

Case Study: “Our Assessment Program Isn’t Working...”

If your assessment program appears to be having less effect than you anticipated, or no effect, or (worse) a negative effect, it is time for a thorough checkup! Here is a list of questions for your assessment program checkup:

Do you actually have a program? Examine the process your business is using to administer and apply assessments: Are the procedures written, consistent, and used as designed?

Are you using the assessment results to affect your decisions?

Too often, close examination of the usage of assessment information exposes the fact that results are simply being ignored, underweighted, or “explained away” by the people on the front lines of the decision process. A simple analysis of a prescreening program, for example, will often reveal that there is simply no significant difference in the assessment results of those hired and those not hired after assessment. In these cases, the front-line decision makers may well believe that they are using the information, and

will often passionately defend the reasons that assessment information was not used in specific decisions.

Is each assessment being used appropriately?

In the Department of Labor’s Testing and Assessment: An Employer’s Guide To Good Practices, this is a cardinal principle. Use assessments as they were designed to be used, and for purposes that were tested in the validation process.

Are your outcome measures job-related, specific, measurable, and repeatable?

The selection of outcome measures is critical to the success of your program. The less subjective your outcome measures, the more likely you will be to properly implement, adjust, and maximize your program. Beware “fuzzy” measurements, like managers’ opinions of effectiveness, self-scoring of variables like happiness and satisfaction, and correlations with other variables that may have low reliability of their own.

Are you using a “whole person” approach?

Referring to the DOL once more, this is a crucial question. Assessment programs are, at the most basic level, simply intended to provide information. Information, from any source, is subject to error.

Therefore, it is important to have information from a variety of reliable sources, and any single assessment’s information should be combined with information from other sources, to minimize error and increase the probability that a good decision will result.

Complete this checkup now, and repeat it at regular intervals.

Designing and implementing an assessment program is a process, not a single action. Constant review, continuing measurement, and an open mind are the hallmarks of an assessment program that works!

Analysis of 10 Assessment Programs Reporting Inconsistent Results

Industry	Documented Program	Consistent Use	Appropriate Purpose	Measurable Outcomes	Whole Person	Periodic Review
Manufacturing	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Manufacturing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Eldercare	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Hospitality	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Hospitality	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Hospitality	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Staffing	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Financial	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Recreation	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Recreation	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No

