

HOW PSYCHOMETRIC ASSESSMENTS ENHANCE MINING EXECUTIVE SEARCH

BY ANNELIZE LOMBARD, HEAD OF RESEARCH — SITE

For 25 years, I have trained in and worked with psychometrics, spending the last 15 years applying them within mining executive search. The question of whether psychometrics are accurate or even necessary has always been debated. Through thousands of conversations with candidates and clients, I have heard many reasons why some believe they add little value.

Let's look at each of these 'reasons':

REASONS	CULTURAL BIAS:	CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE:	MANIPULATING THE RESULT:	DOESN'T REFLECT JOB ABILITY:
PERCEPTION	Assessment tools may be culturally biased, disadvantaging candidates from different backgrounds.	Assessments are stressful and create a negative experience for candidates.	Candidates can 'game' the system by answering how they think the employer wants them to.	Personality or behavioural assessments don't show if someone can actually do the job.
REALITY	Leading providers invest heavily in research to reduce bias. Tools are designed to be culturally neutral, offered in multiple languages, and use universally relevant scenarios. Plus, with globalisation, most professionals are increasingly adaptable to cross-cultural work environments.	While assessments can be nerve-racking, clear communication, supportive framing, and post-assessment feedback can transform them into valuable self-awareness tools that support personal and professional development.	Modern assessments include validity checks that flag inconsistent or manipulated responses. Results become unusable if they're not authentic, which is why proper guidance and feedback are key to ensuring candidates understand the purpose.	They aren't meant to stand alone. These tools should complement other evaluation methods (like experience, skills, and interviews), providing a fuller picture of a candidate's fit and potential.

Having tackled the negatives of psychometrics and assessments, let's flip the script and explore how they can empower mining leadership to make smarter, more informed hiring decisions:

MINING · A HUMAN ENDEAVOUR



THE TRUE PURPOSE OF PSYCHOMETRIC ASSESSMENTS

Psychometrics are designed to measure personality, cognitive functioning, and behavioural attributes in a standardised and objective way. They don't always measure ability but can show preferences and traits that an executive might demonstrate in the role they are interviewing for. These assessments can help guide a hiring decision, in conjunction with other methods, to decide which candidate is the best fit for the role. At a senior mining executive level, most of our candidates are technically qualified for the role. Therefore, understanding how they will fit into the wider mining business and team, and how they manage stress and leadership capabilities, is crucial in ensuring the right hire. They are also useful when working with mining C-suites and boards to develop their leadership skills and team cohesion.

HOW PSYCHOMETRICS TRANSFORM MINING EXECUTIVE TEAMS

Psychometric assessments can assist in understanding each ExCo/board member's communication style, values, and working preferences, which helps reduce conflict and increase synergy. This builds trust and mutual respect, leading to more cohesive and effective ExCo and board-level discussions and decisions.

They can highlight the diversity (or lack thereof) in thinking, problem-solving, and leadership styles within the ExCo team/board. This will enable better role allocation, succession planning, and the strategic recruitment of new board members to balance the team. They can assist in fostering a culture of continuous improvement, normalising feedback and self-development at the highest level of the organisation, which sets the tone for the entire company and models a learning mindset from the top down.



WHAT MAKES PSYCHOMETRICS TRULY EFFECTIVE

To get the most out of psychometric assessments for leadership development and recruitment processes, pairing them with complementary tools and methods that bring the data to life is essential. These methods include:

STRUCTURED, COMPETENCY-BASED INTERVIEWS	TECHNICAL SKILLS ASSESSMENTS
Complement psychometric data by exploring motivations, past behaviours, and cultural fit in depth.	Verify the candidate's domain-specific knowledge and abilities essential for the leadership/technical role (typically done by the client).
REFERENCE CHECKS	BEHAVIOURAL AND COMPETENCY-BASED CRITERIA
Provide external validation of candidate strengths and areas for development.	Use these alongside psychometrics to benchmark candidates against role-specific leadership criteria.

Our aim is to help clients secure leaders who not only meet the role's technical and experiential requirements but also fit seamlessly into the organisational culture and deliver immediate, long-term value. When applied by our specialist team, psychometric insights help inform the future potential of your leadership, enhancing both performance and ROI.

HOW STRATUM USES PSYCHOMETRICS

As part of our integrated search and advisory offering, we apply psychometric assessments to complement our rigorous selection processes. This multifaceted approach ensures robust, evidence-based hiring decisions.

At Stratum, we turn psychometric data into actionable mining leadership insight. Our approach goes beyond testing. We decode the results to fuel smarter decisions, stronger teams, and sharper self-awareness. The outcome? Leaders who lead with purpose, clarity, and impact.



CONCLUSION

When applied correctly, psychometric assessments offer more than just data points. They provide meaningful insight into leadership potential, communication styles, and cultural fit. At Stratum, we use these tools to support more informed, confident decisions that lead to stronger, more cohesive executive teams. In a high-stakes industry, this clarity adds measurable value.

ABOUT ANNELIZE

Annelize has over 25 years of HR and recruitment experience, with the last 15 years in mining.

A specialist in psychometrics, she began her career in management consulting before moving into mining recruitment.

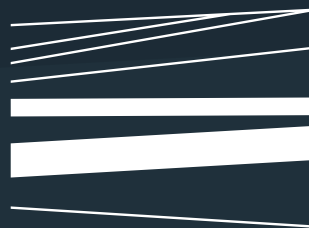
She has since developed deep expertise in senior mining appointments globally, including site-based leadership roles, and has worked with leading EPCM firms.



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STRATUM™



Stratum is the leading specialist mining executive search and advisory boutique firm for the global metals and mining industry.

We have a strong track record and an extensive international reach, supporting clients across the full spectrum of the sector—from site-based leadership and operational roles to C-suite and board-level appointments.