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## Skills tests reveal good and bad

**What makes a good leader? Carol Lewis, the editor of Career, puts her reputation on the line in a search for the answer**

There are two options if your deputy recommends that you have your leadership skills assessed: fire her or hope that it shows that you can do your job. I decided on the latter.

Leadership assessment can take many forms: psychometric testing, interviews, 360-degree feedback and work shadowing, to name just a few. Piers Hollier, a business psychologist at Get Feedback, a talent management consult-ancy, says that I am to be subjected to a basic assessment that includes psychometric testing and an interview.

I am sent links to the online tests I need to complete before my interview. Enthusiastically I log on and attempt to complete the first two multiple-choice questionnaires, a personality profiling test and another that measures motivation. This proves tricky with the phone ringing, people interrupting and generally trying to do my job at the same time. These questionnaires are long and rather irritating, but in no way difficult, unless you are trying to be someone you're not. Although I am beginning to wonder whether I actually have a personality when I answer "disagree" to "I generally dislike the type of person who makes a successful door-to-door salesperson".

The next stage is far more intimidating. I tell Hollier about two projects I have led – one that went well and one that went badly (carefully selected so as not to make me appear a moron). He says very little but jots down combinations of letters and numbers while I talk, and talk, and talk, like a madwoman into the void. I feel like a moron.

Finally I take the online aptitude test. This is crammed full of Mensa-style questions. It is supposed to take about 90 minutes. I end up doing it in bed late at night. It is agonising. I hate it. I rush, complete it in under an hour and fall asleep.

Judgment day: Hollier visits with my results. I lap up the positive feedback; I am: inspirational, influential, good at understanding others, great at finding solutions, entrepreneurial, highly motivated, good at strategy and better at critical thinking than 82 per cent of management consultants. But then come my "areas for development". I need to delegate much more or, as Hollier says, "empower my team to do more". This will free time for me to more thoroughly develop new ideas and strategies, spending more time working through the details. This isn't a eureka moment. I knew this, I just hadn't faced up to it.

But if it is so obvious that a complete stranger can work it out from a few tests and an interview, I think I'd better do something about it. Now, where is my deputy?

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