



**Talegent**  
Technology meets Psychology

Talegent Whitepaper | February 2014

# Graduate Solution Validation Study

# 1. The Challenge

It has become increasingly difficult for recruiters to identify high potential graduates within the torrent of applicants they receive for graduate roles. In a recent survey of graduate recruiters, 72.9% found identifying high calibre graduates challenging. Asking graduate recruiters about the characteristics which are important for graduate success at their organisation uncovered a combination of abilities and soft skills (Figure 1).

## Recruiters' Ranking of Traits for Success

1. Drive and Motivation
2. People Skills
3. Written Communication
4. Teamwork
5. Problem Solving

Figure 1: Top five characteristics for graduates as rated by graduate recruiters.

Drive and Motivation is the most valued characteristic graduates can possess, with 95% of recruiters rating this as critical or very important for graduate success at their organisation. Tied for second most important were People Skills, and, Written Communication, both of which were rated as critical or very important for graduate success by 91.66% of graduate recruiters. Rounding out the top five most important characteristics for graduate success were Teamwork, and, Problem Solving.

Talegent's graduate solution successfully predicted graduates performance accurately across their Drive and Motivation, Teamwork, People Skills, Problem Solving, Leadership potential, as well as their Overall Performance and Potential to Advance.

## 2. Objective

Having identified the most important characteristics for graduate success, Talegent set out to identify the top predictors of these important characteristics as well as other important work outcomes such as overall work performance and potential to advance within their organisation.

## 3. Process

A predictive longitudinal validation study was undertaken with several professional services firms who use the Talegent Graduate Solution to assess applicants. The Talegent Graduate Solution measures ten competencies identified as critical for graduate performance (Figure 2). After one year of working for the professional services firms, the graduates' work performance was assessed through a performance rating questionnaire completed by their managers. The performance rating questionnaire measured the graduates' performance over the last year across their problem solving and communication, planning and execution, building relationships, leadership, potential, and overall performance.

Screening	Numerical Reasoning - The ability to make well-reasoned decisions on the basis of numerical information.
	Verbal Reasoning - The ability to make well-reasoned decisions on the basis of written information.
	Drive for Results - The tendency to be motivated by challenging goals and achieve success in the workplace.
	Social Drive - The tendency to enjoy interacting with others and to build relationships with ease.
Selection	Logical Reasoning - The ability to use logical thinking to solve problems.
	Dependability - The tendency to view one's self as dependable and reliable.
	Business Acumen - The tendency to enjoy analysing data and making strategic plans.
	Teamwork - The tendency to enjoy working in teams and the pursuit of collaborative goals.
	Confidence and Optimism - The tendency to be self-confident and think positively about the future.
	Influencing and Motivating - The tendency to enjoy and be effective at influencing the behaviour of others.

Figure 2: Graduate Competencies



## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Overall Performance

Asking managers to rate the overall performance of their graduates gave insight into their overall satisfaction with the graduate's performance across the year. Investigating the relationships between assessment scores and overall work performance found that five assessment competencies significantly predicted the graduates' overall performance (Table 1).

The top predictor of graduates' overall performance was their score on Influencing and Motivating, followed closely by their score on Confidence and Optimism and Drive for Results. The graduates' score on Influencing and Motivating accounted for 53% of the variance in their overall performance across the year. On average graduates who score in the below average range for Influencing and Motivating on the selection assessment are performing slightly worse than required overall, while graduates who score in the above average range perform better than required on average (Figure 3).

Assessment Score	Correlation with Overall Performance
Drive for Results	Rho (24) = 0.60, p = 0.001
Social Drive	Rho (24) = 0.37, p = 0.04
Business Acumen	Rho (13) = 0.56, p = 0.02
Confidence and Optimism	Rho (13) = 0.62, p = 0.01
Influencing and Motivating	Rho (13) = 0.73, p = 0.002

Table 1: Correlations between assessment scores and overall performance.

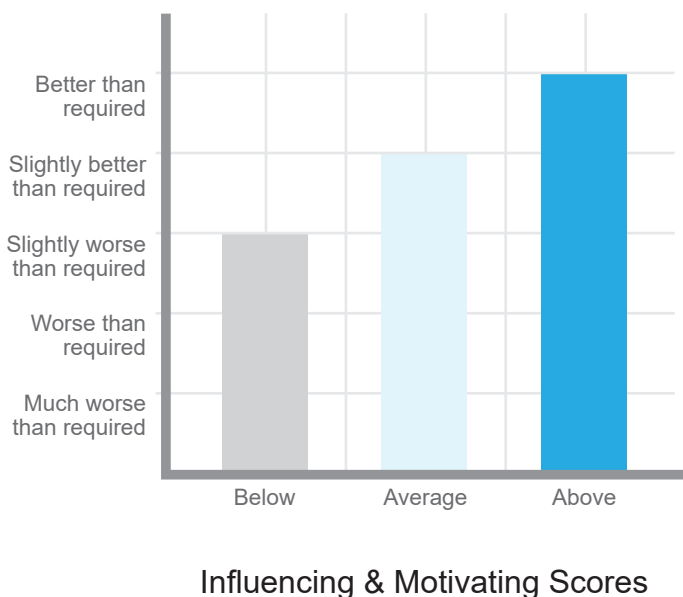


Figure 3: Overall Performance as rated by managers and Influencing & Motivating Scores.

### 4.2. Potential

Potential for advancement within an organisation indicates the performance trajectory of the graduates. High potential graduates are likely to be capable of moving vertically within the organisation more readily than graduates with less potential.

The investigation found that a combination of the graduates' Logical Reasoning and their Drive for Results were significant predictors of the graduates' potential for advancement (Table 2). Graduate's Logical Reasoning score was the strongest predictor of potential and accounted for 29% of their potential, followed by Drive for Results, which accounted for 21% of the variance in potential. Graduates with higher levels of Logical Reasoning were rated as capable of performing the job two levels up on average compared to graduates with lower levels of Logical Reasoning who are rated as likely to grow in the current role.

Assessment Score	Correlation with Potential
Drive for Results	Rho (24) = 0.46, p = 0.01
Logical Reasoning	Rho (12) = 0.54, p = 0.03

Table 2: Correlations with Drive for Results and Logical Reasoning and potential to advance.

### 4.3. Drive and Motivation

Recruiters voted Drive and Motivation as the most important characteristic for graduate success at their organisation in a recent survey. To investigate the strongest predictors of Drive and Motivation at work, managers were asked to rate their graduates' ability to achieve targets, work consistently hard, enjoy challenging goals, solve complex problem, and, overcome obstacles. Analysing the relationships between assessment scores and these manager ratings found that the graduates' scores on the screening competency Drive for Results was the strongest predictor of their Drive and Motivation at work (Table 3).

Ability to ...	Correlation
Achieve targets	Rho (24) = 0.71, p < 0.001
Work consistently hard	Rho (24) = 0.53, p = 0.004
Enjoy challenging goals	Rho (24) = 0.57, p = 0.002
Solve complex problems	Rho (24) = 0.44, p = 0.016
Overcome obstacles	Rho (24) = 0.53, p = 0.004

Table 3: Correlations between assessment scores and overall performance.

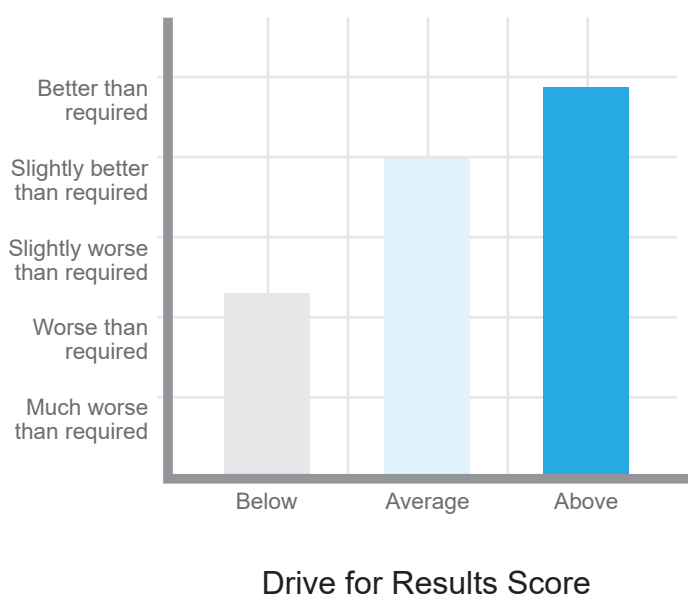


Figure 3: Ability to achieve targets as rated by managers and Drive for Results Scores.

Drive for Results accounted for 50% of the graduates' ability to achieve targets, with graduates who have higher levels of Drive for Results achieving targets at a better than required level on average and graduates with lower levels having worse than required levels of ability to achieve targets (Figure 4).

All of the graduates who scored highly in Drive for Results were achieving their targets at the slightly better than required level or better (Table 4). Conversely, 80% of the graduates who scored lower in Drive for Results were achieving results at slightly worse than required or worse levels (Table 4).

Graduates who score higher in Drive for Results are five times more likely to be achieving their targets at a slightly better than required level or above than graduates who score lower in Drive for Results (Table 4).

Drive for Results Score Range	Percentage of Graduates achieving targets at satisfactory levels
Below	20%
Average	72%
Above	100%

Table 4: Drive for Results scores and percentage of graduates achieving targets.

#### 4.4. People Skills and Teamwork

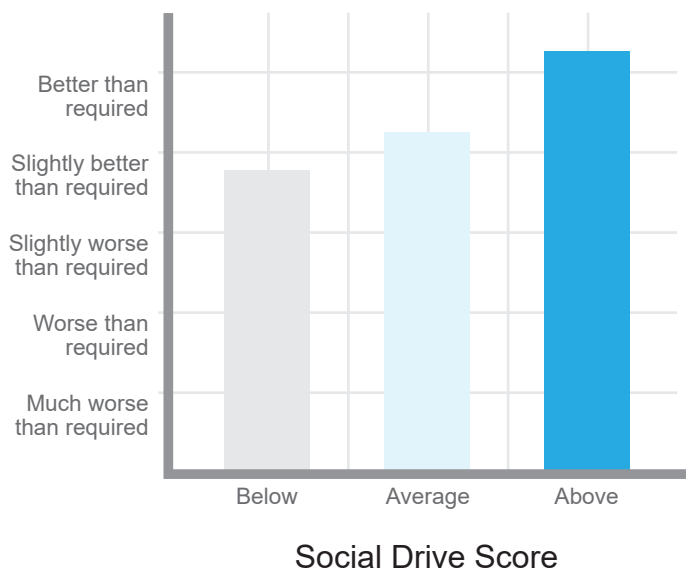
Rated as the second and fourth most important characteristics for graduate success, People Skills and Teamwork ability were investigated by asking managers to rate their graduates ability to communicate with others, speak in a logical, well organised manner, adapt their level and style of communication to suit their audience, interact with new people, communicate confidently, build relationships, put the needs of others ahead of their own, work with others to achieve collective goals, and, put achieving group objectives ahead of their individual goals.

Investigating the relationship between the graduates' assessment scores and their performance in these areas found that the graduates' Social Drive scores was the most significant predictor of their People skills and Teamwork (Table 5).

Ability to ...	Correlation
Communicate with others	Rho (24) = 0.49, p = 0.007
Speak in a logical well organised manner	Rho (24) = 0.46, p = 0.01
Adapt their level and style of communication to suit their audience	Rho (24) = 0.51, p = 0.006
Interact with new people	Rho (24) = 0.52, p = 0.005
Communicate confidently	Rho (24) = 0.50, p = 0.006
Build new relationships	Rho (24) = 0.51, p = 0.006
Put the needs of others ahead of their own	Rho (24) = 0.40, p = 0.03
Work with other to achieve collective goals	Rho (24) = 0.57, p = 0.002
Put achieving group objectives ahead of their individual goals	Rho (24) = 0.40, p = 0.03
Influence others	Rho (24) = 0.37, p = 0.04

Table 5: Correlations between Social Drive and manager ratings of people skills and teamwork.

Social Drive accounted for 20% of the graduates' ability to communicate with others. Graduates who have higher levels of Social Drive communicate with others at a better than required level on average and graduates with lower levels having slightly better than required levels of ability to communicate with others (Figure 4).



All of the graduates who scored highly in Social Drive were communicating with others at the slightly better than required level or better (Table 6). In contrast only 60% of the graduates who scored lower in Social Drive were communicating with others at satisfactory levels according to their managers (Table 6).

Figure 4: Ability to communicate with others as rated by managers and Social Drive scores.

Social Drive Score Range	Percentage of Graduates communicating with others at satisfactory levels
Below	60%
Average	85%
Above	100%

Table 6: Social Drive scores and percentage of graduates communicating with others at satisfactory levels.

## 4.5. Leadership Ability

Graduates are often the future leaders of organisations with leadership potential an important consideration during recruitment. There is a significant relationship between the graduates' Business Acumen scores and their ability to plan and forecast future requirements, make decisions based on facts and figures, evaluate information, motivate others towards collective goals, influence others, and take on a leadership role (Table 7). The graduates' Business Acumen scores also significantly predicted their managers rating of their overall performance (Table 1).

Ability to ...	Correlation
Plan and forecast future requirements	Rho (12) = 0.72, p = 0.004
Make decisions based on facts and figures	Rho (13) = 0.58, p = 0.02
Motivate others towards collective goals	Rho (12) = 0.67, p = 0.008
Influence others	Rho (12) = 0.81, p = 0.001
Take on a leadership role	Rho (12) = 0.76, p = 0.002

Table 7: Correlations between Business Acumen scores and manager ratings of leadership ability.

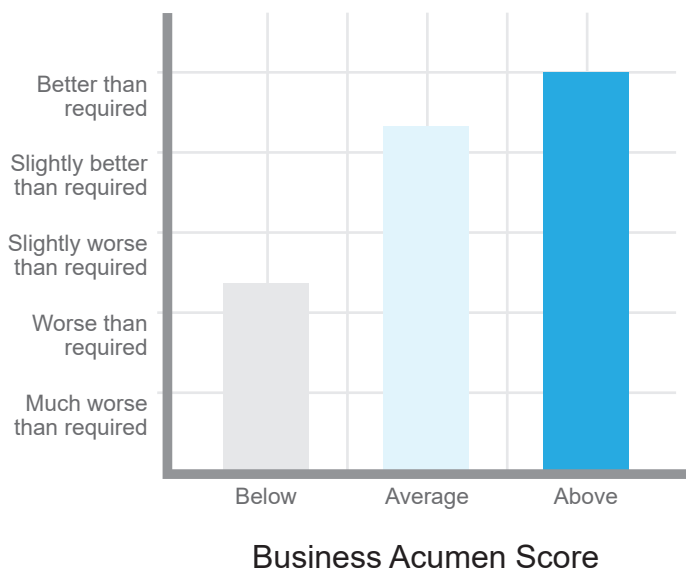


Figure 5: Ability to plan and forecast future requirements as rated by managers and Business Acumen scores.

Business Acumen accounted for 50% of the graduates' ability to plan and forecast future requirements and 33% of the graduates' ability to make decisions based on facts and figures. Graduates who have higher levels of Business Acumen plan and forecast future requirements at a better than required level on average and graduates with lower levels having slightly worse than required levels of ability to plan and forecast future requirements (Figure 5).

All of the graduates who scored highly in Business Acumen were planning and forecasting future requirements at the slightly better than required level or better (Table 8). In contrast only 30% of the graduates who scored lower in Business Acumen were planning and forecasting at satisfactory levels according to their managers (Table 8).

Business Acumen Score Range	Percentage of Graduates planning and forecasting future requirements at satisfactory levels
Below	30%
Average	100%
Above	100%

Table 8: Business Acumen scores and percentage of graduates planning and forecasting future requirements at satisfactory levels.

## 5. Summary

Accurately identifying high calibre graduates who have the potential to succeed is a major challenge for recruiters. To investigate the strongest predictors of potential for success Talegent partnered with several professional services firms to run a predictive study linking assessment scores with work performance following a year on the job. The investigation found that Talegent's graduate solution successfully predicted graduates performance accurately across their Drive and Motivation, Teamwork, People Skills, Problem Solving, Leadership potential, as well as their Overall Performance and Potential to Advance.