

# BestWork Guide: Coachability

# Introduction

Introducing the **BestWork Guides**, a series of PDF guides to give you the information you need to be a DATA master. We want to make it easier to understand when and how to use our specific reports and programs.

Over the past ten years, we have been good at creating solutions that have helped many employers. What we have lacked are the resources and tools to help you best use our services and products.

That is why it is our goal to add these PDF guides to each program by category. We will also be adding video guides and a business marketplace.

Thank you for your business and continued support.

# Coachability

## What Is It, What Does It Mean & What Do You Do?

### What Is It?

First a bit of history...

Since the use of assessment instruments became a common part of selection processes in the business world, there have always been questions about candidates attempting to respond in the best way possible to present the result which is most likely to get them the job. All quality products incorporate some method of identifying such attempts. The purpose of this paper is to explain a more practical approach that engages candidates in a positive way.

### The Reality About "Gaming a Test"

The simplest assessments consist of a list of adjectives. Candidates select the ones that they wish, and it is usually obvious which adjectives have a more positive correlation to the job. Psychometric science and psychology's understanding of personality traits have moved far beyond this.

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It is quite difficult to “fake” a sophisticated psychometric instrument, and this is especially true with BestWork. This quality begins with the item construction. The job behaviors are narrowly focused, identifying the specific traits or cognitive abilities that drive each behavior. The 6-point Likert scale encourages quick responses which are generally more frank. The items for most scales offer little clues for what a “good” answer might be.

An example of such an item is “I like to take shortcuts.” Agreement with the statement may suggest that the candidate is clever in finding better ways to do things. It may also suggest that the candidate does not follow rules and procedures. Disagreeing with the statement may suggest that the candidate is unimaginative and plodding, or it may be that they simply follow rules and procedures.

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A final point: BestWork provides the opportunity for each participant to gain a clear understanding of their own hard-wired strengths and abilities. It helps them avoid the wrong jobs. It also offers them powerful information that can help them in many areas of life. The presentation of BestWork, the invitation and the instructions reenforce that.

Clients play a major role in communicating this, and it can become an expression of how the company values people.

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## What Does It Mean?

### Possible Performance Implications

The most serious problem with a low score in Coachability is that if the candidate cannot admit weaknesses, there can be a major problem in coaching and dealing with those weaknesses. It is rare to hire perfect employees. Success is found in hiring employees whose strengths fit the jobs and whose weaknesses are acceptable. It is critical however, for those employees to be willing and able to work to improve. A lack of Coachability is an almost impossible barrier to that.

### Possible Implications on the Reliability of the Report

A low score in Coachability also suggests that the candidate may have attempted to present themselves in a favorable manner in other parts of the assessment. From a practical perspective, this is much harder than it appears.

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The BestWork experience questionnaire offers choices of answers, but the relative merit of the answers are rarely obvious. For example, a typical item is “I take control of things.” If a candidate agrees with that statement, is it a positive characteristic or does it mean that they cannot take direction from others? If a candidate disagrees with the statement, is a negative characteristic or does it mean that follow instructions well? Current assessments are quite difficult to fool. It is difficult to shape the results in a particular way, even when someone is familiar with assessments.

That being said, there are two scales that are more susceptible to distortion than the others: Sensitivity and Details. The reason for this is that in the Western world, being calm under pressure and handling stress are seen as universally desirable. Similarly, attention to details and organization is generally viewed as positive. Of course, BestWork studies have shown that in many jobs, neither calmness nor detailed organization is desirable, and in some jobs, are not acceptable. Still, job candidates that trigger the Coachability scale may attempt to appear more calm or more organized than they actually are.

# Coachability

## What Do You Do? – Hiring Decisions

### **1. Is the candidate's resumé strong? Is their level of experience what you need?**

If you interviewed them, was the interview outstanding? If the answers to these questions are not “Yes”, then the low Coachability score is another indication that you should seek a more satisfactory candidate without considering the other BestWork DATA elements.

### **2. Are the BestWork cognitive scores acceptable?**

The cognitive score and the behavioral descriptions related to General Reasoning are not affected by Coachability. If that score or those job behavior descriptions are not acceptable, the personality scores may not be relevant. You should seek a more satisfactory candidate.

### **3. Are the BestWork DATA scores and job behavior descriptions satisfactory, regardless of the Coachability effect?**

Looking at the picture which the candidate has painted of their job behavior, is it what you are looking for in that position? If there was no Coachability scale, are they a candidate you would hire? If the answer is not “Yes”, you should seek a more satisfactory candidate.

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4. Remember that one of the first things the Company asked this candidate to do was to answer this assessment honestly and frankly. They did not do that. That is fact. It is doubtful that such a characteristic will serve the company well in any position. Be completely sure that everything else is quite satisfactory before making a hiring decision. Evaluating other candidates to provide alternative choices is recommended.

5. The most important fact demonstrated by a low Coachability score is that the candidate does not acknowledge their weaknesses. For whatever reason, they either do not admit to having any weaknesses or they are concealing them. It is impossible to coach anyone effectively who does that. Their defensiveness precludes positive discussions and generally leads to a frustrating situation for their manager and co-workers. It is strongly recommended that if all other factors were positive and satisfactory, the candidate should be interviewed with the questions which the BestWork system provides for Coachability.

- **When you answered the questions in the assessment, you admitted to almost no weaknesses. Tell me about that.**
- **Give me an example from your previous experience of when another person was able to coach you effectively.**
- **Thinking about your past work experience, tell me about weaknesses that you have dealt with during that time.**

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If the candidate speaks openly and freely about their weaknesses in response to these questions, the low Coachability score was most likely caused by nervousness and anxiety about the selection process in general coupled with the intensity of their desire for the job. If, on the other hand, they are still guarded or reluctant to discuss specific weaknesses, it is a good idea to consider other candidates.

## **What Do You Do? – Existing Employees**

On average, about 10% of incumbent employees will have a low Coachability score. This can be reduced by how the BestWork experience is presented. Positively explaining how it will benefit the employees personally is the key to this.

One of the other factors that influence this score is the culture of the company. If the company has a highly competitive culture with executives effectively competing with each other, no one wants to show weaknesses of any kind. This attitude is then reflected with low Coachability scores. Cultures that foster mutual support and teamwork often have no incidents of low Coachability.

**NOTE: Coachability only refers to the Personality Section of the assessment. The cognitive section is not affected in any way.**

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## How to Minimize the Incidence of Low Coachability

The most important step in minimizing low Coachability scores is to present BestWork as a positive experience, designed to help both the company and the individual determine the best way to use their talents and abilities.

Some ways of doing this are:

- Use the Candidate and Employee letters provided by BestWork to introduce the assessment. The introduction can be edited for your purposes, but use the basic wording which has been crafted through the experience of hundreds BestWork clients and is proven to work well for most people.
- Do not joke about the process. Candidates and employees may laugh but they will not really be put at ease. A positive and professional approach will do this much better.
- Echo the words from the directions by saying that the best results come from frank and honest answers. The first response is usually the most accurate. There are no trick questions. There are no bad results. Everyone is in search of the same thing, a good fit for the job

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- Point out that BestWork contains a mechanism that detects attempts to distort or exaggerate the answers. Emphasize that accurate answers are best for everyone.
- BestWork includes a timed cognitive test. It is important to emphasize the fact that it is rare for anyone to actually finish the timed section. Many people are not accustomed to timed tests, and their surprise at not completing that part can make them anxious.
- It is important to share some results with the participants. All participants receive their own Job Strengths Report, a positive description of their strengths and abilities. This report is not connected with any specific job, and it does not compromise the content of any other BestWork reports.

It does give the participants a positive and affirming feeling as a part of the experience, which encourages them to share this positive feeling with others who have not yet completed the survey. When people are open with their results, others know how to communicate more effectively, work more collaboratively and simply understand each person's unique way of doing things.

# Coachability

Behavioral information is a critical element in selecting the right person for the right job, but only if that information is reliable.

The **Coachability** feature in BestWork is there to ensure that reliability. BestWork offers accurate measures of human performance and capabilities that translate directly into job behaviors and job performance. This is beneficial to both the employer and the employee.

# Thank you.

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**We thank  
you for your  
continued  
support in  
our efforts to  
change the  
world with  
DATA.**

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## Connect with us

### BestWork DATA

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