

An Assessment Strategy That Delivers More, Requires Less

BY ADRIENNE HEDGER

Assessments can be powerful tools for predicting employee performance, but they are often deployed in ways that undermine their value. Using a comprehensive approach helps companies make smart decisions at every phase of the employee lifecycle.

This is how it usually happens: A job applicant takes an assessment to see if he's the right fit for the company and the role. After he joins the company, he may be considered for a promotion, but not before he takes another assessment to gauge his managerial skills. Later he may be part of a team-building exercise, which requires an entirely different assessment.

"A lot of companies are dealing with 'assessment overkill,'" says Kevin Meyer, Consultant at Hogan Assessment Systems, an international personality assessment firm headquartered in Tulsa. "Over time, they've adopted specific assessment tools for specific needs. In theory, it's a good approach, but when you use different tools there's no common framework for a company to use to understand and evaluate its employees."

Instead, Meyer says companies should implement a comprehensive assessment strategy where employees are assessed only once using a standard inventory of questions to determine their full range of personality and values. The results can be used in multiple applications during the employee lifecycle.

"Companies that get better results—meaning stronger engagement, lower turnover and better overall business results—are using assessments in a centralized way," says Rodrigo Del Campo,

Executive Director of Alto Impacto, a Chilean assessment provider. "The assessments are used not only for selection and promotion, but also for developing improvement plans and following up on individual's progress."

Creating Consistency, Getting Results

"One of the most powerful benefits of a comprehensive approach is consistency," says Meyer. "All employees are measured the same way, which gives HR the insight needed to take workforce planning and talent analytics to the next level."

"Companies who use this strategy find they can do a much better job at succession planning, benchmarking, assessing bench strength, identifying gaps and more. They have all the data they need."

Michael Bazigos, a talent executive for a leading professional services firm, Columbia University professor, and former talent executive at IBM says he increased IBM's predictive power in selection by combining comprehensive assessments with behavioral interviews.

"If you're just looking to predict somebody's behavior in a narrow job, it's probably the case that a specialized assessment may be an effective route," says Bazigos. "But I like global assessments for high-potential leaders, because you want to understand where you might place that person both for the business and for their development, so you want a comprehensive view of their capabilities."

Data from a comprehensive assessment can be analyzed in any number of ways, says Meyer. For example, a company can run a leadership report to assess someone before a promotion or use a team report to see how someone will work in a group. A safety report can identify which individ-

uals have a tendency to be accident-prone.

"It's a paradigm shift for most organizations," says Meyer. "People expect a standalone, specialized product for each need. They are surprised to see how much they can do with the data collected from one assessment."

Implementing a New Approach

Bersin & Associates, an Oakland-based HR research and consulting company, said most large companies today purchase and use many forms of assessment for hiring, promotion and leadership.

Meyer concedes it's a challenge to transition companies to a single assessment.

"We advise a strategic, phased approach," he says. "Start with your biggest pain point. Are you trying to identify high potentials? Are you seeing trouble in a specific job family or office site? Start there and expand over time."

Conversion training helps people understand the new comprehensive approach, how it might be similar to other assessments, and what additional value it brings, he says.

"It's natural for there to be resistance in some areas," says Meyer. "We help our clients communicate what's happening and why. As the strategy takes hold, people see that a comprehensive approach makes so much more sense. It requires less from employees, yet it delivers an incredible amount of consistent data you can use to make smart decisions at every phase of the HR lifecycle."

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COMPANY PROFILE

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