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Consultants for Leadership Selection

Personality Tests: Value is Questioned in Executive Selection

From The Dingman Company, Inc Winter2008 Newsletter

In the Autumn 2007 issue of *Personnel Psychology*, an article by five former editors of *Personnel Psychology* and the *Journal of Applied Psychology* questioned the validity of using personality testing when making "high stakes" personnel hiring decisions. While research in the early 1990s provided evidence that one's personality could predict job performance, numerous potential problems are associated with the current operational use of personality testing. Collectively, the editors reviewed 7,000 manuscripts and they found that there is very low validity of personality tests in predicting job performance. They recommended that future research should focus on finding alternatives to self-report personality testing.

Wow. Well, for decades we've been saying that structured interviews of candidates, coupled with 360-degree reference testing showing a candidate had been successful and effective in the past, was the best indicator that they would do well in their next job. We believe the personality or motivational testing may be helpful but it can also be relied on too heavily in making a hiring decision. In our assignments, if a client wants to have such testing done we're fine with that, and none of our candidates have been invalidated by such tests. But that would be in addition to our normal in-depth process.

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