

## Media Release

### Assessing your Career

*Grey\_Consulting Guides Candidates through the Assessment Process*

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Assessments play a vital role in the interview and screening process. In fact, more and more Employers are using assessments to determine a Candidate's ability to do a job successfully and professionally. Failure to recognise the importance of assessments together with neglecting to prepare, will not only place a Candidate at a disadvantage, but may also affect their chances of getting the job.

Carroll-Anne Pollock, Managing Executive of Grey\_Consulting, South Africa's leading accounting, finance and risk recruitment consultancy, says "The importance of assessments is often overlooked as Candidates tend to focus more on the interview itself. This however can prove to be detrimental as many Employers make their final placement decision based on the results of the assessments as well as how the Candidate fared in the interview."

Pollock explains that there are a number of assessments currently being used by Employers including; ability assessments, aptitude assessments, personality assessments, assessment centres and computer assessments.

A typical assessment session lasts two to three hours on average. These assessments are developed by esteemed professionals and have been scientifically proven to be valid and reliable. They are not biased against any group or person and can be applied fairly to all prospective employees.

Candidates often fall into the trap of being ill-prepared for assessments and lack of confidence, not lack of knowledge, often results in the them being unsuccessful in the job seeking process. Pollock believes that by successfully guiding Candidates through the assessment process and educating them on the types of assessments they may encounter will further their chances of getting that all-important job!

The following illustrates the different types of assessments on the market as well as a few guidelines and tips on how Candidates can prepare for them.

**Ability Assessments:** Ability assessments are used to determine both a Candidate's logical and verbal reasoning. Ability tests focus on a person's potential to learn, thus an ability assessment partially relies on what has been learnt in the past. The focus of this type of test is to determine what a person can achieve in the future. Some examples of ability tests are: Verbal Reasoning Tests (assess how well a Candidate can measure verbal logic), Numerical Reasoning Tests (presenting facts and figures in statistical tables), Diagrammatic Reasoning Tests (measures

logical or symbolic reasoning), Information Technology Tests, Critical Reasoning Tests, Advanced Managerial Tests, Management and Graduate Bank Tests and Cognitive Tests (focus is on preferred methods of problem-solving and potential for development).

**Aptitude Assessments:** Aptitude and ability assessments go hand-in-hand. Ability assessments are more focused on the general, while aptitude assessments are based on the function of ability.

**Personality Assessments:** Personality is commonly viewed as the relatively stable and enduring aspects of an individual, which distinguishes one person from another - allowing a comparison between individuals. Personality tests look at the following; relationships between people, communication styles, leadership styles, attitude towards change and creativity.

These tests are commonly used to measure a person's personal attributes to determine whether or not they would suit a particular work environment and position. Examples of personality questionnaires are; Occupational Personality Tests (a person's preferred behaviour style), Occupational Personality Profiles (factor-based on a person's behavioural preferences) and Customer Contact Styles Questionnaire (a person's preferences in terms of contact with customers).

**Assessment Centres:** Assessment centres are commonly seen as a process consisting of a number of exercises or simulations that have been designed to replicate the tasks and demands of the job for which a Candidate is applying for. Assessment centres consist of a number of individual and / or group assessments. These assessments are used to determine if the Candidate has the requirements for the position. Thus, these assessments are used to measure only the intrinsic requirements of a position. They are competency-based. Most assessment centres include an interview.

Assessments normally consist of the following:

- ④ **Group Discussions:** These are small group discussions with a time limit of 30 minutes. The aim is to determine a person's competencies, such as self-confidence, drive, and influence. They are task-based.
- ④ **Social Events:** These events are informal because assessors are looking for social skills, interpersonal interaction and level of comfort within individuals.
- ④ **Role-play:** These tests are related to the type of position a Candidate is applying for. They are used to determine how the Candidate copes with conflict. They are also used to assess a Candidate's decision-making skills in stressful situations and his/her self-confidence.
- ④ **Case-studies:** This type of test measures a Candidate's problem-solving abilities and experience. The Candidate is presented with a lot of information that is relevant to the job, and he/she must determine what course of action to take.

- ④ **Presentations:** This is used in fairly-high profile positions whereby a person will be regularly required to make presentations.
- ④ **In-tray exercise:** These tests have been developed to simulate a typical work situation. It commonly involves suggesting solutions to problems and organising documentation.

**Computer Assessments:** It is important to remember that an Employer may also test a Candidate on his/ her computer-skills. The aim of these tests is to ensure the Candidate is knowledgeable about specific computer programmes that are required for a position. These tests enable the Employer to determine whether or not the Candidate needs computer-skills training, and how much training will be required.

Common areas that may be tested are:

- ④ **Microsoft Excel:** The assessment may cover things like how to use AutoSum, using the Average Function, Insert Comments, Create a Formula, Insert/ delete a Worksheet, Entering Labels and Values, Entering Formulas, Copying Formulas, Navigate a Worksheet, Delete Rows and Columns etc.
- ④ **Microsoft Word:** The assessment may cover things like how to use Track Revisions, Insert a Picture, Add a Page Break, View a Document, Find and Replace Text, Change Font Type and Styles, Bold, underline and Italicise Text, Create a Table, Create a Template, Change Margins, Number Pages etcetera.
- ④ **Microsoft PowerPoint:** The assessment may cover things like how to Open a Presentation, Deliver a Presentation, Save Presentations, Edit Slide Text, Insert New Slides, Create Headers and Footers, Modify Slide Layout, Rearrange Outlines etcetera.
- ④ **Microsoft Outlook:** The assessment may cover things like how to use Out of Office Assistance, Create and Send a Message, Create a Rule by Example, Message Options, Find a Message, Create a Task, View the Calendar, Schedule Appointments etcetera.
- ④ **Pastel Invoicing:** The assessment may cover things like how to Create Invoices, Customers and Items, Manage Customer Invoices, Payments, Credit Notes and Printing of Statements, Reporting on Customer's Outstanding Amounts, Reporting on which Items are Selling the most, Emailing Invoices and Statements to Customers, Keeping Track of Sales etcetera.
- ④ **Pastel Partner Accounting Software:** The assessment may cover things like how to use Bank Manager, Bill of Materials, Point-of-Sales, Receipting, Serial Number Tracking, Time and Billing, Fixed Assets, Cash Manager etcetera.
- ④ **Pastel Evolution:** Account Consolidations, Annuity Billing, Bank Statements, Bill of Materials Credit Risk Management, Information Alerts, Job Costing , Pricing Matrix, Procurement, Resolve (CRM), Bookkeeping (Debtors and Creditors) and Recons etcetera.

Grey\_Consulting offers the following tips to Candidates on how to prepare for an assessment session:

- ① It is important to **have a clear head** so a good night's rest is vital
- ① Ask the assessor about the **nature of the test**, such as what the test/s will focus on, will there be an interview and will the test be timed?
- ① If you will be doing computer assessments, take the time a few days before to **brush up on your skills**, particularly if you don't work on a particular computer programme on a daily basis.
- ① Remember there are no right answers in a personality assessment, **don't dwell on your answers**; write the first answer that comes to mind.
- ① If possible, **introduce yourself to** the person who will be interpreting your results. This will help ease your anxiety and will allow you to ask questions about the objective of the exercise.
- ① Pay close attention to the test instructions and do not be afraid to **ask questions** if you are unsure.
- ① Take your time and **do not rush**.
- ① You are legally entitled to a **feedback** discussion of your results.

"The job seeking process is a lengthy one, starting with a killer CV and ending in placement. However en route to final success are a number of challenges including; screening, interviews and assessments. Being well-equipped and prepared for each of these steps will not only give you the confidence required to meet each of them head on but also, will help you acquire your dream job " concludes Pollock.

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## **About Grey\_Consulting**

Having successfully sourced, selected and placed thousands of professional Financial and Risk management Candidates over the past 26 years, Grey\_Consulting has earned its reputation as a leader in specialist Accounting, Financial and Risk Assurance recruitment. Technological advancements together with the inception of globalisation in the last two decades has seen their Clients' Staffing needs change and evolve and with them, their specialist Talent Solutions. However two things have never faltered; their commitment to offering superior service to both Clients and Candidates alike and their promise to build relationships based on ethical principles, trust, quality and excellence. Their experience and expertise in Accounting, Financial and Risk Assurance recruitment, across all industry sectors, combined with the ability to attract Top Talent means that Grey\_Consulting is able to provide Clients' with a world class workforce whilst simultaneously placing qualified professionals with world class companies.

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