

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
OF
VALIDATION RESEARCH**

SUPPORTING

THE JOB APPLICANT SURVEY

Prepared by

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Purpose of the Executive Summary

This summary of the validation research supporting the Job Applicant Survey (abbreviated here as “JAS”) provides an overview, in non-technical terms, of the research, development and validation of the Job Applicant Survey. Every effort has been made to present this material free from the specialized jargon of statistics and research. The purpose of such jargon is to increase the precision of language used to describe technical work. Therefore, avoiding such technical jargon will, at times, result in more general statements than would otherwise be the case. We accept this limitation in order to clarify the research findings for the non-technical reader. A more technically precise explanation of the issues presented here is available in the full validation report on the Job Applicant Survey (technical report # 2501).

Description of the JOB APPLICANT SURVEY

Job Applicant Survey is a self-report inventory of an individual’s attitudes and past behavior with regard to these job-relevant risk and performance areas:

RISK AREAS:

- Employee theft and pilferage of both money and company property;
- Drug use that would affect performance on the job;
- Temper control, both verbal and physical;

WORK ETHIC ATTITUDES:

- Attendance -- showing up for work as scheduled;
- Punctuality -- being on time;
- Initiative -- doing what needs to be done without having to be told;
- Reaction to authority -- a willingness to take direction.

SERVICE ATTITUDES:

- Helpfulness orientation -- a willingness to assist customers;
- Dealing with rude customers -- a willingness to stay calm;
- Sales Orientation -- a willingness to sell.

The Job Applicant Survey is designed to allow employers to:

1. Screen job applicants and incumbents for potential risk and performance potential in the areas listed above;
2. Provide a basis for the instruction of employees in appropriate workplace behavior in each of the areas listed above.

Design and Development of the JOB APPLICANT SURVEY

The Job Applicant Survey is designed to provide employers with an idea of the amount of risk there is that a job applicant or employee could display inappropriate behavior(s) or an unproductive attitude in any one of the ten areas it measures. The degree of risk in each of the ten areas was defined by either an admission (or admissions) of past inappropriate behavior, or by the extent of agreement with a statement that there are circumstances that justify inappropriate behavior in a given area.

The JAS’s test items ask a respondent to rate his or her attitude toward the area in question, or about his or her past behavior with regard to that area on a ten-point response scale. One end of the response scale for every item contains a “Totally Disagree” or similar choice in order to avoid forcing the applicant into an unwarranted admission.

The Validation Process

The validation process is a way of determining, through scientific research, whether a test effectively measures what it is designed to measure. The three approaches to test validation are content-related validation, construct-related validation, and criterion-related validation. While validation evidence obtained using any one of the three is acceptable, a stronger case for a test’s validity is built when validation evidence comes from two, or even all three, of these approaches. Consequently, the initial effort of the JAS validation research focused on providing evidence of content-related validity. Evidence of criterion-related and construct-related validity is being collected during concurrent usage studies.

The JAS validation research was designed and conducted according to the criteria and standards for test development established by the American Psychological Association in their “Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing.”

Distribution of Item Responses

Items on the JAS ask the test-taker about his or her willingness to see inappropriate behavior or

unproductive attitudes, in each of the ten areas, as acceptable or unacceptable, or whether he or she has committed inappropriate behavior in a given area in the past. For each item, the test-takers chose a response from a ten-point scale that ranged from “Totally Disagree” at one end of the scale to “Totally Agree” at the other end. The assumption was made that test-takers would make a reasonable effort to make a favorable impression and would therefore avoid admitting to past behavior or attitudes that they believed would be considered inappropriate or unacceptable by interviewers, or that would call into question their ability to act appropriately on the job.

For the “Risk Area” items, the percentage of test-takers who chose a response other than “Totally Disagree” ranged from two percent (2%) to seventy-five percent (75%), depending on the item. On the average, about twenty percent (20%) of test-takers chose a response other than “Totally Disagree.” This figure of twenty percent corresponds roughly to the figures often cited as reflecting the percentage of the general population that is at risk to engage in inappropriate behavior of some sort and, in addition, provides evidence that the JAS accurately reflects the diversity of the range of such behavior that exists in the population.

Content validity

Content-related validation evidence is provided by examining the extent to which the items on a test are representative of the content areas that the test is designed to measure. All of the items on the Job Applicant Survey were constructed to match as closely as possible in content, presentation format, and terminology the opinions or behavior that the item addressed (i.e., theft, attendance, dealing with rude customers, etc.). Thus, the fact that the content, format and terminology of items on the Job Applicant Survey focus directly and unambiguously on the subject matter of the intended content domains provides evidence for the content-related validity of the Job Applicant Survey.

Construct and criterion validity

Construct-related validation evidence and criterion-related validity evidence will be based on on-going research, and will be reported in future publications.

Legal and Ethical Concerns

The Job Applicant Survey is designed to be used as one part, and only one part, of the pre-employment evaluation of prospective applicants at all levels of employment. It is intended to give an employer an indication of the degree of risk for inappropriate behavior or unproductive attitudes indicated by an applicant or incumbent endorsing questionable attitudes or admitting past inappropriate behavior.

Questionable JAS results do not mean that the person will necessarily act inappropriately in the risk area in question. Questionable JAS results indicate either the admission of past inappropriate behavior or of unproductive attitudes. The individual producing questionable JAS results should always be given the opportunity to explain his or her questionable JAS responses.

The decision to hire or not to hire an applicant should never be made on the basis of JAS results alone. All available information about the applicant from interviews, background checks, references and other relevant pre-employment screening procedures should be considered along with JAS results in order to make the hiring decision.

The Job Applicant Survey is intended to be used as only one part of a selection process that should include information about the applicant obtained from, but not limited to, interviews, background and reference checks, drug screening, physical examinations and other relevant pre-employment screening procedures.

Recent litigation concerning the concept of “negligent hiring” has taken the position that it is the employer’s responsibility to be aware of the degree of risk that any of its employees might commit inappropriate workplace behavior that would result in an employee’s harming a co-worker, customer or purveyor, and to deal with that risk through appropriate selection decisions, training, or work assignments. The Job Applicant Survey is designed to be used as one part of a multi-part pre-employment evaluation process and an employee training program whose intent is to hire those applicants with the greatest potential and to help educate employees about appropriate behavior on the job.

Statement of Principle

Helm and Associates, Inc is dedicated to the proper use of tests to make the hiring, placement and promotion process fair and objective. It is our belief that both organizations and their employees benefit most when there is a good match between the job and the person who fills it.

Tests for Sales, Management, Executive and Professional Positions:

PERFORMANCE PROFILE – Measures fifteen job-relevant personality and performance characteristics, and includes the General Information Appraisal and the Work Attitude Questionnaire. Instructs/trains for improved managerial effectiveness.

Tests for the Financial Services Industry:

TELLER TEST – Measures a bank teller applicant's general competency by focusing on the core teller competency of counting money accurately under time pressure.

BANK RELY TEST – Measures work ethic, attitudes toward punctuality, attendance and initiative. Instruct/trains for a good work ethic.

BANK CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY – Measures People Orientation, Cross Selling Ability and Complaint Handling Ability. Instructs/trains for improved customer service.

CREDIT UNION MEMBER SERVICE SURVEY – Measures People Orientation, Cross Selling Ability and Complaint Handling Ability. Instructs/trains for improved member service.

Tests for the Employment Services Industry:

RELY FOR TEMPS TEST – Measures work ethic in Temp applicants, attitudes toward punctuality, attendance and initiative. Instructs/trains for a good work ethic.

RELY-PLUS TEST and **QWIK-RELY TEST** – Measure work ethic, attitudes toward punctuality, attendance and initiative. Instructs/trains for a good work ethic.

Tests for the Retail Industry:

COIN TEST – Designed for cashiers or any position involving the handling of money. Measures the ability to count money accurately under time pressure. Available in industry-specific versions for convenience stores, grocery stores, drug stores, and restaurants.

JOB APPLICANT SURVEY – Measures service attitudes (helpfulness, dealing with rude customers, sales), work ethic (attendance, punctuality, initiative, reaction to authority) and risk attitudes (theft, drug use, temper control).

General Employment Tests:

GENERAL INFORMATION APPRAISAL – Measures general knowledge and thinking skills. Appropriate for all jobs and employment levels.

WORK ATTITUDE PROGRAM – Measures attitudes toward theft, substance abuse on the job, temper control, and respect for others. Instructs/trains in appropriate workplace behavior.

RELY-PLUS TEST and **QWIK-RELY TEST** – Measure work ethic, attitudes toward punctuality, attendance and initiative. Instructs/trains for a good work ethic.

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