



EPSTAR

Using The EPSTAR Total Person Assessment

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I. Introduction and Purpose

Why Use an Assessment?

As a company moves forward, the state of the company will be determined by its people. Have you ever made a conscious decision to hire a poor performer? Of course not, but many of us have hired poor performers.

When companies prepare to purchase an expensive piece of equipment, much effort is used figuring asset value, cost, budgeting, expected life, etc. A person expected to spend years in a company has a million dollar cost; yet companies are often not prepared to analyze that decision with the same precision. The reason? They do not have adequate information. When we purchase a television set or software, it comes with instructions. How nice it would be if we had those instructions to guide us in making that important people decision.

Do you know who your best people are? Do you know who the minimum producers are? Of course you do. But did you know this at the time they were hired? Think about the last person you had to let go. What were you thinking when you hired them?

A reliable and valid assessment identifies those drastically important qualities you wish you knew about the person upon whom you are preparing to spend up to a million dollars. Essentially, the assessment provides you with information that is usually not seen in resumes and interviews. It is a tool not to make your hiring decision, but to aid your hiring decision.

There are many tests available that are personality tests. These tests will compare a person against himself or herself and look primarily for areas of dominant styles. These personality tests do not compare two people, and they have no affinity for a specific job. In other words, they are not predictive.

As long as an assessment is job specific, is not used to discriminate, meets legal guidelines, is quantitative, has no bias or invasion of privacy, and meets rigid reliability and validity standards, it is acceptable in today's marketplace. With the proper assessment you can clone your top performers, manage to your people's strengths and most important—keep from making that bad hiring decision.

A key benefit of using the Epstar system is that by selecting an individual who is predicted to be successful in a job, the job of managing that individual becomes significantly easier.

The Total Person Assessment

Our Total Person Assessment was developed in the 1990s specifically for the purpose of measuring the Total Person as a predictor of success in a job. More than a personality test, it was designed to measure work-related characteristics, measuring mental abilities, motivation and behavioral traits. The assessment allows an objective measure of the individual to be used along with subjective information. The purpose is to match people with jobs where they will find success and satisfaction, and to avoid matching people with jobs where they will fail or be unhappy.

Features of the assessment:

- ❑ Measures core behavior, mental abilities and job interest
- ❑ Personality traits correlated with mental abilities and motivation
- ❑ Interview questions based on specific job fit
- ❑ Quantifiable and comparable
- ❑ Valid and reliable
- ❑ Timed cognitive testing
- ❑ Company specific job fit
- ❑ Non-fakeable
- ❑ Individual test validity – Social Desirability
- ❑ Universally scored without subjectivity or bias
- ❑ Job suitability score
- ❑ Immediate management feedback
- ❑ Individual and Selection reports unlimited

Making Great People Decisions

The Epstar system is designed to accomplish the following in an organization:

- Place the right person into the right job
- Reduce turnover
- Make the best promotion decisions
- Reduce people problems
- Manage more effectively to individual strengths and weaknesses
- Make informed training decisions

How the Assessment Fits Into the Hiring Process

We may break down the hiring decision into three areas:

- Job Fit
- Company Fit
- Skill

The purpose of the assessment is to provide additional information about an individual that will contribute to an intelligent decision about that person's predictability of success in a particular job. The assessment provides suggested areas of interviewing.

The assessment measures Job Fit. This tells us whether the core cognitive abilities, motivations, interests and behaviors of the individual fit a specific job in a company.

The areas not covered by the assessment are Company Fit and Skill. Company Fit includes such items as attitude, dress and fit in the company environment and culture. It is important that you assess this area in your own way because an individual may have job fit yet not have company fit or the desired attitude.

In a job where skill is important, you again must ascertain the level of skill of the individual. In general, it may be preferable to have Job Fit and Company Fit, and you can teach the skill, rather than having skill without Job Fit and Company Fit.

The assessment does not have to be administered to all candidates—only those who have reached the *serious* level in the selection process and to all who are at the same stage in the process. For legal reasons, the assessment cannot be used to discriminate against candidates. The assessment should be administered to all candidates who have reached your pre-defined level in the hiring process, preferably before the official interview.

An individual should never be told that his/her selection will be based or was based upon an assessment. They should be told that this is simply part of your company hiring process. In general, the assessment results should account for approximately one-third of the hiring decision. It is not necessary to give the results of the test to the applicant. Furthermore, the individual should not be shown his/her benchmark results. Their lack of experience in interpreting the results could lead to irrational conclusions.

The Total Person Assessment is available to be taken online in your custom website, taking approximately 45 minutes to one hour. It is a timed exercise.

[II. The Benchmark](#)

A Benchmark is created from an analysis of your top performers in a particular job which is used as a template in measuring and comparing individuals against these known top performers. The benchmark is depicted on the graph by a series of gray or green bars. The benchmark tells us how the known top performers score in the assessment.

We have found that those who score similar to the benchmark have a high predictability of job fit. In general, if an individual scores within the benchmark, their behavioral traits, motivations and abilities are similar to the top performers in the job. If we look at areas where an individual scores outside the benchmark, this may indicate a red flag for you to look deeper into this aspect of the person and determine if this is important in the hiring decision.

The purpose of the benchmark is twofold. It is designed to keep us from making a bad hiring decision. It is also designed to point out the areas of job fit to be further explored. As such, whenever a person scores outside the benchmark, a series of suggested interview questions is generated. You may utilize these as you see fit to suit the situation.

If a person falls outside the benchmark, should they be eliminated? Not necessarily. As with all measurements and situations, the benchmark is a correlated equation of the top performers. There will always be unique individuals who can perform at a high level who are a little different than *the average top performer score*. Some individuals may score outside the benchmark who could be a top performer in the position. They may have higher mental ability, be more competitive, be more sensitive, etc. These scores should be looked at in relation to the Total Person. The assessment provides you with the information; you still have to use your judgment in making a decision about the individual. Some scores may be more important than others and may be deemed critical in your company. For example, a low score in Competitive in a sales job is more critical than a low motivational interest in data score.

In general, the thing to remember about using the benchmark is that it tells us what the top performers are like and if this person is different than that, where they are different, and by how much.

Reading the Report

As you gain experience in reading the report, you will immediately go to page 2 to see the graph of scores against the benchmark. If the individual gave too many B answers in the Personality section, the scores may not be presented with the benchmark because that portion of the assessment will be invalid. The last page of the report shows whether there is a validity problem with the report.

Because there are millions of combinations of scores, it is difficult to create a narrative that is truly accurate. Therefore, the narrative provided in the report is rather general. It is the understanding of the scores and the traits being measured that depict the true individual.

You should first look at the Job Suitability score at the lower right. (see Job Suitability)

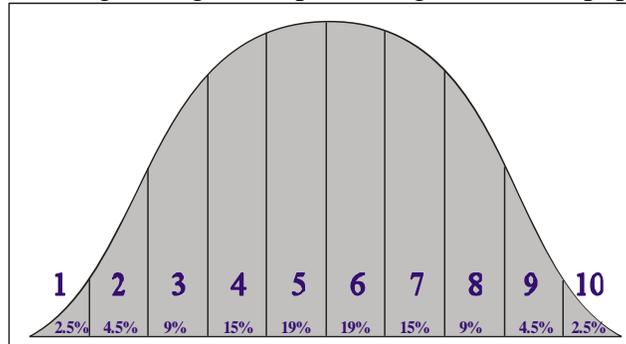
You should look for any asterisks that appear next to a score. This is an indication to you of a *red flag* which may merit concern. Remember, the purpose of this assessment is to provide you with information otherwise unavailable so that you can make an informed hiring decision. The decision is yours. There may be some cases where a person scores under 80%, yet would be a good fit. For example, they may score higher than the benchmark in Abilities.

If you see an asterisk in a critical factor, this merits further consideration as to the job fit of this individual. You will be notified as time goes on which are critical factors based on ongoing updates to the benchmark.

III. Understanding the Results

WHAT WE MEASURE

The following is a list of the terms used to describe each of the characteristics, along with a short description of what is being measured by the Total Person Assessment. You must look at the entire assessment; don't make a quick judgment based on one factor. The assessment uses a sten graph, making it possible to compare a person against another. The scores are based on a Bell Curve, with a score of 4-7 being average, or representing 68% of the population.



Cognitive Abilities

1. **General Ability** measures a person's capacity to deal with ideas, to solve problems, understand relationships and to assimilate new information. It is a measure of reasoning ability and an indication of how well a person thinks ahead to anticipate the effects of actions and decisions and how quickly he or she learns. It also shows a person's ability for strategic thinking, three dimensional thinking and ability to mentally handle a number of different items at the same time. This is not a measure of IQ, but rather a match of a person's *brain power* to the specific job, i.e., the score should match the job. For example, a person with a high score needs to be in a job where their brain is fully engaged.
2. **Working with Numbers** is an evaluation of numerical reasoning ability and how we solve problems. It shows how well an individual reasons with new information, data, and numbers. It indicates ability to think logically and solve problems.
3. **Working with Words** relates to reasoning with and using written language effectively, primarily the ability to use information to explain and understand ideas and concepts. It is an indication of written communication skills. A low scorer does not want to communicate.
4. **Working with Shapes** has to do with spatial skills, or how well a person is able to manipulate objects, both physically and visually. It is an indication of a person's ability to think in three dimensions, think conceptually and utilize strategic thinking.

Motivation / Interests

People generally have stronger motivation to do work which truly interest them. If a person is not interested in a job, they won't focus on it or do it for very long. Motivation is a reason for taking action. Motivation/Interests fall into three areas. A person can be high or low in any or all areas--they are separate.

1. **Working with People** measures the extent to which an individual needs or wants involvement in working with people. It also indicates whether a person wants to mentor, negotiate, instruct, supervise, delegate, persuade, interact, serve and help. A person with a low score will be more discriminating in who they are interested in working with.
2. **Working with Data** measures how a person feels about working with numbers, words, statistics, symbols, facts and figures. It is different from Working with Numbers because it measures interest, not ability. Working with Data indicates interest in synthesizing, coordinating, analyzing, compiling, computing, copying and comparing.
3. **Working with Things** measures interest in working with inanimate objects such as machinery, tools and equipment. Interest in Working with Things includes setting up, precision working, operating-controlling, driving-operating, manipulating, tending, feeding-unloading and handling.

Work-Related Personality/Behavior Characteristics
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Independent

This relates to how much *I want to be in charge* vs. how much *I want others to be in charge*. Independent people are single-minded and determined to win. The higher the score, the more confident, hard-headed autocratic leaders. They take charge and get things done, although they can be insensitive to the needs of those around them (see Stability). The Independence scores are an indicator of team dynamics. Not all people should serve on teams. There should be a proper mix of higher scoring individuals with lower scoring individuals. A person with a score of 9 may be too dictatorial and autocratic for individuals who score a 3.

Diplomatic (Low Independent)

Diplomats are generally likable and good-natured. They are considerate, cooperative and good at pulling people together through persuasion. They sometimes choose to avoid conflict and controversy to preserve relationships.

Competitive

Competitive people strive hard to reach their goals. The higher the score the more they are happy with an *I win, you lose* situation. They are interested in personal achievements and play to win at any cost, sometimes using others to get what they want. This is an important score for a sales person. Generally, a low score is not good for a sales position

Cooperative

Those who cooperate are non-competitive, desiring to make their contributions to achievement as members of a team. They will forego their own success to help others. They may not be a good negotiator and may not fight for something.

Assertive

Assertive people want control and may be outspoken because they know their own minds and are not afraid to say so. They operate under the statement, *I can be successful if I am in control and people will listen to me*. They seek to be group leaders. They can create conflict through their sometimes controversial and unpopular opinions. They stand up for what they believe. A high

scoring individual may be pushy, outspoken and aggressive. A low assertive (Submissive) may be uncomfortable with a high assertive.

Submissive

People who are submissive are helpful, tactful, seeking to avoid controversy and diffuse aggression. They would rather avoid conflict than confront it. They operate under the statement, *I can be successful if someone will give me good direction.*

Conscientious

Conscientious individuals follow rules and abide by standard practices and procedures so you can depend on them. High scorers are highly structured, neat, tidy and detail-conscious. They tend to dislike change. They are always well prepared through careful planning.

Spontaneous

People with spontaneity are flexible and unpredictable who work well in changing, challenging situations. When problems arise, they often adopt creative and unorthodox solutions. They tend to be a kind of person who says, *tell me my job and what's expected of me, and let me do it my way.* They will tend to challenge the rules.

Conventional

Those with conventional traits will do their work in a meticulous and reliable manner, exhibiting traditional behavior. They are trustworthy, structured and intent of doing things *the right way.* They need and want rules.

Innovative

Innovators are not bound by rules *and the way things have always been done.* They would rather explore new routes than take the well-traveled path, often viewing established rules, policies and procedures as obstacles to progress. They are looking for a better way to do things. Combined with a high mental abilities score (ability to see the big picture/consequences of their actions), this person could be creative.

Organized

The mark of an organized person is a structured, controlled and carefully planned and arranged environment. They plan carefully to meet deadlines, but dislike situations where they must improvise, *think on their feet,* or engage in unstructured debate. They are uncomfortable if plans change

Reactive

People who are reactive seldom plan, choosing to react to circumstances as they arise. They are comfortable with surprises. They take a broad view of events and leave details to others. Their work areas may appear disorganized, however, this is more a case of unorganized rather than disorganized.

Extrovert

An extrovert enjoys the stimulation of being with many people, draws energy from others and wants to build relationships. High scorers, if given the opportunity, want to be the center of

attention. They may even talk too much and not listen. In fact, those with low Motivation/Interest scores will tend to talk more about inconsequential matters than those with higher Motivation/Interest scores. They like exciting, lively places. They are collaborative and may be more enthusiastic. As we mature, this score tends to move toward the middle.

Introvert

An introvert prefers the company of a few close friends and is content to be alone. They choose quiet, familiar surroundings. They don't work well on teams if they also have low Independence scores because they are self-sufficient.

Group-oriented

A strong need for other people is the chief trait of group-oriented people. They depend on the support, encouragement and social approval of others. While they want to be on the team or included in the group, they may not be interested in standing out or serving in leadership roles.

Self-sufficient

The ability to enjoy working alone for long periods of time is the mark of the self-sufficient person. While they can work with others, they have no need to do so.

Outgoing

Outgoing people enjoy taking risks and accepting challenging and doing stimulating things. They dislike repetitive tasks and like being with other people for the stimulation they provide.

Reserved

People described as reserved find everyday life stimulating and feel no need to seek further excitement. They are not bored by repetitive tasks and tend to live quiet, orderly lives.

Stable

This measures the emotional component of the individual. Those who are described as stable are generally untroubled and calm. They face problems and unforeseen circumstances without suffering undue stress, remaining relaxed and secure. They are untroubled by criticism. High scorers are relaxed, poised, laid back and lack a sense of urgency. They may be cold, insensitive and matter-of-fact. They are often surprised that others are so sensitive.

Emotional

Emotional people are sensitive, mostly to their own feelings of anxiety, suspicion, guilt and irritability. They are fearful of new people and new situations. While you may want someone who is sensitive to other's feelings, they may also be fragile easily hurt.

Poised

People with poise shrug off criticism and cope with most adverse situations without becoming upset or irritated. They accept that few things proceed in life without a few things going wrong. A high score here could be bad for a sales position in that they may easily accept defeat.

Restless

Restless people are easily upset, irritable and prone to lose their tempers. They don't take rejection well and tend to take things personally. They are sensitive. They view the world as basically hostile and threatening and tend to look on the negative side.

Relaxed

Relaxed people are well prepared to cope with stressful situations. They accept people at face value and are seldom bothered when things go wrong. A high score indicates a lower drive and possible lower sense of urgency. In a sales situation, the high scorer may not have perseverance or fear of failure, even though they may have a high competitive score.

Excitable

Excitable people become tense and anxious in stressful situations. They have trouble trusting and having confidence in their colleagues, being suspicious of the motives of others. They may let their stress lead to physical problems.

Social Desirability

The Total Person Assessment uses four internal validity checks to validate the accuracy of data and determine if the reported data is reliable. These validations are a way of the assessment testing itself to tell us about the accuracy of the information in the report. These checks include erratic answers, omitted answers and too many in-between or undecided (B) answers. A problem with validity is noted at the end of the report and will signify that the report is not of the highest reliability. In some cases, if the assessment does not reach the required validity level, a Selection Report or other report using a benchmark cannot be produced.

A high score (9-10) indicates a person has probably painted a better picture, an exaggerated picture of themselves. They may be, in essence, *cheating* on the assessment by answering the way they think will make them look good. We do not know the reason: they may be trying to paint a better picture of themselves; they may not know themselves well enough to portray in the assessment; they may be anxious about hiding something; or they may really be *what they say they are*. They are *faking good*, presenting what they feel to be a socially acceptable view of themselves rather than an honest picture of how they really are. Scores in the area of 7-8 are more stable and conscientious and, in general indicate a higher desire to be socially desirable. They may tend to have a concern for traditional high moral values and are more able to accept people at face value. Generally, they do not tell lies, tend to be nice to people and try to always do the *right* thing.

JOB Suitability Percentage

This score is a determination by the computer of how close the total array of scores comes to the benchmark. The computer is not making a determination of which scores may be more important; this is simply a way to compare scores of different individuals to others as suitability to a specific job as depicted by the benchmark. When we see a score of 95% (that's as high as it goes), this means that the individual fits the job in terms of mental ability, motivation and personality/behavior.

A lower score simply indicates that there needs to be further analysis as to the suitability of this person to the job. Correct interviewing and your determination as to whether the scores outside the benchmark are acceptable can accomplish this.

It is possible that a person can be a top performer who is a 10 in mental ability, a 10 in competitiveness/assertiveness and a 3 in stability. This person will require his/her brain to be more engaged than others, will be more tireless in achieving and wanting to be in control, and be more sensitive. They may very well be a top performer if you allow them to work in the job at their level of fit. They will, however, be slightly different, may not fit in to the team, may need more stimulation, and may be difficult to manage. These are all considerations that result from a job suitability score that may be lower. Should this person be hired? Maybe. Maybe not.

You may discuss these interpretations with our consultant, Bob Epstein, at 800/245-0699