

Assessments: Hiring, Developing, and Retaining an Optimum Workforce

A rapidly changing talent market requires a heightened focus on the ability to attract, retain, and develop the talent that is the right fit for the organization. Assessments enable organizations to gain deeper, and more accurate insight into current and anticipated workforce needs, and can improve both pre- and post-hire operational metrics. In order to make objective placement and promotion decisions, organizations must be armed with the necessary knowledge to ensure they are selecting the best people for the job. Additionally, engagement is emerging as an increasingly important focus for organizations and they are looking to assessments that evaluate attitude, fit and satisfaction as part of engagement efforts.

To build and maintain their competitive position, organizations must understand how to assess current employees against defined competency models, and how to use that information to understand the viability of their existing workforce and to determine what to look for when hiring new employees. Recent Aberdeen research on performance management, succession management, learning and development, talent acquisition, and onboarding, has consistently found assessments, both pre- and post-hire, to be one of the key enablers of Best-in-Class organizations. Aberdeen's December 2008 report *The 2009 HR Executive's Agenda* found that Best-in-Class organizations are 62% more likely than all other organizations to use assessment and test-building software to support and / or narrow their placement and promotion efforts.

Context

Organizations are facing uncertain times, and need to understand the state of their current talent base and the gaps that exist – both current and future – with regards to the knowledge, skills sets, and employee attributes that are required by the organization. And the ability to assess for the right skills, behaviors, and knowledge in the pre-hire stage will be even more critical as recent layoffs and downsizings have lead to a glut of applicants in the marketplace. Now is the time for organizations to be able to filter out the clutter and focus on the candidates they know are a best fit for their organization. In addition, this same importance applies in the post-hire, as the ability to develop and retain key workers and make them as productive and happy as possible, has a tremendous impact on organizational efficiencies and productivity.

Research Preview

A Research Preview provides an advanced look at an upcoming study and the research hypothesis which will be explored based on prior research

How to Participate in the Study

If your company is:

- ✓ Struggling with the ability to identify, develop and retain its top talent
- ✓ Seeking to understand the overall level of engagement or satisfaction of its workers,
- ✓ A talent management suite or best-of-breed software provider that embeds assessments into its product offerings
- ✓ A provider of assessment software or services

[Contact us now to get involved in this study!](#)

Aberdeen’s Hypothesis

A critical ingredient to understanding and ultimately eliminating these talent gaps is an organization’s ability to assess the current state of its workforce, as well as the skills and capabilities of job applicants. In Aberdeen's October 2008 report Succession Management: Assessing the Leadership Development Challenge, behavioral assessments were rated as the number one enabler among Best-in-Class organizations. Organizations know that finding the right fit, and matching a potential promotion candidate's attributes with a pre-defined success profile is an important indicator of success in their new job role. Also, assessments for knowledge / skills and behaviors were cited as a top enabler by over half of Best-in-Class companies in our July 2008 report Talent Acquisition Strategies, as a way to ensure that the right competencies and attitudes are being brought into the organization. This report will build on those findings to understand how Best-in-Class organizations are using assessments, both pre- and post-hire to attract, retain, and develop their top talent, and manage feedback to understand the needs and engagement of their workforce.

"Succession management should include...a reliable assessment system."

~ EVP/SVP/VP of HR, Large Asia-Pacific-based oil and mining company

Table I: The Best-in-Class PACE Framework

Pressures	Actions	Capabilities	Enablers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic uncertainty shifting focus to productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop competency frameworks ▪ Align employee goals and development to business priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workforce core competencies required for each job and career path are defined ▪ Well-defined processes for measuring quality of hire ▪ HR has understanding of key business priorities ▪ Frequently assess the attitudes of employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment / test building tools (how does this differ from the next three?) ▪ Assessment tools for skills and knowledge ▪ Assessment tools for behaviors and attributes ▪ Tests/assessments for promotion / placement ▪ Competency model libraries and tools ▪ Integration of assessment data with learning & development ▪ Integration of assessment data with performance management ▪ Succession management software

Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2009

The performance metrics which will be used to determine Best-in-Class may include:

- Employee performance
- Employee engagement
- Employee retention
- Quality of hire
- Employee performance after a job promotion

Outcome

The benefits of using assessments are the ability to understand and evaluate the key skills, behaviors and competencies required when hiring new employees, as well as insights into how to improve the overall readiness and quality of the organization's current workforce.

Our research will show how the implementation of robust assessment capabilities can result in:

- Increased alignment between business needs and available talent and skills
- Improved targeting of learning and development efforts
- Improved results in recruiting efforts
- Improved engagement through targeted development opportunities and job assignments

"The RPO provider should demonstrate better quality of pre-screening of applicants to meet our minimum standards."

~ HR Practitioner, small US-based engineering company

Solution Snapshot

Assessments are used in a number of ways by organizations, and not surprisingly vendors in this space also deliver assessment solutions in multiple ways. Some vendors offer a la carte assessment products that may be off-the-shelf or customized. Some offer assessments as part of a broader talent management suite. And some go to market with a combination of any or all of the above. Solutions also vary by when they fall in the employee life cycle with solutions such as pre-hire assessments for skills, behaviors and cultural fit or post-hire assessments of performance, succession readiness or leadership capability.

Table 2: A Partial Vendor List

Company	Pre- or Post-hire	Solution Focus
Abso abso.com	Pre-hire	Integrated into talent acquisition and background screening solution.
Aon Talent Solutions www.aon.com	Pre- and post-hire	Leadership and pre-hire assessments that can be customized and delivered via web or telephone
Authoria www.authoria.com	Post-hire	Integrated within performance management solution.
Beeline www.beeline.com	Pre- and post-hire	Applicant assessments and 360 assessments integrated with talent management system.
Bernard Hodes Group (Hodes iQ) www.hodesiq.com	Pre- and post-hire	Integrated with talent management system.
BDI www.businessdecisions.com	Post-hire	Competency based, multi-rater assessments.
Caliper www.caliperonline.com	Pre- and post-hire	Stand-alone assessment solutions for selection, development and performance management

Company	Pre- or Post-hire	Solution Focus
Censeo www.censeocorp.com	Pre- and post-hire	Fully managed ASP offerings for selection, multi-rater feedback, skill and behavioral assessment.
Cezanne Software www.cezannesw.com	Pre- and post-hire	Integrated within recruiting, training, performance and succession solutions, as well as tools to create and administer employee surveys. Also provide assessments through partner solutions.
Cognisco www.cognisco.com	Post-hire	Stand-alone, online delivery of employee understanding assessments, learning & development assessments.
Cognology www.cognology.com.au	Post-hire	Web-based 360 or performance management assessments online or integrated with the intranet.
Connect the Dots www.connectthedotsconsulting.com	Post-hire	Web-based surveys mostly focused on determining employee engagement for exempt professionals and executives
CPP, Inc. www.cpp.com	Pre- and post-hire	Exclusive publisher of the MBTI® (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®). Offerings include personality, career, and organizational development assessments.
DDI www.ddiworld.com	Pre- and post-hire	Assessments integrated into recruiting, leadership development and executive development solutions.
Employee Continuum www.employeecontinuum.com	Pre-hire	Best-fit hiring assessments
Executrack www.executrack.net	Pre- and post-hire	Hiring assessments, learning assessments, cultural assessments.
First Advantage www.fadv.com	Pre- and post-hire	Comprehensive suite of assessments integrated into talent management solution
Halogen www.halogensoftware.com	Post-hire	Integrated into performance and talent management solutions.
Hogan Assessment Systems www.hoganassessments.com	Pre- and post-hire	Portfolio of stand-alone assessment products for selection, development and leadership readiness.
HR Chally Group www.chally.com	Pre- and post-hire	One web-based assessment that collects 866 data points. Used for selection, deployment and development
Human Resource Alignment www.hralignment.net	Pre- and post-hire	Focus on stand-alone executive assessments for executive Onboarding, career transitions, succession planning
iCIMS www.icims.com	Pre- and post-hire	Selection assessments, performance assessments integrated into talent management solution.
Infor www.infor.com	Post-hire	Assessments and multi-rater assessments integrated into talent management offerings.
Iscofia www.iscofia.com	Pre- and post-hire	Assessment platform that enables end-user organizations to build their own assessments or implement best-of-breed tests.

Company	Pre- or Post-hire	Solution Focus
Kenexa www.kenexa.com	Pre- and post-hire	Skills testing, behavioral and personality assessments, competency modeling and assessment.
Knowledge Advisors www.knowledgeadvisors.com	Post-hire	Design and implementation of learning testing & assessments, competency assessments
Leadership IQ www.leadershipiq.com	Post-hire	Stand-alone, web-based multi-rater and engagement surveys
Learn.com www.learn.com	Pre- and post-hire	Competency assessments within performance management offering. Build and manage pre-hire assessments within recruiting and onboarding.
OOJob www.ojob.net	Pre- and post-hire	ASP providing customized and off the shelf skills and behavioral assessments, including 360°, complemented by “matching” searches.
PDI www.personneldecisions.com	Pre- and post-hire	Selection assessments for skills, behaviors, aptitude, development and succession assessments.
Pilat www.pilat-nai.com	Post-hire	Multi-rater assessments. Offered over the internet as a managed ASP service, or in-house.
Plateau www.plateau.com	Post-hire	Multi-rater, learning, development, performance assessments integrated within talent management solution
PreVisor www.previsor.com	Pre- and post-hire	Competencies, skills, personality assessments. Off the shelf or custom, stand-alone offering.
Profiles International www.profilesinternational.com	Pre- and post-hire	Stand-alone portfolio of behavioral, competency, personality and multi-rater assessments. Integrates with various talent management solutions
QuestionMark www.questionmark.com	Pre- and post-hire	Knowledge, skills, and behavioral assessments. Stand-alone off the shelf offerings, as well as test authoring software.
Reactive360 www.reactive360.com	Post-hire	Dynamic, online, customizable multi-rater assessments for large or small groups.
SHL People Performance www.shl.com	Pre- and post-hire	Stand-alone offerings for personality, skill, cultural assessments, multi-rater performance assessments.
SilkRoad www.silkroad.com	Pre- and post-hire	Selection and performance assessments Integrated into hiring and performance management modules.
Sonar6 www.sonar6.com	Post-hire	Performance reviews, assessments of capabilities, competencies and potential integrated into graphics based online performance and talent management offering.
SuccessFactors www.successfactors.com	Post-hire	Multi-rater performance assessments integrated into performance and talent management offerings.
TalentQuest www.talentquest.com	Pre- and post-hire	Multi-rater assessments, executive assessment, online pre-hire assessments, engagement surveys.
Taleo www.taleo.com	Pre- and post-hire	Selection, performance, skill assessments integrated into recruiting and performance solutions

Company	Pre- or Post-hire	Solution Focus
The Gabriel Institute (TGI) www.thegabrielinstitute.com	Pre- and post-hire	Qualitative role-based solutions that can be delivered via a web-based talent management portal
Vangent www.vangent-hcm.com	Pre- and post-hire	Integrated within performance management solutions, also offer stand-alone selection assessments.
viaPeople www.viapeople.com	Post-hire	Multi-rater feedback, competency and skill assessments and employee surveys. Stand-alone 360, as well as integrated into performance management and succession planning.
Wonderlic www.wonderlic.com	Pre- and post-hire	Competency based assessments for best-fit hires. 360/performance assessments, employee surveys.

Source: Aberdeen Group, February 2009

For more information on this or other research topics, please visit www.aberdeen.com.

Related Research	
<i>The 2009 HR Executive's Agenda</i> ; December, 2008 <i>Succession Management: Assessing the Leadership Development Challenge</i> ; October, 2008 <i>Achieving Real Business value with Learning and Development</i> ; September, 2008	<i>Talent Acquisition Strategies: Employer Branding and Quality of Hire Take Center Stage</i> ; July, 2008 <i>Managing Employee Performance</i> ; May, 2008 <i>Competency Management: The Link Between Talent management and Optimum Business Results</i> ; August, 2007
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