



Politically correct profiling

How to win in the employee-recruitment sweepstakes / by Wendy Eustace

These days the term “profiling” can carry with it nasty connotations of screening for “appropriate” people at border crossings. However, in the world of human resources, it can be an effective methodology for finding the best woman or man for a job. In this context, profiling is defined as a set of assessment tools that help a company make decisions regarding the workers in question when it comes to succession planning, hiring and training. One local company that has seen the benefits of profiling is Hamilton’s Canreg Inc., which specializes in consulting on regulatory processes and is a regular business award winner in this region and at the Ontario level. Anne Tomalin, president of Canreg, has used profiling to help her understand her employees’ strengths and to increase their productivity and effectiveness. She has incorporated assessments as part of a “working styles workshop” in order to build her team’s understanding of these issues.

give a percentage compatibility fit, offer suggested behavioural-based interview questions for applicants and provide coaching recommendations for existing employees.

Behavioural profiles. These tools are designed for use with current staff. They are very popular because they take less than 15 minutes to use and can identify style preferences and teamwork compatibility. Leaders and coaches are able to guide, motivate and inspire their teams to reach new heights.

When used properly, employee profiling tools can offer various advantages:

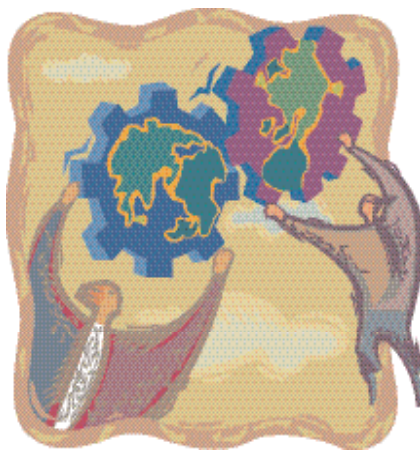
Benefit #1: A good fit

Early 20th-century manufacturing guru W. Edwards Deming once commented that “if a person is not performing as expected, it is probably because he is miscast for the job.” Studies have shown that this is the case for as many as four in five workers (in the U.S.). It has become popular today to “job hop” every six months or so. The knowledge worker, for example, often sells him or herself to the highest bidder and, as a result, may be more demanding, more portable and less loyal. This is obviously costly to your organization as employees don’t stay around long enough to build their worth to the business. It can take six months for a new employee to reach a consistently high output. The overhead expense to find, hire, orient and train people is a major investment that many businesses fail to track. Depending on the job, it can be as low as 25 per cent of a person’s annual salary or as high as 300 per cent.

Some of the more popular tools and their payback include the following:

Pre-employment attitude-screening profiles. These tools are only used with applicants. They take less than 15 minutes to perform and measure such important attitudinal aspects as work ethic, honesty, substance abuse (where permitted by law) and dependability. The least expensive of all employee assessments, they screen out potential problem applicants, saving both time and money.

Total-person profiles. A good tool measures many things about a person and compares the results with a benchmark of those characteristics shared with top performers. It is recommended that an assessment measure cognitive abilities (thinking styles), motivational interests and key personality traits. It should take about an hour to perform,



“If a person isn’t performing as expected, it’s probably because he’s miscast for the job” . . . and that could cost you as much as 300 per cent of an annual salary

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