



**EffortlessHR March 2010
Employer's Advantage Newsletter**



For Your Information (FYI) – Skills Testing

I am pleased to report that through my affiliation with Profiles International, Inc., EffortlessHR, Inc is now able to provide not only access to great assessments, but also to a complete library of skill tests. Why is this important? Hiring managers need to know if a candidate can actually do what they say they can do. This is important in jobs where there is little time for training. It also helps to know what gaps to expect and to determine the timeline to develop needed skills.

With over 1,500 skills tests, we are able to help organizations measure the essential knowledge and skills employees need to succeed in a job. Our skills tests cover software skills, clerical skills, and call center skills, as well as skills for accounting and finance, medical, nursing, legal, industrial, computer literacy, retail, food services, information technology, staffing and human resources.

The skills tests can be used for selecting people with the required skills for the job; increasing productivity, raising the level of engagement; reducing turnover; helping new employees off to a faster start; reducing training costs; and assessing team skill fit.

The skill tests are taken on a computer and average about 35 minutes to take. Scores are sent to the company within minutes of completion. For an additional fee, customization of tests are available. Tests are not just “yes” or “no” type tests but depending upon the test can include a broad range of knowledge that uses a variety of question types, including interactive performance-based, multiple choice, matching, simulation, and other question types.

Give us a call for more information on this newest addition to our HR tool box.

Lola Kakes
CEO, EffortlessHR
520.546.3947
lola@effortlesshr.com
www.effortlesshr.com

Did You Know?

- **3 out of 10** people lie on their resume. -*CBS News*
- **30% percent** of business failures are due primarily to employee theft.
- **Only 10%** of companies ever discover they have been victims of theft. -*Harris Interactive for Careerbuilder.com*
- **89% of job seekers** exaggerate on their resume. *New York Times*

Feature Article

Beyond the Resume: A Look at Smart Hires

by Amanda Molleur

How much easier would hiring and management be if employees came with an instruction manual?

You could have complete confidence in an individual's ability to follow through with an assignment by a set deadline. Conflict could be avoided, miscommunications wouldn't come into play, and there would be harmony among coworkers.

However, people are complex. It's hard to fully comprehend an individual's values and work ethic by reading their resume. Even after hiring someone, you still may struggle to understand personal strengths or limitations. In addition, other unpredictable issues may arise, but there are tools you can use to assess talent before a candidate joins your team. Through the use of assessments, your organization can gain valuable insight into your most valuable asset – your people.

There are essentially three phases of assessment use, the first being the pre-hire and placement stage. After reviewing an applicant's resume, you need more objective information on their qualifications, personality, interests and communication style. Here, you're asking yourself "can this person do the job?" Assessments measure their learning index as well as numerical and verbal skills and reasoning.

Learning style is not synonymous with intelligence. To demonstrate this principle, think of an individual's learning style in terms of a bucket as compared to a bottle. Both hold the same amount of liquid, but a bucket can receive the input at a quicker rate than a bottle. Someone with a "bottle neck" learning style could be just as gifted as a "bucket" minded individual, but they just process information at a slower rate.

To see the value in pre-hire assessments, take for example the efforts of an enthusiastic candidate. Outstanding candidates will conduct prior research on the company to stand out from other applicants. They keep up with industry trends and further investigate the skills needed to excel in a desired position.

Let's be honest; you're impressed with them. They've taken the time to be realistic about their contribution to your company and they're already acquainted with your organization's mission and goals. In the same way, it is only appropriate for hiring managers and business executives to invest time into researching a potential employee.

Once you have some background information on a candidate, it's important to look at behavioral traits that affect how well the person will do the job. Certain skills can be developed, but there are many qualities that can't change. These include assertiveness, independence, objective judgment and manageability. When you evaluate a person on this level, you can reasonably decide whether or not you could manage this person effectively.

The last level of employee assessments deals with succession planning. This focus prompts you to ask, "will this person want to do the job?" An individual may be qualified, but without an assessment you may not know whether or not they have creative, technical, or enterprising skills – until it's too late. With long-term goals in mind, you can also use assessments to plan for additional placement opportunities. Perhaps you're hiring someone seasonally or as an intern, but you see that his or her occupational interests align with a full-time, paid position. You can coach them effectively, knowing that they have promotion potential.

"Valid, reliable assessments provide organizations with in-depth, objective and comprehensive information about its workforce," said Dario Priolo, Director of the Profiles Research Institute. "This information helps managers to put people into the right jobs and manage them to their fullest potential."

Profiles International provides employee assessments to help organizations worldwide create high-performing workforces. Recently, the company introduced a white paper document titled "The Executive's Guide to Employee Assessments" that gives expert insight on assessment use and benefits.

"Assessments result in more satisfied and productive employees, and a more efficient and effective organization," Priolo went on to say. "Some executives assume that assessments are tools for the HR department, and they are very surprised when they discover how these instruments help them make better business decisions."

HR Marketer

Wellness Increases Creativity

The following is information gained from HRMarketer:

According to research by Right management, "Organizations that promote employee health and well-being are 3½ times more likely to encourage creativity and innovation." Right Management is the talent and career management expert within Manpower, the global leader in employment services.

The study reports that "fewer than half of the more than 28,000 employees who participated in our worldwide study reported that their organizations actively promote health and wellness," said Deborah Schroeder-Saulnier, Senior Vice President for Global Solutions at Right Management. "Yet we now have persuasive evidence linking health and well-being to greater employee engagement, organizational productivity, talent retention and — of utmost importance in today's post-recession economy — creativity and innovation."

Seventy-two percent of respondents who rated their organization highly for actively promoting health and well-being also rated it highly for encouraging creativity and innovation. Among those who did not rate their organization's healthy and well-being efforts highly, only 20% took a favorable view of their organization's encouragement of creativity and innovation.

Schroeder-Saulnier cites the top drivers for promoting health and well-being at work:

- "I work in a safe and healthy environment."
- "My organization allows me to maintain a reasonable balance between my family and work life."
- "You can balance work and personal interests at my organization and still progress."
- "I have an appropriate workload."
- "The amount of pressure I experience in my role is reasonable."

"In swiftly changing markets, creativity and innovation provide organizations with the agility to meet new needs and make the most of new opportunities," advised Schroeder-Saulnier. "The true potential of wellness initiatives can only be realized when wellness is embedded within the organization's core business strategy. Leaders and human resource professionals would do well to implement wellness initiatives that focus more precisely on yielding results that drive individual behaviors essential to improving the effectiveness of the entire organization."

Right Management surveyed 28,810 employees across 10 industries in 15 countries. Participants were asked to self-report on attitudes, performance and conditions directly related to the effectiveness of their organization.

This press release was distributed through PR Web by Human Resources Marketer (HR Marketer: www.HRmarketer.com) on behalf of Right Management.

Product Focus

Saving Green Means Depending on More than Luck

Workers whose fingers fly over an Excel spreadsheet or who immediately find the perfect Microsoft Office application to use for a clerical project are not in their jobs by chance. Their skills helped them arrive at their destination—making their leaders appear very smart or very lucky.

Luck is fine as far as it goes, but at a time when technical skill is critical to so many roles, relying on good luck is foolish and irresponsible. Skills tests enable employers to hire smart and adequately prepare for employee training and coaching.

Managers apply these tests just as they do other Profiles assessments. They are effective in selecting employees, increasing productivity, enhancing employee engagement levels, and reducing turnover. Astute leaders also use them to give new employees a jumpstart on their jobs, to reduce training costs and to assess the skill level of a team.

Many of the tests are available at several levels, including Standard, Basic, Advanced, Essentials, and Time Solver. The Standard is the recommended test for most positions that use the applications organizations test for. It covers the 30 to 35 most often used and most critical tasks that a worker needs to be rated proficient, and provides questions at the beginner, intermediate and advanced levels.

Here are some of the skills areas employers can get information about when assessing job candidates:

- Excel
- PowerPoint
- Language proficiency
- Clerical
- Call Center
- Accounting and finance
- Medical and nursing
- Legal
- Industrial
- Computer literacy
- Retail sales
- Food service
- Information technology

Hiring managers who believe they can rely on a listing of resume accomplishments need to consider this: HR experts believe about half of all people lie or exaggerate their skills on their resumes.

If you don't have a lot of time or money to expend on training employees on software programs, doesn't it make sense to know what they know in advance? If you are an employer who wants to spend training dollars in a targeted area, doesn't it make sense to know which employees actually need skills training?

Managing Mankind

And the Award Goes To...

The entertainment industry produces an estimated 2,000 films per year. Of those films only around 600 are released into select theatres all over the globe, and of those 600 only a handful are captivating enough to leave a lasting impression on audiences and the academy. This year's 82nd Academy Awards nominated a whopping 10 films for the honor of Best Picture. These nominated films were recognized for their ability to tell a story unlike any other film, but at the end of the night "The Hurt Locker" beat out blockbusters like "Avatar" and "Precious" for the award.

This scenario could be likened to the surplus of American talent currently seeking employment. The job market is still recovering from the recession. The ratio of those unemployed to available jobs is dramatic. Companies are struggling to process the volume of applications received per available position. Like Oscar Night, only a handful of applicants will impress enough to be considered. Choosing Best Picture is simple. The Academy simply votes. But how do you ensure that of the handful of qualified applicants you choose the best?

Pre-hire assessments enable hiring managers to narrow down their list of applicants and select the applicant most appropriate for the job. If two applicants have identical resumes, it can be difficult to decide which one looks better. Assessments provide results that match each applicant to the available position. This information can determine who would be the overall best fit based on their skills, personality and job fit.

Use assessments that measure skills, aptitude, behavior, thinking style and personality to gather as much information as possible so that you can make informed decisions about who is the best fit for the job. Placing people appropriately the first time saves time, money and energy and that calls for a standing ovation.

Announcements

Wanted – a few good people – if you are a consultant, or an individual who knows businesses in your area that might be looking for HR assistance, we are seeking EffortlessHR Pro Advisors. This is a program that will allow individuals to earn a little extra money by bringing new clients into EffortlessHR. Built around the model of QuickBooks, this is a way to augment your income. If you are interested, please send me an email at info@effortlesshr.com and we will give you a call to explain the program.