

A high-profile view...



Greg Hayes says that, used well, psychometric profiling can provide great aid for your recruitment processes, as well as a good foundation to retain and develop leaders

A colleague and I were running a session last week, offering guidance on interviews and psychometric profiling to some of the future leaders in the sector. It was a session that left us with a great sense of optimism and encouragement.

A couple of questions from participants on the course gave me pause for thought though. To paraphrase, the first was 'how useful are all these psychometric profiling exercises anyway?' and the second was, 'how big an emphasis is placed on their findings in a recruitment process?'

Advising on the use of profiling for senior recruitment should be second nature, it is an essential ingredient in the recipe for a successful appointment. Recruitment at this level is high stakes and ensuring the right people are in the right roles is fundamental to peak performance for authorities.

We all know that getting it wrong can hinder progress, cost public money and sap morale and energy. So, an exercise to uncover some objectivity around the way a candidate tends to lead, their personal impact, their resilience and motivation is prudent.

Candidates regularly tell me how much of themselves they recognise having been through our profiling, and scepticism is generally rare.

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GatenbySanderson's profiling is based around our unique leadership model 'Altitude' which assesses candidates' leadership style across 12 core behaviours. Using continuous research of public sector leaders to benchmark what success looks like, we use Altitude as a behavioural framework against which we model the results from a range of psychometrics to better identify an individual's preferences in the workplace and potential derailers.

Recent feedback on Altitude from chief

executives has been overwhelmingly positive. The sector-specific behavioural framework is giving them a more relevant and more complete picture to consider alongside the other parts of the recruitment process. They are gaining greater insights into a candidate's approach, behaviours, values and motivations prior to appointment. They can assess differences within a shortlist of candidates, consider organisational fit and calculate benefits and risks.

Profiling can also be integral to supporting the onboarding of candidates successfully. What is discovered during the recruitment phase should not be left on the shelf to gather dust but used to help a candidate's transition into a new organisation over a period of time. Used well, it can provide a foundation upon which to retain and develop leaders.

Too many organisations are missing the trick and not placing enough emphasis on psychometric profiling in their processes and thus maximising their chances of achieving the best hire possible. The use of reliable and valid psychometrics by a qualified assessor can also help challenge a panel's unconscious bias,

reduce adverse impact and ultimately support better representation at the top.

In a high pressured and high profile environment, where often an executive has given notice, the clock is ticking and there is an imperative to recruit quickly. A tension exists between recruiting at pace and taking the time to distil the information gathered from profiling and importantly, to use it.

The point at which authorities consider psychometric profiling varies from authority to authority, but those making the time to use profiling reports as part of the recruitment process to consider 'individual fit' and 'top team balance', and use the insight to shape interview questions, are making better hires than those who take a quick peek during a wash-up session after the final interviews. ■

Greg Hayes is a senior consultant in the local government practice at GatenbySanderson

