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Why is conscientiousness important in hiring decisions?

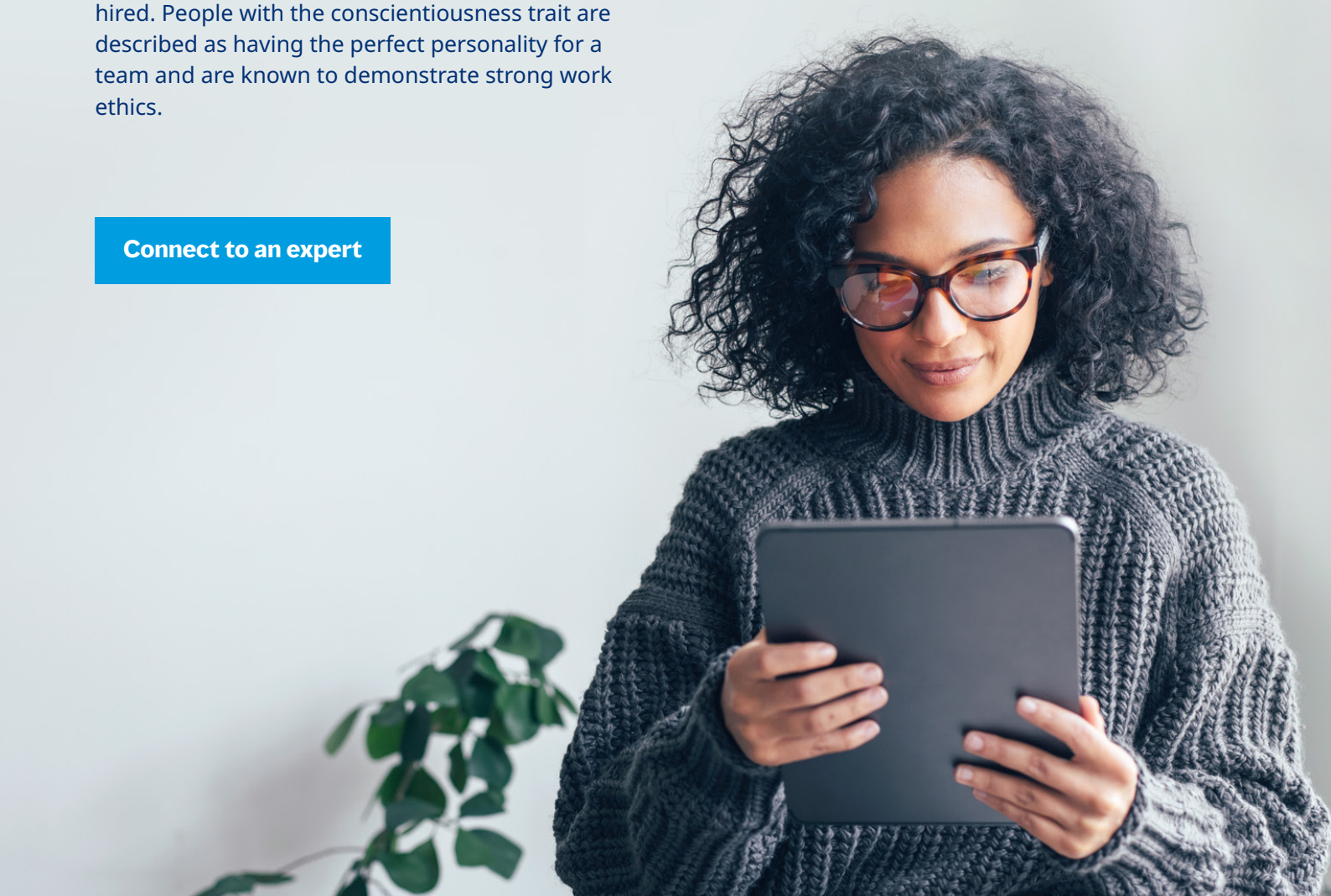


A major challenge that recruiters currently face is effectively screening candidates before interviews. While the focus is on prioritizing traits like agility and adaptability in prospective employees, onetrait that recruiters shouldn't overlook is conscientiousness.

Conscientiousness is one of the big five traits that define personality types. The five big traits are openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Also known as OCEAN, these traits provide employers with insights into a candidate that help predict future career success potential.

Out of the five big traits, conscientiousness gives an overview of how efficient a candidate will be if hired. People with the conscientiousness trait are described as having the perfect personality for a team and are known to demonstrate strong work ethics.

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What is the conscientiousness trait?

Conscientiousness trait is associated with awareness and measures a person's ability to control and regulate their impulses. Individuals who score high on conscientiousness are highly effective workers and are good at planning and organizing. They tend to be more responsible and reliable than others.

Furthermore, conscientiousness comprises three sub-traits, which are achievement, order and dependability. Achievement is a person's drive to succeed in their work. It includes high work standards to accomplish goals. Order refers to their sense of organization and dependability, their sense of duty and adherence to deadlines. Also, conscientious employees are thorough planners as they consider all the risks before deciding on a course of action. In short, conscientious workers are achievement-oriented, well-organized, methodical in approach and accountable.



Why hire conscientious candidates?

A study by Ethan Zell, Department of Psychology, University of North Carolina, shows that conscientiousness is linked with career success. Conscientious people are known as great team players and diligent workers. They are ethical, reliable, punctual and detail-oriented, showing great commitment and purpose. They are known to plan their work and time to the last detail, making them highly effective workers.

Conscientious candidates are also more resilient and good at overcoming hurdles. Furthermore, they are more likely to set achievable professional and personal goals and work towards accomplishing them. Such people make effective employees and allow businesses to focus on targets and goals.

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There are several advantages of hiring conscientious workers, some of which are:

They finish tasks before deadlines:

Conscientious workers focus on their work, and their meticulous planning and rule-driven behavior ensure that all tasks are completed well before the deadline. Such workers also tend to pay attention to more minor details, which is an essential asset in big projects.

They are an asset to the team:

Conscientious employees desire to handle more responsibilities and are more devoted to their work, making them an asset to their team. In addition, such employees understand the importance of tasks and contribute to the successful completion of a project.

They are problem solvers:

Most conscientious employees are problem solvers. Whatever the task is, they try and create a consistent workflow. For instance, a conscientious worker would streamline daily activities such as clearing utility bills, ensuring data is stored safely and creating a system with easy access to bills paid in the past.

Traits of highly conscientious people

Here are some of the most common traits associated with a conscientious person:

They are highly organized:

Conscientious people are highly organized. Right from their workspace to the way they work, everything is structured.

They have a good sense of time management:

Once a conscious person commits to a time and deadline, they stick to it. Their personality is such that they are duty-bound and morally driven to ensure that all the work is completed on time.

They are self-disciplined:

Self-discipline is a trait associated with a conscientious person. Such people strive for excellence in everything they do and have high goals and ambitions.

They are high achievers:

As per research by Huo ML from the University of South Australia, and Jiang Z from the College of Business, Government and Law, Flinders University, people who score high in the conscientious trait are usually high achievers, making them excellent employees.

They stick to the rules:

People scoring high on the conscientiousness personality trait tend to be cautious and reliable. They are less likely to break the rules. They are also more likely to consider all the facts before deciding, be it their personal or professional life.

They can prioritize work effectively:

As a byproduct of self-discipline, conscientious people are known to effectively manage their time and prioritize work accordingly. Sticking to a deadline brings out the best in them.



How Mercer | Mettl can help:

Mettl personality tests are developed keeping in mind the **OCEAN traits.** These traits are used by recruiters and companies to evaluate candidates' and employees' personalities, as they are shown to predict important job-related outcomes.

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The five OCEAN traits are:

Openness to experience:

Also called intellect or imagination, this trait represents a person's willingness to try new things and think outside the box.

Conscientiousness:

This trait measures a person's desire to be careful and diligent regarding their personal and professional life.

Extraversion:

This trait measures a person's desire to seek social connections and interactions as opposed to being alone. Characteristics associated with this trait are an outgoing nature, energetic and confident personality.

Agreeableness:

This trait is how a person interacts with others. The trait is characterized by kindness, tactfulness and loyalty.

Neuroticism:

This trait measures a person's tendency towards negative personality traits, emotional instability as well as self-destructive thinking.



Additionally, Mercer | Mettl experts went beyond the established mode of the big five personality traits and have developed 26 scales or facet-like constructs.

These scales form the building block of Mercer | Mettl's assessments.

The personality assessment consists of 80 items across the OCEAN traits, assessed using the 5-Point Likert Scale.

The assessment is constructed in a way that allows recruiters to customize its configuration and scoring to fit their needs and provide reports that facilitate smart hiring decisions. The standard reports generated show scores of a candidate across eight critical and 17 sub-competencies. Also, the assessment can be mapped to any job role using the Mercer | Mettl Competency Framework (MCF) or to any company-specific framework.

Some of the reasons to use Mercer | Mettl are:



Time-saving:

Mercer | Mettl's assessment platform is accessible from anywhere, anytime. It provides real-time data with detailed insights into a candidate's performance.



Customized as per needs:

Questions, time, findings, almost everything can be customized as per the needs of the organization.



Easy-to-use:

The dashboard is easy-to-use and understand, and no extra training is needed to create assessments.



Red flag alerts:

AI-backed proctoring ensures monitoring and flags any unethical activity.

Conclusion

Conscientiousness trait is commonly associated with awareness. Conscientious employees are well-organized and diligent. Knowing how conscientious a candidate is in the workplace can give recruiters a clear advantage in creating a workforce that suits the business goals.

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About us

At Mercer | Mettl, our mission is to enable organizations to make better people decisions across two key areas: acquisition and development. Since our inception in 2010, we have partnered with more than 4,000 corporates, 31 sector skills councils/government departments and 15+ educational institutions across more than 90 countries.

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