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Monday, September 21
Westin Convention Center Pittsburgh
Noon – 1:30 p.m.

FEATURING

Keynote Speaker: **Cristina Perez**
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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The benefits of predictive indexing

As CEO of Summa Technologies, a Downtown-based IT consulting and software firm, Audrey Dunning was looking for better ways to understand the personalities and communication skills of her staff. A year ago, she turned to predictive indexing, a surveying process, to gain a better understanding of how her staff works together and what behaviors to seek out in hiring.

What is predictive indexing?

It's a survey that takes about 15 to 30 minutes to complete. Basically, the respondent takes the survey and there's two parts to it. The first part is to decide and check behaviors that best describe you: shy, communicative, collaborative, etc. You would check as many things that you think apply to you. The second part is answering basically the same list in terms of how other people see you versus how you see yourself. It's two sides of the same picture.

How did you first decide to use predictive indexing?

I became intrigued in the process, the tool, and also Dan Courser, the consultant we used to license the product.

We're a service-oriented company. Ultimately, our people is our product. Being able to indicate the behaviors that make the most successful consultant and being able to replicate it in our hiring process was very intriguing to me.

How was it different?

In the past, maybe we'd been more focused on technical skills, not focused on behaviors. It seemed like a way that we could identify these behaviors as a prequalification before people get engaged in the hiring process.

What kind of behaviors are you looking for?

Collaboration is really important. In the process of seeking new customers and delivering our services, getting people to work together as a team is really important. You might be able to identify an employee as a team player. What we found is maybe some of the people who weren't the best collaborators were able to get their best ideas when they worked alone.

How much have you used it?

We've used it quite a bit. Initially, we had all of our employees take the survey as a first step. We gave them the results and shared it with them. We've been using it as an opportunity to provide some coaching in some certain areas. We've also used it in recruiting.

We've used it to help guide the interview process and guide the questions. I think the ultimate benefit is you could use the tool to pre-qualify candidates so you can spend your time only interviewing people who can be a good fit. You can teach somebody job skills or the right programing language, but behaviors are very hard if not impossible to change or affect.

– BY TIM SCHOOLEY

Engineering, computer science, health care top list of degrees recommended by human resources executives

Human resource executives are saying degrees in engineering, computer science and health care are the way to go for college freshman, according to a new survey.

As for career paths to avoid? They include law, marketing/advertising, and, yes, human resources, according to a survey of 150 human resources executives by outplacement consultancy firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas Inc.

"This recession may have many freshmen second-guessing career plans. Certainly, those who were contemplating a future in financial services or homebuilding may be looking for new options," said John A. Challenger, chief executive officer of Challenger, Gray & Christmas.

"The areas recommended by human resource executives, while appearing to be relatively specialized on the surface, actually provide future graduates with a great amount of flexibility to pursue careers in a wide range of fields that are emerging now or could emerge over the next two decades."

Computer science/information, at 16 percent, narrowly topped engineering, at 15 percent, as the most-recommended study field. The respondents were allowed to select one field from 11 choices.

Medicine/health care was selected by 14.3 percent of respondents.

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