

# NEWS HELM AND ASSOCIATES, INC. BULLETIN

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*The NEWS BULLETIN is a publication of Helm and Associates, Inc. It is published to provide a forum for discussion of issues relating to the use of employment tests in banks and credit unions. Helm and Associates, Inc. develops and validates employment tests and provides psychological assessment services to clients throughout the world.*

## ***Employment Testing In Banks And Credit Unions***

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Volume 3

Issue 1

October 2008

Barbara Otto, Editor

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### ***This Month's Subject: Advice For Uncertain Times***

One of the subtle side effects of our present uncertain times is that it's all too easy to lose focus on what *can* be done. The repetition of bad news, the minute-to-minute reporting about every downturn in the economy, or poor economic report, all pile up to create the impression that we are helpless in the face of forces beyond our control.

So let's take a look at some good advice for uncertain times: focus on what *you* can do and on the best way to do it, and then stick to your program. This applies to hiring and selection just as much as to all other areas of our lives. Now is the time to make sure that you have established a sound selection process, and that you continue to follow that process.

### **The Basic Selection Process**

There are four main elements of a sound selection process:

1. Make sure that you have current, written job descriptions that not only describe the actual duties, responsibilities, and reporting structure, but also include descriptions of the skills, knowledge, and experience that are required to perform those duties.
2. Treat all applicants with the respect, consideration, and fairness, just as you would like to be treated.
3. Use as many sources of information about an applicant as are available and required before you make selection decisions, including background and credit checks, reference and education verification, interviews, and employment tests.
4. Hire the right person, not just any person.

Every step in a sound selection process should be reviewed and renewed as often as possible. Reviewing the process often gives you opportunities to improve the process, as well as to make sure that it is being followed consistently. Finally, frequent reviews often bring attention to new ways to use the

information that your process generates. Let's look, for example, at a new way to use information from employment tests.

## **A New Way Of Using Employment Test Results**

We all use diagnostic testing in many parts of our lives. Diagnostic tests measure the current status of a given situation or system, and are particularly useful at highlighting what is broken, missing, or working incorrectly, so that corrections or treatments can be applied.

We use tests, for example, to find out how healthy we are (or why we don't feel well), to find out what needs to be done to our cars, or to find out why our computers aren't working very fast.

The purpose of diagnostic tests is to help us plan a course of action: what do we need to do in order to stay healthy? Is it time to get the car's brakes worked on? Is it time to upgrade the virus protection or some hardware in our computer?

The bottom line is that diagnostic tests give us information that we use to make the best possible decision. And that is exactly what employment tests can do for us as well.

Employment tests measure specific skills, aptitudes, or attitudes. Employment test results give us "point in time" information not only about what the person knows or can do right now, but also about what training or experience the person needs in order to be more productive.

Here are three ways that employment test results can be used to improve your training programs and placement decisions:

- Employment test results can provide specific information about the training that a new employee will need in order to be productive on the job;
- Employment test results can be used to pre-test or post-test the effectiveness of training programs;
- Employment test results help you make better placement decisions because you can use them to match a person's strongest skills with the "best fit" job.

Look for employment tests that are job-relevant, validated and supported by a reputable publisher, and that provide results information that answers your questions about placement and training issues. Do you get information about specific areas of training that this person needs? If the employment test measures a specific skill, do you understand what skill is measured and what the results mean for likely performance on the job?

## **A Final Note**

Stay focused on what needs to be done right now, and make sure that the basics of your selection system are sound. Look carefully at the wealth of information that system produces and think about whether you can do more with the information you already have. This is one good way to stay centered and productive during uncertain times.

## ***A FREE Consultation***

If you have any questions about this newsletter, give us a call for FREE consultation about your specific testing needs.

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**The Reason For This Newsletter** is to provide a quick review of basic issues that have to do with using employment tests effectively in your bank or credit union *to help you select, hire, and train more effective employees*. We don't pretend to be experts in banking issues, but we are experts in the development and use of reliable and helpful employment tests, and we have over 25 years of experience in integrating employment test results into an organization's selection process. Please visit our website ([www.helmtest.com](http://www.helmtest.com)) to learn about tests for financial institutions that we offer.

## **Please share this News Bulletin with others who are interested in these subjects!**

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## **About Us**

Kurt G. Helm, Ph.D., is the founder and president of Helm and Associates, Inc. He is an industrial psychologist who has been working with organizations and businesses since 1975, helping them assess personal work-related performance preferences in manager and executive applicants. In addition, he has developed and validated many industry- and job-specific employment tests that do not require a psychologist's interpretation.

Barbara Otto is the vice-president and director of test program implementation and research for Helm and Associates, Inc. She designs and manages scoring procedures and customer service for tests, and conducts validation studies and concurrent statistical analyses of test data. She joined Helm and Associates, Inc. in 1981, and has extensive private and public sector experience in program development and management.

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## *Statement of Principle*

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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.

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### *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 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.

**SALES SUCCESS PROFILE** – Measures 12 critical selling skills. Instructs/trains for improved sales effectiveness.

### *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.

### *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.

**TEEN RELY** – Designed for teenage applicants. Measures work ethic, attitudes toward punctuality, attendance and initiative. Instruct/trains for a good work ethic.

**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, violence).

### *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, workplace violence, and sexual harassment. Instructs/trains in appropriate workplace behavior.

**RELY 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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