



PSYCHOLOGY GROUP

RECRUITING FOR CURRENT TIMES: PREDICTING WHO WILL BE AN EFFECTIVE REMOTE WORKER

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With some form of remote work now the 'new norm', employers are modifying recruitment habits and asking – **will this person be effective working from home?**

How can we actively select employees who are likely to be more effective working remotely than others?

We know that personality preferences can predict a person's job performance but can we predict remote job performance through understanding and measuring candidates' personality?

To understand how personality affects a candidate's potential job performance in remote work, we first need to understand what is different about performance in remote jobs compared to non-remote jobs. Then, by assessing candidates' personality preferences, we can identify candidates who are more likely to succeed in these more isolating environments, ask targeted interview questions, and understand how to manage and motivate them once they start.

Of course, how remote work differs could be different for different jobs, but broadly, employers might want to understand:

- How will employees manage being (part time or full time) in different workplace as their peers and managers, including feelings of loneliness and isolation?
- How will employees manage not having access to all the resources required to do their work?
- How will employees manage their time, and work boundaries?
- If the employee will themselves manage other remote workers, how will they monitor performance?

The University of Melbourne noted in their [article](#) on flexible working beyond COVID-19, that **"many employees have long called for more and better flexible work arrangements,** whether to accommodate carer duties, working parents or work-life balance.... employee choice is crucial when it comes to employee approval of different work arrangements."

It is important to note that there is no such thing as a 'good' or a 'bad' personality, and different personalities are suited to different types of jobs and industries. These are likely to play a bigger part than whether employees are co-located with their managers.

There seems to be a consensus among many HR professionals and leading consultancies including OPRA, that there will not be 100% return to all people in the office all the time. Human Resources Director (HRD) found in a recent global survey that "...almost all HR leaders (91%) are keen on campaigning for remote work arrangements to continue post COVID-19."



OPRA's suite of validated personality assessments are an excellent indicator of performance and potential across a range of job types, levels, and industries, including remote job performance. Some personality attributes that are likely to influence a candidate's success in remote work, and ways to support them include:

OPRA recently shared an infosheet on how people's different personality preferences may affect how they respond to changes and challenges brought on by Covid-19, such as remote work.

Conscientiousness: helps employers understand a candidate's ability to plan, manage their time and workload, and meet deadlines. Naturally conscientious people tend to be better at motivating themselves to do work not just because their manager has set them the task, but because they are enthused by the idea of completing those tasks. Candidates with lower levels of natural conscientiousness may need more guidance and support when working remotely, including regular check-ins and open communication. They more also need to better understand the purpose of those tasks so they can see how their work is connected to a broader goal.

Emotional Stability: how a candidate regulates and monitors their emotions, and react to stress and pressure. Candidates who score higher on Emotional Stability are more likely to be able to adapt to new stressors and demands, such as social isolation and family responsibilities, and make the most out of a difficult situation. It will be important for candidates who score lower on emotional stability to feel supported and connected with their peers and manager and identify tactics to help them manage their stress and workload.

Openness: how much a candidate is likely to enjoy learning new things and tolerant of ambiguity. Remote work is likely to require employees to learn new systems, ways of working, and find solutions to problems that they might otherwise be able to ask a colleague sitting next to them, or down the corridor, for help with. Candidates who are more open may be better making sense of ambiguous or incomplete information. Candidates who are less naturally open to new experiences may require more time to adjust to new situations, which they might find stressful, and prefer some more structure and clarity in their work. Managers should be very clear in describing what is expected of employees and to be open to questions about tasks. Pairing fewer open employees with a more 'open' colleague who could act as a mentor/buddy could also help manage their stress levels associated with new situations.

By assessing and understanding candidates' personality preference, employers can better identify those who are more likely to be successful remote or flexible workers, as well as better support employees who might find some aspects of remote work more challenging. Speak to your OPRA consultant to see how personality assessments can help you identify and support the best candidates for your organisation.

TO ENGAGE THIS SERVICE, OR FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL OPRA CONSULTANT.

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