

# Assessments Relieve High-Volume Screening Pressures

ASSESS SYSTEMS—A BIGBY HAVIS COMPANY

The increased use of job boards, online applications and automated applicant-tracking systems has made employee screening like trying to sip water from Niagara Falls. Finding gems of talent amidst a flood of applications can be a monumental challenge.

Assessments solve this Information-Age problem by quickly identifying top talent and providing a priority ranking of the entire candidate pool. Assessments supply the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, professionalism and insight that are critical for employee screening.

## Efficient Hiring as a Competitive Advantage

Often a position must be filled immediately with one out of hundreds or thousands of applicants. Added pressure exists in industries where companies compete for the same talent, because a recruiter who is bogged down in evaluating mediocre fits might reach the best ones too late.

Because they enable an organization to quickly measure potential, assessments bring efficiency and mastery to today's large applicant volumes, urgent hiring needs and talent shortages. Assessments automatically prioritize candidates based on their potential for success in a given role, whether hourly or professional. The best candidates rise to the top, so recruiters can contact them first and then work down the list. Assessments help prevent the loss of top talent to competitors.

## Time and Cost Savings

Assessments bring cost-effectiveness to employee screening in many ways:

- **Hiring professionals' time is money.** The quality and speed of decision-making provided through assessments means hiring managers and human resource (HR) professionals can do their jobs faster and easier. The resulting time savings translates into cost

savings because more time is available for other critical activities.

- **Good hires boost profits.** Research has consistently shown that those best suited for a job are most productive. For example, a 16-month study of retail sales associates demonstrated that those scoring well on a job-fit assessment performed better than those scoring poorly—every month of the study. Another recent study of insurance agents revealed that top scorers sold more than double the new business compared to agents whom the assessments advised against (\$189,515 versus \$74,004).
- **Bad hires are costly.** Depending on the position and industry, a bad hire can cost from thousands to tens of thousands of dollars. Studies show that assessments can help avoid between 60 and 70 percent of these poor hiring decisions.
- **Turnover wastes money.** By ensuring better job fits, assessments improve retention and help organizations better preserve their investments in hiring, onboarding and training.
- **Travel for professional candidates is expensive.** When recruiters bring in upper-level candidates, the hard costs for travel and lodging are substantial. Assessments help ensure that such candidates are well qualified so the company's money is not wasted.

## Professionalism

Assessments provide a personalized experience and give hiring organizations an image of professionalism. Some individuals are concerned that assessments lengthen the application process and deter candidates. However, entry-level assessments can take as little as 10 minutes, and studies indicate that adding assessments typically increases drop-off rates by just two percent or less. Those who drop off because of an assessment might not be committed, viable candidates.

Assessments can be conveniently taken from anywhere at any time as part of an online application. Candidates themselves have indicated that an assessment gave the message that the organization was justifiably selective and presented a challenge to entry that put them among a select few. The sense of having earned admission tends to increase new hires' initial commitment to a company.

## Hiring Insight and Intelligence

Insight is assessments' most valuable benefit. Criterion-validated assessments deliver hiring intelligence that is essential for the following reasons:

- Assessments add incremental validity because they evaluate and objectively report crucial characteristics that cannot be easily measured by interviews or other means.
- Assessments evaluate the innate personal characteristics that give a candidate a natural bent for success in a specific position. Not easily learned, these are capabilities the candidate developed early in life.
- Interviews focus primarily on experience and demonstrated behaviors, while assessment provide insight into a candidate's potential to display competence in new areas.
- Assessments enable organizations to evaluate existing employees' potential for tasks they have not yet performed. For example, an assessment can indicate if an engineer has the people-management aptitude to move to a managerial role.
- Interviewers vary in skill and experience. Assessments provide objectivity because they are fair and consistent for each candidate.

Many organizations make better hiring decisions while improving efficiencies and cost-effectiveness through assessments. No screening process should be without them. ■