

# Avoiding Personality Roulette: How to Hire the Best and Brightest.

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For every dental office manager who has a perfect track record for hiring the best employees, there are probably 10 who have been blindsided by hiring the wrong person occasionally. Sometimes the right person is hired but placed in the wrong position.

Today, a new generation of employee selection assessment tools is putting science into the art of identifying the best job candidates for your work environment and job requirements. What's even more impressive is that one of these new tools, called Integrated Performance Management (IPM) can also measure performance intangibles that are difficult to identify in an interview, or from a candidate's resume.

It is often these hidden but critical traits that separate average employees from great employees—the kind of people who can help fulfill the vision you have for your practice. By measuring these characteristics, managers can gain insight into the candidate's potential before any commitment or job offer is made.

Is this person able to handle high-pressure deadlines? Can they work independently or do they need supervision? How would this person maintain emotional control under stress? Are they able to focus on one task or do they need more variety to stay engaged? Are they high energy or low energy? What happens to their energy level when they become stressed? Thanks to the science offered by IPM assessments, these answers are made clearer.

## New Era. New Methods.

Pre-testing employees is not a new concept. Since before World War I, businesses of all sizes have used tests to separate the wheat from the chaff. But today's technology takes it beyond the realm of knowledge, and into performance. And while small and large businesses are utilizing a wide range of assessment tools to screen potential hires, IPM assessments provide the most complete picture of a candidate's true potential.

The IPM assessment identifies how someone might respond in given situations. It gives a reviewer additional insights into a person's emotional composition, includ-

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ing how well they understand the emotions of others. Through IPM, one may identify potential employees who have natural skills (core competencies) which match what the job requires.

Furthermore, only IPM measures emotional intelligence, or E.Q., a critical factor in adapting to change, controlling emotions



and working well in a dynamic environment. Employees with high EQs are able to size up situations and even gracefully diffuse potentially volatile ones. Employees with low EQs can seem insensitive or socially unaware. For example, Carole is brilliant, but has a low EQ. She frequently and inadvertently responds unfavorably to patient requests. Even simple requests for directions become tense and acrimonious. Carole could benefit from awareness training, or creating a greater awareness of one's emotions and how to manage them, while creating a greater awareness of other's emotions.

Another attractive aspect of IPM is that it is a validated employee selection instrument which the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission recommends be part of every hiring process. In addition, since IPM assessments are conducted online, office managers

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and owners receive results almost instantly. A trained consultant can pull together and interpret each area of the results to identify the most appropriate employees for your office's unique environment and business style—or can recommend adjustments so that an ideal candidate can maximize their potential within a certain position.

It is because of this flexibility that IPM is also utilized for team-building with current employees, to shed light on personality and work-related issues. It helps managers see why tension between Janice and Denise is constant, and why Margie and Karen always work in harmony. Armed with data on what makes employees tick, smart office managers can structure the work environment to take advantage of employees' strengths, and avoid triggering their weaknesses.

With the proper guidance, management also can make adjustments in office systems or individual roles to facilitate better communication, teamwork or increase productivity. For example, some personality types are more focused and less flexible. They may be organized, methodical, and less "people"

oriented. Any deviation from the routine takes them off-center. Other more flexible employees find these people rigid and insensitive. They may wonder why these people can't just "go with the flow" or lighten up. The truth is you need both types of employees in a healthy office environment. But the trick is to give each type a role that fits their strengths and allows them to succeed and be challenged without bursting the limits of their comfort zone. Knowing how to balance this is important for happy employees and overall profitability.

No matter how intensive your hiring protocol, interview process or training program, you can still inadvertently hire the wrong person for the wrong job. As Jim Collins, author of the best-selling book, *Good to Great* says, "If you have the wrong people, it doesn't matter whether you discover direction, you still won't have a great company. Great vision without great people is irrelevant."

IPM personality assessments not only give office managers tools that help them build successful teams — IPM offers insight into understanding what motivates certain em-

ployees, and how to optimize the work environment to get maximum results.

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