Making "People Decisions:"
How HR Leader Adecco is moving to Data-centric Recruiting

By Paige Beaton, Talentoday

Personality can trump technical qualifications when it comes to choosing someone who will fit the role and grow within the position. According to 2012 research from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), only about 20 percent of employers use personality assessments during the hiring process,[1] although 71 percent indicated these tests can be useful in predicting organizational fit and job-related behavior.

Today, an increasing number of data-driven psychometric tools and solutions are popping up to bring science-based decisions to human resources and recruiting. Algorithm-based decision tools are allowing recruiters and HR to move from "gut feeling" to objective, data-driven decisions for hiring and talent assessment. A recent study by the *Harvard Business Review* reported that "a simple equation outperforms human decisions by at least 25 percent."[2] Using psychometrics and predictive behavioral analytics, talent professionals are now able to improve and strategically enhance their practices.

The Perfect Combination: Soft skills + Data science + Hiring experience = Placement Success

Given the ever-widening skills gap, there's logic in finding candidates who will fit in a company, even if they don't have every qualification for the job. In fact, 38 percent of employers have open positions they cannot find the talent to fill.[3] To jump the skills gap, many employers are looking to candidates who have the right personality and motivations for the organization, along with the enthusiasm and ability to learn the skills they lack.

A candidate's personality and passion influences what they enjoy doing, and are ultimately good at doing. What project will a particular candidate enjoy? What team members they will gel best with? To answer these questions, a combination of psychometrics and hiring expertise is ideal. Smart organizations are taking personality assessments to the next level, using modern tools to complement soft skills assessment and the recruiter's hiring experience. Data-driven

recruiting allows HR professionals to save time by prequalifying and interviewing the right candidates, provide evidence for their decisions, and select and place the right candidate in the right position.

Using Psychometrics in the Workplace

Using psychometrics as a means to screen candidates is not a new form of recruiting, but usage has dramatically increased in the past few years. There are several factors that explain the success and widespread use of psychometrics and data into the recruiting process.

First, replacing employees is costly; employers are using psychometrics as a means of reducing turnover. Recruiting costs, including costs associated with sourcing and interviewing, are extremely high, as is the cost of training and onboarding new hires. According to one estimate in a recent CareerBuilder study, the price tag of a "bad hire" costs American companies an average of $50,000.[4] For some jobs, it may cost much more.

Second, psychometrics allow HR professionals to get to know their candidates beyond their technical qualifications and past experiences. As an early step in the recruiting process, psychometrics can be used to help prepare behavioral interview questions that focus on the essential personality traits for the desired position. By analyzing personality test results, trained HR professionals can determine where a candidate may or may not fit within the organization.

A third effective use of psychometrics is to discover if candidates match company culture. By first using psychometric testing within the organization on current employees, HR can strategically determine the culture of their organization and the personality that makes for a top-performing employee within that culture. Avoiding a costly mismatch is essential, and by identifying if the candidates' traits and motivations align with a company's culture is not easy to detect during an interview. With data-driven psychometric testing, HR professionals are able to gain insight into who the candidate is and how they will fit in the

company.

Lastly, effective deployment of assessment tools provides candidates with opportunities for self-discovery and empowerment. Taking an employee/candidate-centric attitude and delivering value-added services to candidates will reflect positively on the company.

Psychometric-based People Analytics Solution

Talentoday provides HR professionals with in-depth behavioral analytics based on validated psychometrics. The company was created to provide individuals and enterprises with intelligent recommendations for career success. The People Analytics solution was created by a team of accredited psychologists, engineers, data scientists, and HR experts. The team has collected massive datasets and transformed this data into personalized career analytics. The solution allows recruitment professionals to ensure the reliability of their candidate selections by evaluating the personality and professional motivations of each individual. Professionals are able to identify best-fit opportunities and matches between the candidate, position, and company culture, optimizing job placements, and proposing high-value services to candidates. Since launching in January 2014, more than 3 million people have taken the Talentoday assessment.

"Nowadays, companies that are looking to recruit are often faced with a homogenous pool of candidates—same age, same degree, same studies, and thus, same hard skills—and find it difficult to obtain specific insights about how one candidate or another will be a better fit with the company," explains Pierre-François Verley, psychologist, co-founder and CEO of Talentoday. Combining soft skills assessment and previously identified people analytics allows the recruiter to identify how well a candidate will adapt to the company culture, work with a team, and excel in a given position.

Talentoday is introducing analytics and psychometrics to organizations and HR professionals, empowering them to use objective data to make better hiring and career-long decisions. At the same time, psychometrics-based questionnaires can provide individuals with insights that support self awareness, and potentially lead to greater career fulfillment.

Using Psychometrics to predict Future Success: Predictive Behavioral Analytics

Beyond selection and hiring, behavioral analytics can be used to predict whether a candidate will be a successful manager or describe how they tend to communicate with their co-workers. Personality information combined with big data analytics is providing more information than ever before.

Pierre-François Verley explains, *"The mix of data-based insights and the wisdom of experienced recruiters allows for the best decision making ever."* By integrating big data technology solutions such as Talentoday into traditional HR practices, not only will professionals enhance their services, but candidates and employees will also benefit from learning how they can perform at their peak and find fulfillment in their careers.

Match Candidates to Job Positions and Company Culture

With Talentoday's Target Profile, HR professionals are able to precisely define who they want to fill an open position and match candidate lists to job profiles. The tool highlights key personality traits and motivations necessary to be successful in a given position and fit with the company culture. Target Profile automates the definition of key success factors by analyzing required soft skills and current employee performance data. After assessing and compiling the results of a selection of employees, a personality profile is created to illustrate the keys to success in a job position and organization.

Using an algorithm developed with data scientists from MIT and Stanford University, Target Profile provides intelligent recommendations for career direction to individuals and enterprises. The algorithm uses Talentoday datasets to determine behavioral constants of a successful and fulfilled population, defining a Target Profile for a dedicated position, team, business unit, etc. Once determined, it is possible to quickly screen a pool of candidates and reveal the individuals who best match those behavioral criteria.

Figure 1.Talentoday Profile

Figure 2. Target Profile | Talentoday.com.

Endnotes

1 SHRM Poll: Most Employers Don't Use Personality Tests. SHRM, 1 Apr. 2012. http://www.shrm.org/hrdisciplines/ staffingmanagement/articles/pages/ mostemployersdontusepersonalitytests.aspx.

2 Nathan R. Kuncel, Deniz S. Ones, and David M. Klieger. "In Hiring, Algorithms Beat Instinct." *Harvard Business Review*. 1 May 2014. https://hbr.org/2014/05/in-hiring-algorithms-beat-instinct.

3 "Talent Crunch Study." CareerBuilder. 2012. http://careerbuildercommunications.com/ talentcrunch/.

4 "More Than Half of Companies in the Top Ten World Economies Have Been Affected By a Bad Hire" CareerBuilder, 8 May 2013. http:// www.careerbuilder.com/share/aboutus/ pressreleasesdetail.aspx?sd=5%2F8%2F2013 &siteid=cbpr&sc_cmp1=cb_pr757_&id=pr757 &ed=12%2F31%2F2013.

5 Lauren Weber "Today's Personality Tests Raise the Bar for Job Seekers." WSJ. N.p., 14 Apr. 2015. http://www.wsj.com/articles/a-personality-test-could-stand-in-the-way-of-your-next-job-1429065001?tesla=y.

About the Authors

Paige Beaton is the product marketing manager at Talentoday, a People Analytics solution. Talentoday improves career success by delivering personal insights based on psychometrics and predictive analytics. The company provides a free assessment for individuals and a cloud-based framework for Career and HR experts to scale and optimize effective job placement. Responsible for the product marketing, lead generation activities, and community management for Talentoday, Beaton works to provide and introduce an innovative solution to individuals and enterprises around the world. She is passionate about education and sharing the vision of Talentoday globally, and can be reached at *p.beaton@ talentoday.com*.

Case Study: Adecco Group

Adecco Group, a global leader in HR services, has seen the workforce evolve over nearly two decades. The company understands the advantages of using psychometrics and data in people operations and recruiting. Using Talentoday, Adecco has brought innovation to the recruiting by using a new method based on data, with the ability to determine the perfect fit between a candidate's personality, the job position, and the organization culture.

Challenges and Needs

Adecco Group faced two main challenges when approaching their recruiting practices, and looked to a modern solution to answer these needs. First, they were looking to save time by enhancing the efficiency of their consultants, especially with respect to data-driven prescreening of their candidates — and reducing the time spent in interviews. Additionally, Adecco looked to offer a more positive experience for every candidate, attracting and satisfying the best candidates for clients with a modern and innovative tool.

Solution: How they set up Talentoday and How the Solution is Answering their Needs

Adecco implemented Talentoday into their recruiting and placement practices to allow their consultants to better serve every candidate and client. By training their team of consultants to be data-centric recruiters, they are able to offer intelligent recommendations and placement support for candidates. Consultants equipped with expert knowledge of analytics and psychometrics are able to implement more user-centric solutions and serve clients with a more personalized approach—despite working on a massive scale.

Loren Resal, training and development manager for Spring France Adecco, weighed in on Talentoday's impact:

"A successful recruitment is strongly linked to our ability to assess not only the technical skills of candidates, but also their personality and professional motivations. Our partnership with Talentoday offers each of our consultants a tool that is both powerful and easy to use, allowing them to prepare for each of their interviews. Based on a comprehensive report, each consultant can design the interviews and questions based on the positions they are recruiting for. Our candidates benefit from feedback sessions focused on their career paths, best-fit job positions, and their personality preferences and professional motivations.

As "creators of professional affinities," our ambition is to provide our clients with candidates who bring the necessary skills to succeed in their organizations...a compatible personality to work with the team, and an aligned motivation to the proposed position. The easy assessment process, positive user experience, reliability, and transparency of the Talentoday results are real assets to Spring and Adecco. They contribute to the image and message we are sending to our clients and candidates."

Results

In just 6 weeks, 200 Adecco consultants were trained on the psychometrics and effective usage of Talentoday for their clients and candidates. These 200 consultants are assessing 15 candidates per week on average. Overall, Talentoday is helping Adecco consultants reduce the time for placements by 32 percent, and with the addition of this high-value solution to their portfolio, some consultants have upsold their existing clients full personality reports. Adecco is looking to see a 2x return-on-investment (ROI) by the end of 2015. CEO of the Adecco Executive Branch, Christophe Catoir, says, *"Our partnership with Talentoday responds to the objective to transform conventional recruitment methods. Given the volume at which we recruit technical, middle and top management talent, Talentoday allows us to leverage big data to optimize job placements."*

"In 2001, 26 percent of large U.S. employers used pre-hire assessments. By 2013, the number had climbed to 57 percent."[5] This number will inevitably increase as more and more professionals and enterprises integrate personality assessment and data-driven approaches to selection practices. Ultimately, we expect to see an increase in the use candidate and employee-centric solutions across the range of HR activities.