

though applicants do try to look good by enhancing their responses to personality tests, it seems clear that such enhancement does not significantly detract from the validity of the tests. Why might this be the case? Evidence suggests that socially desirable responding, or presenting oneself in a favorable light, does not end once someone takes a job. Therefore, the same tendencies that cause someone to present himself or herself in a somewhat favorable light on a personality test also help him or her do better on the job. As an example, consider the job of customer service representative. An individual in that occupation needs to be able to assess a customer's needs, deal with potential problems, and interact with that customer in a way that will result in the customer being satisfied. An employee who is able to assess a situation and determine the socially desirable response should be more adept at achieving customer satisfaction than an employee who is less skilled in this area. Thus, socially desirable responding may very well be desired in many cases.²¹

Because faking does not appear to undermine personality validities, some of the proposed solutions to faking may be unnecessary or may cause more problems than they solve. For example, some have proposed correcting applicant scores for faking. However, the literature is quite clear that such corrections do not improve the validity of personality measures.²² Another proposed solution—using forced-choice personality measures, where applicants must evaluate themselves as either, say, conscientious or emotionally stable—also appears to be fraught with considerable problems.²³ A third possible method of reducing faking involves warning applicants that their scores will be verified. Typically, this warning is presented to applicants prior to completing a given inventory. However, one recent study tried an approach whereby applicants who were suspected of faking were given a warning *during* the testing process. “Fakers” were detected based on whether they endorsed bogus statements and whether their scores on an impression management scale were well above the norm. Although the warning message reduced subsequent faking, it also increased perceptions of testing unfairness. There is also recent evidence that fakers attend visually more to the extreme ends of response options on personality inventories (e.g., “strongly disagree” and “strongly agree”); however, detection of this requires eye-tracking software and thus is likely to be impractical for many organizations. Overall, while there are pros and cons to warning applicants against faking, studies have shown that such warnings can reduce faking (by as much as 30%) without undermining validities.²⁴

A final possibility is to use other reports of personality. One might have individuals who have worked with an applicant report on the applicant's personality. The upside of observer reports appears to be noteworthy in that most research suggests that observer ratings of personality outperform self-reports when predicting job performance.²⁵ If one is using observer reports of personality, however, it is important to attend to information security concerns. One should ensure that the observer nominated by the applicant actually completes the assessment and that the observer is asked to be objective in the assessment. In addition, to the extent