Using Assessments

In the Hiring Process

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As a dealership owner or manager, finding and hiring the right person for the job is critical. After years of honing interview skills and becoming comfortable with hiring the right candidates, employers still see people struggle once they are on the job or, worse yet, leave the company after so much time, money and energy have been invested into them.

Much of an interview is subjective. How often do people go with their "gut feeling" when interviewing potential employees? Now think about how often that "gut feeling" is wrong. With added pressures to only hire the best and brightest, more and more hiring managers are beginning to explore the use of profile assessments or personality profiles as part of their hiring process.

When used properly, along with interviews, references and background checks, these assessments can become valuable tools for a dealership's long-term success and help reduce the likelihood of a costly mis-hire. The costs of hiring the wrong person can be far-reaching. The U.S. Department of Labor's rule of thumb puts replacement cost as equating to 33 percent of the annual salary of the individual being replaced. Most executives tend to push that number much higher for top talent. In addition, the hidden costs of replacing a bad hire include the cost of recruiting a replacement, training the replacement, lost productivity, and, in some cases, the loss of potential sales.

Use of an assessment may not replace the traditional interview. No matter how much people love the new tool, nothing can replace a face-to-face interaction. The profile assessment should be used as a component of the overall hiring process. It cannot provide a summary of a candidate's past accomplishments or achievements nor can it provide a reference on the candidate's past work history.

The tool can, however, provide insight into a candidate's personality, their behavioral traits, and how they compare to other top performers in the company. It can also provide insight into areas such as how the individual approaches a prospective buyer; whether they are an introvert or an extrovert; and how well they participate in a team environment.

It is important to remember that the assessment can continue to be an effective tool for an organization even after the candidate has become an employee. Wouldn't it be nice if all employees came with a user's manual? That is essentially what the assessment is. For example, if it is known up front that a new hire requires direct feedback, an employer might want to make sure that this person is given recognition for a job well done. If another new employee has a profile that shows he or she seeks out others and needs to be sociable, avoid putting them in a strictly administrative role with no interaction.

Studies have shown that assessments can increase employee retention and improve productivity and morale because the one-time candidate eventually becomes an employee who is in the "right" job for them and is a productive employee for the organization.

Many assessments are offered in the marketplace. When choosing one, keep in mind one very important word: validation. Make certain that the tool chosen satisfies all requirements of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Department of Labor (DOL) and the Civil Rights Act. It should also be validated to be age-blind, gender-blind and ethnicity-blind.

Mark Barnhart is the director of TouchPoint Recruiting Group, an affiliate company of Katz, Sapper & Miller, located in Indianapolis, Indiana. Mark has more than 17 years of recruiting experience and has a track record of successfully placing quality personnel in a variety of industries, including automotive dealerships. His services range from search services and recruitment consulting to market research and client-specific database creation and maintenance. For more information on how to integrate profile assessments into hiring processes, contact Mark Barnhart at mbarnhart@touchpointrecruiting.com.