



Cognitive Aptitude: What It Is and Why It's Important to employers and your future

Hiring managers are starting to care more and more about a candidate's cognitive aptitude...

But what exactly is it, and why are employers getting so interested in it?

Cognitive aptitude refers to a person's ability to process information, learn quickly, and apply new information to solve problems. Cognitive aptitude is a bunch of interrelated intellectual skills and behaviours. These mental faculties include perception, attention, memory, visual and spatial processing, and a slew of other brain functions like mental resilience, problem-solving, and decision making.

All in all, this brainpower is what guides the choices we make in life, big or small. From choosing between two different types of cereal (comparing their ingredients, nutritional information, cost, taste, etc.) to deciding what type of job we want to have (determining if we'd enjoy it, potential salary, if we'd have to move, what kind of career mobility and stability exists, etc.), we depend on our cognitive ability.

These skills really shine when we're presented with new or difficult tasks. They help us cobble together unique solutions on the fly and make well-informed decisions. Cognitive aptitude can also be thought of like a muscle – something we can grow, flex, and improve with training over time. Playing an instrument, diving into a great book, getting plenty of sleep, and hanging out with friends can all improve cognitive functioning. Interestingly, physical activity can also be a great way to pump up your brainpower. [Exercise](#) can increase levels of hormones and neurotrophins (proteins that promote the growth of neurons), that have been shown to improve memory, strengthen neural connections, and improve information processing speed. Our cognitive ability directly impacts what we do, how we do it, and our ability to adapt to changes in our lives.

Okay, so we now understand what cognitive aptitude is and what we can do to improve it... But why do companies care about it so much these days?

A big part of its importance stems from [research](#) that has shown [time](#) and [time again](#) that cognitive aptitude is the single best predictor of job performance, short of actually doing the job. [In fact](#), cognitive aptitude is twice as good at predicting job performance than interviews, three times as good as job experience, and four times as good as education level. Hiring managers aim for successful hires above anything else, so it makes perfect sense why they would gravitate towards the factors that are most likely to predict that success.

This research has been pivotal in helping hiring managers understand that many of the most common hiring tactics, like interviews and resumes, are poor predictors of job performance. Think about it from the perspective of a company hiring a new employee. Most companies have a hire-horror story: the candidate had a stellar resume, rocked the interview, and seemed like they were going to be an incredible asset to the team, but once they started working, everything fell apart. The hiring manager is left with what can best be described as “hire remorse.”

It makes sense why employers often turn to more data-driven factors to help them make a more educated decision, which also explains why more and more employers are using cognitive aptitude tests to review job seekers. These tests measure the key components that make up cognitive aptitude: problem solving, information application, learning ability, and critical thinking. Scoring well on these tests’ signals to your prospective employers that you’re a fast learner who will earn their keep in no time.

At Digital INnov8ors we can use them to help you identify future employment opportunities to your advantage! You can refine your cognitive skills with brain games and mental exercises that you enjoy, whether it’s playing a card game, going for a jog, working through math puzzles like Sudoku, or [using a brain games app like JobFlare](#)! If you hone your skills and keep them sharp, you can become the dream candidate that any employer will want to join their team!