



Empowering Our
Greatest Asset

Running with Scissors - 21st Century Hiring Reform

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Disclaimer

- The views, opinions, and findings contained in this paper are those of the author and should not be construed as an official National Security Agency position, policy, or decision, unless so designated by other official documentation.

Goal

- Today's goal is to discuss some of the tough decisions that HR professionals make as part of the hiring process, especially in light of the recent changes brought on by hiring reform
 - Intention is for a lot of discussion
 - Hopefully we will learn from each other...

Why hiring reform?

- OMB M09-20 noted:
 - “The current hiring process is **lengthy and encumbered** by burdensome requirements and outdated technology.”
 - [OPM and OMB] called for improvements in “timeliness, plain language and streamlined announcements, communications with applicants, and involvement of hiring managers.”
- 2010-2015 OPM Strategic Plan called for:
 - “Promoting **innovative and coordinated approaches** to recruiting and hiring”
 - “Streamlining the end-to-end process to create a **positive experience** for applicants, managers, and HR specialists”
 - “**Increasing manager engagement** in the hiring process”
 - “Promoting **efficiency and effectiveness** in hiring practices and processes compliant with merit staffing principles”

Six Key Directives (Presidential Memo)

- Eliminate requirement for essay-style questions
- Allow applicants to submit resumes and cover letters or simple, plain language applications and assess applicants using valid, reliable tools
- Select from qualified applicants using category ratings
- Increased involvement of hiring managers in hiring process
- Increased accountability of hiring managers in hiring process
- Improve the quality and speed of the hiring process

What is our primary goal in hiring?

* To hire the best for every position*

- What are we assuming?
 - High quality job seekers will apply
 - We can effectively identify the best from a pool of applicants
 - Best applicants will accept our offer

Tough Decisions

- HR professionals must make a number of tough decisions
 - How should we recruit applicants?
 - What should be assessed?
 - What assessment methods are best?
 - How do we increase the involvement of hiring managers?
- We need to remember that
 - “Efficient” decisions could increase risk
 - “Effective” decisions could increase cost and time

What is the best recruitment approach?

Cast a Wide-Net

- Job announcements posted on the internet will often receive a large number of applications
- Positives
 - Should maximize exposure to viable applicants
 - Large number of applications
 - May be most cost effective approach
- Potential Pitfalls
 - Assumes that the best applicants go to the website
 - Assumes that website is accessible and easy to use
 - Assumes website and announcement will “attract” applications

Cast the Right Lure

- Pools of good candidates are identified and subsequently “pursued” to apply
- Positives
 - Greater proportion of applicants will be high quality
 - Reduces number of applications
 - May yield highest quality applicants
- Potential Pitfalls
 - May be expensive
 - Assumes we know where to go to find the best applicants
 - Requires effective outreach and communication
 - Assumes that best applicants will be persuaded to apply

Which recruitment method is best?

- Unfortunately it depends...
 - Characteristics of the job opening
 - Level of specialized/technical skill required
 - Level of the position
 - Characteristics of the applicant pool
 - Level of access the target applicant pool has
 - Level of interest the target applicant pool has
 - Relative size of the applicant pool
 - Extent to which you are competing for the applicant pool's attention

Is the resume / job application sufficient?

Resume or job application

- Applicants summarize their background and experience in a “standardized” format
- Positives
 - Streamlines the application process
 - Likely to increase the number of applicants
- Potential Pitfalls
 - Applicants may not provide all of the job-relevant information
 - Applicants may not write clearly
 - Labor intensive review required

Essays (i.e., KSAs)

- Applicants provide responses to items that summarize their related background and experience
- Positives
 - All applicants given equal opportunity to respond
 - Responses focus on job-relevant information
- Potential Pitfalls
 - Good applicants may not apply
 - Applicants may not provide all of the job-relevant information
 - Applicants may not write clearly
 - Labor intensive review required

How do I evaluate resumes / job applications?

Reread Directive 2:

Allow applicants to submit resumes and cover letters or simple, plain language applications and assess applicants **using valid, reliable tools**

- Biographical Inventories (Biodata Tests)
 - Standardized means by which applicants provide information regarding job-related background and experience
 - Research has found that biodata items can measure
 - Knowledge
 - Skills
 - Abilities
 - Interests
 - Other personal attributes
 - Scores are reliable and valid predictors of performance

How should I assess?

Unproctored Assessments

- Standardized assessments of knowledge, skills, abilities or other characteristics administered via Internet
- Positives
 - Efficient, reliable and valid assessment procedure
 - Minimizes the costs associated with assessment
- Potential Pitfalls
 - Susceptible to error
 - Potentially cumbersome data management issues

Proctored Assessments

- Standardized assessments of knowledge, skills, abilities or other characteristics administered with supervision
- Positives
 - Effective, reliable and valid assessment procedures
 - Minimizes sources of error (e.g., cheating, environmental factors, etc.)
- Potential Pitfalls
 - Potentially expensive
 - Potentially cumbersome data management issues
 - Potential time drag

How do we get the best of both worlds?

Potential Suggestion – Split-half assessments

- Recent research suggests that informing applicants that the second half of an assessment will be given in a proctored situation greatly reduces likelihood of cheating
- Procedure
 - Administer Part I via internet
 - Invite “passing” applicants to take Part II in proctored environments
 - Compare scores from the unproctored and proctored versions
 - If scores are similar, allow applicant to proceed
 - If scores are significantly different (i.e., 2nd score much lower), consider removing applicant from further consideration
- We are still looking into this...

How do we increase hiring manager involvement?

- Job announcement development & approval
- Assessment development, review and validation
- Applicant evaluation (structured interviews)
- Selection
- Job orientation and employee development

In Conclusion...

- Streamlining the hiring process has forced many HR professionals to make a number of tough decisions
- Decisions should weigh efficiency and effectiveness equally
 - Too often decisions will be made that emphasize efficiency because a key metric of hiring reform is the number of days to hire
 - Careful implementation of a multiple hurdle assessment system may be more efficient
- The key to success is learning from and supporting one another