

Making Performance a Prerequisite

Engagement Profile: Performance Management



Industry: Manufacturing

Like organizations in every other industry sector, today's global manufacturing companies must do more with less. They are in the midst of a never-ending race to produce innovative products faster and more efficiently than competitors striving to do the same. Every day, somewhere in the world, various new materials are tested in building both conventional and new products, and groundbreaking techniques and processes are piloted in order to more seamlessly integrate components from a large network of global suppliers.

Client Opportunity and Challenges

Pace of Innovation Requires Immediate Proficiency

This constant and complex cycle of innovation dictates that manufacturers hire highly skilled personnel, from the front office to the assembly line. Demonstrated, reliable, and repeatable performance is required on day one. Ideally, new employees will require minimal training to reach full proficiency on the job. The economic consequences of poor performance can be prohibitive, amounting to as much as billions of dollars depending on the industry, the products being manufactured, and the impact of the mistakes.

Alpha Company,¹ a global manufacturing company, was in the process of developing a leading-edge product line and needed to hire workers for newly designed jobs building complex and innovative products with advanced manufacturing techniques. In addition to specialized technical expertise, Alpha's environment required adaptable workers with the critical core knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform a variety of assembly functions associated with the new manufacturing process.

Companies must decide which job requirements they want to hire for and which they are willing to train. These are value judgments and economic decisions that vary depending on the organization's specific strategic objectives. Alpha chose to select job applicants for training and turned to PDRI, a CEB Company, to help identify candidates with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be trained and to perform successfully on the job.

This can be an especially difficult undertaking given the demographics of an increasingly diverse, rapidly aging, and constantly evolving workforce. Global manufacturing companies like Alpha are often faced with trying to fill physically demanding skilled-trade jobs that are less appealing to many job seekers.

¹ Pseudonym.

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Engagement Profile: Performance Management (Continued)

Solution

Realistic Job-Specific Simulations Deliver Accurate Measurements

Since we were tasked with developing the selection system before the product had been fully designed and the assembly process finalized, this challenging scenario required a complex strategic job analysis of positions that did not yet exist. Once job requirements were established, we developed targeted assessments precisely aligned with requirements. We were able to help Alpha¹ put the right people in the jobs, and ensure they were ready to go on day one.

We employed a set of computer-based pre training assessments measuring the basic skills required to be trained in the job—such as mechanical comprehension, math, and reading. These assessments were supplemented with non cognitive assessments measuring adaptability, safety consciousness, and other factors that would dictate successful adjustment to the work environment.

Alpha also wanted to test candidates after training, so we validated high-fidelity job simulations in which candidates were presented with mock-ups, specifications, and work orders to build apparatus or install parts. They were asked to complete tasks that demonstrated skilled performance on the job. Not only were applicants engaging in job-specific tasks, but they were also scored using the same criteria that the client uses to assess on-the-job performance.

Results

The more that job-related assessments mirror the work performed and the context of a job, the better they predict job performance—and job performance ties directly to bottom-line business success. Hiring skilled workers who have proven their ability to perform on day one is good business. This savvy global manufacturing company ensured the validity of its talent selection tools, thereby protecting the enterprise and its customers and driving profitability and competitive advantage in a fiercely challenging global marketplace.

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