



Nonprofit Increases Hiring Success Probability with a Customized Testing Solution

Employ**Test**



Greystone Programs is a private nonprofit that supports children, adults and families living with autism or other developmental disabilities. With residential and community-based services, it works with more than 600 residents of three counties in the Mid-Hudson Valley in New York State, including operating 16 homes for adolescents and adults. Its outreach work includes day education and socialization programs, vocational training and in-home education and counseling for families.

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The EmployTest solution gives us more confidence in our hiring decisions.

Michele Lawrenson,
Assistant Executive
Director of Administration



MICHELE LAWRENSON, ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

Every time an employee leaves a job, the organization suffers financially.

It is especially difficult for nonprofits because their financial base typically is thinner than most companies.

As a nonprofit in the healthcare field, the challenge of finding and keeping good employees increases, especially in entry-level positions.

Michele Lawrenson feels the pain every day.

She oversees the HR function for Greystone Programs, a nonprofit that operates residential homes and outreach programs for about 600 autistic teens and adults and their families in upstate New York.

THE CHALLENGE OF FILLING ENTRY LEVEL JOBS

Although it pays a competitive wage, Greystone's highest turnover was at the entry level position of Direct Support Professional, the people who interact daily with clients with developmental disabilities and their families.

It can be emotionally taxing work and is one of the reasons people leave.

CHALLENGE:

Reduce staff turnover for entry-level positions that make up the bulk of the hiring.

SOLUTION:

Customized tests that help identify sought-after behavioral traits and prompt the organization's interviewers on follow-up areas during in-person interviews.

RESULTS:

- Implemented a testing solution that focuses on competencies unique to business needs;
- Improved candidate field moving on to in-person interviews; and
- Increased confidence in hiring choices.

Nationally, it is a job with 52 percent turnover annually, according to a University of Minnesota study. And it costs about 16 percent of that position's salary to replace someone who leaves, the Society for Human Resource Management says.

That puts pressure on recruiters and hiring managers to make the right choices for the staff of about 400.

Greystone hires 150 to 200 people annually, and Michele says EmployTest's highly customizable online pre-employment tests increase Greystone's success probabilities.

The agency solicits applications through internet job postings. It does phone interviews with selected prospects and then forwards candidates to hiring managers. Those chosen to advance take the EmployTest assessment and then are interviewed in person.

TESTS HELP INTERVIEWERS FRAME QUESTIONS

Partnering with Greystone, the EmployTest team talked with Greystone staff and walked through their interview process, step by step. EmployTest helped identify key traits and skills that would enable new hires to contribute immediately.

The EmployTest team used its test topic library, along with the Greystone job description, to configure a test that could be taken anywhere (applicants' home or office), typically in about 20 minutes. With instantly available test results, Greystone staff quickly moved top scores to the next step in the hiring process.

"We really wanted a more scientific approach to learning about a candidate's personal characteristics as it relates to job fit with us," Lawrenson says. "Success in our jobs is more about coming in with the right personal traits, such as kindness, compassion, patience and reliability. We can teach skills, but you can't teach kindness."

Michele likes how EmployTest generates follow-up questions for the interviewer based on an applicant's written responses, especially in areas where they might have fallen short. Both the test itself and these follow up interview questions are designed by a Phd-led research team.

To explore kindness, the EmployTest solution might suggest a question such as:

"Explain a time when it was difficult for you to help someone in need. Do you often find it difficult? Please explain."

The prompts are especially helpful for staff members new to conducting interviews.

CUSTOMIZABLE AND SCALABLE

While Greystone, in the big picture, would be considered a health-care organization, its niche in developmental disabilities required focused questions.

Michele says that was one of the chief obstacles with the organization's former testing process.

"Nothing they offered fit our industry, and the language used in the tests was geared more towards healthcare or other unrelated fields," says Michele. "EmployTest helped us customize a test for our type of job."

There are no expensive annual contracts with EmployTest. Companies can buy what they need and scale without having to commit to elements they won't use.

I'm certain we have saved ourselves some bad hires by using the EmployTest solution.



MICHELE'S TIPS FOR GETTING IT RIGHT

Having been through two testing solutions now, Michele wants to share her insights:

- Design a test that measures the most critical things you seek for job success;
- Don't make the tests too lengthy and annoy the candidate early in your screening process; and
- Accept that 'perfect' candidates - those who have everything you could possibly desire -- are few and far between.

ABOUT EMPLOYTEST

EmployTest is dedicated to increasing productivity and reducing costly employee turnover through timetested, customizable screening assessments. The company has worked with more than 7,000 corporate and government partners across six continents. Our customizable assessment platforms administer more than 60,000 tests to job applicants annually.

