



TTI SUCCESS INSIGHTS®

# 10 Common Mistakes When Using the DISC Assessment

**The DISC behavioral profile is as popular as it's ever been.**

It has been produced by thousands of companies all over the world and used by millions for numerous purposes. From wanting to know more about an individual's behavior style to finding the right fit for a particular job, and everything in between, DISC has been an important and vital tool. But with anything that is as popular and widespread as DISC, common mistakes and misconceptions arise. **Let's address 10 common mistakes attributed to the DISC assessment.**



# MISTAKE #1: DISC is a complete personality profile

While DISC is commonly perceived as a type of personality test (because it's often incorrectly marketed this way), it's actually a behavioral assessment. Understanding this difference is vital.

DISC explores four traits within our personality, but the term "personality" is an all-encompassing word that goes far beyond the scope of four DISC behavioral traits. Personality is much more than behavior and includes things like values, beliefs, sense of humor, character, ethics, temperament, emotional maturity, thought process and communication style. DISC is not a complete measure of who we are, but simply one aspect of what makes us unique. It describes the "how" we prefer to act and communicate.

**DISC is an extremely valuable tool, but it's not the only tool you need to understand human dynamics.** To understand a person more deeply, other important elements such as values and emotional intelligence help to go deeper than DISC and paint a more thorough picture.



## **MISTAKE #2: All DISC suppliers are offering the same product**

**The DISC theory originally created by William Marston has evolved into many different versions sold around the world; each using different terminology, questionnaires, training methods, and of course, levels of accuracy.**

Many of the major sellers of DISC around the world only offer one product - DISC. This approach is limiting. It is critical to examine multiple angles and dimensions of human performance including behaviors, motivation, competencies, acumen and emotional intelligence. This provides individuals with better understanding of others and a broader method to be more effective in the workplaces.



**MISTAKE #3:  
DISC tells you who  
will be a superstar  
or dud performer**

Probably the most common error made in using the DISC model occurs when someone assumes that a DISC profile will explain whether or not a person will succeed or fail in a job. **DISC only measures common behavioral tendencies — not skills. DISC does not predict job success.**

A person with any type of DISC profile can succeed in any type of profession. It's important to remember DISC is only one part of the total picture and there are many other elements that affect job performance. The only way to accurately determine whether a person is “well suited” (behaviorally speaking, at least) to a job is by objectively and objectively benchmarking it.



**MISTAKE #4:  
Making general  
assumptions based  
solely on primary  
behavioral style**

**Behavioral style is just one of many indicators of a person's potential behavior, but it is only one factor.** For example, some sales people believe it is important for people in their trade to have a high influence score, commonly known in DISC language as a “high I.” The logic is straightforward enough: people with a high influence score like interacting with people; sales/leading is all about interacting with people. Therefore, high I's are built for selling and/or leading.

Many high I's are good at dealing with people — they can be friendly, sociable, warm and enthusiastic — but others aren't. Some high I's can be selfish, shallow, disruptive, unruly, impulsive and noisy. Therefore, not all people with a high influence score behave the same way. The different may be found in an individual's emotional intelligence score.

It's clear, though, that using additional sciences such as motivators, emotional intelligence and others can give us a clearer picture. Motivators are actually far more important to understand in this situation listed above than DISC.

A hand holding a pen points to a bar chart with a red overlay at the bottom. The chart has several horizontal bars in shades of blue, green, and yellow. The red overlay contains the text 'MISTAKE #5: There isn't proof that assessments are accurate.'

## MISTAKE #5: There isn't proof that assessments are accurate.

It all depends on with whom you do business. Are you looking for the cheapest price on the market? If so, chances are that their research is rather limited.

**Solid assessment providers have undergone extensive research to prove validity and reliability.** While many quizzes and tests in the marketplace measure personality and can be more whimsical in nature, quality assessment providers go deeper by unveiling who we are as people and how others perceive us. Measuring dimensions of an individual with quantifiable, objective numbers backed by thorough research are most ideal for making a meaningful difference in an organization.

Make note: despite what is popular in the marketplace, personality can't be scientifically measured. Different dimensions of an individual's behaviors, motivations, skills, emotional intelligences and values, however, can be measured.



## **MISTAKE #6: The results can be manipulated**

**Trying to manipulate the assessment doesn't work.** On the rare occasion that someone does try this — whether intentionally or unintentionally — the data usually tells a story of misrepresentation.

One easy way to illustrate how assessment providers are sound practitioners of social sciences is through an adverse impact study. Studies such as these indicate that some tools on the market are validated and reliable for selection, employee development and retention.

In the end, assessments are incredibly powerful. They have been proven to improve communication skills, develop leadership competencies, formulate new career paths, and understand the best sales strategies.



**MISTAKE #7:  
Taking an  
assessment is  
time consuming**

This is a falsehood. Depending on what assessment a person is taking, time spent answering questions may range from five to ten minutes in length. **You do not need a lengthy test to uncover dramatic insights from within a person, you just need to ask the right questions.** A good assessment can accomplish this and can be finished by the time you finish a cup of coffee.



## **MISTAKE #8: Assessments can be discriminatory**

**When a person takes an assessment, demographic information is not passed along to the company or consultant conducting the assessment.** Only the company who creates the assessment has that information.

Further, the company only uses demographic information for research and statistical purposes. Assessments measure beliefs, thought patterns, and predictive elements but they are not intended to measure physical or genetic attributes such as race, gender, creed, religion, or anything else that can be considered potential for discrimination.



## MISTAKE #9: Assessment results don't change

**Though it's true that a person is who they are, a major life change can produce a significantly altered result.**

A few major life changes can include a birth or death within a family, a near-death experience, an impactful job experience, winning the lottery, losing a job and military experience (especially during combat).

These major life events can definitely impact the way a person thinks about a particular situation and how they react when exposed to certain stimuli.



## **MISTAKE #10: Assessments are too expensive**

You purchase house, car, life and health insurance, right? Why not protect your company by insuring your hiring practices?

**Not only are assessments affordable, their findings are invaluable.** And, when considering the cost of a bad hire, the value of an assessment increases exponentially. Consider the cost of hiring a candidate, putting them through training, waiting for them to learn the job and the culture, only to have them leave before being a productive member of the team. That is an expensive lesson in proper hiring that can be avoided and overcome by proper use of assessments to hire the right candidate the first time.

The more information we can provide about the facts, while correcting misconceptions, the easier it will be for people to understand what important questions to ask when searching for an assessment solutions company.



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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**“Are Workplace Personality Tests Fair?” Wall Street Journal**

[www.wsj.com/articles/are-workplace-personality-tests-fair-1412044257](http://www.wsj.com/articles/are-workplace-personality-tests-fair-1412044257)

**TTI Success Insights Compliance Study**