



Screening the Best Workforce Talent

"The number one benefit we've seen since implementing Taleo is the standardization of the screening and hiring process across 500 stores."

Jeffrey Mayer

Director of Systems and Decision Support
Domino's Pizza

Author Henry David Thoreau once described the ocean as a "wilderness reaching around the globe, wilder than a Bengal jungle, and fuller of monsters..." In today's economy, it seems retailers get to experience their own version of Thoreau's ocean.

Increasing unemployment rates have left retailers with the difficult task of trying to find the ideal candidate in a virtual ocean of applicants. To assist in the candidate screening process, many organizations have turned to automated assessment tests which quickly rank candidates for job fit. But, as Wall Street Journal reporter Vanessa O'Connell wrote in her January 6 cover story article, *Test for Dwindling Retail Jobs Spawns a Culture of Cheating*, it would appear the sea of applicants includes 'monsters' willing to cheat to get a job.

Here are steps your organization can take to reduce the chance that applicants will game your screening process while simultaneously reducing your staffing time.

Step 1: Establish an Automated, Multi-Step Screening Process

Behavioral assessments are a key component in the employment screening equation but they are just one piece. All retail positions have a number of hard requirements that determine a candidate's match for your job opening. These may include availability to work, past experiences in the industry or job role, willingness to consent to drug or background screening. You may even have a number of product and technical knowledge skill requirements. We recommend you implement a comprehensive Talent Management solution which has the ability to systematically screen, score and rank candidates based upon their match to these requirements. However, be careful when implementing a solution as many vendors offer pre-screening but few offer scoring and ranking. The scoring and ranking is what saves hiring managers precious time!

Step 2: Avoid the "One Size Fits All" Approach to Assessment Testing

Most assessment vendors offer tests for retailers that are the same regardless of the company or jobs. Because they reuse their assessment tests across their retail customer base, applicants can go from retailer to retailer, see the same test, and try to beat the assessment based upon past experience. Applicants try to game the test by repeating it several times, comparing notes with other test takers, or consulting an online cheat sheet. In O'Connell's article, one interviewee plainly admitted to taking the test at Circuit City, failing it, and then going online to memorize the answers. He later passed the test with flying colors at a local Blockbuster. Avoiding this One Size Fits All approach to assessments can

counter the cheating applicant. Select vendors that create unique assessments for each retail customer. Unique assessments tailor the questions and scoring algorithm to each company so applicants that deceive the test will receive poor scores. This eliminates the chance of gaming assessment tests across retailers.

Step 3: Prevent Applicants from Retaking Tests

Many assessment vendors in the marketplace are missing critical safe checks which prevent applicants from re-taking the same test with the same employer. With these solutions, applicants can submit multiple applications until they pass the assessment. If retailers had the ability to restrict an applicant to taking the assessment test just one time, it would eliminate a wide open hole in the process and reduce the chance for cheating within that organization.

Use Talent Management solutions that are profile based. Profile based solutions establish a living/breathing candidate file that prevents candidates from re-taking the same assessment in conjunction with their submitted profile. In addition, make sure your profile based solution has duplicate checking to screen for candidates trying to create multiple profiles. If a candidate were to create multiple profiles, the solution should allow employers to merge candidate files thus revealing the duplicate assessment tries. These steps effectively eliminate the chance of cheating for improved scores through multiple tries of the assessment.

We've all heard about crimes of opportunity; not to suggest that cheating on a test to gain employment is in any way criminal behavior. But in the world of employment screening, it largely seems that cheating occurs when the opportunity is there. Taking a few steps to improve your screening process will reduce the opportunity for cheating and add the benefits of increased employee performance and manager time savings. A well designed Talent Management solution is what you need to navigate your ocean of applicants.

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ABOUT TALEO

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