

New recruitment tools match people to jobs

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Technology delivers a higher success rate than traditional techniques for finding employees

By Derek Sankey, For Postmedia News August 9, 2013



David Lahey says his firm's new software recruitment tool translates into higher levels of job satisfaction and boosts productivity.

Piers Steele has been trying for years to get his software recruitment tool — essentially a complex technology based on a series of logarithms — called synthetic validity into the Canadian market without much success.

Now, there are signs there is a growing appetite for a technology recruitment tool that aims to match the right people with the right job at a higher success rate than traditional recruiting north of the border.

In the U.S., the technology has already seen a massive uptake in various forms. In Canada, a company called Predictive Success has been using it with growing success for years. The firm recently experienced a 163 per cent five-year growth rate in this country.

Companies such as Nexen, Canadian Pacific Railway, Shaw GMC, Google and others in Canada are turning to technology solutions to find the best people for the job.

The goals are simple: a better match between employee and employer; higher retention rates; lower turnover; increased hiring efficiency and speed; higher engagement; increased revenue growth; increased safety; and more job satisfaction.

Such a sophisticated system that helps people self-select into ideal careers would have a noticeable effect on national gross domestic product, with best estimates in the \$700 billion

range, argues Steele, a professor in human resources and organizational dynamics at the Haskayne School of Business in Calgary.

“An increase of 10 per cent GDP is actually pretty reasonable,” Steele says. “I’m now getting inquiries from U.S. consulting agencies about how they can start implementing (synthetic validity).”

David Lahey, president of Toronto-based Predictive Success, says his company’s data-driven tools, which include a Predictive Index Behaviour survey and a Selling Skill assessment tool, are the way of the future in recruitment. It’s already proven a success in Canada.

“Everybody is looking for an answer,” he adds. “Productivity is Canada’s No. 1 challenge.”

It has been called the “skinny resumé solution” — a reference to people with a lack of experience, but who are a much better fit for the job and can be trained for the role. Lahey says it helps eliminate the natural bias that recruiting managers have. “Right away, they’re missing diamonds in the rough,” says Lahey, who joined Predictive Success about seven years ago, coming from Microsoft Canada.

Steele is in the process of trying to bring his product to market — a move he says can be done for about \$300,000 with today’s technology — and has had strong endorsement from external reviewers. He’s now in the process of basic development as part of a research project.

Predictive Success, meanwhile, is pushing ahead with national expansion of its two flagship products, including using it as an accident prevention tool for the oilpatch. Since people are better matched to jobs, they tend to have lower accident rates. One long-haul trucking company reported a 40 per cent lower accident rate using Predictive Success’s data-driven tools.

It attributes the results to a better ability to focus on the task at hand, along with finding people with the analytical, reflective and detail-oriented attributes necessary for the job. Lahey maintains the firm’s data-driven technology survey and assessment tool also boosts productivity.

It also translates into higher levels of job satisfaction. “Interviewing is no better than a coin toss — a 50 per cent success ratio at best,” Lahey says. “We go in with evidence-based tools.”

It also reveals how well a person will be “on-boarded” and how long it will take for somebody to hit the ground running. He claims a 30 per cent faster hiring process as a result of the technology. It digs down into the “core DNA of people.”

“There are lots of people who don’t have all the experience ... but they have the right drive and motivation to be successful and the right cognitive ability to solve the problems,” Lahey says.

“When you put the two of those together, you have a higher probability of success.”

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