

*Use Of the Occupational Personality  
Questionnaire (Saville and Holdsworth Ltd.):  
Three Case Studies*



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Hennepin County HR

# *Hennepin County--An Overview*



- Over 11,000 employees
- A Merit System since 1967
- About 25,000 applicants per year
- Strong tradition of testing
- Prides itself on quality
- Substantial Management retirements over next decade

# *Why HC started looking beyond Traditional Skills and Abilities*

- Need to look at the whole person
- Technical skill may not be enough
- Change requires flexibility
- New, higher emphasis on service
- Finding team/organizational “fit”

# *HC Approach to Using Personality Assessment*

- Multiple methods of evaluating candidates
- Importance of the interview
- Convergence of OPQ and interview results
- Use Licensed Consulting Psychologist-LCP
- Candidate feedback
- Provide service to a higher level
- Assessment Centers too people intensive

## *Case Study # 1*

- Property Management Department  
(Assistant Director)
- Evaluate two finalists
- Administer OPQ
- Draft questions for Director to use in second interview - HR assisted in interview
- Result: Neither candidate was hired

## *Case Study # 2*

- Court Administration (Manager)
- Administered OPQ
- Developed pre-work interview - HR conducted interview
- Wrote summary for department on each candidate for use in hiring process
- Department pleased

## *Case Study # 3*

- Deputy County Administrator
- Administered Verbal/Numerical Reasoning and OPQ
- Interviewed former Deputy and former Administrator
- Reviewed information with Administrator to identify profile fit

## *Case Study # 3 Continued*

- Developed and conducted interviews: LCP + HR employee
- Wrote candidate summaries based on OPQ and interview
- Grouped candidates into three groups based on the “fit” model
- Recommendations to Administrator

## *Lessons Learned*



- Presents richer information  
vs. simple rank order
- Better match for managerial requirements
- Expands thinking of hiring managers
- HR becomes a consultant/partner

# *Recommendations and Caveats*

- Build credibility - offer new services
- Presenting information vs. rank order
- Caution: Do not cut corners
- Caution: HR Time/cost investment is large
- “Validate” results with customer
- Keep looking for ways to innovate
- Smile, do good work, and keep in touch