

ab  acid test



“Acid Test is a communications audit like no other. Use this powerful tool to remove barriers to understanding and drive strategic alignment across your organisation.

This is not another tick-box survey. Acid Test is tailored, qualitative research carried out in structured face-to-face interviews.

It elevates your conversations with leaders. You will be asking intelligent, probing questions that get to the heart of your organisation's strategy.

Taking part in Acid Test feels rewarding. The method is a message – it tells employees they are heard and understood.

The result is a practical plan of action with quick wins and longer-term initiatives to drive alignment and superior performance.”

Katie Macaulay
Managing Director, AB



Trusted for more than 25 years



Why we call it Acid Test

Communication does not equal understanding. You have to test for that. An 'acid test' is conclusive. It identifies the true success or value of something.

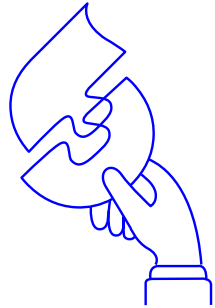
Our unique audit tests knowledge, understanding and alignment – the true 'acid test' of great internal communication.

The benefits of Acid Test

When your employees try to make sense of their work environment, does it feel like completing a jigsaw puzzle without the lid?

All too often the goals and direction of an organisation are not fully understood – even at the highest levels. This leads to duplicated and wasted effort, thwarted change initiatives and a lack of discretionary effort.

Greater alignment improves the performance of an organisation exponentially.



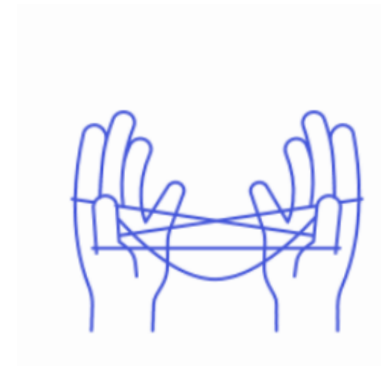
Completing the puzzle

All too often the goals and direction of an organisation are not fully understood – even at the highest levels. This leads to duplication and wasted effort, thwarted change initiatives and a lack of discretionary effort. However, when there is alignment around a common cause, performance improves exponentially.



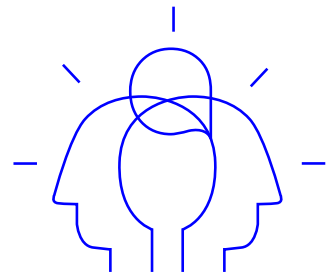
Listen harder, learn more

The questions we ask in Acid Test interviews reveal far more than conventional tick-box surveys. Our researchers delve into what employees really think and feel about their work, the strategic direction of their organisation, obstacles to success and ways to improve performance.



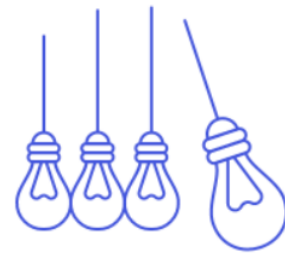
Find the knowledge gaps

Acid Test has a unique methodology. We start by interviewing your organisation's leader, often the CEO. Then we interview members of his or her senior team. Next, we interview a sample of middle and line managers, followed by frontline employees. A pattern soon emerges. Gaps in understanding and areas of misalignment are revealed.



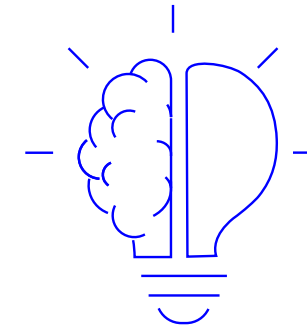
Make the method a message

Our confidential, qualitative interviews assess more than an employee's verbal response. We evaluate body language, behaviour and attitude. Acid Test sends a message – you are heard and understood.



Diagnose the problem

Acid Test shows you where understanding is breaking down and why. You find the 'knowledge gaps' inside your organisation – where communication is falling short and performance is suffering.



Find the fix

Traditional engagement surveys rarely lead to timely action. Acid Test results provide clear, practical quick wins and longer-term initiatives to deepen understanding and drive performance.

How does it work?

Acid Test is qualitative research conducted in structured face-to-face interviews using a tailored questionnaire.

It is based on a unique methodology. With Acid Test, we ask each interviewee the same questions in exactly the same way – starting at the top.

The questions are probing – designed to test people's strategic knowledge and understanding. There are no right or wrong answers.

As researchers, we look for areas of clear and common understanding, and areas where understanding is breaking down. We identify the reasons why understanding is faltering and what can be done about it.

The final report identifies the gaps in strategic understanding, the causes of this and any risks or dangers of misunderstanding or misalignment. It includes clear actions to address these problems and, in so doing, improve performance.



Your step-by-step guide

Engage an executive sponsor

We advise you to engage a senior sponsor for Acid Test. This is someone who will champion the audit and encourage interviewees to get involved.

Two impartial researchers

We use two researchers to conduct a series of hour-long interviews. In our experience, two sets of ears and eyes are better than one. An impartial and objective researcher encourages people to speak plainly and honestly.

Maintain confidentiality and anonymity

To encourage openness, we protect people's anonymity. We explain we will be taking notes but not attributing quotes to individuals.

One-hour, face-to-face interviews

We will need to schedule one-hour, face-to-face interviews starting at the top. Normally, this means interviewing your CEO or equivalent, then each member of his or her senior team. Next, we interview middle and line managers, and finally those working on the frontline.



How many interviews?

We conduct enough interviews for a pattern to emerge. Often between 30 to 50 interviews are sufficient because if one person thinks a certain way, it's likely others do too.

Designing the questionnaire

Each Acid Test questionnaire is unique. Our questions will be based on the unique characteristics of your organisation and what you need to test.

Collation and analysis

When we collate and analyse feedback, we identify where there is alignment – areas of strong, common understanding – and where there is the opposite, knowledge gaps. We recommend ways to address misalignment and drive performance through better understanding.

Your final report

Acid Test results outline clear, practical quick wins and a set of longer-term initiatives. This will help you decide where best to place your time, resources and attention based on evidence and data – not assumption or guesswork.

Going forward, your team's activities will be clearly based on the strategic needs of your organisation.

Your next step

Acid Test involves hours of listening, thinking and analysing. But the result is worth it. You'll have a wealth of evidence, information and insight at your fingertips, plus a new plan of action to drive alignment and performance.



For an informal chat about conducting an Acid Test at your organisation, please contact Abi Terry at abi.terry@abcomm.co.uk