

# MaxImizing Insights

Workforce Trends, Forecasts and Solutions from MaxImizing Insights

June 2003 ▶ Volume 2 Issue 5

## Selecting the Right IQ for your Employee Queue

### The Survey Says

The Workforce Climate and Supervisors Survey results are in and there is some refreshingly good news.

Over eighty-three percent of the respondents in the survey (n=79) felt that their front-line managers' attitudes were good or very positive toward their work.

Seventy-six percent also felt that these managers were usually or very respectful of others.

They were less optimistic however about their employees' attitudes toward work.

Only fifty-six percent of the respondents rated employees attitudes as good or very positive.

Despite a good attitude, their confidence in the effectiveness of these front-line managers' was less than encouraging.

For more results, turn to page 3 of Maximizing Insights.

*The survey was sponsored by Success Performance Solutions.*

**Maximizing Insights is written, edited and published monthly by Ira S. Wolfe for:**

**MaxImize**

(512) 278-1200

(512) 278-0058 fax

Barbara@maxproductivity.com

www.maxproductivity.com

**H**ave you ever had to explain to an employee how to do something and the look you got back was that of a deer caught in your headlights?

On the other hand, you've likely been thrilled to hire that special employee who just seemed to "get it" with little or no training only to be disappointed terribly when they left your employment for a new challenge.

Many organizations are learning through job analysis that a significant source of high turnover in some positions is due to hiring individuals with too high general abilities when average or even low is enough. (For more about general abilities see page 2.)

One advantage to hiring fast learners is that you can cut down training time. These high ability individuals absorb new information quickly but also get bored and lose concentration easily when the job is no longer challenging. By hiring a fast learner for a moderately challenging job, you bore the high abilities individual to tears as soon as they learn the job.

This leads to higher rates of turnover in that position which means more training more often.

One client recently discovered that an employee was calling off work more and more often. She applied for a promotion and after receiving her job match testing, her employer was shocked to learn that her abilities placed her in the top 30 percentile of the population. During her interview, she admitted being able to do the five day job in only two days. So she just stayed home rather than be bored at work.

### When Speed Matters

If you hire, train, manage, or coach employees, this story about Jack and Jill mimics what you must assess when it comes to qualifying how "smart" an individual must be to function effectively in a job.

Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch some water. Jack and Jill each had a 5 gallon container. Jack's container was a jug. Jill's container was a pail.

Both Jack and Jill ran up to the top of the hill. Because Jill's wide-mouthed pail was easier to fill than Jack's jug, Jill filled her container quickly. Jack barely had his jug half-filled when she finished.

Eventually Jack's container was full and now both Jack and Jill had 5-gallons of water.

General abilities are like these 5-gallon containers. Some jobs require the ability to learn and access information quickly. Other jobs require individuals to know the same information but success on the job does not require them to refill their "containers" often nor does it put them in situations that requires them to pour out the information quickly.

For instance an architect and an air traffic controller both may benefit by having the ability to work with shapes. The traffic controller must have the ability to make on-the-fly decisions. The architect will rarely find himself in situations that require split second responses. The architect could be a top performer with lower abilities than the controller.



Copyright 2003. Poised for the Future Company and Ira S. Wolfe

**Hard work and teamwork** goes a long way in achieving goals. But time and resources are running out for managers to find the right people for their teams.

Many organizations have become so resourceful at navigating through troubled waters that they have lost sight of their core competencies. Struggling to stay afloat today, management has forgotten that their purpose is not bailing water but reaching a destination.

Don't wait for the future to dictate your direction. Set your goals and work to achieve them. Identify the challenges and anticipate what's ahead to avoid having the bottom fall out right underneath you.

Call us today for a CriteriaOne® Leadership Audit. Assess the ability of your team to lead you to solid ground and the potential of your up-and-coming to navigate effectively and safely.

### ROI for Job Matching

It costs between 75 to 200 percent of annual salary to replace employees. Anything that you can do to find, hire and keep good employees will have a nice ROI. The ROI for job matching, for example, is usually in excess of 1000 percent. It pays to hire right and manage smart.

### Just Enough Smarts

What most managers mean when they talk about "smart" is general abilities or cognitive skills, not IQ. General abilities suggests how quickly and accurately an individual can think logically and sequentially through formulas, read and comprehend directions, think on his or her feet, and visualize and conceptualizes in three dimensions. It is not specific to education or intelligence.

The higher the abilities, the faster and more accurately an individual is likely to learn new skills. They can read directions and understand them the first time or look at a blueprint and visualize the end-product without even creating a model. General abilities determine how quickly individuals "connect the dots, see beyond the obvious, and learn on the fly".

For instance, an air traffic controller needs to constantly re-calculate flight direction and do it quickly while monitoring traffic in three dimensions. He or she has little room for error and many times doesn't have the luxury of looking for a piece of scrap paper to do the calculation long hand. Traffic controllers require high abilities. A bank teller on the other hand may need to be good at math but basically uses the same formulas over and over again. Rarely does a mistake on a deposit endanger a life. Don't make the mistake of over-hiring cognitive skills when average skills suffice. Don't under-hire either.

### Just One Negative Employee Can Spoil the Bunch

How do you feel when you're surrounded by people who moan and complain all the time? There are three common responses;

- One possibility is that you do whatever you can to avoid contact with them. Don't tell me you haven't avoided the phone call from someone who just brings you down every time you speak with them.
- Second, you cave in and join the negative side. Those other guys just overwhelm you until you become one of them. (Did you know that it takes 7 times more energy to overpower a negative mood than maintain a positive mood.) Sometime it's easier just to go along.
- Third and what is happening more and more, positive people like yourself leave de-motivated organizations or avoid them in the first place. Positive people have this sixth sense. They can walk into a room and just "feel" the good or bad vibes. If you have ever left an environment filled with negative motivation, you know exactly what I'm talking about. You feel like you just had a million tons lifted from your shoulders as soon as you walk out..

Positive people are in short supply these days. Positive people with skills are even harder to find. Talented people are leaving organizations for greener pastures every day because many organizations have devoted all their attention to motivating the de-motivated rather than retaining the talented.

**Is "negativity" infecting your organization?** Our assessment and performance technologies can help you differentiate between the highly motivated-productive and highly motivated-unproductive employees. Hire, train and retain employees who can get you where you want to go. Call us today.





What you need to know to build a “whole person approach” selection and development process that is legally defensible, reliable and accurate.

CriteriaOne is a trademark program of  
Poised for the Future Company

For more information or to order any of the publications, contact today by:

Phone: (512) 278-1200

Fax: (512) 278-0058

Email:

Barbara@maxproductivity.com

## NEW! Accurately Assess Competence with Janus



Leadership ability.

Delegation skills.

Analytical thinking.

Change handling skills.

Motivation skills.

These are just a few of the required crucial skills needed by managers and leaders today.

Janus Performance Management Systems is an easy to use and cost effective approach for improving performance, assessing jobs, aligning an organization, and meeting other HR goals. Many organizations have identified competencies but have not had positive results during the implementation phase - until now.

### FREE Competency Workbook!

Receive a FREE Competency Library workbook from the Janus Performance Management Systems. The workbook includes the library of 36 competencies and worksheets. To order your FREE workbook contact today at 401.431.0026.

**Maximizing Insights**  
has arrived!

**Maximize**  
P.O. Box 142466  
Austin, Texas 78714-2466  
www.maxproductivity.com