FAQ | CS AP™
CS Aptitude Profile

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What scales are measured in the CS AP?

The scales measured in the CS AP are:

Achievement Motivation	Using one's inner drive to apply the effort needed to attain strategic goals
Composure	Staying calm under pressure and in difficult interactions
Cooperativeness	The level of comfort in working with others towards a common goal or purpose
Customer Orientation	Having a desire to help others while being sensitive to, and understanding of, their feelings and needs
Sociability	Engaging with others and developing relationships effortlessly
Self-Confidence	An individual's level of belief in their abilities and judgments
Upselling	Involves active strategies to increase value by suggesting additional products and services to customers

What is the research linking CS AP competencies to work outcomes?

The CS AP measures seven scales that have been shown to relate to success in customer service roles based on past research. Following is the list of CS AP scales and their predictive outcomes:

Individuals who are higher in:

- **Achievement Motivation** have better overall job performance (Barrick, Stewart, & Piotrowski, 2002).
- **Composure** experience less conflict with customers (Darrat, Mulki, & Swimberghe, 2017).
- **Cooperativeness** are able to have constructive disagreements and problem solving in a group setting which will ultimately enhance a team's productivity and creativity (Lehmann-Willenbrock & Chiu, 2018).
- **Customer Orientation** are more responsive, assuring, and empathetic which all influence customers' perceptions of service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988).
- **Sociability** are more courteous and congenial. They create a more positive service climate, which ultimately increases customer loyalty (Wang, 2015).
- **Self-Confidence** are more likely to have a positive attitude about customer service, which can drive stronger performance (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001).
- **Upselling** can enhance the customer experience and improve customer relationships. Upselling is associated with higher sales performance (Johnson & Friend, 2015).

For more details, refer to Chapter 1 of the User Guide: Customer Service AP Scales and Outcomes.

What are the characteristics of the norm sample for CS AP?

Each participant in the CS AP is compared to a group of 1620 individuals who have taken the assessment previously. This sample is evenly distributed by gender and across five age-ranges and was matched to the 2016 U.S. Census by race/ethnicity and geographic region. The participants in the normative sample had a variety of employment statuses and levels of education.

For more details on the demographic characteristics of the CS AP norm sample, refer to Chapter 3 of the User Guide: Normed Sample, Table 3.1.

Is the CS AP valid and reliable?

Research conducted by MHS in the development of the CS AP provide evidence that the assessment results are both valid and reliable. For a complete review of the research, refer to Chapter 5 of the Technical Manual: Standardization, Reliability, Validity and Fairness.

- **Validity:** The CS AP has multiple sources of evidence that support its validity. The assessment has a factor structure that seems the most empirically and theoretically consistent compared to other plausible models. Additionally, the validity studies for the assessment demonstrated that high-performing customer service representatives score higher than the general population sample. To support that the assessment relates to work outcomes, the validity studies for the assessment show that those who have higher customer service aptitude, as measured by the Customer Service AP, have higher self-reported levels of job performance and job satisfaction. Furthermore, the scales of the assessment seem theoretically consistent, as they correspond closely to other measures that reflect similar content.
- **Reliability:** The reliability of the Customer Service AP was examined using internal consistency. The coefficient alpha values of the Customer Service AP had a median of .88, with a range of .82 to .94. These high values imply that the questions assessing each competency are connected and are measuring the same idea.

Is the CS AP considered to be fair and free of bias?

In order to ensure the fairness of the assessment, multiple analyses were run testing the measure across race/ethnicity and gender groups. The results of our analyses indicated that the assessment functioned similarly across demographic groups, providing evidence for its fairness and lack of bias.

For a full explanation of the fairness of the CS AP, refer to the CS AP Fairness section in Chapter 5 of the Customer Service AP Technical Manual.

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How is the CS AP scored?

The Customer Service AP presents the respondent's results using standardized percentiles. Percentiles are an intuitive way to understand how a person's scores compare to others like them.

Each participant in the Customer Service AP is compared to a group of 1,620 individuals who have taken the assessment previously. This sample, against which Customer Service AP scores are compared, is representative of the U.S. general population. By comparing results to a reference group, we can assess where the respondent falls on a scale of Low, Mid, and High.

For instance, a score in the 75th percentile means that the respondent scored better than 75% of a group of people who have taken the assessment previously.

What are the minimum and maximum scores on the assessment?

The CS AP scores are in percentiles, ranging from 1 (lowest) to 99 (highest).

- If a respondent scores between 1 to 24, their score will be classified in the Low range meaning they are in the bottom 25% of the comparison group.
- If a respondent scores between 25 to 74, their score will be classified in the Mid range meaning they are in the middle 50% of the comparison group.
- If a respondent scores between 75 to 99, their score will be classified in the High range meaning they are in the top 25% of the comparison group.

Can you score too high on the CS AP scales?

Our analysis indicates customer service representatives with higher scores in Achievement Motivation, Composure, Cooperativeness, Customer Orientation, Self-Confidence, Sociability and Upselling tend to have better performance and higher job satisfaction. Although there are no indicators for scores that are too high in the CS AP scales, it is a good practice to investigate very high scores to identify potential overuse. For example, a participant who is very high in Self-Confidence may not consider other people's perspectives when making decisions.

What if someone scores low on all of the scales?

A low score on all the CS AP scales may indicate the respondent's unsuitability for a customer service role. However, it is a good practice to investigate this assumption further by gathering more information on the conditions in which the participant took the assessment. These follow-up questions would be helpful:

- Did you have enough time to take the assessment, or were you in a hurry to finish it?
- Were you able to take the assessment in a relaxed setting?
- Did you read through each question fully before answering?

In addition, it's recommended to gather insights from multiple sources (e.g., observations, behavioral and situational interviews, academic records or other assessments, and resume) to get a clearer picture of the candidate's customer service competencies.

What level (e.g., individual contributors, managers, etc.) is the CS AP appropriate for?

The CS AP is best suited for the hiring and development of individual contributors.

What facilitator/coaching resources are available for the CS AP?

There are three primary resources available to help you build your knowledge of the CS AP.

- **Training Modules:** Two self-paced e-learning modules provide a high-level overview of the CS AP competencies, scoring, report features and interpretation, as well as features, benefits and applications.
- **User Guide:** A comprehensive User Guide provides all the information you need to understand and administer the CS AP. It includes an overview of the assessment, guidelines for use, a step-by-step interpretation of the Interview Guide and Development Report as well as information needed to administer the assessment.
- **Technical Manual:** The CS AP Technical Manual provides detailed information related to the theory, development and content, as well as the standardization, reliability, validity and fairness of the assessment.

Should I use the Interview Guide or Development Report?

The CS AP was designed with different reports that are suited for different purposes.

The CS AP Interview Guide contains a set of features that provide customer service-specific insights that will help you make informed hiring decisions. This report can be used across the employee lifecycle, including interviewing, succession planning, and promotion.

The CS AP Development Report provides insight into the competencies that contribute to customer service performance and is intended for use in coaching and development contexts.

What are the custom options for the CS AP Interview Guide?

The CS AP Interview Guide includes several features that can be turned on and off or changed.

- On the cover page, the job title, organization name, and logo can be customized when generating reports.
- The Interview Questions section of the report can be turned on or off.
- Up to five custom interview questions can be added when generating reports and will be included at the end of the report.

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What are the custom options for the CS AP Development Report?

The CS AP Development Report includes several features that can be turned on and off or changed.

- On the cover page, the job title, organization name, and logo can be customized when generating reports.
- The Response Style page at the end of the assessment can be turned on or off. It is recommended that this page not be shared with the participant, and, if the report was printed with the page included, it should be manually removed.

What Response Style Indicators are included in the report?

The Response Style section of the CS AP reports provides insight into factors that can indicate a lack of attention and positive impression management. Three indicators are displayed:

1. **Time to Completion:** This indicator provides the total time the participant took to complete the assessment, and flags participants who do the assessment in an unusually short or long time. In general, the CS AP should take between 10 to 15 minutes to complete.
2. **Positive Impression:** Several items in the CS AP assessment were designed to detect participants who may be giving an exaggerated positive impression of themselves. They may have inflated their responses on purpose, or for other reasons, such as self-deception, lack of personal insight, criticism avoidance, unwillingness to face one's limitations, or misunderstanding the assessment's purpose.
3. **Inconsistency:** Several pairs of highly related items are used to detect possible inattention to the questions. This alert will be triggered when the participant responds differently to items measuring similar content.

In what languages is the CS AP available?

The CS AP assessment and reports are currently only available in English.

Is there a CS AP group report?

There is currently no group report available for the CS AP.

If you would like to create a custom solution for your organization, call MHS Customer Service at 1-800-456-3003 or email customerservice@mhs.com.

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