

TACKLING VOLUME HIRING WITH INTELLIGENT BLENDED ASSESSMENT



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Introduction

Traditionally, when organizations want to assess potential employees across a variety of areas, they have had to subject candidates to a lengthy assessment process often with long gaps between each type of assessment and several instances of potentially incongruent feedback. Today, organizations have the option to deliver a single assessment to their candidates, providing a far more streamlined, valid and inclusive process. Advances in assessment technology now allow “blended assessments” to become more easily utilized, while helping to underpin a positive candidate experience through a massive reduction in time between initial testing and final decision, supported by a clear and concise feedback process. This Advice Guide will discuss these areas in further detail, alongside some practical examples of how Talogy have helped organizations to adopt these new processes, and give you ideas on how you can start to use intelligent blended assessment to improve your hiring process.

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What is a blended assessment?

Blended assessments are the latest approach in selection and recruitment. The term 'blended assessment' generally applies to online tests which are designed to measure a range of different constructs, such as behavioral, motivational, personality and cognitive. The blended assessment is typically designed in line with a specific organization or with a specific job role in mind.



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While this is a broad definition it's useful to explore exactly what we mean by blended assessments, and consider the delivery mode:

Online or face to face?

In the current market, blended assessments are very much focused on online testing, but does this have to be the case? If a blended assessment is purely a mix of different types of questions, could an assessment center comprising behavioral interviews, a personality feedback session and cognitive tests also be considered a blended assessment? To clearly differentiate a blended assessment approach from an assessment center approach, we will define blended assessments as being online only. To further differentiate this approach from other online testing approaches (such as completing a battery of tests), a blended assessment is delivered as one test, albeit potentially with different sub-sections.

Custom or off the shelf?

The majority of blended assessments in use have been custom made for the client organization, on the basis that they are shorter, focused assessments that measure the really critical behaviours and aptitudes for that organization or role. However, custom solutions can require significant investment from the client organization.

We believe that while there will be occasions where a custom solution is most appropriate, there are certain behaviors, personality traits and aptitudes that will be relevant across different organizations and roles. Our approach to blended assessments is therefore that they can be off-the-shelf, tailored, or fully customized.

Low-touch or high-touch?

At Talogy, our virtual assessment center approach combines some of the elements of online testing with higher touch assessments which require input from an (human) assessor. To further distinguish the blended assessment approach, we characterize blended assessments as lowtouch only, i.e. an automated assessment process.

To summarize, Talogy define blended assessments as online assessments which measure a range of skills, attitudes, behaviors, traits and aptitudes; delivered as a single test.

Why use blended assessments?

One of the benefits of blended assessments is that they allow organizations to 'do less with more'. This means that rather than putting candidates through a whole battery of tests, they take one shorter assessment which focuses on the key characteristics that the role and/or organization requires. This can be very beneficial from a candidate perspective as rather than going through a lengthy process with numerous stages and assessments to complete, they can complete one assessment and quickly find out if they have been successful in passing the initial sift.

Better predictive power

Generally, blended assessments are invaluable in their improvements to the quality of hire, possessing incredible predictive power compared to single assessments. A recent study from Schmidt (2016) found that adding even one other type of assessment to a cognitive ability test can add up to 20% more validity in terms of predicting job performance.

Improved candidate experience

There are many benefits to providing a good candidate experience from the organization perspective. Recent reports have found that between 6-15% of offers made to candidates are declined or reneged (ISE, 2017; The Talent Board, 2017). A large contributing factor of this can be that good candidates are lost to other organizations during the selection process, therefore a reduced time-to-offer is likely to minimize this risk. Reducing the number of stages in the selection process also helps to keep candidates interested, as candidates do not like feeling that they are being made to 'jump through hoops' to reach the next stage of the process.

Combining the measurement of constructs into one blended assessment can also help to provide a more coherent, and engaging experience for candidates. Rather than the process being broken into separate, non-related components, the blended assessment can incorporate an overarching narrative which allows the different components to merge together more seamlessly. The use of blended assessment has been further aided by technology advancements with regard to the use of different items types and delivery formats, allowing the incorporation of things such as multimedia elements, and enabling delivery for mobile devices. These contribute to the overall positive candidate experience which can be achieved through the use of blended assessment.

A holistic snapshot of the candidate

Blended assessment can also help to provide a holistic assessment of the candidate's behaviors, motivations and abilities. The output provides an overall view of the candidate's likely fit to the organization or role. This differs from more traditional assessment batteries or staged assessment screening processes where candidates are often sifted out based on their performance on single assessments, which can only give limited insight to their suitability for the role. Taking this approach gives an organization much more control over using talent measurement to both design and reflect exactly what top performance looks like within the organization.

Increasing diversity

Finally, blended assessments look to alleviate some of the fairness and group difference issues that are found in pure cognitive ability tests. Measures of general mental ability (GMA) continue to have the strongest operational validity (Schmidt, 2016), however they also demonstrate reduced diversity of demographic groups in their outcomes. Blended assessments help to maintain the high operational validity found in GMA tests, while increasing diversity through the use of tests such as situational judgment tests. This increases the fairness of the test while keeping it much shorter than a battery of tests would allow.



What to include

To get the most out of your blended assessment, we would typically suggest a combination of situational judgment questions and cognitive ability questions. There may also be utility in including personality and/or motivational questions, however we only recommend these as part of the blended assessment if supported by organization-specific validity data.

It is critical that candidates receive some form of feedback on their assessment. Recent data from The Talent Board (2017) found that lack of feedback during the selection process had significant negative impacts on candidate's overall satisfaction with the process, and recent research undertaken by Talogy regarding the graduate experience in the UK found that nearly 80% of graduates considered receiving feedback to be "important" or "very important". With this in mind, we recommend that feedback on the blended assessment results is given to all candidates. One of the advantages of blended assessment is being able to provide a single report for the assessment which outlines the overall likely fit to the role. This avoids the need for multiple assessment reports which would then need to be interpreted separately.

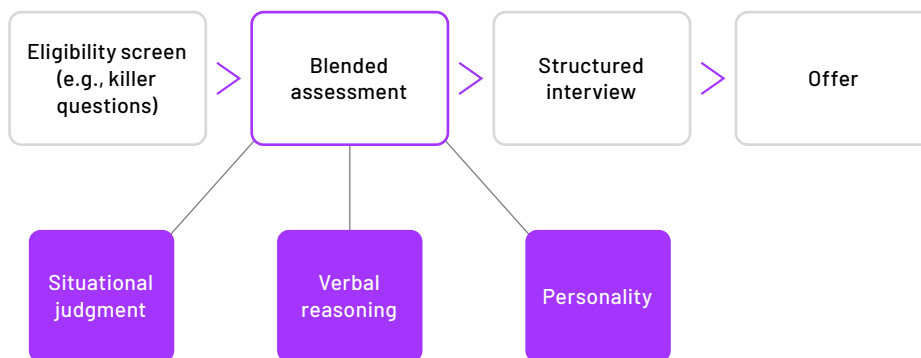


When to use blended assessments

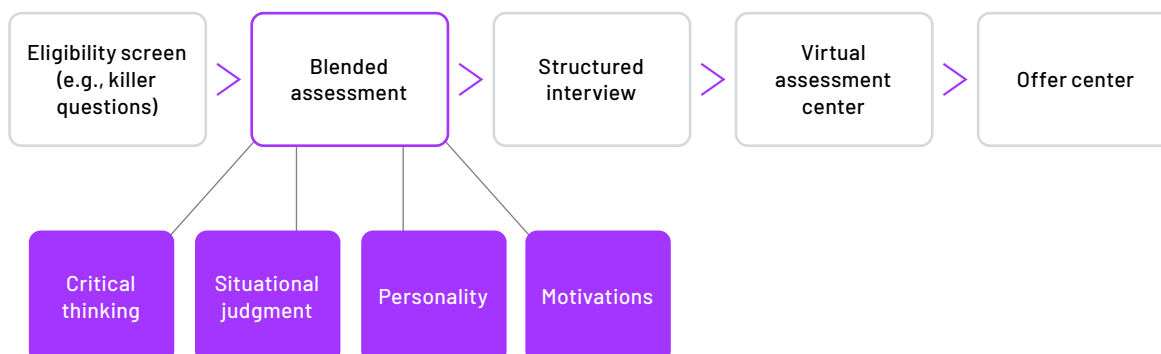
We recommend that blended assessments are used only in early stages of the selection process as a shorter, fairer and more engaging alternative to traditional test batteries. This means that they will be most useful in high-volume recruitment, where large numbers of candidates need to be reduced. For final selection decisions, we recommend the use of face to face assessments, either in the format of a structured interview or an assessment center depending on the complexity of the role. The flow charts on the right show example selection processes for two roles – call center staff and graduate training programs.

Using blended assessments early in the selection process ensures that candidates are demonstrating potential for the role in terms of their fit (e.g. in personality terms and/or motivations and judgments) and their cognitive ability. This means that the later stages of the process, which require greater investment from the organization, can focus on candidate behaviors specific to the role in question, and provide them with a realistic job preview; thereby significantly increasing the likelihood of making the best hiring decision.

Call Center



Graduate



A smart next generation approach to volume sifting

Talogy have recently undertaken an extensive redesign of an initial assessment process for a large public-sector body. The organization was initially using a single measure, and was running into several problems, including being unable to assess candidates on certain constructs, as well as much lower instances of diversity hiring than was expected. However, the organization was concerned that an extended assessment process would lead to a reduction in applications, or a worse candidate experience.

Evaluating the situation, we recommended the inclusion of multiple assessment types, delivered in a single assessment. This included a personality measure, designed to measure the more preference focused constructs required and increase diversity in the hiring outcomes of the assessment. Through our occupational psychology expertise combined with having extensive assessment/test types, we were able to create a technology-led solution that delivered a true blended assessment.

Today, the blended assessment has been administered over 120,000 times, and early evaluation of the impact of using the process has shown massive increases in diversity, with far lower group differences reported for the blended assessment compared to the more traditional method.



Summary

In summary, the following are key in terms of defining blended assessments:

- **Online, automated** and **low-touch** alternative to traditional test batteries
- Can include a **mixture of cognitive, personality, motivation** and **judgment based** questions
- Best used **in early stage sifting** for **high volume recruitment**

Talogy recommends the use of blended assessments to address several common issues found in organizations today, most notably for those finding concerns regarding diversity and candidate experience, but also for those looking to add more assessments without affecting the length of their testing processes.

When used in the correct way, blended assessments can improve the candidate experience and predictive power of the selection process, increasing the likelihood of hiring high performing candidates who are motivated to work for the organization in question.

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