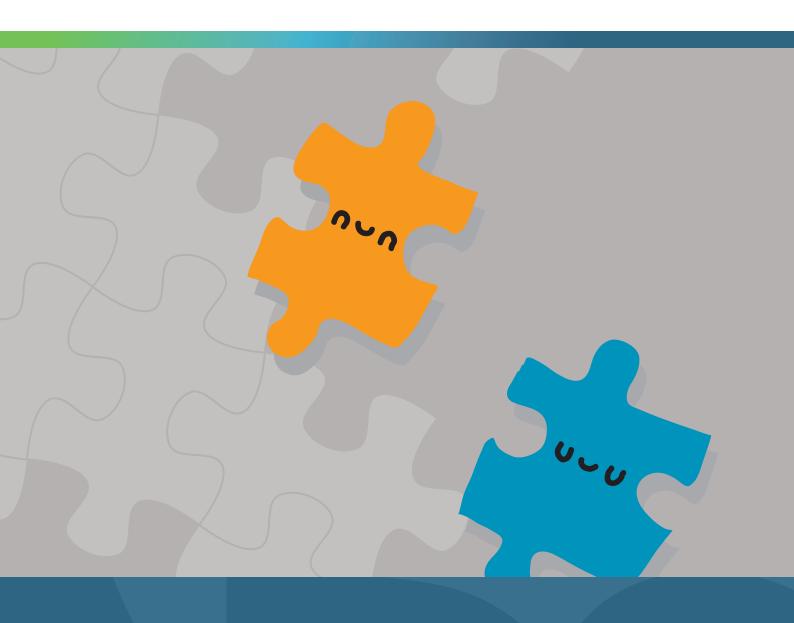
Finding Potential   www.findingpotential.com		
Personality	Assesses personality based on the 'big 5' model (neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness). Reports help organisations understand behavioural preferences in the working environment and most suitable roles based on these.	
Harrison Assessments	I <u>www.harrisonassessments.com.au</u>	
Job Suitability Assessment	Assesses attitudes, motivations, work values, engagement factors, interpersonal skills, and retention factors relevant to specific jobs. Can be customised to suit specific job requirements.	
Hexaco I http://hexaco	o.org/hexaco-online	
Hexaco Personality Inventory Revised	Designed for broad scale personality assessment; six personality factors are measured including honesty-humility, emotionality, extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience.	
Hogan Assessments I www.hoganassessments.com		
Hogan Motives, Values, Preferences	Assesses values across 10 scales that determine what motivates candidates to succeed. These include recognition, power, hedonism, altruism, affiliation, tradition, security, commerce, aesthetics and science.	
Hogan Personality Inventory	Assesses seven aspects of personality when people are performing at their best. These include adjustment, ambition, sociability, interpersonal sensitivity, prudence, inquisitiveness and learning approach.	
Hudson I http://au.hudson.com		
Business Attitudes Questionnaire	Assesses 25 different dimensions of personality based on the 'big 5' model neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness). Scores predict how a candidate will behave in a professional workplace.	

Merit Solutions Australia   www.meritsolutions.com.au		
Personality and Preference Inventory	Provides insights into an applicant's preferences and behaviours at work and how they may fit into a role, team and organisation. Assesses factors including achievement, dominance, conscientiousness and persistence, openness, sociability, work tempo and agreeableness.	
PsyTech International	I www.psytech.com	
Fifteen Factor Questionnaire +	Based on the 16 personality factors model, this assessment was developed to ensure cultural and gender fairness, while providing insight into how people typically think, feel and interact.	
Revelain I www.revelia	<u>ın.com</u>	
Onetest Behavioural Profile	Designed to bridge the gap between recruitment and onboarding, this profile assesses strengths, development areas, motivators, communication, decision making, team behaviour, and preferences for workplace management and communication.	
16 Personality Factors Questionnaire	Assesses unique characteristics, the traits that underlie and influence behaviour.	
Saville I www.savilleconsulting.com.au		
Wave Focus Styles	Based on the Wave four domain model of thought, influence, adaptability and delivery. Provides a short assessment of candidates' motives, talents, preferred work culture and competency potential.	
Wave Professional Styles	Using the same four domain model as the Wave Focus Styles, this presents a more comprehensive assessment of candidates' motives, talents, preferred work culture and competency potential.	

Select Assess and Train   www.selectassesstrain.com		
12 Driving Forces – Motivators	Assesses across 12 driving forces underlying motivation of behaviour and actions. These include intellectual, instinctive, resourceful, selfless, harmonious, objective, altruistic, intentional, commanding, collaborative, structured and receptive forces.	
Personal Motivation and Engagement	Measures the attitudes underpinning candidates' personal motivations and actions including theoretical, utilitarian, aesthetic, social, individualistic and traditional attitudes.	
Talent Dynamics I www	vw.talentdynamics.com.au	
Talent Dynamics Profile	Matches personality to one of eight roles including the creator, the star, the supporter, the deal maker, the trader, the accumulator, the lord and the mechanic. Provides insight on the most suitable roles and ways to leverage work performance.	
Talent Lens I http://tal	entlens.com/sosie	
SOSIE	Assessment of personality and interpersonal values and personal values in one questionnaire. The combination of these three assessments provides insight on the way candidates' values will interact with performance in the role.	
Talent Q I www.talentqgroup.com		
Dimensions	Designed for assessing key behaviours at work, Dimensions assesses personality across three broad domains of people and relationships, tasks and projects, drives and emotions.	
Drives	Assesses an individual's values and motivations at work across four domains of challenge, connection, esteem and personal to identify environments in which candidates are expected to thrive.	
Visual DNA   www.visualdna.com		
Values	A short online or mobile assessment that reports on the top three most important values of candidates and how these fit with the organisation. Option to customise assessment results to values of the organisation.	

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VBR TOOLKIT MODULES

DISABILITY SECTOR