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## Measuring Potential: Secrets to a good job fit

By: JIM PLOTKIN - For the North County Times

How many of you have hired a temp who typed 80 words per minute, scored high on the software tests and had great references ---- but ended up being a horrible hire? Maybe he or she was too introverted, unyielding, careless, unreliable or slow to learn. In any event, you would have been better off with someone who typed slower, but learned faster, tried harder and smiled a little more often.Ý

It's a common mistake. Companies often base their hiring decisions on skills alone, neglecting other important factors. In general, there are three "variables" that every employer should consider. Put them together, and you have the formula for a good job fit:Ý

Personality +ÝIntegrity + Cognitive Abilities = Promising Candidate.

That sounds simple enough, but what do these terms mean, and how do you measure these attributes? When someone says, "Joe has a great personality," does that mean he's well-rounded or that he has good social skills (which may not be his "personality" so much as his level of maturity and acquired behavior)?Ý

Measuring personality is somewhat broad, but certain personality types are definitely better for certain positions. Good salespeople are generally more extroverted. Good waiters and waitresses are generally very accommodating. Identifying people with the right personality traits will lead to better hires.Ý

Measuring integrity helps you find more conscientious employees who are less prone to counterproductive behavior. Just imagine having an entire crew of "good citizens" who can depend on one another to show up every day and work hard. That's half the battle in establishing a strong work force.Ý

Finally, it's important to understand a person's cognitive abilities. How quickly can he or she learn? How strong is his or her analytical reasoning? For a mundane job with repetitive tasks, you don't need to set the bar as high. But if you want someone who can be trained easily and advance into higher positions, you need to measure cognitive abilities ---- which you can't always determine from a transcript or a resume. There are many quick learners out there without a college degree or even a high school diploma, and some slow learners with glowing resumes.Ý

Armed with this formula and the right kind of employee assessments, you will gain valuable insights based on objective data. You will be able to compare internal or external candidates on a level playing field. And you will be much more likely to make good hires.Ý

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