

NEWS HELM AND ASSOCIATES, INC. BULLETIN

www.helmtest.com

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

Volume 1

Issue 1

October 2006

Barbara Otto, Editor

This Month's Subject: How to Select The Right Employment Test

Perhaps your bank or credit union has never used employment tests in the past, but you've heard colleagues discuss them at a recent professional meeting. Or perhaps you've had a string of rapid turnovers among recently hired customer service reps or telebankers, and you'd like to find a way to identify applicants who are more likely to stay on the job long enough to justify the training time and dollars you invest in them.

For whatever reason, you may have recently decided to investigate the possibility of using employment tests for one or more positions. Looking for employment tests has exposed you to a confusing new world of test publishers and formats, and you are left asking yourself the question:

How do I select the *right* employment test to use?

This is a question we are often asked and, to answer it, we'd like to suggest following five steps. Follow these five steps for each position where you would like to use pre-employment testing.

Step #1: Determine what the job requires

The best place to start is with the written job description because that is the formal definition of what the person holding the job will do. Examine the job description and make a list of the specific skills, job-related behaviors, and job-related attitudes that the job description either explicitly lists or implicitly assumes. Next, consider the relative importance of each item and rank order your list from the most important item to the least important. For example, the teller position may require both the accurate handling of money *and* a willingness to offer additional bank products and services, but which one is more important to be successful as a teller? Be sure that you have a good idea, and a consensus within your organization, about the *most important* items on your list. With this list in mind, scour the web (try our website first – www.helmtest.com -- and click on "Catalog of Tests" and then on "Financial Services Banks & Credit Unions") and identify several tests you feel might meet your requirements.

Step #2: Identify what each test actually measures

Employment tests are not necessarily alike, even ones that are presented by their publisher for the same job. A test publisher's brochures and sales literature should make it reasonably clear what the test measures, and in what form the results will be presented.

Step #3: Test the tests

Match what each test measures to the items on your list, starting with the most important items. It's tempting sometimes, when you find a really attractive employment test, to try to make it fit your requirements. To avoid the pitfall of spending money on a test that doesn't really help you make more effective hiring decisions, now is the time to keep *your list of important requirements* uppermost in mind. You can do this by focusing in the most important requirements and with these in mind, asking yourself, "Does this test measure these most important requirements of the job?" If the answer is "No," then drop that test from consideration and look at the next test. Keep going until you find a test that measures the most important requirements of the job.

Step #4: Make sure the test publisher will provide a strong level of support

Ask the publisher for references to other organizations similar to yours who are using the test. Find out how you will be able to get help or support with the test if you have questions about results later. Find out exactly how to administer the test: will you need special equipment? Will you need a testing computer? How will these requirements work in *your* organization's environment? Does the publisher offer a money-back guarantee?

Step #5: Do a Pilot Project with the chosen test

If you are satisfied with the match between the job-relevant requirements that you have identified and the test you have selected, try it! Ask the publisher for advice about how to set up a fair trial, and keep track of how the test works. It's important, by the way, to determine *beforehand* the kind of information that you keep track of to evaluate the test so that you systematically collect the same information during the trial period.

The Final Word:

Employment tests should be used as only *one additional piece of information* that you use to make a decision about whether to hire an applicant. Employment tests results give you a good idea about a person's skill, knowledge, or attitude at a given point in time, but they do not evaluate the entire applicant.

A FREE Consultation

If you have any trouble with the five steps suggested above, give us a call for FREE consultation about your specific testing needs.

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) to learn about tests for financial institutions that we offer.

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

Even though this is a copyrighted publication, we invite you to use material from it in your own internal communications. All that we ask is that you give us credit by using the "Used with permission..." statement at the end of the newsletter.

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.

Subscription Information: There is no charge for the NEWS BULLETIN. You may choose to receive the NEWS BULLETIN in either electronic or paper form by sending an email to botto@helmtest.com. Please refer to NEWS BULLETIN in the subject line.

Unsubscribe to this publication by sending an email to botto@helmtest.com with DELETE ME in the subject line from the email address where you received the NEWS BULLETIN, or with your mailing address in the message area, or you may fax us a single page with your mailing address on it to our FREE FAX LINE: 888-291-5023.

Privacy Notice: We do not share or sell our mailing lists or email address lists to any other organization, entity, or individual.

© Copyright 2006 by Helm and Associates, Inc. All Rights Reserved . *Used With Permission:* You are allowed to use material from this News Bulletin in whole or in part provided that you include attribution in the following form: "By Barbara J. Otto of Helm and Associates, Inc. Please visit our web site at www.helmtest.com for more information about how to avoid hiring mistakes by using pre-employment testing as part of the applicant evaluation process."

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 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.

For more information, call toll-free (800) 886-4356
P.O. Box 130, Helmsburg Indiana 47435
FAX: (812) 988-7780 E-mail: information@helmtest.com
