

eSkill



What You Need to Know

When Evaluating Skills Assessment Companies

A Buyer's Guide to Skills Testing

Employees are the backbone of any company. Since a solid workforce is key to success no matter the industry, it's no surprise that companies place so much emphasis on finding the best talent out there. Yet finding the best candidates for a job isn't easy. Effective recruiting requires many different tactics, among which is pre-employment skills assessment.

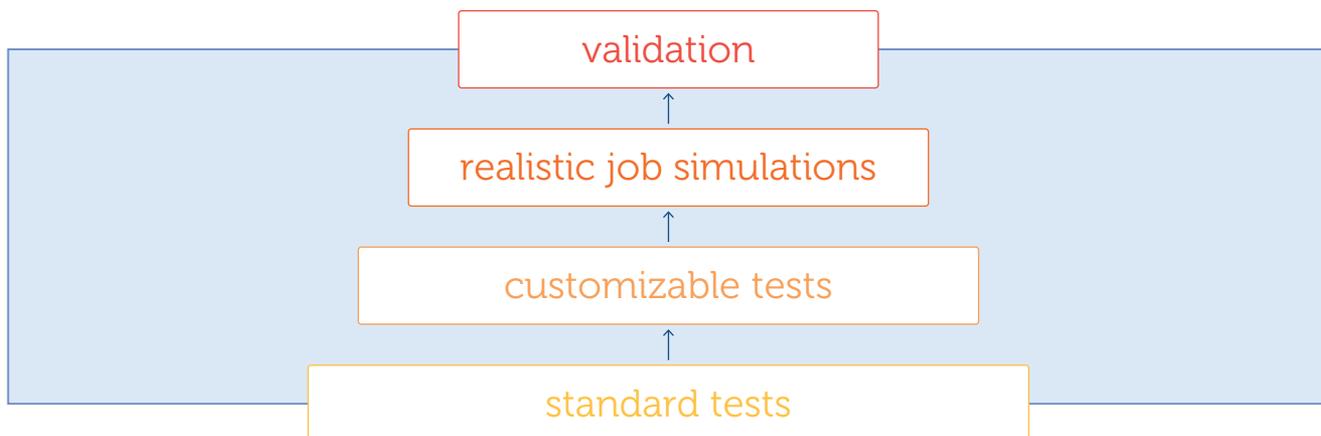
Resumes and interviews are important first steps in recruitment, but skill assessments provide extra information that is very useful when it comes time to make a hiring decision. Not only can a well-designed skills test clearly reveal actual vs. self-stated skills, but offering the same relevant test to every candidate strengthens your company's legal protections. When every candidate takes the same objective skills test, you have scientific data based on skills to reference, not related to subjective attributes of the candidates.

After posting a job, most companies receive dozens, if not hundreds, of resumes. Sorting through so many candidates is difficult, especially when what is written on paper may not always be accurate. Being able to cross-reference all of those resumes with skills assessment test results that show exactly which candidates have the right skills can help you easily narrow down the candidate pool and find the perfect person for the job.

It's easy to see how skills assessment can help recruiters and hiring managers find top candidates, and thus help companies succeed with a thriving workforce. Yet many companies don't use skills assessment. Not knowing where to start or what to look for are some of the roadblocks to incorporating skills assessment into the recruitment process. Below is a guide to what companies need to know when evaluating skills assessment companies.

I What should a skills assessment company provide?

1. Products and services



The most basic service a skills assessment company should provide is **standard tests**. This is the starting point for introducing skills assessment to a recruitment process. Skills assessment companies should have an extensive subject library of standard tests covering both soft skills, like multitasking and communication, and hard skills, like accounting principles and web development. Standard, subject-based tests offer a **quick solution for testing specific skills**. **Job-based standard tests** are more well-rounded to include the different sets of skills needed for a specific job. A skills assessment provider should offer both types of tests. Standard tests should come in a range of difficulty levels, from beginner to advanced.

Some skills assessment companies go a step further by offering **customizable tests**. Companies that need to find candidates for unique positions can benefit from making their own tests. Through this option, recruiters can choose questions from different subjects and assign a specific difficulty level to their tests.



Through a **web-based editor**, skills assessment providers offer the option to create or convert content that is specific to each job posting, time and again. This helps recruiters custom-make each test as needed to create the perfect assessment tool.

Another helpful service that some skills assessment companies offer are **realistic job simulations**. Through custom simulations, recruiters can recreate the exact working environment tools candidates will face on the job to evaluate their future performance.



Simulations with custom questions that replicate day-to-day activities provide realistic and quantifiable information on a candidate's skill set and ability to perform. This helps companies find the candidates who will succeed on the job before hiring them.



Finally, **validation** is an essential service that skills assessment companies should provide. A solid statistical validation process is critical when using skills assessment to make hiring decisions.



First, validation ensures compliance in that all tests provided are free of bias. It is the only way to understand compliance-related risks associated with assessment testing.



Second, it demonstrates the effectiveness of the assessment tests by predicting their value to your company.

Validation services offered should include the following: statistical validation studies, audits of testing systems, job analyses, business impact reporting, and the identification of associated risks.

2. Integrations

Incorporating any new element into an existing system can be daunting. When considering whether to include skills assessment as part of their recruiting plan, most companies are afraid of how the change will affect the process.



Will skills assessment mean more work for hiring managers? How will skills assessment work within the recruitment process? Will there be a way to integrate skills assessment seamlessly into the existing process?

Skills assessment companies should offer ways to effectively and easily integrate their services into your company's recruitment practices, including existing **applicant databases, applicant tracking systems (ATS), or learning management systems (LMS)**. The integration with such in-house tools can flow in two ways:

In a one-way system

Your hiring manager sends candidates a link that takes them to the skills assessment provider's website, where they'll take the test and the results will be sent back to the hiring manager.

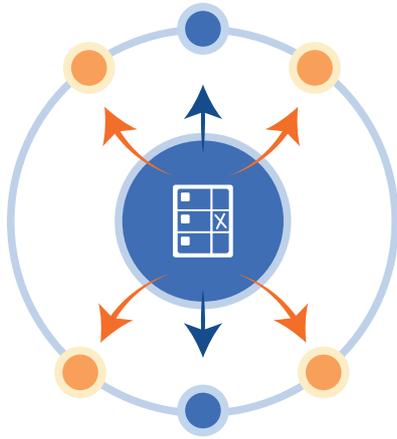
In a two-way system

Candidates can access the tests by clicking directly on a link on your company's website or intranet. The results are then seamlessly integrated with your company's applicant database and candidates are ranked according to their skill levels.

By integrating skill assessments with existing applicant tracking software (ATS), companies can save time and money in their recruitment process. For instance, integrating skills assessment with an ATS cloud-based system like **Oracle Taleo Recruit** can help companies achieve faster results as they screen applicants.

This type of integration leads to better control over job postings, applications, and pre-screening options and results. With customizable looks and co-branding, automated test links for applicants, and a candidate selection workflow, this type of integration allows companies to flawlessly fit skills assessment to their recruiting strategies and company goals.

Skill assessments can also be integrated with talent management platforms like **iCIMS**, a leading provider of Software-as-a-Service talent acquisition solutions.



Companies can easily customize skills assessment tests and send the corresponding test directly to each candidate through a centralized platform.

✓ COMPLETE ACCESS

Hiring managers have complete access to every candidate's testing history, and can manage candidates and tests as part of an entirely automated testing process.

✓ HOW & WHEN

This integration allows hiring managers to choose how and when each applicant will take a skills assessment test in the recruitment process.

✓ COMPARE

Hiring managers can then compare applicant results and choose the one with the highest scores.

3. Technological solutions

•• MOBILE SOLUTIONS

The world of recruiting has been forever transformed by current technology. A company that does not recruit on web and mobile platforms is a company that's missing out on attracting top candidates. Any skill assessments provider should include **mobile solutions** that allow applicants to access and complete

tests from their smart phones. Mobile solutions should also allow hiring managers to access test results wherever they are, any time they want.

••• USER-FRIENDLY INTERFACE

Beyond mobile access, skills assessment companies should also offer a **user-friendly interface** and test results that are easy to follow and rank. Hiring managers have enough on their plates, so a skills assessment tool must make it easy for them to choose the tests they need, customize tests for specialized positions, administer the tests to the corresponding applicants, and track and rank results at the push of a button.

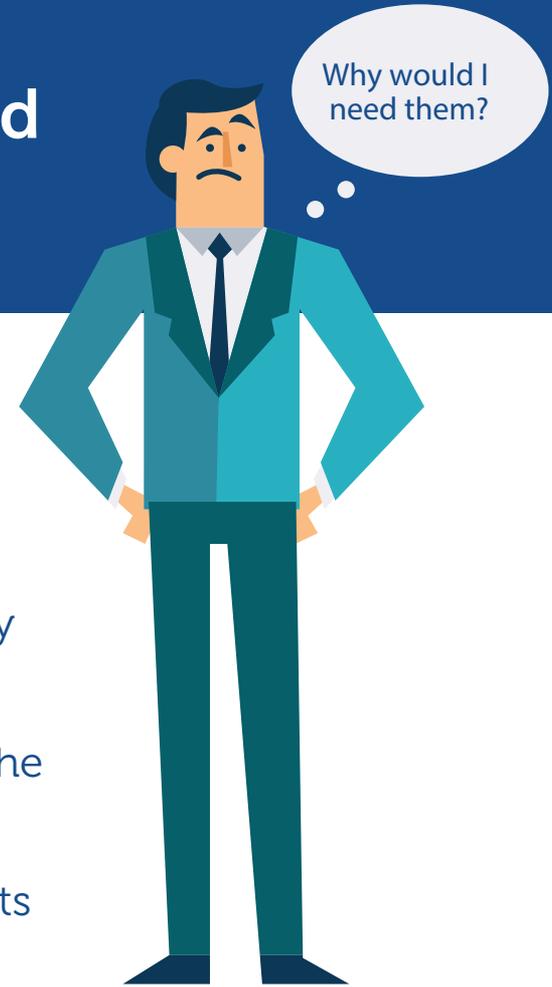
••• ONLINE ASSESSMENTS

If your company isn't quite up to speed with the digital age, some skills assessment providers will offer to **turn paper-based in-house materials into online assessments** that can be easily tracked throughout the recruitment process. Paper tests can be scanned and sent to the skills assessment provider and they will enter all of your proprietary information into your unique testing center. This way, hiring managers can choose from your company's existing tests, browse through new tests, or create their own customized versions that merge questions from existing and new tests.

••• CUSTOM BRANDING

Finally, no integrated skills assessment is complete without **custom branding** that looks and feels like your company. A skills assessment provider should offer you ways to customize the look of its testing platform, such as co-branding with your company logo, matching your company's color scheme, or even a white label option in which only your company logo and colors appear.

II Why do HR departments need skills assessment?



As previously mentioned, skills assessment can help companies hire smarter by testing applicants on the actual skills and abilities they need to succeed on the job. The recruiting process can be streamlined to narrow down the applicants who prove they have the required skills. Here are a few ways that HR departments can greatly benefit from skills assessment:



LEGITIMIZE THE HIRING PROCESS

Skills assessment is a tool that helps HR **legitimize the hiring process**. Through skill assessments, only the candidates who get the highest scores move forward. This helps hiring managers make decisions based on facts, taking out some of the subjectivity of hiring.



PROVE THEIR SKILLS

Skills assessment also helps candidates by allowing them to **prove their skills** beyond what's written on their resumes. Candidates who truly have the skills needed can feel confident they'll likely move forward in the recruitment process.



LEGAL AND MORAL STANDARD OF FAIRNESS

Skill assessments provide a **legal and moral standard of fairness**. Every candidate has the same opportunity to prove him or herself, leveling the job application playing field and allowing recruiters to choose candidates more fairly.



IMPROVE THE RECRUITMENT EXPERIENCE

skills assessment helps **improve the recruitment experience** for applicants. Instead of just sending a resume out into the void, applicants take a skills test to prove their skills. They can see their results and better understand why they were or were not selected to move forward.



REDUCE THE TIME AND COSTS

skills assessment can help **reduce the time and costs** spent on screening and sorting through resumes. Recruiting and hiring takes a long time, but by administering skills tests, companies can quickly narrow down the applicant pool, cutting down the time it takes to review dozens of resumes.



EXPERIENCE WHAT THE JOB IS ACTUALLY LIKE

Skill assessments that include custom job simulations let candidates **experience what the job is actually like**. Applicants have to apply their experience and skills to an actual job situation. This lets hiring managers know which candidates will excel on the job based on the results of simulation testing.



AUTOMATE THE RECRUITING PROCESS

Skill assessments help companies **automate the recruiting process**. By integrating a skills assessment tool with its applicant tracking system, a company can easily keep track of job postings, applicants' testing histories, and test results, all at the push of a button.



REDUCE THE RISK

Skill assessments can **reduce the risk of hiring mistakes and biased hiring decisions**. With clear test results in hand, hiring managers can better select the applicants that demonstrate they have the applied skills for the job.



INCREASE QUALITY OF HIRE

Skill assessments can help **increase Quality of Hire**. Hiring the candidates with test-proven skills can improve a company's workforce, which in turn helps increase productivity and profitability while reducing turnover rates and recruiting costs.

III

Checklist: What should you ask skills assessment companies?

It's clear that skills assessment, when effectively integrated into a recruiting process, can help companies hire smarter and develop a workforce that leads to success. If your company decides to include skill assessments in its recruitment process, you'll need to choose a provider that fits your needs. It's important to know what you want out of a skills assessment vendor and know exactly what they can provide, whether it's customized tests, simulation questions, or co-branding.



Here are a few questions about the services, platforms, and pricing that you should ask when evaluating skills assessment companies. Use this table for each vendor you're evaluating, in order to better compare the features and select the skills assessment company that fits your business needs.

CONTENT AND CREATING TESTS			
QUESTION	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Can the company prove the validity of the questions featured in the tests?			
Have the company's tests ever been legally challenged? If so, what was the outcome?			
Are their tests compatible with mobile devices?			
Can visually impaired people take their tests?			
How large is the content subject library?			
Can the company's tests be customized to assess the multiple requirements of a job?			
Are multiple versions of a test available, such as short and long versions for different stages of candidate screening, or same-length alternative versions for pre-and post-training assessment?			

CONTENT AND CREATING TESTS (CONT.)			
QUESTION	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Can we add our own test questions to an assessment?			
Can we host our own tests on the same service as the company's tests?			
Does the company offer interactive simulation tests? For which subjects?			
Is the content predictive on performance?			

TECHNICAL FEATURES			
QUESTION	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Do simulation tests run natively on current browsers, or do they require test takers to install plug-ins such as Flash or Java?			
What are the technical requirements for taking a test? How the user would access the application?			
Does the company offer customized branding for the test interface?			

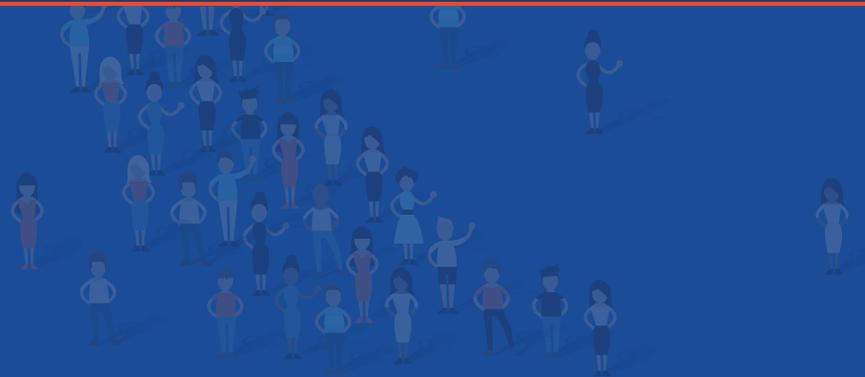
INTEGRATION WITH OTHER HR TOOLS			
QUESTION	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Which Applicant Tracking Systems or other HR systems can the company's tests be integrated with?			
We have an in-house ATS. Can it be integrated with the company's application?			

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SUPPORT			
QUESTION	YES	NO	COMMENTS
What support hours and response times does the company offer by phone, email, and chat?			
Will my team need a lot of training to get used to the skills assessment tool? Can the company provide this training?			

PRICING			
QUESTION	YES	NO	COMMENTS
What are the pricing options, including pay-per-score and unlimited subscription testing plans, with a-la-carte options, if available?			



If using this checklist won't be enough to help you make a decision, download this [RFP template](#) and send it to the vendor(s) you are most interested in. The combination of these two documents can guarantee that you're selecting the right skills assessment company, one that will meet all of your business and recruiting needs.



About eSkill

Founded in 2000 with the aim of providing easily customizable online tests, eSkill Corporation has developed into a global leader in employment-related skills testing.

provides organizations with a Web-based skills testing service. Rather than relying solely on interviews and personal impressions of an applicant's resume, companies can more effectively place qualified and talented individuals into critical jobs using relevant assessments of the required knowledge and skills. Specifically, the eSkill application lets hiring and training managers configure tests from our extensive subject library to match their hiring and training needs, and reduce the risk of hiring failures and discrimination litigation.

eSkill's skills assessments encompass many different industries, including IT, Retail, Call Centers, Sales, Marketing, Healthcare, and many more. While standard tests may be enough to assess the skills required for most of the jobs out there, some positions require special specialized task-based testing. That's why we've created simulations to test important qualities, like reaction times and the ability to make decisions in stressful situations, for a comprehensive assessment.

Contact us to learn why thousands of employers worldwide have picked eSkill to make their hiring process more accurate and efficient.