

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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This Month's Subject: THREE REASONS TO SAY, "YES" TO EMPLOYMENT TESTING

When we talk with potential customers about employment testing, we sometimes hear objections to the idea of testing of any kind. The objections to testing usually seem to have to do with discomfort with the testing process (it adds time to the selection process, for example), or with the feeling that it isn't worth the expense because turnover is so low.

In this issue, we'd like to present the reasons that we believe that employment testing, *as long as the tests that are used adhere to specific standards*, is a good idea, regardless of your organization's turnover rate or selection process.

Common Objections to Testing

Let's look first at some of the most common objections to employment testing:

"Our turnover is low to non-existent, so it wouldn't pay us to buy employment tests."

It certainly wouldn't pay you to stockpile employment tests that you will probably not need for a long period of time, but the unpredictable thing about turnover is that it is...unpredictable! You may not have any turnover at all for a long period of time, and then suddenly have more than one opening that must be filled as quickly as possible. Finding an employment test publisher who will allow you to purchase only as many tests as you *need* (whether that is 1 or 10) should be one of your decision criteria in choosing the employment test or tests that you will want to use. In addition, it's easier to learn about employment tests that are available to you and make an informed decision about which one(s) to use if you are not under the additional pressure of having unfilled positions. In other words, be prepared for eventual turnover by doing your due diligence in selecting the employment test or tests you want to incorporate into your hiring process now, *before* you have unexpected turnover!

More questions on the next page!

“We use a test that we developed ourselves.”

As long as the test or tests that you developed meet the requirements of job-relevancy and validation, you are in good shape. We’ve learned, however, that many people that we talk with don’t actually know whether their in-house test has been validated according to the EEOC’s Uniform Guidelines; validation is a lengthy and exacting process that, if ignored, can actually create more risk for you. Always make sure that employment tests that you choose to use are validated. For more information about validation, go to our web site, <http://www.helmtest.com/abouttesting/>.

“We don’t do testing because we don’t like tests.”

No one particularly *enjoys* taking tests, but effective employment tests are designed to help you learn about job-relevant skills or attitudes that affect a person’s successful (or not) job performance. We suspect that, when we hear this comment, it is often because the person we are talking with has been required to take tests in that past that felt intrusive or irrelevant to the job.

All of our comments about employment tests assume that the employment test(s) that you choose are well-designed, validated, and job-relevant. Let’s look at what employment tests can do *for* an organization.

What Employment Tests Will Do For You

We have tried to capture the many benefits of using employment tests as part of your selection process by identifying the three *main* reasons to use them. You may find that the reason that makes most sense to you is third on our list, but that doesn’t make it any less significant a reason.

1. Employment tests make it easier to compare applicants

It’s not always easy to compare applicants because they have various backgrounds, experience, knowledge, skills and abilities. Employment tests provide you with a measurement, a piece of data, for each applicant that has the same basis: all applicants are demonstrating level of competency at one particular task, or are being asked exactly the same questions about job-relevant attitudes. In that sense, it “levels the playing field” for applicants who may have different levels or kinds of experience but who are applying for the same job.

2. Employment tests give you *job-relevant* information

When you use employment tests that measure knowledge, skills, or abilities that are relevant to the job for which applicants are being considered, then the information that you get from the tests is *job-relevant*. It is more objective than interview impressions, for example, and therefore easier and fairer to use, along with all the other information you have about applicants, for making hiring decisions.

3. Employment tests identify training needs for current *and* new employees

Testing isn’t just for applicants; the results of employment tests provide you with a point-in-time measurement of current employees’ training needs or job fit, as well as giving you a pre-training measure of the new employee’s *job-relevant* skills and attitudes. Testing results can help you focus training time and content for *all* employees.

A Final Reminder

Before you select an employment test, be sure that you understand what the test measures, and that the publisher can back that claim up. It's your job to be sure that the employment test that you use measures a skill or attitude that is relevant to the job.

A FREE Consultation

If you have any questions about these suggestions, give us a call for FREE consultation. We love to talk about how our tests can help companies like yours hire and develop the best people.

The Reason For This Newsletter is to help you select, hire, and train more effective employees. 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 this 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.

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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.

\$ALES \$UCCESS 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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