

Hire and Keep the Cream of the Crop with Assessments



By Mack Arrington, CNP, CPVA, CPBA
Business and Personal Coach

336.856.1600
thecoach@mackarrington.com
www.mackarrington.com

Business and Personal Coaching

B@D@H@V@

BizLife Magazine, January 2004
www.bizlife.com

How often do we hear that good help is hard to find? And once you find it, then you have to develop and retain it. Many businesses are missing the boat in recruiting, training and keeping good help by not using assessment tools to save time, money and frustrations.

I agree that people can be “our most valuable asset.” Actually, it’s the *right people* in the *right places* that *are* our most valuable asset. In business, a coach or consultant certified in assessment tools can equip you in making better decisions on who to hire, who to promote and where, how to work to the strengths of your employees, and how to communicate with, motivate and manage them. You gain insight into both the growth opportunities and the potential problem areas —before you make decisions about them.

Without getting technical, an assessment is a sort of self-survey used to help understand how people work. Good assessments tools, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), DISC, PIAV and others, have been developed for validity and reliability. This means that they are designed to assess some specific human characteristics, and they do it consistently well. For example, the PIAV indicates the values that drive us, the MBTI and DISC indicate different aspects of how we behave. If you know what drives a person and their behavioral style, it is much easier to play to their strengths and fit them into the right place where they can be the most productive.

Let’s consider some of the benefits of using assessment tools. In hiring a new employee, the interview, background, references and track record of the applicant count a great deal. But, as Barrett Riddleberger noted in the October 2003 BizLife, people show you their best in an interview. The assessments help you to discover what lies beneath the surface to determine performance and productivity issues that might exist.

A powerful point about using assessments in employment: they might help you decide who you *don’t* want to hire as much or more than who you *do*. Employer turnover costs have risen sharply. In 2002, *FORTUNE Magazine* reported \$140,000 to replace a financial services representative with three years experience. Aside from salary and benefits, turnover costs include training and management, lost productivity, dissatisfied customers, continual recruitment and more. The proper use of tailored assessments can greatly reduce these costs.

For example, companies frequently promote their best salesperson to be sales manager. In this one move, they often discover they have lost their best salesperson and gained both an ineffective manager and a disgruntled sales team. It has been shown in one series of assessments that 93% of highly successful outside salespeople produce a similar assessment profile—and this is not the profile of an effective sales manager. If you want a super salesperson, look for one with a strong sales profile; if you want a great manager, look for someone who fits a management profile. By properly structuring specific assessments to specific job descriptions, you can avoid the time, expense and aggravation of placing the wrong person in the wrong spot.

What about existing employees? The research of Dr. Robert S. Hartman (*The Individual in Management*) shows that appealing to employees as *persons* rather than *workers* taps a human resource that *can add 40% to productivity*. How can assessments help you tap into this additional 40% of a worker's "discretionary productivity?"

The key is to know what motivates each person. This can be money and material possessions, status and recognition, sense of mission, sense of belonging, self-improvement, personal relationships or combinations of these six motivators. They are different for each person.

The assessments give guidance into the best ways each person can be motivated. They point out what your highly talented people really want and how to keep them plugged into the right place. It's easier to give them what they want and need to be happy and productive when you take the guesswork out. Then you don't have to read their minds!

Assessments can be used to vastly improve communication, select the best members for a team, to resolve business and personal conflicts, choose a career or change one and develop effective management. They can be used to define and benchmark a particular job complete with interview questions for candidates, profiles to see which finalists might fit the best, and recommended training for the person who gets the job.

A lot of things can go wrong in getting and keeping the right person for the right place. Good help is still hard to find, but assessments dramatically increase the odds of getting it right—and keeping it right—the first time.

For more information, click into www.ttisuccess.com or www.mackarrington.com.

Mack Arrington, CNP, CPVA, CPBA, CAIA is a Business and Personal Coach in Greensboro. He coaches people to find and go for what they really, really want in business, career and life. He invites you to send coaching and assessment questions to him at 336-856-1600 or email thecoach@mackarrington.com.