



Hamilton-Chase Consulting

Larry Gard, Ph.D.
President
(312) 787-9620
www.hamiltonchaseconsulting.com

applying
behavioral science
to enhance
executive and
organizational
performance

Hire by Design, Not by Chemistry

Competencies differ in the extent to which they can be taught. Content knowledge and behavioral skills are easiest to teach. Altering attitudes and values is much harder. While changing them is possible, the process is lengthy, difficult, and expensive. From a cost-effectiveness standpoint, the rule is "hire for core motivation and trait characteristics, and then develop knowledge and skills." Most organizations do the reverse. They hire on the basis of educational credentials (MBA's from good schools) and assume that candidates come with or can be indoctrinated with the appropriate motives and traits. It is more cost effective to hire people with the "right stuff" (i.e. motives and traits) and then train them in the knowledge and skills needed to do specific jobs. Or in the words of one personnel manager . . .

"You can teach a turkey to climb a tree, but it's easier to hire a squirrel."

Competency Assessment

Methods

Spencer, McClelland, &
Spencer

Overview

Every new hire will ultimately contribute either to moving your business forward or to holding it back. The acquisition of "intellectual capital" is a primary source of competitive advantage. So, why handicap your organization's competition for human resources by not exploiting the most advanced technology available for selecting the strongest candidates and for avoiding costly selection errors?

The Facts

50,000 organizations in the U.S. use testing to help them make decisions about hiring, placement, and promotion.

Turnover, replacement, and retraining costs for a mid-level manager average \$320,000 (TRW Corporation Study)

There is a cost spiral that results from poor hires: salary, recruitment, training, medical claims, opportunity loss, impact on morale, customer ill-will, legal exposure, and decreases in productivity, quality, and profits.

The worst candidates are typically screened out, but it's the marginal ones who slip through and who adversely impact your organization's productivity and morale (and it's hard to terminate them).

EEOC guidelines state "The use of tests and other selection procedures can be a very effective means of determining which applicants or employees are most qualified for a particular job."

The Benefits

It's objective, cost-effective, legal, and it works.

Candidates are impressed by an organization that takes its mission so seriously that it uses such a systematic and thorough approach to hiring.

When the best-fit applicants are hired, they settle into the new position more quickly and travel the learning curve faster.

The Process

Job Analysis

The job in question is evaluated with the immediate supervisor. We identify the job's critical success factors and learn who succeeds and who fails in this role. A competency model can be created that may be used for future hiring, development, and promotion decisions.

Interview

The candidate spends two to three hours in a structured interview with a consulting psychologist.

Computerized Testing

The candidate is administered a battery of tests tailored for the job in question. Cognitive tests can measure verbal skills, critical thinking, and reasoning abilities. Personality instruments assess goodness-of-fit issues such as thinking style, motivators, emotional maturity, work style, interpersonal stance, and so forth.

Information You'll Have About The Candidate

Career outlook: evaluation of career history, personal mission, and job motivators and de-motivators.

Cognitive abilities: description of analytic skills, receptivity to ideas, problem-solving style, practicality/creativity of thought processes.

Work style: energy, pace, approach to planning and organizing, need for recognition, need for organizational freedom, attention to detail, orientation to action, and conscientiousness.

Emotional style: optimism, restraint over feelings, objectivity about feedback, stress management, resilience and composure.

Interpersonal factors: sociability, assertiveness, perceptiveness, competitiveness, agreeableness, acceptance of diversity.

Management and leadership style: capacity to persuade and influence, approach to managing relationships and conflict, communication style, and adverse factors that could impact relationships.

And more: a graphic profile of personality traits and how they impact specific competencies; management advice; specific probes to pose to the candidate and/or those providing references; and the ability to reanalyze the same data set in order to produce an in-depth developmental report for on-boarding purposes.

Hire by design. Improve the odds.