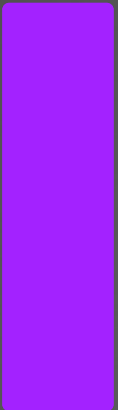
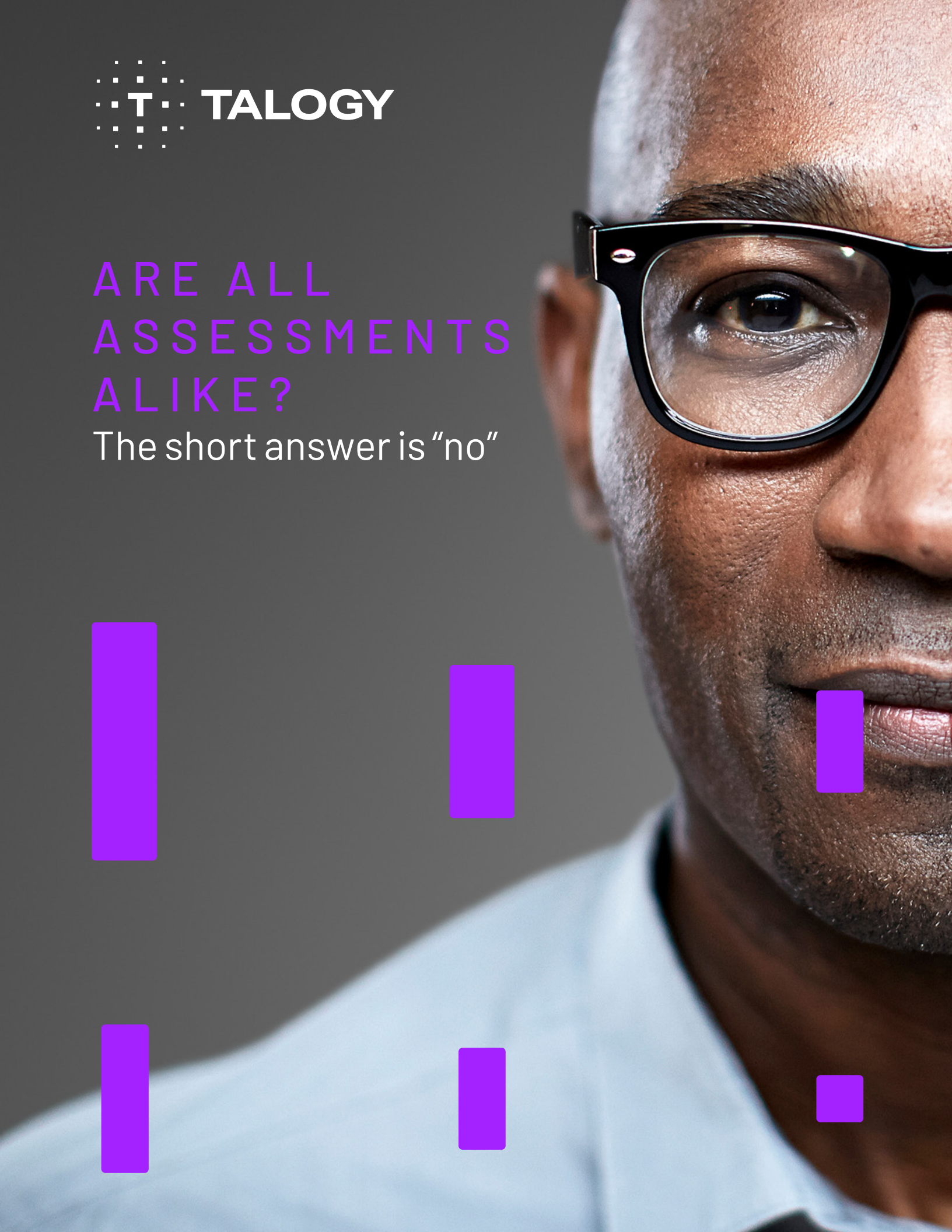




ARE ALL ASSESSMENTS ALIKE?

The short answer is "no"



Introduction

Are all assessments alike? The short answer is a resounding NO. There are many kinds of assessment tools available for use. The right assessments can greatly increase the accuracy and efficiency of your hiring decisions but finding the right assessments can be a challenge of its own. This document will give you a brief description of the different kinds of assessment tools that are available to you and provide some tips on how to choose the one(s) that works best for you.

Assessment types

Structured interviews

You may not think of an interview as an assessment, but it is if you are asking specific competency-related questions and evaluating the responses with ratings. The most accurate and effective interviews are structured, meaning that the same questions that are focused on job-related competencies are posed to all candidates. The most effective types of interview questions ask candidates about specific examples of their past behaviors which exhibit the level of proficiency the candidates have on a particular competency. For example: Tell me about a time when you had to give constructive feedback to an employee.

Biographical data

Past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior. Gathering information and asking questions about past experiences can be done through the use of biographical data questions. These questions can be included in an application or an online assessment. For example: How many times have you been terminated from a previous employer in the last five years?

Personality inventories

Underlying personality traits and characteristics have been shown to be predictive of job performance across jobs and industries. Typically, personality is measured by presenting a series of personal belief statements to candidates and asking them to rate their degree of agreement. These items measure one's feelings, interests, and beliefs and use that information to draw conclusions about certain competencies. For example: Please rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statement. I enjoy being the leader of a group.



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Situational judgment

In addition to knowing what candidates have done and how they think and feel, situational judgment items tell you what they would do in certain situations. These assessments present hypothetical scenarios in work settings to candidates and ask them to rate the effectiveness of different responses in handling the given situation. For example: You are the leader of a group and one of your employees blatantly ignores a safety policy. How would you rate the effectiveness of the following response? Option (A) Ask your employee to come to your office for a direct conversation about the violation.

Simulations

Many candidates have not held a job similar to the one for which they are applying. Simulations allow employers to see how candidates would perform on a similar task in a similar environment to which they would be working. Simulations can take many forms such as role playing and in-basket exercises. Some manufacturing organizations may have actual production exercises that require a candidate to demonstrate similar physical work or complete computerized simulations that mirror the process monitoring that would be part of the job.

Cognitive ability

These assessments measure one's intelligence and ability to learn. How smart someone is has been shown to be highly related to job performance. However, given that cognitive ability measures show moderate to strong adverse impact, it is important to build an assessment system that uses more than just a cognitive ability test.

Motivational fit

Most assessments focus on candidates' ability to do the job. After finding out if candidates CAN do the job, it is important to look at if they WANT to do the job. Motivational fit questions look at the job characteristics as compared to the candidate's desired job and work environment. A mismatch can lead to turnover and absenteeism, which are very costly for agencies. An example question is: What was your favorite job and why?

Technical knowledge

These assessments focus on the specific knowledge that candidates need to know to perform the job. For example, an electrician must have a certain level of electrical knowledge.



Checklist for the different assessment types

	Resume screen	Phone interview	Online battery	Structured interview
Biographical data	✓			
Motivational fit	✓	✓		✓
Past behavior interview questions		✓		✓
Personality			✓	
Situational judgement			✓	
Cognitive ability			✓	
Simulation role play		✓		✓
Simulation in-basket			✓	

Tips

Use multiple assessments. An effective and efficient hiring funnel will have multiple steps and will use well-developed assessment tools at each step. For example, a standard hiring funnel for hiring a leader/manager might include a resume screen, a structured phone interview, an online assessment battery, and a final structured interview. The table shows how these four steps actually use eight different types of assessments. By doing so, you increase the accuracy, efficiency, and utility of your assessment process.

Match the competency or skill to the assessment. The most accurate and appropriate assessment depends on what you are trying to measure. Each assessment type has its own strengths and weaknesses. You wouldn't want to use a personality assessment to measure presentation skills, for example. If that skill is important, a simulation would be more appropriate.

Be efficient. Place assessments in your hiring funnel where they can add the most value. The most comprehensive assessments should be placed farther down the funnel where you have fewer candidates. However, if you have very high volume at the top of the funnel, find a shorter assessment that can help screen out many of the less qualified candidates.

Use pre-employment assessments. Make sure you use assessments that were developed for selection. Many assessments available were meant for another purpose – usually clinical or informational. You want to find an assessment that is designed for employee selection purposes and has clear information about validity and reliability. Be wary of assessments that claim to be one size fits all or provide a category or 'label.' Those types of assessments were not developed for pre-employment testing.

Be consistent & relevant. Whatever assessments you use, use them consistently. Establish standards and apply them to every candidate the same way. Make sure the assessments and their measurements are relevant to the target position. Just because an assessment contains a measurement does not mean that you have to use it in your decision making – do not use it if it is not important to success on the job.

AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT HIRING FUNNEL WILL USE WELL-DEVELOPED ASSESSMENT TOOLS AT EACH STEP



Conclusion

In sum, no – not all assessments are alike. If you have difficulty sifting through all of your options, call in assessment experts who can show you the best solution for you and your target position.

