

Using psychometric tests for developmental HR

Be it as part of the training, development or career assessment, psychometric tests are being increasingly used in management of human resources. According to Central Test HR Survey (Jun,2009), almost 40% of the companies use psychometric testing after recruitment for various developmental HR purposes and this practice is going to increase in the years to come.

"Using psychometric tools is crucial to human resource development within the organization", asserts Mariya Jilinskaya, in charge of Research and Development in Central Test. With the longer career span and growing average age of employability, a carefully designed succession planning is going to become very important in improving motivation level of experienced professionals and in reducing burden of recruitment. Retaining the employees is becoming a major challenge for the human resources department. As tools of assessment and alignment, the personality tests, motivation and skill tests are, thus, increasingly being demanded more and more to be used internally, after recruitment.

From procedural point of view, the method is the same as the one in recruitment: use of tests must be accompanied by interviews and the person conducting the tests must have a good knowledge of it. That is why it is generally the human resources and rarely the departmental managers who conduct them. The skill tests are mostly used to reinforce the knowledge and to identify the aptitudes to be worked upon, especially during the training or in order to plan a change. An employee who has to take up a managerial post can, for example, take Management Skills Test or CTPI-PRO to identify his unique strengths & developmental areas and to plan to undergo a training if need be. Similarly, an English Language test can indicate to an employee, elements to be strengthened in case he is going to work in an international setting. As for personality and preference tests are concerned, they are good complements to the annual performance appraisal interview when an employee has doubts about the future direction of his career.

"In any case, it is not only about administering a test as a tool for evaluation but also about using it as a tool for counselling", underlines Mariya Jilinskaya. "The tests must not be imposed on employees but should be used by involving the employee after getting his consent."

On the other hand, interest and aptitude tests may help individuals in self awareness. After going through many skill assessment and development programmes during a career of 20 years or so, many employees develop transferable skills but they do not actually realise that these skills are applicable to other domains as well. A test like the Temperament Evaluator can help them explore new perspectives.

From the human resources perspective, it can be difficult to understand the use of psychometric tools to assess existing employees in comparison to using them for new recruits, as the Human Resource Department already knows the employees well and do not feel the need for supplementary information. Despite that, the tests actually have their own pertinence: as a result they help in getting out of subjectivity and bring a new perspective. For instance, psychometric testing may discover a seasoned software developer to be a good potential project leader, without him having thought about it till the assessment.