

## **Four Reasons Why Assessments Can Get You in Trouble**

It's black with white printing. It's a t-shirt which reads "Business is about Results!" It is one of the few t-shirts I have received over the years that I have kept. I received it at a conference many years ago put on by the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers.

As a business leader and business owner I know results are the only thing that matters! Nobody wants to pay for a half finished product or incomplete service. Without results there is no point in moving forward.

If you are anxious for results, one of the best ways to achieve results with individuals and teams is to use assessments. Are they foolproof and do they give you every ounce of information you need? Not by a long shot! However, they do give you a glimpse at the individuals you are:

- Considering hiring
- Wanting to provide more training for
- Thinking of putting into a team
- Creating a more cohesive team

Assessments can help you to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of an individual – i.e. room for improvement.

### **HIRING**

When assisting in the hiring process assessments are **ONLY ONE** of the processes used to ensure a good fit. And in this case it is used to help the corporate interviewer in drilling down in areas that may be seen as challenges. With more insight into ways the individual will fit into the existing culture a better hiring decision can be made. What is **NOT APPROPRIATE** is to simply cull prospective candidates based solely on their assessment.

Remember, assessments are only as good as the person who filled them out. They may have had a bad day, feel rushed because there are other commitments or detest the idea of a "test" which is how they view filling out an assessment. No assessment I have found is every one hundred percent accurate – there are always some inconsistencies however small.

### **TRAINING**

It is true – assessments can provide more information so you can guide your personnel in deciding which training programs will assist them in becoming better at their jobs. However, used alone you may find you are wasting your corporate dollars providing unnecessary training.

Far better to look at the assessment and evaluate it against what you see in the work place **BEFORE** you decide (along with the individual) which programs may be of value.

### **TEAM**

Many people like to work in a team, especially some of the younger generations. They feel confident when they have others to rely on rather than simply their own experiences. To have a successful team you need people with varying strengths. So, taking all the people who show strengths in one area may backfire. Instead build a team around the core strengths needed to accomplish the results. This may mean you need to examine a variety of strengths such as:

- An ability to lead
- A focus on time management
- A critical thinker
- Individuals who stand up for their beliefs

With assessments that explore these traits and others solely required for great results then the assessment is doing its job – it is showing which people to place into a team for the explicit purpose of seeing outcomes. Once this team has successfully completed its assignment it will be disbanded and a new and different team created based on the desired outcomes.

#### COHESIVE TEAM

Recently we had the opportunity to work with a team that had one individual that caused everyone else to shake their heads. Once the assessments were complete we shared the findings with the team as a whole. Suddenly everyone in the room realized some of the reasons why the team was not as cohesive as it could be.

Although not one hundred percent accurate, the assessment provided enough information that individuals now understand each other a little better and realize each person has strengths to bring to the team as well as areas which can cause people to be a little less close. In this case it made people realize the one individual is not simply being “difficult to get along with”, this individual is reacting true to the values and behaviours they exhibit.

In the end, this will help the team focus more on results instead of personalities.

#### CONCLUSION

When used totally on their own without other consideration there is a great chance you may inadvertently destroy the very outcome you are after.

However, used in conjunction with other assessments, personal observation, feedback and interest you may find your assessment is a valuable tool to achieve results. Without results all is of little value!