

Take the Gamble out of Hiring with Assessments



By Michele Ellner

Imagine how it feels to win the lottery. You're elated that, with a little luck, you hit the jackpot. Many people view the hiring process in the same way — as a gamble. Fortunately, there's a way to stack the odds in your favor when it comes to hiring the right person for a job — using assessments to screen new hires.

It's critical to find people whose skills fit your job requirements, and assessments can go a long way in preventing hiring errors. Test results provide powerful information to help you make better hiring decisions. Customizing the process removes bias, assures that all candidates respond to the same questions, and gives you an objective

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way to measure one person against another. This saves you the money and stress associated with hiring someone who's not a good match.

Uncovering necessary abilities is just one step in picking the right candidate. Exceptional employees will also possess character traits that make them valuable to your organization.

Perhaps it's important that the new hire possess self-control and sociability, an analytical thinking style, and a cooperative spirit.

Hiring someone with these traits who needs skills training might be better than hiring someone who's competent but lacks the right traits. It's much easier to provide skills training than to adjust someone's personality.

That's where personality tests come in. Often neglected in the hiring process, they're vital tools to predict a person's success in your organization.

Use these tips to integrate assessments into your hiring process:

- **Be sure you have detailed job descriptions**, which define tasks and job context as well as the skills, personality, values, and attitudes needed.

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Teaching skills is easier than changing a person's approach to life.

- **Don't forget the importance** of your organizational culture. In your job descriptions, pinpoint the values and qualities a person needs to fit into your culture.

- **Focus more on the type of person you want in your organization** than on the job's technical demands. Teaching skills is easier than changing a person's approach to life. Look for qualities of compassion, integrity, and the desire to make a difference.

- **Use the job description to isolate** the most important skills and behavioral traits of the job.

- **Evaluate** your best value – buying tests or purchasing testing

services from a vendor.

- **Select** a reputable firm with assessment practices you trust, and obtain assessments that best fit your job description.

- **Consider partnering** with an assessment expert, who can help you choose the best tests for your needs, manage the test-taking process, and analyze test results.

- **Use a combination** of ability and personality tests for each open job.

Remember that assessments are just one tool in the hiring process. But when used in tandem with traditional hiring methods, they can provide a helpful leg-up on finding the best person for the job. ■

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More Tools for Your Hiring Kit

Visit www.snpo.org/members to download these and many other helpful personnel resources:

- **How to Hire the Right Person the First Time** (Vol. 21, No. 2)

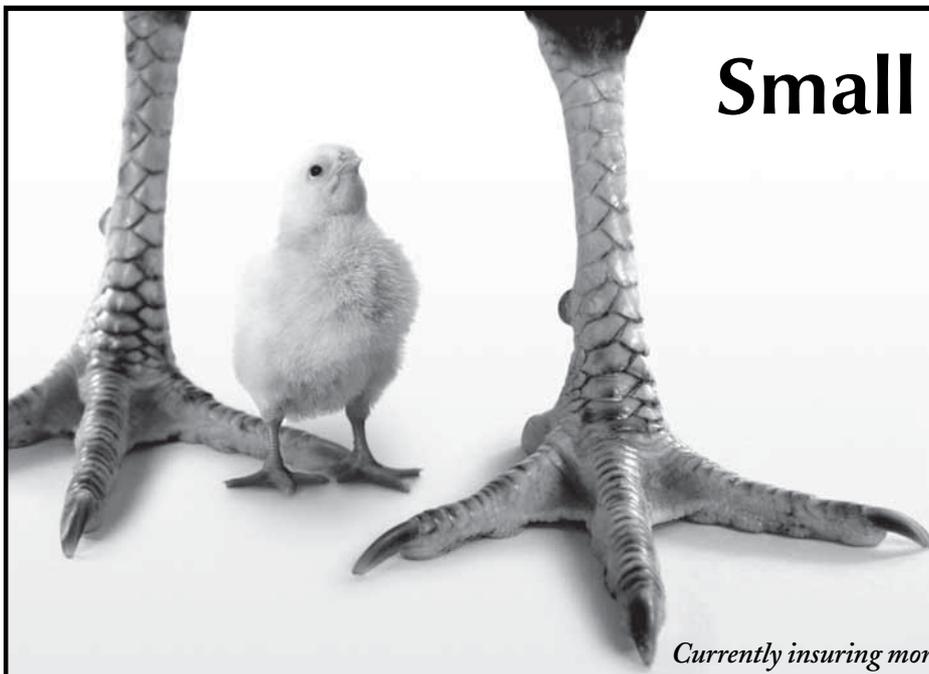
- **Regular People, Spectacular Results** (Vol. 23, No. 4)

- **The Organizational Personality & Employee Performance** (Vol. 21, No. 1)

- **Managing Your Organization's Culture** (Vol. 3, No. 2)

Michele Ellner is the field marketing manager for Manpower, Inc., a world leader in the employment services industry. For more information about Manpower's suite of assessment services, visit manpowerassessments.com.

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