## Members Quarterly

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**feature**

# Get the Right People on Board
NEW INSIGHTS ON ASSESSMENTS

"Getting the right people on the bus", to borrow from Jim Collins of Good to Great fame, is arguably one of the most critical challenges facing organizations. The complexities are further complicated by the diversification of our workforces and the globalization of the organizational landscapes in which we conduct business.

At the heart of this quest is the need to identify talent that will be the right "fit" for our organizations. There are many formal and informal ways that these individuals can be identified, including online sites such as Monster or LinkedIn.

Once this potential talent has been found, it raises an even more important question about how to identify which one of the many candidates provides the "best fit" for the organization. Despite the intensity and duration of hiring processes often including panel interviews and/ or exhaustive reference checks, surprisingly few use one of the most rigorous tools at their disposal.

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In too many cases, key decision-makers rely on a "gut feeling" to make this all important choice. Although it is tempting to feel we are fully equipped to make this decision, there is considerable evidence to suggest some discretion would be prudent here.

A recent paper statistically combined the findings from 140 separate studies which compared the effectiveness of "clinical" (e.g. professional judgment) versus mechanical (e.g. statistical/actuarial-based) assessment methods for making hiring decisions. The authors concluded that "depending on the specific analysis, mechanical prediction substantially outperformed clinical prediction in 33% to 47% of studies examined." Perhaps an even more compelling finding was that the superiority of mechanical versus clinical decision-making was consistent, even in cases where the judges were highly experienced. This suggests that experience may not be the best teacher when it comes to making hiring decisions.

Awareness and acceptance of our limitations is only the first step. Trying to identify the best "mechanical" tools for the job may be even more daunting. Conducting a Google search on the topic of assessment delivers an overwhelming number of possibilities. So, how does one decide?

In the world of psychometric assessment, two key differentiators separating effective from ineffective tools are reliability and validity.

One of the most important aspects of reliability relates to the stability of the results. In other words, if a candidate takes the same assessment next week, will their results be consistent? If the answer to this question is "no", major problems are created from a hiring perspective. An organization needs a tool that will allow them to be confident in their capacity to "know" who they will be getting today, tomorrow and next year. Tools that assess elements of the candidate's core personality deliver consistent results.

While reliability is important, arguably the most critical feature when using assessment in a business context is validity. A key indicator of validity involves the link between the assessment results and important outcomes including job performance, organizational commitment, etc. If these linkages are not part of the development of the assessment, it may not be linking to things that are of most value to the organization.

One of the industry leaders is the Hogan suite of assessments. On the market for over 30 years, Drs. Robert and Joyce Hogan have researched how our personalities affect organizational effectiveness and have integrated this knowledge into their assessment instruments.

In addition to the Hogan Personality Inventory which assesses an individual's "normal" personality, they have created other valuable tools such as the Hogan Development Survey (HDS), which outlines potential career "derailers". It provides unique insight into the behavioural tendencies that can trip us up and provides warning signs for us to be aware of when they arise. From a coaching and integration perspective, these insights may be invaluable to a hiring manager/organization when contemplating important talent selection or succession planning decisions.

Another Hogan tool, the Motives, Values and Preferences Inventory (MVPI), provides another invaluable indicator of "fit". If these key engagement factors do not overlap, research has shown that this can create numerous challenges for the employee and the organization. Making sure these are in alignment is a key aspect of a good hire.

Although trusting our gut may feel right, it may open ourselves and our organizations to tremendous risk. We may be better served by incorporating more effective and objective tools into our hiring/selection process. Specifically, researching the reliability and validity of proposed assessment tools would be a prudent step in the decision-making process. Although these should not be the only data source that is considered, the "right tools" can add tremendous value. This is crucial since, at present, there are countless tools available in the market that have not undergone rigorous and necessary scientific analysis.

Bringing on a key hire is an essential part of organizational life. Spending a little extra time and money fully evaluating the decision ahead of you is the best way to ensure that your bus will have the right people on it both now and in the future.

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