

TESTING AND ASSESSMENT:

Foreword

PURPOSE of the GUIDE

In today's competitive marketplace and complex legal environment, employers face the challenge of attracting, developing, and retaining the best employees. Michael Eisner, CEO of the Disney Corporation, recognized the impact of personnel decisions on a business' bottom-line when he remarked, "My inventory goes home every night."

This guide is to help managers and human resource (HR) professionals use assessment practices that are the right choices for reaching their organizations' HR goals. It conveys the essential concepts of employment testing in easy-to-understand terms so that managers and HR professionals can

- ™ Evaluate and select assessment tools/procedures that maximize chances for getting the right fit between jobs and employees
- ™ Administer and score assessment tools that are the most efficient and effective for their particular needs
- ™ Evaluate employees
- ™ Impact of people fit

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Personnel assessment tools differ in

- ™ **Purpose**, e.g., selection, placement, promotion, career counseling, or training
- ™ **What they are designed to measure**, e.g., abilities, skills, work styles, work values, or vocational interests
- ™ **What they are designed to predict**, e.g., job performance, managerial potential, career success, job satisfaction, or tenure
- ™ **Format**,

1-2

Using a single test or procedure will provide you with a limited view of a person's employment or career-related qualifications. Moreover, you may reach a mistaken conclusion by giving too much weight to a single test result. On the other hand, using a variety of assessment tools enables you to get a more complete picture of the individual. The practice of using a variety of tests and procedures to more fully assess people is referred to as the *whole-person approach* to personnel assessment. This will help reduce the number of selection errors made and will boost the effectiveness of your decision making. This leads to an important principle of assessment.

Principle of Assessment

Do not rely too much on any one test to make decisions. Use the *whole-person approach* to assessment.

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TM *Reasonable accommodation* is defined as a change in the job application and selection process, a change in the work environment or the manner in which the work is performed, that enables a qualified person with a disability to enjoy equal employment opportunities. Under this Act, qualified

Your organization should develop a written policy on conducting testing and assessment of individuals with disabilities. This will help ensure compliance with the provisions of the ADA.

If you need assistance in complying with the ADA, there are several resources you may contact.

- ™ The Job Accommodation Network: (800) 526-7234
- ™ Industry-Labor Council on Employment and Disability: (516) 747-6323
- ™ The American Foundation for the Blind: (202) 408-0200, (800) 232-5463
- ™ The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities: (202) 376-6200
- ™ Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers: (800) 949-4232.

7. Record keeping of adverse impact and job-relatedness of tests

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²⁹ 29 CFR part 1602, as amended by 56 Fed. Reg. 35,753 (July 26, 1991); previously, record-keeping requirements did not apply to temporary and seasonal positions.

™ ***The Principles for the Validation and Use of Personnel Selection Procedures.*** This publication was developed by the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP). Like the *Standards*, the *the Socie* are also an excellent guide to ge thTPactices in the choice, development, evaluation, and use of assessment tools. However, their main focus is on tools used in the personnel assessment context. The *the Socie* explain their relationship to the *Standards* in the following way:

- ™ The test measures what it claims to measure consistently or reliably. This means that if a person were to take the test again, the person would get a *similar* test score.
- ™ The test measures what it claims to measure. For example, a test of mental ability does in fact measure mental ability, and not some other characteristic.

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8. Using validity evidence from outside studies

Conducting your own validation study is expensive, and, in many cases, you may not have enough employees in a relevant job category to make it feasible to conduct a study. Therefore, you may find it advantageous to use professionally developed assessment tools and procedures for which documentation on validity already exists. However, care must be taken to make sure that validity evidence obtained for an “outside” test study can be suitably “transported” to your particular situation.

The *Uniform Guidelines*, the *Standards*, and the *SIOP Principles* state that evidence of transportability is required in considering the following when using outside tests:

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Table 3. General Guidelines for

Examples of some mental abilities are verbal, quantitative, and spatial abilities. Physical ability tests

Following a structured interview format can help interviewers avoid unlawful or inappropriate inquiries where medical conditions, disability, and age are concerned. For additional information on the ADA, see the *EEOC Technical Assistance Manual on the Employment Provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act* and the *EEOC ADA Enforcement Guidance: Preemployment Disability - Related Questions and Medical Examinations*.

6. Honesty and integrity measures

Honesty tests are a specific type of personality test. There has been an increase in the popularity of honesty and integrity measures since the Employee Polygraph Protection Act (1988) prohibited the use of polygraph tests by most private employers. Honesty and integrity measures may be broadly categorized into two types.

- ™ **Overt integrity tests** gauge involvement in and attitudes toward theft and employee delinquency. Test items typically ask for opinions about frequency and extent of employee theft, leniency or severity of attitudes toward theft, and rationalizations of theft. They also include direct questions about admissions of, or dismissal for, theft or other unlawful activities.

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7. Education and experience requirements (including licensing and certification)

[illegible]

TM ***Mental Measurements Yearbook (MMY)***. The MMY is a major source of information about assessment tools. It consists of a continuing series of volumes. Each volume contains reviews of tests that are new or significantly revised since the publication of the previous volume. New

- **Staff requirements.** What training and background do staff need to administer, score, and interpret the test? Do you have suitable staff available now or do you need to train and/or hire staff?

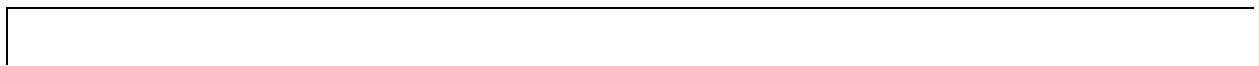
TM **Purpose, nature, and applicability of the test**

- **Test purpose.** What aspects of job performance do you need to measure? What characteristics does the test measure? Does the manual contain a coherent description of these characteristics? Is there a match between what the developer says the test measures and what you intend to measure? The test you select for your assessment should relate directly to one or more important aspects of the job. A job analysis will help you identify the tasks involved in the

- **Test fairness.** Select tests developed to be as fair as possible to test takers of different racial, ethnic, gender, and age groups. See Chapter 7 for a discussion of test fairness. Read the manual and independent reviews of the test to evaluate its fairness to these groups. To secure acceptance by all test takers, the test should also appear to be fair. The test items should not reflect racial, cultural, or gender stereotypes, or overemphasize one culture over another. The

3. Checklist for evaluating a test

It is helpful to have an organized method for choosing the right test for your needs. A checklist can help you in this process. Your checklist should summarize the kinds of information discussed above. For example, is the test valid for your intended purpose? Is it reliable and fair? Is it cost-effective? Is the



applicants. Your staff may need professional training on test administration offered by some test publishers.

Only those staff who can administer the test in a professional and satisfactory manner should be assigned test administration duties. Test administrators should be well organized and observant, speak well, and be able to deal comfortably with people. They should also be trained to handle special

- ™ **Prepare the room and test materials ahead of time.** Chairs and tables should be set up in position. Staff should check that all needed test materials and equipment are available and in good condition.
- ™ **Test taker readiness or suitability for testing.** Be alert to problems individuals may have in taking the test. Before the assessment begins, give them an overview of the test and ask whether anyone anticipates having a problem taking the test. Some test takers may have forgotten to bring their eyeglasses; others may have bad colds or other temporary illnesses. These individuals should be rescheduled. Others may have disabilities that require accommodations or an alternate assessment arrangement (see section on ADA in Chapter 2).
- ™ **Uniform administration.** The practices and precautions discussed above should become standard procedures in preparing testing materials, equipment, and facilities. Also, make sure that all test takers understand the directions before the test begins and are ready to follow the standard

In general, test takers should not be coached on how best to answer test questions. Administrators should not offer more information than what is indicated in the instructions. If they do, some individuals will be given an unfair advantage.

5. Test anxiety

Most people feel some anxiety about taking a test. For some otherwise qualified individuals, test anxiety can have a paralyzing effect on their performance. There are a few things that can be done to alleviate anxiety.

- ™ Written orientation materials are available for many tests. These materials describe the test and provide sample questions. If such materials exist, they should be made available to all test takers well in advance of the test date.
- ™ Before the test begins, give test takers a brief orientation explaining the purpose of the test, the type of questions to expect, and how long the test will last.
- ™ Start test sessions promptly. A long wait will raise the anxiety level among test takers. All testing materials, equipment, and facilities should be ready well in advance of the scheduled session. A well-run test session helps to reduce test anxiety.

6. Alternative assessment methods for special cases

There may be qualified individuals who, due to cultural differences, poor skills in English, or limited formal education, are unable to score satisfactorily on some of the currently available selection tests. Poor test performance may not be a reflection of job-relevant knowledge, poor skills, or lack of ability.

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CHAPTER 7 Using, Scoring, and Interpreting Assessment Instruments

This chapter describes some of the most common assessment instrument scoring procedures. It also discusses how to properly interpret results, and how to use them effectively. Other issues regarding the proper use of assessment tools are also discussed.

Chapter Highlights

1. Assessment instrument scoring procedures
2. Test interpretation methods: norm and criterion-referenced tests
3. Interpreting test results
4. Processing test results to make employment decisions—rank-ordering and cut-off scores
5. Combining information from many assessment tools
6. Minimizing adverse impact

Principle of Assessment

1. Assessment instrument scoring procedures

Test publishers may offer one or more ways to score the tests you purchase. Available options may range from hand scoring by your staff to machine scanning and scoring done by the publisher. All options have their advantages and disadvantages. When you select the tests for use, investigate the available scoring options. Your staff's time, turnaround time for test results, and cost may all play a part in your purchasing decision.

™ Hand scoring.

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CHAPTER 8 Issues and Concerns with Assessment

It is important to remember that an assessment instrument, like any tool, is most effective when used properly and can be very counterproductive when used inappropriately. In previous chapters you have read about the advantages of using tests and procedures as part of your personnel assessment program. You have also read about the

In summary, before expanding your assessment program, it is important to have a clear picture of your

Use of reliable and valid assessment tools can result in improved performance of your workforce. However, when designing an assessment system, it is also important to consider how to ensure a diverse workforce that can help your organization be successful in today's diverse marketplace. To encourage diversity in your organization, consider how different types of people perform on different types of tests. Some research has indicated that older workers and members of a variety of racial and

test, they may still perform on the job successfully. Thus by using a variety of types of assessment, more

e.g., of you used only physical ability (test, they may not necessarily vary) $T_j T^* -0.0504$ $T_c 0.0504$ $T_e 0$ exclude older workers

CHAPTER 9 A Review—Principles of Assessment

Employers can effectively use personnel assessment instruments to measure job-relevant skills and capabilities of applicants and employees. These tools can help to identify and select better workers and can help improve the quality of an organization's overall performance. To use these tools properly, employers must be aware of the inherent limitations of any assessment procedure, as well as the legal issues involved in assessment.

The guide is organized around 13 important assessment principles and the 0.appmitatyees.iddefin legal

the testing process, or providing qualified assistance to the test taker. For example, administering a braille version of a test, allowing extra time to complete the test, or supplying a reader may be appropriate. It is important to become familiar with the types of accommodations that can be made without invalidating test results. If reasonable accommodation involving test administration cannot be made, consider alternative assessment strategies.

™ Maintain assessment instrument *security* (Chapter 6)

All materials used in the assessment process, whether paper-and-pencil or computer-based, must be kept secure. Lack of security may result in some test takers having access to test questions beforehand, thus invalidating their scores. To prevent this, test users should, for example, keep testing materials in locked rooms or cabinets and limit access to those materials to staff involved in the assessment process. Security is also the responsibility of test developers. The security of a test may

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. 1978. The Office of Personnel Management, U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Labor (1979). *Questions and Answers Clarifying and Interpreting the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures.* 29 CFR Part 1607 (1988).

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E q u a l E m p l o y

APPENDIX B: Glossary of Assessment Terms

ability test

A test that measures the current performance or estimates future performance of a person in some

content-related validity

The extent to which the content of a test samples or represents the subject area or behavior it is intended to measure.

converted score

job analysis

rank ordering

The process of ranking individuals based on their relative test scores, from the highest to the lowest process.

raw score

The obtained score on a test, usually determined by counting the number of correct answers.

reference group

The group of individuals used to develop a test.

reliability

The degree to which test scores are consistent, dependable, or repeatable.

reliability coefficient

A coefficient of correlation that indicates the degree to which test scores are dependable, or repeatable.

standard deviation

A statistic used to describe the variability within a set of scores. It indicates the extent to which scores vary around the mean or average score.

standard error of measurement (SEM)

A statistic that gives an indication of the amount of error in a measurement system. It indicates a range within which a test taker's "true" score is likely to fall.

standard score

A score that describes the location of a person's score within a set of scores in terms of its distance from the mean in standard deviation units.

standardized test

A test developed using professionally prescribed methods that provides specific administration requirements, instructions, and scoring procedures.

