

Using Assessments In The Hiring Process

Hiring the right people for your organization has always been a key ingredient of success, but is more critical today than ever before. Individuals come into the workplace with diverse cultural, education, experience, and backgrounds and many have clear expectations of how they want their job to fit into their overall lifestyle. With increasingly strict guidelines for hiring practices, how can an employer differentiate among qualified candidates without discriminating against them? Background and reference checks may allow a decision maker to eliminate some candidates, and a well-planned interview or series of interviews can provide valuable insights into the candidates. Unfortunately, the usefulness of the information gathered by these means greatly depends on the skill of the individual gathering that information.

Organizations seeking additional insights into candidates are turning with increasing frequency to assessment instruments or processes.

Continued on page two – Assessments

Inside This Issue

1. *Using Assessments in the Hiring Process*
1. *Are You an Effective Manager?*
3. *Schedule of Public Courses*
3. *One Minute Ideas*
4. *Mentors*



Are You An Effective Manager?

You may have been managing people for years. You think that you know the ins and outs of managing people and running your department, but your boss says that you aren't meeting the company goals. You're cautioned to "get it (budget) in line or else." You think, "I am doing fine...the boss is being unrealistic."

Or perhaps you've just been promoted to your first supervisory position. Your boss calls you in on Thursday, tells you how good of a job you are doing, shakes your hand, and tells you that starting Monday that you are in charge. No training, no guidance, just "do it." It's great to get a promotion, but don't you wish you could have some training to be able to motivate others to do what you had done so well? To be able to deal with the people in this new position?

Your role as manager/supervisor is critical to organizational success. You are directly and indirectly responsible for the productivity of yourself and each of those individuals whom you supervise. Your functions now include establishing goals and priorities, planning, staffing, controlling, motivating, and producing for a profit. You will be called upon to be many things to many people.

What happens if the people who report directly to you or your team buck the system? No matter how hard you try to get them to do their work, to meet deadlines, be on-time, or comply with standards, they do just enough to keep from getting fired.

Stop blaming others. Look to yourself.

Continued on page three – Manager

Continued from page one – Assessments

These processes may include assessment centers, where candidates go through a battery of assessment instruments, role playing exercises, and interviews over a period of one or more days. Psychological assessments by an organizational psychologist, assessment instruments administered by company personnel either on site or on line, or some combination of these approaches may also be done. *(Assuming that the individuals administering and interpreting the assessments have been properly trained)* The advantages of using assessments as part of the hiring process are as follows:



- 1. Benchmarking** – This is the process of determining what skills, talents, attitudes, and behaviors are important for successful performance in a given position. By analyzing the results of individuals who have demonstrated success in a given position and the requirements of the position, candidates can be compared with a set of objective standards.
- 2. Comparative analysis** – Standardized assessments allow for the direct comparison among individuals on whatever dimensions are measured by the instruments. For example, if a given position requires a high level of attention to detail and the assessments used measure attention to detail, the suitability of one candidate over another on that dimension can be directly determined.
- 3. Quantifying organizational culture** – Organizations have their own personalities, just as individuals do. A major contributing factor of an individual's success in an organization is how well that individual assimilates into the organization's culture, which has been loosely defined as how we do things around here. In fact, as an individual rises in an organization, his or her technical ability becomes less important and his or her ability to understand, work within,

Continued on next column –

and influence the culture of the organization becomes critically important. Assessments can quantify many aspects of an organization's culture, although not all.

- 4. Technology** – The workplace has changed dramatically in the last decade and technology has driven those changes. Individuals cyber commute or work flex hours, companies conduct virtual meetings to reduce travel time and expense, and almost instantaneous communication is the norm rather than the exception. Many standardized assessments can be administered on-line, allowing for individuals to respond at any time, day or night, and from their office, home, or laptop. This allows organizations to determine which candidates meet the minimum requirements to move ahead in the hiring process without the cost in time and manpower of bringing obviously unsuitable candidates in for a visit to the company office.

Although the advantages mentioned above are real, a word of caution is in order. The use of standard assessments is only one element in an effective hiring process. They should not be used instead of background checks, reference checks, and personal interviews. Assessments should be used together with these other sources of information. Your organization is never going to be one hundred percent accurate in hiring new employees, but a systematic approach to hiring, effectively using assessment tools, can greatly reduce the number of hiring mistakes and its accompanying pain for all involved.

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Motivational Quotes

Opportunity... Often it comes disguised in the form of misfortune, or temporary defeat.

– Napoleon Hill

There is no future in any job. The future lies in the person who holds the job.

– George Crane

In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.

– Albert Einstein

Continued from page one – *Manager*

Are you managing like a 19th century autocratic boss or 21st century leader? To meet today's challenges, you must ask yourself some difficult questions.

Rate yourself on the following questions:

| | Rate Yourself on a scale of 1 to 10. 10 being the best. |
|--|---|
| Am I the best I can be? | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Do I provide goal directed leadership? | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Do I meet the needs of my people while satisfying the needs of the company? | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Do I improve the productivity of my department and my team? | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Am I current in my understanding and use of "people knowledge" and techniques to help individuals excel? | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Am I operating with yesterday's knowledge in today's world? | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Am I effective as a supervisor? | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Can I become more effective? | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Do I want to become more effective? | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| How can I become a better supervisor and/or manager? | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

Take a look at how your approach to management and supervising shapes up with what the management gurus consider the "right way." Then set an action plan to develop the necessary skills. **To have you must become!**

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Schedule of Public Courses

The following courses are offered by Harmony Coaching & Consulting in a public forum.

| Course Title | Location | Date & Time | Registration |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Coaching & Counseling Skills | University of Memphis Continuing Education | Friday, October 6 th 9:00 – 5:00 | For more information or to register go to www.coned.memphis.edu |

Web Site Of The Month

WhatIs.com® is a knowledge exploration and self-education tool about information technology, especially about the Internet and computers. It contains over 4,500 individual encyclopedic definition/topics and an informational page all about the internet and networking. Check it out at: www.WhatIs.com



ONE MINUTE IDEAS

Delegation

Test how well you delegate authority to your employees by asking yourself these questions:

- **How often** do I say "I should have taken care of that myself"?
- **What is** the turnover rate among my employees?
- **Are my** employees frequently absent when they're not sick?
- **How many** people that I have directly supervised still work with me?
- **How many** of my employees would follow me if I took a new job at another company?

Source: *Streetwise Managing People*, by Bob Adams et al., Adams Media Corp., 260 Center St., Holbrook, MA 02343.



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Mentors

What is a mentor? According to Greek legend, the goddess Athene liked to come down to earth disguised as a man named "Mentor" so she could advise the young son of Ulysses. (The Greek root "men" means remembering, thinking or counseling; we still use it in words like "mental.") Today, a mentor is an experienced and trusted counselor, anyone who guides and encourages another, especially someone younger.

Mentors come in all shapes and sizes, formal and informal. Usually your mentor is someone who takes a personal interest in your progress, seeing your potential and regarding you as just a bit more capable and talented than you think you are. Not too much more, or you'll dismiss their opinion as unrealistic. Not any less, or you'll have nothing to strive toward.



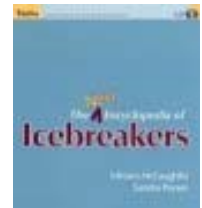
In my own life, I've had many excellent mentors – wise bosses who guided me and exciting clients who encouraged and inspired me to be the best I could be. We all have mentors who don't know they are our mentors. They are all around us as we watch and learn from what they do and say. Many people have told me I had been their mentor the first time we met.

Good mentors are the people who put the gas in your tank and give you a road map to where you want to go.

Source: PFripp@Fripp.com, 1-800 634 3035, <http://www.fripp.com>

Resource of the Month –

The New Encyclopedia of Icebreakers – the sequel to the best-selling *Encyclopedia of Icebreakers* -- gives you 150 innovative activities to energize your training sessions. The book is filled with a variety of activities that will move participants through the stages of group development: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. Use this new collection to help people get acquainted, build teams, address team or group issues, develop effective working relationships, and improve learning and retention of new information. The final chapter presents specific adjourning activities to help you bring closure to your training or group work, increase skills and knowledge transfer, and transition the participants back to the workplace.



To order this or other great books to go <http://www.harmonycc.net/links.htm>

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