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### Predicting Performance: The Benefits of Behavioral Assessments

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There are several approaches a company can take to assess its employee population.

Some organizations are minimalists, sticking to simple pre-hire interviews and annual performance evaluations. Others, however, drill deeper during the hiring process, comparing a potential hire's behaviors and skills with the requirements of a given job role and the company culture. In these institutions, career development starts with the first conversation a candidate has with the hiring manager.

At Benchmark Assisted Living, a senior housing organization, the assessment process begins before the job candidate and the organization's leaders ever meet. As part of the application process, Benchmark asks all prospective hires to take the **Predictive Index (PI), developed by PI Worldwide**, which provides a detailed personality profile of each interviewee.

The PI measures four primary personality traits to outline the behavioral patterns and communication styles of every Benchmark candidate. Company leaders use this profile to determine where an applicant would best fit within the organization, said Jill Haselman, Benchmark senior vice president of organizational development. The profiles also help streamline the interview process by allowing hiring managers to ask more-targeted questions.

**"We can use the PI to know before we ever meet somebody whether or not they're potentially a good fit for our culture,"** Haselman said. "Or, if we're not sure if it's a good fit, it helps us ask the right questions."

With the information the profiles provide, managers can focus on the areas that relate to a candidate's ability to fulfill a given job role. By targeting areas in which individuals' behavioral patterns seem at odds with the job for which they are applying, managers can determine where applicants have learned to mitigate personality traits that could hinder them in certain job functions, Haselman said. By looking at someone's communication style, managers also can place new hires on the team where they will be most likely to succeed.

After an individual is hired, Benchmark uses a continuous assessment process to onboard employees, manage conflicts and create their personal development plan.

**By mapping employees' personality profile with the profiles of their managers, team members and direct reports, leaders can identify potential personality conflicts and offer communication coaching to make sure the onboarding goes smoothly.**

By using individuals' profiles differently as they grow within the company, Benchmark's leaders can evaluate the whole employee and develop the specific behaviors and skills they will need to succeed in their role in the organization, Haselman said.

"In the hiring process, we will typically look at the four factors separately and drill down on certain characteristics, where they are positively or negatively used and whether they've learned to adapt to that over the course of their career," she explained. "During executive and leadership development, we look at all four factors in concert with each other. This gives an outstanding snapshot of the whole person and helps to predict where somebody might fit best in the organization."

For more-advanced employees moving into senior leadership or executive positions, Benchmark fills out the development process by training individuals to manage their communication and leadership styles.

By helping people recognize how their behavioral patterns affect their ability to lead a diverse group, Benchmark can develop a more effective group of future leaders, Haselman said.

**"We use the PI to do a detailed analysis of how the four factors work together to define the leader's style and how they might have to grow or modify or leverage a certain component of their own style so they can be more effective in the next role," she said. "It takes the leader today and helps grow and develop them into the leader tomorrow."**



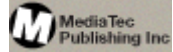
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Tegan Jones is an associate editor for Talent Management magazine.

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