



Hire the Best and Avoid the Rest

By: **Greg Smith**



Businesses are hiring employees again. There is an abundance of well-qualified applicants looking for jobs. Finding and placing the right person in the right job is critical to success. Now that the economy is improving that is no reason to lower your standards and hire the first person who walks through the door -- a dreadful strategy. Now is the time to improve your hiring process.

The difficulty lies not in FINDING people, but SELECTING the right person. Have you ever faced this situation?

The new person you just hired had an impressive resume. He answered all the interview questions correctly. The background check came back with no blemishes. He seemed like the right person for the position. You even had him interviewed by two other managers. However, his first week on the job, he had two employees in tears and one of your best workers quit. Was this a case of Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde? Where did you go wrong?

One bad hiring decision can damage or in this case "kill" a healthy organization. Take notice -- job interviewing alone is unreliable in today's market.

One reason interviewing by itself is unreliable is because most of today's job seekers are proficient at interviewing -- they already know what to say and how to answer your questions. They can put on a good "presentation" and bluff their way through.

Even the best interviewer has trouble seeing past the superficial image and identifying an applicant's true attitudes and behavior patterns -- their ability to interact with others. Furthermore, job resumes are often exaggerated and unreliable. What makes matters worse, many companies do not properly train managers in interviewing techniques.

A better approach is needed. Many organizations are

turning to behavior assessments and personality trait testing for both hourly workers and managers. Back in the late 1990s, only five percent of Fortune 500 companies used some type of assessment. Today, that figure is climbing to 65 percent. A year 2000 study by the American Management Association showed nearly half of the 1,085 employers polled use at least one assessment in their interviewing process.

Javier Lozano, SPHR, an organizational capability coordinator for Chevron USA, recently told HR News, "A validated pre-employment test can be a strong predictor of future performance and whether an applicant is a good fit for the job. If used correctly, a validated test can be one of the best retention tools available to the employer."

For example, many companies are using integrity assessments that measure the "six deadly sins" of a bad hire. It identifies applicants who may steal from the employer, engage in computer and sick leave abuse, workplace aggression, and other counter-productive behaviors.

QWIZ Inc. has several automated tests that help measure basic job skills such as word processing, computer skills, and basic reading and mathematics. They also have a product that can help select better applicants to work in call centers.

One bank using assessments selected people who sold \$60,000 in more services and products annually. A manufacturing company hired people who generated \$21,600 more per year than the company average, and \$42,000 more than those who received failing scores with assessments. By combining a behavioral interviewing process with assessments, Ritz-Carlton hotels reduced their turnover from over 100% to less than 30%.

One of the key factors leading to high turnover is the relationship between the employee and his or her

supervisor. In a survey we conducted, 42% of the employees said they quit their last job because of the poor management skills of their supervisor.


Often people get hired, and in other cases promoted, for the wrong reasons. Many times supervisors have not had the benefit of proper training and development. Soft skills or what is called emotional intelligence (EQ) can also be measured and individuals can benefit from these assessments.

On the market today, there are many varieties available. There are specialized assessments for sales professionals, management, or pre-employment assessments.

Hundreds of organizations are using a special version of the DISC assessment, which identifies the eight common behavior patterns found in most people. The reason this is superior is its simplicity, validity, accuracy, and availability on the Internet 24 hours a day. Individuals or the employer receives a personalized 25-plus page report that can be used for either hiring, coaching, or development purposes. This report provides detailed information on the individual's:

- Value to the organization;
- Communication preferences;
- Ideal work environment;
- Motivation needs;
- Management expectations and needs;
- Areas for improvement; and
- Leadership strengths on a ranking scale from 1-10.

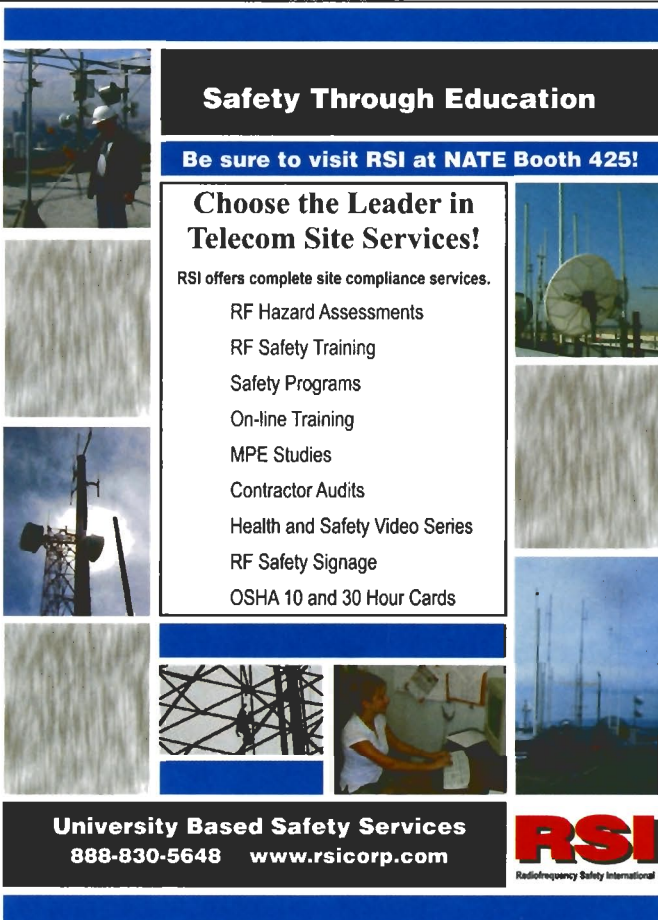
This report can also be used with current employees to facilitate a positive dialogue between the manager, the team, or co-workers. Most assessments only take 10-15 minutes to complete and score, and can be e-mailed to anyone in the world within minutes.

If you want to learn how to use assessments to identify and hire top performing people please go to www.behaviorprofile.com. 

Greg Smith is a nationally recognized speaker, author, and business performance consultant. He helps businesses hire great people. He has written numerous books including his latest, Here Today, Here Tomorrow: Transforming Your Workforce from High Turnover to High Retention. Greg has been featured on television programs such as Bloomberg News, PBS television, and in publications including Business Week, USA Today, Kiplinger's, President and CEO, and the Christian Science Monitor. He is the President and "Captain of the Ship" of a management-consulting firm, Chart Your Course International, located in Atlanta, Georgia. Phone him at 770-860-9464. More articles available: <http://www.chartcourse.com>

*For last year's words belong to last year's language
And next year's words await another voice.
And to make an end is to make a beginning.*

- T.S. ELIOT, "LITTLE GIDDING"



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