

Using tests for HR purposes

In our last article, we discussed the different types of assessments that can be used to learn the ins and outs of the people who want to join your company and those who are already part of your team. So when is the best time to use them? Well, there is no right answer to this question. The benefit of assessments lies in their versatility. Let's start with the most well-known use of assessments.

Hiring

The optimal time to use an assessment is before an interview. This allows you to immediately identify and filter out candidates who are not the right fit, both in terms of skills and personality. The goal is to narrow down your candidate pool to those who meet your minimum requirements.

Next, assess candidates who make the "first cut" for job fit. This is where you take a critical look at each person's test results, and create a cut-off point for level of skill, personality, and attitude (supplementing this process with benchmarks can make this process quicker). Now the goal is to narrow down your candidate pool to those with the strongest potential.



With each person's test results in mind, it's time to interview your most promising candidates. This is the point where you want to probe deeper to validate a candidate's test results: Is this person really as patient, assertive, motivated as he or she claims to be? The goal here is to evaluate trade-offs. For example, if a person is lacking a certain skill (negotiation), can other strengths compensate for it (e.g. assertiveness, risk-taking)? Taking all things into account, would it be worth the time, effort, and resources to train this person? Once you have this info, you can determine whether a candidate fits the company's environment.



Training & Onboarding

Even if you have now hired the perfect job candidate, you can't just plop him or her into the work environment and leave the person to his/her own devices. The onboarding process is crucial to getting new employees started on the right foot. It's an opportunity to clarify tasks and roles, to ease them into the social environment, and clear up the shell-shock of starting in a new place.

With assessments, you can help an employee adjust more quickly to their new position. Here's how:

- ❖ You can focus your training and coaching on areas identified on the assessment as needing development. You can then tailor an employee's job functions to their strengths and preferences.
- ❖ You can adapt your managerial approach to bring out the best in the new employee. Knowing a person's quirks enables you to adjust your style and approach. For example, some people prefer structure and direction, others want autonomy. Some people thrive on feedback and praise, others prefer more tangible motivators. Learning about an employee's personality can go a long way to increasing job satisfaction and productivity.
- ❖ You can facilitate integration into the existing team. In ideal team situations, each member fulfills a specific role. With a clear understanding of what a person brings to the table, you can expedite a new hire's integration into your existing team.
- ❖ You can prevent future performance issues by addressing potential problems from the start. Will that extrovert you hired socialize too much? Will that conscientious worker be too inhibited to take risks? Will that ambitious competitor rub others the wrong way? Using insight gained from a test report, you can learn ahead of time about possible conflicts between your work environment and a new hire's personality. This allows you to address issues proactively. So if you've got a talker on your hands, you can 1) explain the company policy with respect to breaks and 2) ensure ample social contact for your extroverted candidate by assigning projects that require teamwork.



Talent Retention

After hiring and onboarding, you can use assessments as a learning and personal development tool, both for new hires and experienced employees. After all, finding a diamond in the rough is only a successful endeavor if you are able to keep this person in the company for the long-term. With assessments, you can continue to:

- ❖ Identify training needs, both individual and group. For example, do your customer service reps or salespeople need some refresher soft skills training? Does your management team need to improve their emotional intelligence?
- ❖ Offer tailored learning opportunities to those who are interested, like leadership or assertiveness training. At the same time, you can uncover budding leaders and those who are ready for a promotion and more responsibility.
- ❖ Optimize motivation by understanding what motivates individual employees and manage each accordingly. This allows you to keep your team challenged, engaged, and helps them grow professionally.
- ❖ Take proactive steps to prevent problems, like escalating stress levels in your staff, and other company wide trends



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