

Agreeableness

The agreeableness scale measures an individual's tendencies with respect to social harmony and getting along with others.

Those with low agreeableness scores tend to be more skeptical about the motives of others, and are less inclined to be accommodating to other people in order to foster social harmony. **Because such individuals are often better equipped than highly agreeable individuals to make tough, objective decisions, they are generally well suited to positions that require objective, disciplined problem solving; these positions could include managerial positions, judges, lawyers, scientists, and soldiers, and traders. Similarly, a low agreeableness score can also be an asset in a sales or executive position,** because highly cooperative salespeople/executives will often be too willing to accommodate others and therefore not best represent the company's interest in dealings with customers or partners.

Because less agreeable people can at times be uncooperative or even unfriendly, individuals **with low agreeableness are generally NOT well suited to customer service, and can run into problems when working in team-based environments.**

Conscientiousness

The conscientiousness scale measures an individual's tendency with respect to being careful, deliberate, self-disciplined, organized, hard-working, and dependable.

Those with conscientiousness scores in the middle range are generally hard-working, responsible and dependable. Although such individuals tend to be persistent and reliable workers, they can occasionally be disorganized or prone to act somewhat impulsively.

Although conscientiousness has been linked to success at work across all job families, evidence suggests that conscientiousness is more predictive of success for lower-level positions that require careful, deliberate work than it is for leadership and higher-level managerial positions that place a premium on seeing the "big picture."

Extraversion

The extraversion scale reflects an individual's tendency with respect to being gregarious, sociable, energetic, assertive, and comfortable in the company of others.

People who score in this range are generally comfortable in social situations, but can on occasion be reserved and withdrawn. Individuals who score in the middle range for Extraversion do not generally feel intimidated by interacting with others, but will often defer to more outspoken individuals in group settings. **While individuals who score in the middle of this range are generally sociable, they may not be well suited for jobs that require actively initiating social interactions, such as sales and sales-related positions.**

Openness

The openness scale measures the extent to which an individual is imaginative and creative, as opposed to down to earth and conventional.

Individuals who score in the low range on this scale are more concerned with practical issues and concerns than with abstract concepts, and tend to have traditional interests. Such individuals also generally prefer familiar ideas and practices to novel ones, and can usually be described as conventional. They will tend to prefer familiarity over novelty, are disinclined to experiment, and may be conservative and resistant to change. Individuals who score low in openness may be best-suited for jobs that call for individuals who will be detail-oriented and prone to follow the rules, and require a person to remain focused on the practical issues at hand.

Most research shows, however, that across most job types openness is the least predictive of job performance of the Big Five factors: the correlation between an individual's level of openness and subsequent job performance is generally low. It is therefore recommended that the openness scale should generally NOT be used for employee selection purposes; rather, its primary utility is that it can be used to inform training and placement decisions, and to provide further insight into a person's behavioral tendencies.

Stability

The stability/neuroticism scale measures the extent to which an individual is prone to experience negative emotional states, such as anxiety, depression or guilt.

Individuals who score in the middle range on this scale are generally even-tempered and calm, though they may sometimes respond emotionally to events when under stressful conditions. They are generally considered to be composed and are not overly excitable. People who score in the middle range for stability do not generally worry too much about how others perceive them, and are able to accept constructive criticism from others.

Interview Guide

Agreeableness

When a person scores in the low range for a job that would seem to require a high score, sample interview questions might include:

1. How would you handle a situation in which you really did not get along with a co-worker, with whom you had to work closely?
2. Describe a conflict that you have experienced working as part of a team, and how you resolved it.
3. Have you ever grown frustrated or angry with a customer, and how would you deal with a situation in which a customer was being unreasonably demanding?

Extraversion

When a person scores in the middle range for a job that would seem to require a high score, sample interview questions might include:

1. What was the latest project you've been involved in that really energized you?
2. If you experienced a clash of personalities with a co-worker, what steps would you take to ensure a functional working relationship with that person?

When a person scores in the middle range for a job that would seem to favor a low score, sample interview questions might include:

1. Do you feel you perform best working alone or as part of a team, and why?