The Art and Science of Hiring - Doing better than 51%

By Paul Endress

Would it shock you to find out that research\(^1\) shows conventional approaches to putting people into jobs are as likely to hire below-average performers as they are to hire above-average performers?

Let me prove it to you by asking you three questions:

- Have you ever hired or promoted someone who did not live up to your expectations?
- Have you ever hired someone who turned out to be much better than they seemed to be in the interview?

OK, final question…

- How different was the process you used to hire the unexpectedly poor performer from the one you used to hire the unexpectedly great performer?

THERE WAS NONE! Why would there be? Every time we set out to hire we set out to do the best job we possibly can – we always set out to hire the very best, don’t we?

Predicting the Future

There are, of course, lots of variations on a theme, but most firms follow at least these two key steps as they set out to predict the future:

First, they use resumes and application forms to look at candidates’ educational qualifications, skills, experience in an effort to use past performance to predict the future.

If this looks promising, then they move onto the next step of using an interview to review how the candidate looks today, and to determine how well they feel the candidate will fit in with the company.

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Your Last Interview

Think back to the last job interview where you were being interviewed for a job.

Who did you present to the interviewers on that day – was it you ‘warts and all,’ or was it a highly polished version of you (all warts gone!), with the perfect education, qualifications, experience, and personality for the position?

People are like icebergs when they attend interviews – they float into the room looking powerful, whiter than white – a wonderful force of nature.

So we hire them. And sometimes what we get is much more valuable than we were expecting. But sometimes the seven-eighths that floats below the surface unseen is what makes them a critical danger to our businesses – so much so that if we had know about their hidden attributes we would have avoided them altogether!

Interviews simply cannot see below the surface of the individual and cannot give you all the information you need to have to make a good decision when you put someone into one of your positions.

Research shows that conventional, unstructured interviews provide only 14% of the information you need to make a good hiring decision (the same research shows that more structured behavioural interviews can bring this up to 51%). So what you’re really doing every time you hire someone is saying: “I PREDICT that Tom will be one of my best performers…”

While resumes, applications, interviews, reference and background checks are all important components of the hiring process, recent developments in psychology combined with modern technology now allows law firms to use the power of on-line psychometric assessments to gain further insight into an applicant.

What is a Psychometric Assessment?

A psychometric assessment is a series of validated questions developed by psychologists and designed to reveal and measure the characteristics of an applicant that are not be readily apparent from a resume or interview.

A traditional interview is a form of an assessment in that the interviewer tries to use questions to discover the characteristics of an applicant and assess their potential value to the company, but it is limited by the skill of the interviewer. In fact, research shows that most interviews make up their mind during the first 4.3 minutes of the interview!

Assessments have been used for years for many purposes including hiring and psychological counseling. However, in the early 1990’s, changes in equal employment regulations invalidated most existing assessments and led to the development of a new generation of non-biased and validated ‘job-fit’ testing instruments.
These types of assessments are not designed to measure specific skill sets such as typing or mechanical ability, but rather to create job patterns and evaluate applicants against these patterns. This allows the employer to quickly identify individuals who are like their existing superior performers, and know in advance any adjustments that you might have to make.

If you want to target superior performance in your positions, then you must have all of this information at your disposal -every time- to place someone in a job. And this IS NOT just when you hire; more placements are made on the basis of internal moves– people moved from one job to another, people promoted etc – than on the basis of new hiring.

The good news is that this technology is readily available for you to use and dramatically change your hiring results.

Want to Know More?

To explore the potential of job matching technology for your organization, contact us at Maximum Advantage. Phone 800-788-2068 x 1020 and we’ll be glad answer your questions.

About Paul Endress

Paul Endress is a nationally recognized expert in the application of psychology to business in the areas of communication, leadership and synergy within the workplace. Paul is the creator of The Everything Principle™ and is the founder and president of Maximum Advantage International, a company dedicated to the success of businesses by encouraging, promoting and supporting the professional and personal growth of each individual employee through easy-to-master communication methods.

During his extensive business career, Paul has established nine companies, including a progressive software company which created a top-ten-selling software program covered in the Wall Street Journal and other business publications. His commentaries and expert strategies on communication, hiring and retention have been quoted and published by such A-list media as the New York Times, USA TODAY, Entrepreneur and Forbes.

By combining this experience with study, research and real life business observation, Paul has developed a unique approach to solving the challenges of conducting outstanding business in the twenty-first century.

Thousands of professionals have moved to a higher level of communication and success by participating in keynotes, workshops, and intensive study sessions conducted by Paul. Hundreds of fine organizations and statewide SHRMs, MPIs and a host of others have enhanced their membership and staff interaction by taking advantage of Paul’s methods.