TenStep, Inc.

TenStep Supplemental Paper

3 January 2004

Personality Testing

Personality tests indicate the basic tendencies of a candidate's core personality profile. Before a candidate is recruited, it is essential to analyze his or her behavioral patterns and personality traits.

Pre-employment screening is a must because it improves the employer's chances of making the right selection. The right personality or behavioral traits are required for the successful execution of existing assignments. Psychometric tests measure a candidate's behavior and are primarily used during recruitment to guide both the employer and the employee.

Personality tests enable the interviewer to assess the candidate better than a face-to-face interview does. In a face-to-face interview, candidates are always tempted to build an impressive picture of themselves and probably mislead the interviewer. Assessment tools are far more structured and reliable.

Intangible benefits of psychometric tests include:

- The recruiter can avoid a biased judgment of the candidate
- The recruiter can minimize the risk of choosing the wrong personality
- The recruiter can use it as an adjunct to the traditional, rigorously structured interview
- The recruiter can gain relevant information about the candidate
- The candidate can adopt a more positive and less defensive attitude

Do all successful people have identical personalities? Not unless you are working with androids. Are all "dominants" always successful? The answer is again negative. Successful performance depends more on common sense than any typology. The same logic holds true for communication styles and leadership.

Personality tests originated in theories for treating the mentally challenged. Later, certain generalizations were made to better understand human nature. These tests do not specifically address employee selection issues. They are broad-based, non-specific, general-purpose personality theories attempting to describe the entire universe of personalities. The nature of these tests prevents them from being the most sought after tool for studying job performance capabilities.

Most personality tests are based on the study of averages. Thus, using these personality tests to understand the behavior of a group is also not a viable option because they tend to hide the individual differences among team members.

If these ready-made and renowned tests do not help predict future performance, how can HR managers find the right person?

There is a simple method that enables HR managers to assess the accuracy of these tests. Begin by identifying at least two groups - a high performance group and a low

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performance group. Then, the results of the test should be statistically analyzed against the standard performance ratings scored by these groups. The test is valid only if there is no mean difference between them.

The right personality test can be a valuable selection tool. These tests need to aim at understanding culture compatibility rather than predicting performance. Any personality test should be carried out only after completing a position analysis and work environment analysis. Based on the results, the desirable traits should receive complete focus.

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