



# Job Benchmarking

## It will improve the chance of success with new hires

by: Larry Breed, Precision Hiring & Development

**B**usiness owners everywhere are seeking better ways to find the talent necessary for their business success. Jobs and the specific talents of the people who fill them are the unique building blocks of that success. But how can you discover the specific talents required for a job and match them with the talents inherent in a person?

All jobs have unique requirements for on-the-job behavior. For example, the employee behavior required for a customer service job's work environment would likely include tactful decision making, the ability to contact many people, patience, diplomacy and having a cooperative nature.

In addition, all jobs have inherent rewards and a predominant culture that drives performance excellence. When the job's rewards and culture match those of the person who will be performing the job, the result is performance excellence. For example, one of a customer service job's rewards may be expressed as: "Gaining personal satisfaction by performing the job consistently the right way, according to a predefined set of rules and procedures." Employees whose values or motivators are in line with this reward and culture will excel.

People have unique behaviors that can be matched to jobs, however, these behavior and job matches seldom occur. When a person's behaviors are in sync with a job, the result is increased performance and employee satisfaction, and decreased turnover.

Common behavior types range from outgoing and assertive to soft-spoken, mild and reserved, from adventurous and daring to controlled and restrained — and everything in between. But how can you discover the specific talents required by a job and match them to a person's talents?

■ **Benchmark the Job** — Define the talent required to be successful on the job by identifying top performers and asking them to determine and prioritize the knowledge, skills, behaviors and motivation required to be a top performer. Then, create a list of questions to ask future candidates to determine if their talents match the job.

■ **Compare the Candidates to the Job Benchmarks** — Incorporate the job benchmark questions into your interviewing



process and compare each candidate's talents to the job benchmarks prepared by the successful top performers you would like to clone.

It used to be very difficult and time-consuming to create job benchmarks, which are the primary reasons that most businesses do not have or use job benchmarks in their hiring and development processes. However, with today's technology, employers can create an accurate and detailed job description for key positions quickly and easily. Here is one three-step approach:

(1) Identify the job to be benchmarked and select one to three subject-matter experts who know what it takes to be successful in the job being benchmarked.

(2) Have each person complete a job benchmarking questionnaire about the knowledge, skills, behaviors and attitudes they feel are necessary to be successful in the particular job.

(3) Have the group meet to discuss and agree on what knowledge, skills, behaviors and attitudes are required for job satisfaction and superior performance.

Here a few of the key benefits of using job benchmarks:

■ **Job Satisfaction** — Job-related talents are directly related to job satisfaction.

■ **Higher Performance** — People are better positioned to achieve success when they are engaged in work suited for their natural behavioral styles and values.

■ **Lower Turnover** — People are less likely to leave an enjoyable and challenging job.

Using job benchmarking in the selection and development of your employees will reduce "gut-feeling" hiring decisions made under pressure, improve your new hires' chances of success and reduce costly turnover. The right talent in the right job equals top performance and employee satisfaction, which is exactly what every company wants. ■

*Larry Breed started Precision Hiring & Development in 1991 after working with Lanier Worldwide Inc. for 26 years in service, sales, management and training. He can be reached at (800) 875-7599 or lbreed@precisionhiring.com. Visit www.precisionhiring.com.*

