

HR Standard 1.2

Standardized Testing in the Hiring Process

PHILOSOPHY/HISTORY

The goal of all elements of the hiring process is to identify the most qualified applicant for the available position. The most desirable attributes change with each position and job description. The goal in utilizing standardized testing as one element in the choice of new employees is to be able to identify certain generic and specific qualities (skills, personality traits, etc.) within the potential employee which will parallel the requirements of the position and hence increase the likelihood that the individual will perform effectively in the position.

Career testing was initiated shortly after the World War II in an effort to find appropriate employment for individuals discharged from the armed forces. Since that time, it has undergone a sustained evolution in which the innovations of John Chrystal and Richard Bolles have played an important role. These individuals have developed a topography which, briefly and simply stated, categorizes all positions into one of six categories: *realistic*, *investigative*, *artistic*, *social*, *enterprising*, and *conventional*. Research has also indicated the one single measure is most reliable in predicting job success: the rapid ability to learn and to pragmatically apply abstract information.

The ultimate goal is to match the ability and interests of an applicant with the requirements and responsibilities of the position. The closer the match, the greater job satisfaction, the greater effectiveness of the individual in the position, and the greater satisfaction of both employee and employer.

OUTCOME

To identify the job applicant that has the best potential to perform the duties of the position needing to be filled and who will remain in the employment of the PCSA for a significant period of time.

APPLICATION

Standardized testing may be used as an integral part of pre-employment screening for all positions. Accompanied by group interviews with all supervisory personnel, resumes, and reference checks, testing is a valuable source of additional data regarding the appropriateness of applicants for various positions.

At present, three tests are used: The Self-Directed Search, the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory, and the Wonderlic Personnel Test.

1. The first is the Self-Directed Search which posits that a person's dominant type or "the personality type" determines the primary direction of vocational choice. The specific nature of a person's occupational preference comes from his/her personality pattern. The closer the occupational choice parallels the personality pattern, the greater the likelihood that success, satisfaction, and productivity will result from the career choice.

The Self-Directed Search results in a three letter score. Each letter parallels one of the occupation domains into which John Holland, PhD's research indicates that all occupations fall : realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, conventional. Each of these domains have characteristics that would indicate each person's resemblance to each of the personality types.

Hence, in interpreting the results of the inventory in screening for caseworker positions, for example, we would tend to look for the highest score to be "S" and for compatible scores of "E" and "A". Full and adequate interpretation and understanding, however, can only be attained through a reading the test manual and research documentation.

This device is one of the most used in the world and is particularly valuable as a tool to indicate career choice in late high school years and college.

2. The second tool utilized is the AAPI: Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory. The AAPI is an inventory designed to measure the child rearing attitudes of adult and adolescent parent and pre-parent populations. Responses to the inventory provide an index of risk of behaviors known to be attributable to child abuse, neglect, and lack of nurturance.

Responses to the AAPI provide an index of risk in five specific parenting and child rearing behaviors:

- A. Inappropriate expectations of children
- B. Parental lack of empathy to children's needs
- C. Strong belief in the use of corporal punishment as a means of discipline
- D. Reversing child-parent responsibilities
- E. Oppressing child's power and independence

The attitudes of individuals who will work directly with children (caseworkers and child care staff) are of paramount importance to the PCSA. The AAPI provides valuable information that can be used **to assist** in the hiring decision.

3. The third instrument used is the Wonderlic Personnel test. This is a timed response test. The WPT takes 12 minutes to complete and measures the individual's learning capacity, ability to understand instructions, and aptitude for problem solving. It is a paper and pencil test and can be scored immediately using a template. Included with the test is an interpretation booklet and chart. The test has been used extensively and has been consistently proven to be accurate. There are numerous forms. After repetitive application over time, the user will begin to note patterns and develop an internal validity that becomes sequentially more valuable. For instance, specific high and low cut-off scores have been found to be most indicative of success in the various agency positions for which employees have been sought.

A CAUTION: testing can be utilized as only one of a series of methods employed to assist in the hiring and retention process. It alone is insufficient. Useful information is contingent upon training in the proper and effective use of testing and in the understanding and interpretation of each of the above-mentioned instruments or any other instrument.

There are many instruments available that may measure elements that would be helpful in the screening process. Some references for the purchase of these as well as information include:

1. Wonderlic Inc., 1795 Butterfield Rd., Libertyville, IL 60048 800 323 3742
2. Family Development Resources, Inc., (for the AAPI), 3160 Pinebrook Rd., Park City, UT 84060
3. Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc (PAR) (for the SDS), P O Box 98, Odessa, FL 33556 813 968 3303
4. Western Psychological Services, 12031 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90025
5. CTB McGraw Hill, 20 Ryan Ranch Rd., Monterey, CA 93940 800 538 9547
6. The Psychological Corp/Harcort Brace Jovanovich, Inc. 555 Academic Court, San Antonio, TX 78204 800 228 0752
7. Numerous other sources. Try the internet: psychological testing; career inventory; personality tests, etc.

Policy is adapted from the Muskingum County Children Services Board

12/01