Game on
Accurate profiles of your most important assets through games. → Pg 03

COMING HOME
Returning Malaysians share how and why they are back

HIRE RIGHT
Select the best candidate by avoiding these hiring mistakes

WOW THEM
Ten ways to welcome new employees into the organisation

STEP ON UP
A JOBSEEKER’S GUIDE TO ASSESSMENT CENTRES PAGES 6-7

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A VERY EXPENSIVE MISTAKE

ESTIMATES of the cost of a bad hiring decision range from 30% of the individual's potential first year earnings (according to LinkedIn influencer, Ryan Holmes, Hostsuite CEO) to 2.5 times the person's annual salary (in an article by Fred Yager, editor at FinancialCareers).

Automatic Data Processing even has a calculator on its website to help you tally the full cost of a bad hire, taking into account factors such as staff costs, productivity loss, relocation costs and training costs. When recruiters discuss the “cost of talent” and the constant urgency to ensure organisations have the “right” people for roles, what is implied in an undercurrent of not wanting to hire the wrong people. These are individuals that cannot meet the expectations of the role and/or do not fit into the culture of the organisation.

Many agree that it is more costly to make a bad hiring decision than to not hire at all. The financial cost of the hire and cost of looking for a new employee are but two elements of the formula for total cost for employers. Other elements that can be detrimentally affected that cannot be cleanly represented by monetary figures include relationship at the workplace, productivity of other employees and client relationships.

Zappos CEO Tony Hsieh is so bent on weeding out bad hires that he famously offers new employees a bonus of US$2,000 to quit after their first week of training. Now there’s an idea.

So while we can’t seem to settle on a clean answer on what the cost of a wrong hire is, it’s at least clear that the costs are very high. As a result, employers invest heavily into ensuring their recruitment processes are as efficient as possible in selecting the “right” people. Understanding that interviews can be tainted with personal bias and first impressions can be misleading, many companies reduce the risk of bias by ensuring that a whole host of people meet the candidate, both superior and potential peers.

Companies also employ the use of assessment centres to capture a more accurate picture of how individuals could perform on the job. These are a planned series of activities that candidates must undergo, which can include anything from group discussions, case studies, presentations to psychometric testing.

Typically, these are customised to measure candidates against the prescribed competencies of the company.

While the name suggests a special venue with a large signboard saying “assessment centre”, these activities can be held at any venue and the term refers more particularly to an assigned period of assessment rather than an actual place. They can be intimidating environments for jobseekers, but they have been shown to be a good, objective approach to making hiring decisions.

The aim, at the end of the day, is to ensure the best people for the job and the company get hired. The point to remember is that a bad hiring decision is expensive for both employer and the new employee. From the individual’s perspective, cultural misalignment and the inability to meet expectations can be demotivating, and importantly,

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up until the early 20th century, it was almost a miracle when large organisations managed to hire great staff, let alone great teams, as most of these hiring decisions were based on "gut-feeling".

Henry Ford, founder of Ford Motors and Andrew Carnegie, a steel industrialist, who in today's value would be worth about US$20bn, were great employers. Building their empires required the hiring of large pools of great talent. Their success may be mistakenly attributed dumb luck: being at the right place at the right time.

Napoleon Hill studied hundreds of industrialists. He sets apart Ford and Carnegie as great minds who understood, and had the wisdom to acknowledge, what they themselves lacked in knowledge and personality. They compensated for their shortcomings by identifying and hiring people who had the skills and attributes that they personally lacked.

As time progressed, the employers turned to science for ways that would provide for a more consistent and reliable approach in identifying talent.

There is a plethora of options today. Complex tools are continuously being designed for talent seekers to make better decisions more through data analysis and less through reliance on "gut-feeling".

Employers today use psychometric assessments to help select the right candidates. These are tests designed to assess a candidate's abilities and attributes; it is sometimes called "talent profiling".

Psychometric evaluations provide decision makers with quick, simple and cost-effective methods of talent selection.

However, the advent of social media created an issue not many saw coming. Quick and easy online sharing and posting of information from these psychometric tests by people who had access to them, amplified issues faced by tool providers who were generally behind in technology and substance.

Many thought the solution was to simply tweak the current systems. However, the more forward thinking psychometric designers introduced the idea of online "gamification".

Gamification simply put is making talent selection assessments and questionnaires look and behave like a game. Such a test may have a point-scoring element or interaction with other online users.

For instance, the online navigation application, Waze. It is easy to understand because it works on a "gamified" platform. It has an inherent element of fun in its use, along with a level of competitiveness.

It enables interaction with other Waze users and the ability to update map information for the benefit of other users.

Gamification is not a novel concept. We have been at it for decades with gamified titles like "Employee of the Month" and customer loyalty programmes. These were, however, simpler forms of gamification.

Neuroscientific research has demonstrated that gaming results in easier participant attention for longer periods, and intuitively generates higher levels of involvement. In the last decade, the art of gamification has improved a great deal.

Today's employers have a vast array of tools at their call. They can choose how complex they want their hiring and development process to be. Their choices start from simple paper and pencil testing right through to simulated online gamified platform with all the bells and whistles.

One of the key reasons employers are adopting gamification to replace current tools is to tap into the human competitive instinct.

Deloitte has listed gamification as one of the top 10 trends of the future, and believes that gaming drivers and magnifies adoption of information, increases performance and improves engagement.

In order to build a strong gamification tool for talent profiling or development the following elements may be necessary:

ENGAGEMENT — The tool must be simple and ought to elevate the user experience of the brand.

REWARD/ RECOGNITION — There has to be an instant gratification element to entice users to use the tool to its fullest potential. Leaderboards and badges are examples of simple rewards that have been used for decades now.

FEEDBACK — People are always on the lookout for feedback as it validates the good work and allows for development. Hence, when designing a gamified profiling tool, feedback must be instant, simple and accurate.

COMMUNITY — This creates a sense of belonging to a group and allows for information sharing and peer feedback.

Some of the examples of gamification in today's working environments are:

BUSINESS SIMULATIONS — Generally used for development, business simulations usually take on a gameplay that induces participants to make decisions and react to informational change throughout the process.

REALISTIC JOB PREVIEWS — Relatively new in the industry, the realistic job preview tool is used in areas of mass application such as graduate programmes or cabin crew/ground staff for airlines.

In principle, what HR Technology organisations are trying to achieve is to boil down the essence of the brilliant insights of people like Henry Ford and Andrew Carnegie into simple, measurable, effective and consistent methods so that business drivers too can enjoy the insights, understanding and strengths of recruits, just like Henry Ford and Andrew Carnegie could so innately do.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When do I know our organisation is ready for "Gamification"?

Many organisations suffer with the "I don't know if this will work for us" syndrome. My answer to this has always been simple; you won't know until you try.

As such, implement a staggered approach where the end-game can be a fully integrated simulation process but the journey can be different from organisation to organisation.

What about bandwidth? Will this be an issue?

This is a very important issue. The better solution providers have taken this into consideration and have generally built solutions that are light and easy on the bandwidth.

Make sure you ask for documents that show bandwidth usage and insist on testing the solution for the aforementioned.

This all sounds great, but how do I know it will work?

Like all sound psychometric tools, any reputable provider will run a validation study on tools such as this before going live. Validation is usually done to be able to understand and create measurement of impact of the solution provided.

Our organisation doesn't have much budget for things like this; what would be the best place to start?

This depends on the main issue the organisation would like to solve. If the main issue is at the beginning of the recruitment process i.e. too many applications, too little time to review, then a Realistic Job Preview tool would do the trick.

If it's about talent differentiation then a Situational Judgment Gamification would be a good start. The best thing to do is to talk to an expert and get the right advice.

By SHARMA KSK LACHU

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THE MANY REASONS WHY WE'VE RETURNED HOME

By POONAM BALAN

mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

ALAYSIA is vastly different from what it was since its inception, and so are people. The question of where this nation is heading looms in the back of all our minds, whether young or old. I, for one, am constantly amazed by how rapidly we’ve grown in the business sphere, there’s an unmistakable sense of excitement.

With an average growth of 6.5% per year over the last five years, as identified by the CIA World Factbook, we rank No. 6 out of 10 best countries for long-term growth as stated in HSBC’s The World in 2030 report.

We seem to be poised for the years to come despite the gloom and doom consuming the airways. Promising indicators like these pave the way to a silver lining for this nation, defying the almost unpallatable doubt seaweed that had rooted itself in our politicised article we come across.

Returning home wasn’t a decision that came easy to me and promises of growth backed by factual data wasn’t the way I went about making my decision.

In my case, it was always family that tured me home. You’d think that would be the easiest decision, but after spending what I consider my most formative years in a different country, I realised how impactful a place can be on our decisions.

For me it was the lifestyle that I had been exposed to which made the change so much more difficult. The reasons are different for each of us and when you dig deeper, you’ll find commonalities in our thought processes, what fuels us to move forward and interesting enough, what binds us all as Malaysians.

Beyond the nasi lemak and roti canai which I asked everyone if they could make when they visited from home, there is in fact a deeper sense of nationalism in all of us. It’s shown in our natural sense of cultural understanding, our love of Malaysian food, our celebration of all ethnic holidays. It’s safe to say that we’re a unique bunch.

As soon as I returned, I noticed areas in which I could be of assistance. When I first picked up the newspapers, I noticed that there were opportunities for more subjective content addressing topics like ageism, inclusive work environments, work-life balance, gender biasness, etc.

So, I gave it a shot and asked for a space in one of our national newspapers.

Under the guidance of an editor who has an appreciation of varied insights, I found an audience and I continue to do so today with my column in The Edgy - speaking to the generation I believe we should be paying focus to. Little did I know that my thirst to write and a different point of view was in fact an already identified area of need.

The National Key Economic Areas list (Communication, Content and related Infrastructure as a key milestone for us to transition from a middle-income to a high-income economy.

In my line of work, I find that often, the lines between communications and marketing are often greyed. Communications is the strategy behind marketing and content, is in fact king! I hope in the near future initiatives like the above will make this distinction clear.

I’m a believer in continual improvement, there is always room for betterment and change. Like many who have braved moving overseas, I realised how small the world really is and how fast time passes by.

If change is to come about, it would have to come from within. Gaining better insight into unique organisations such as Talent Corporation Malaysia Bhd, who are determined to make a difference, brought forth relatively silent efforts that are sadly less communicated in the media.

These would be positive efforts I’m sure quite a few of us would like to read about. Government initiatives are simply not sexy. However, they are necessary. Each story further to mine in this feature will introduce a fellow Malaysian making contributions in national key economic areas by knowledge sharing, going beyond the expected, putting aside any inhibitions and returning home to make a difference.

Poonam Balan is a returnee from Canada. She now works with TalentCorp in furthering our communications and collaborative efforts with the Malaysian diaspora dispensed all over the world.

RETURNES’ THOUGHTS

DR CHAU DE MING
Senior lecturer, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
Universiti Putra Malaysia
Returned from: The United States

How did you find out about TalentCorp?
I was working as a research fellow at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, when I first heard of TalentCorp back in 2011.

I was invited by some friends to attend an informal networking session which made the change so much more difficult.

The representatives knew the audience well and they were able to address different kinds of questions professionally.

I also enjoyed attending these sessions because of the opportunity to meet other Malaysians.

I got in touch with TalentCorp for advice on how to apply for REP.

The process was quite straightforward and I’m thankful for the assistance I received.

Are there any key messages you would like to share with fellow Malaysians abroad who are looking to contribute beyond borders or looking to return home?
I know many Malaysians residing overseas and pursuing a career in research who are looking for opportunities to contribute through dialogue sessions to learn about each other’s work, to share research ideas and to exchange expertise.

Participating in these discussions is the first step towards forming future research collaborations.

I would also like to see Malaysian scientists who are living abroad give research talks in seminars when they are in Malaysia for their vacation. The purpose is to expose Malaysians to the kind of work they do overseas.

In short, there are so many ways where we, as a global Malaysian scientific community, can work together and the key is to take the active step of reaching out to one another.

What are your hopes for Malaysia?
I wish to see more young Malaysians become interested in science. Not merely as consumers but as discoverers and innovators.

One of my roles as a researcher and lecturer is to cultivate a love for science in these young people and to inspire them to do things that can impact the world and improve the daily life of people.

I also hope that the Government will continue to support the research community so that science will one day become a thriving industry in Malaysia.

I KNOW MANY MALAYSIANS:
RESIDING OVERSEAS
AND PURSUING A CAREER IN RESEARCH WHO ARE LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE

SHRIANAND PATHMAKANTHAN
Head of research, CLSA Securities Malaysia
Returned from: Singapore

Tell us about your experience being back in Malaysia from a professional and/or personal point of view.
There was no real tipping point – there is a lot of flexibility inherent in being a single professional.

However, after over four years in Singapore and having picked up a lot of experience working in an international financial centre, I was ready to come back to Malaysia to apply my enhanced knowledge base and skill set to a management and leadership role.

There was also the social pull of family and friends, as well as that comforting general sense of “belonging” that comes from driving on Malaysian streets and having ready access to quality nasi lemak!

Working with a Malaysian team is a really great experience compared to many of their global counterparts; I see the typical Malaysian professional as a great balance of intelligence, flexibility and sociability. No wonder we are such a popular import around the world!

Can you give us some insights about your profession and/or the industry you’re currently in?
As far as the equity research profession in Malaysia is concerned, we are really on par with regional best practices and standards. This is a globalised business with few cross-border barriers, so a combination of progressive regulators and competition proved that the industry has kept pace and will continue to do so.

Perhaps the biggest change from a structural perspective is the change in client rankings. Ten years ago, foreign pension funds and fund managers would be the prime source of business for international equity houses like mine.

Qatar Oil and Gas sector outreach networking session 2013.

UK Healthcare Outreach networking session 2013.

AS FAR AS THE EQUITY RESEARCH PROFESSION IN MALAYSIA IS CONCERNED, WE ARE REALLY ON PAR WITH REGIONAL BEST PRACTICES AND STANDARDS.

Now, with the fall-off in international interest re-investing in Malaysia and the continued growth in domestic savings, I domestic funds like the Employees Provident Fund that are our most important clients and we are proud to be their partners as they increasingly invest in the region.

Are there any key messages you would like to share with fellow Malaysians abroad who are looking to contribute beyond borders or looking to return home?
My move back has been working out well for me but of course, you have to do your own careful cost-benefit analysis before deciding whether this is a big decision.

Engage with TalentCorp early on – it has a lot of resources to lend (which I only found out about after my decision) that will help you make a decision.
**RETURNING EXPERT PROGRAMME (REP)**

**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?**

- Federal CIT: Full tax rate on non-tax employment income for a period of three years.
- Tax exempt for personal effects (excluding vehicles)
- Tax free for dependent children
- Tax free for dependent parents
- Tax exemption for personal vehicles

**THE REP IS A PROGRAMME TO FACILITATE THE RETURN OF MALAYSIAN PROFESSIONALS FROM OVERSEAS.**

**QUICK FACTS**

Top 6 countries REP applications come from (based on percentage):

1. Singapore
2. China
3. Australia
4. UK
5. US
6. LIAE

Top 6 NKEA Sectors of REP applications (based on percentage):

1. Business Services
2. Oil, Gas & Energy
3. Financial Services
4. Electronics & Electrical
5. Communications, Content & Infrastructure
6. Healthcare

**ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

1. Malaysian citizen and able to contribute significantly to the economy
2. Residing and employed abroad continuously for at least three years at time of application
3. Not earned employment income in Malaysia continuously for at least three years at time of application
4. Total cumulative working experience abroad of at least two years after graduation of a Bachelor’s degree

**ONLY INDIVIDUAL APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED**

**COMPANIES CAN APPLY ON BEHALF OF THEIR TALENT**

For more information on the REP Fast-Track Application process, contact:

**Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad**

- Tel: +603 8992 3500
- Fax: +603 8992 3501
- e-mail: talentcorp@talentcorp.com.my
- www.talentcorp.com.my

**FELISAH AHMAD NOOR**

Executive director - project management/construction, AECOM Perunding Sdn Bhd

Returned from: Hong Kong

Please tell us about your journey home. Did the REP assist you in this transition?

It’s been great being back; Malaysia is flourishing well. I am privileged to be involved in some of the larger projects which fall under the government’s Economic Transformation Programme (ETP), and through these I have met many professionals who are driven to deliver the projects in earnest, all for the benefit of the country, people and environment.

My journey home was quite simply laid out, I was fortunate to have multiple offers made to me at the time and I eventually chose one that suited my lifestyle and career plans. The REP process was very efficient, the website laid things clearly and I received responses in a timely manner, all of which left me quite impressed. My company did assist me in this as well, having processed a number of professionals similar to my case previously.

Can you give us some insights about your profession and/or the industry you’re currently in?

I’m in the construction and development field which is ever-growing. The ETP in place is a necessary step towards us meeting this goal and eventually would help raise the economic standards of the country. I do feel that our nation is at crossroads. Whilst we have the platform necessary for growth and development, we now have to ensure that our plans are implemented rationally and delivered to meet their objectives.

Going ahead, I would emphasise focus on ensuring efficiency for managing developments, and with a sustainable view for the long term, both in the physical and socio-economic context.

One challenge we continually face is the shortage of skilled and experienced talent. Enhancement to our education system needs to take place with emphasis on both language and leveraging on our diversity, and initiatives like TalentCorp may well hold the key to unlock the hidden potential of our professionals and harness both local and foreign Malaysian talents.

Are there any key messages you would like to share with fellow Malaysians abroad who are looking to contribute beyond borders or looking to return home?

Without a doubt Malaysians stand in a good position in terms of professional progression here. Mechanisms like TalentCorp can help ease the move back and assist with the sourcing of potential careers. Having been abroad for quite some time and met many Malaysians working overseas, I believe we are all patriotic and given the correct opportunity, I feel many would want to contribute towards the betterment of our nation.

I do hope we continue to develop as a nation in a proactive, transparent and well-considered manner, focusing on the importance of developing our society.

Needless to say, raising the religious standards of the people together with promotion of racial harmony and religious tolerance would be key in achieving the dreams our forefathers had planned for a truly developed and united Malaysia.

**JIM JIA JING**

Process technologist, Shell Refining Company Malaysia

Returned from: Australia

Please tell us about your journey home. Did the REP assist you in this transition?

My journey has been relatively simple because the company that I am currently working for took care of my logistics, transport and temporary accommodation. This is a real plus because it would be very stressful for my wife and I to deal with the arrangements of returning to Malaysia.

The application for the REP programme is very straightforward and user-friendly. All that I had to do was to upload the relevant documents and information through the internet.

From time to time there were questions that were addressed by a staff whom I met back in the outreach session. Throughout the whole process I felt my application was taken seriously.

Tell us about your experience being back in Malaysia from a professional and/or personal point of view.

It is great to be close to family and friends. Not to mention, now, I have full access to my beloved Malaysian food from nasi lemak, rendang kambing, roti canai to bak kut teh. On another note, it was like travelling to a new country and I am adapting to the lifestyle here.

Having worked five and a half years abroad it was definitely the right time to return home to work when the opportunity presented itself.

In my first week of work, I already felt the need to pace up with the stereotypical Malaysian working ethic. In the last three months, the company that I work for has given me a good breadth of exposure; therefore it is worth it.

Being in a growing industry, I believe there will be plenty of opportunities ahead which align with my career goals.

Are there any key messages you would like to share with fellow Malaysians abroad who are looking to contribute beyond borders or looking to return home?

For Malaysians who are interested to return, the objective and the returning should be clear. All the queries and uncertainties about the prospect of returning should be addressed.

Hence, the motivation to return has to come from an intangible factor. This can be family, patriotism or simply the Malaysian experience!
A CANDIDATE’S GUIDE TO
ASSESSMENT CENTRES

By ELISA DASS AVIN
elisadass@leaderonomics.com

DO I HAVE TO BE THERE THE WHOLE DAY?
I remember when I was first called to an assessment centre many years ago for my first corporate job in a management trainee pro-
gramme. The interview started at 8am and ended at 5pm at the time, but thank-
fully something prompted me to call the human resources (HR) department to clarify the timing. It transpired that the centre was from 9am to 5pm and I should have the frustra-
tion of missing the first interview session. That’s why I always make sure to arrive at least 15 minutes early. Do not be late and bear in mind that the time begins when you arrive. Also, it is always best to dress smartly and neatly despite the type of assessment and how informal it may seem.

CAN I GET SOMEONE ELSE TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ON MY BEHALF?
Definitely not. Some of you may receive various written, numerical, or logical tests. In your quest to complete the assessment centre successfully you may be tempted to seek help. However, it is possible to get scenario to answer ability tests that are not based on the knowledge that you possess. I, strongly detest this notion because of the repercussions:

HR, I strongly detest this notion because of the repercussions:

- It will not reflect who you really are and what you are capable of.
- It will give your assessors a wrong perception of your abilities and might compromise your chances of getting the job.
- There will be repercussions of what’s expected of you.

WHAT KIND OF PERSONALITY SHOULD I PORTRAY IN ONLINE ASSESSMENTS?
What is more crucial to the assessor is to find out if you are someone who knows yourself well.

- Most good tools would have an inbuilt mechanism to track if you are consistent in your answers, or to see if you are trying to manipulate the system.
- When you are given a schedule, keep to it and do not make any unnecessary last minute changes. It is rude and unprofessional.

SHOULD I PRETEND TO BE SOMEONE ELSE?
Assessors are actually already aware when they are “faking it”. So, not only should you be yourself, but do your best.

WHAT KIND OF ABILITIES SHOULD I SHOW IN ONLINE ASSESSMENTS?
More is more. It is tempting to answer too many questions, but it is better to answer fewer questions with more depth and thought. Most ability tests or personality questionnaires. While they may help assessors to get a feel of what you are like, it is also important to be honest. Most of these tools are designed to assess your honesty and integrity. So, be honest and be at your best.

SHOULD I COMPETE TO BE THE BEST IN THE TEAM?
No and no. You need to stand out. But not at the cost of being seen as clever, arrogant and overly competitive.

- While most employers would want to assess how you do for your standard, they also want to ensure that it is not done at the cost of build-
ing others. Always think about the situation, but practice sharing the load of your tasks with your team-
mates. At no time, be it during interviews or tea breaks, should you ever bad mouth your previous employer. This automatically sheds a very negative light on you. Not your previous employer, but you!

- You can sit on your pity-pot with your family and friends, but never with your potential future employer. Do not complain about your current employer or say anything negative about your previous employer. This is unprofessional and will come across as ungrateful.

WHAT IS USUALLY OBSERVED AND ARE YOU ONLY OBSERVED DURING ACTIVITIES?
Assessment centre activities and observation will differ according to organisational needs and posi-
tions. That said, common/behavioural indicators assessed are:

- Interpersonal skills.
- Conflict management skills.
- Listening skills.
- Humility.

Officially, assessors will observe you during this activity. However, the assessors do not do an “off-duty” during tea breaks and lunch. So, continue to be at your best throughout the day.

4
WHO ELSE CAN I STAND TO DO?
There is always an introduction. It should be strategic, impactful and short. Name, qualification, hometown and an interes-
ting fact about yourself. Don’t make your assessors feel like you’re showing off. Also, don’t need to dive into details like your birthday, pets and hobbies (unless it is very, very unique). Generic hobbies like reading and playing the piano are not exciting enough to know as an impression. Instead, think about things that your listeners (both assessors and other candidates) would be keen to ask you more questions about and would help project you in a good light.

- Think of this as your elevator speech.
- Read up on the organisation and current news. It is not necessary for assessors to hire managers to ask for your thoughts on the latest trending news or what you think about the organisation. This will come in handy during your networking efforts too.

- Be ready to network. Make an effort to get to know the non-candidates in the room. These include your assessors, hiring man-
age and centre managers. Prepare a few professional conversation opener to start networking.
- Be on time for all your calls. You will be given a role to play, so your ability to stay focused, unless informed otherwise.
- Throughput of the day/project confidence through dressing, body language, words and voice.
- Ask questions; asking questions often makes you look more interested than otherwise. Of course, don’t ask questions that you can answer yourself. So do think through your questions before asking them. Tell me what you ask.
- Justify for every opinion you state during the interview. Assessors want to see that you are knowledgeable about the cases and questions in your assessment centre many moons ago for my first assessment centre.

- Dress for the assessment centre. The email invitation stated the time as “8am-5pm”.
- You were told later the whole Day?

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- You can sit on your pity-pot with your family and friends, but never with your potential future employer. Do not complain about your current employer or say anything negative about your previous employer. This is unprofessional and will come across as ungrateful.
Stellar past performance does not guarantee they will perform the same way in the future.

Common mistakes in the hiring process

By SHAHRAN MASOOD

A global survey conducted by Harris Interactive, an international market research company, found that more than half of employers in the 10 largest world economies, made bad hiring decisions that resulted in a decrease in revenue and productivity. In addition to this, the data also revealed a negative impact on client relations, sales and employee morale, not to mention the time and cost spent to refill the position.

As hiring managers, we follow a process that leads us through a path to the best available candidate. It’s a tried and tested recruitment methodology that started in the 1950s and has evolved into a sophisticated process that can include pre-screening, competency based interviewing, and a range of assessment tools.

In this day and age, despite today’s advance in recruitment technology, and years of “best practice” hiring methods, why do we still make hiring mistakes? And what is the real cost of hiring the wrong talent?

The following may shed some light on why hiring mistakes happen.

What you see… is not what you get

Many candidates look excellent on paper. Have you met that candidate that interviews really well, but ends up being underwhelming on the job? “A stud on paper, duh on the job.”

According to a survey carried out by London based recruitment company McIlver Wood, “more than seven out of ten (72%) senior executives interviewed, said it is common for candidates with promising CVs to not live up to expectations.”

Perhaps it’s a combination of candidates overestimating themselves, and working a job that’s a little out of their depth.

Job fraud or false claims in a candidate resume is a serious misrepresentation of one’s ability.

This can be found in varying less serious degrees, in the form of a seven day masters qualification awarded from an obscure online university, to the slightly stretched out tenure with a previous employer - making them look like a more loyal employee than they actually are.

On a more serious note, there was a case in Australia about a migrant doc- tor that was convicted for the death of an elderly patient, and causing grievous bodily harm to two others.

“Or Death” as he was aptly nick-named, committed fraud relating to his registration as a doctor. The judges were spellbound with how he got the job title of director of surgery.

By keeping in alignment with the hiring objective, all decisions and actions we make give us the best out- come, and in the most efficient way. By keeping mindful of your hiring objective, the best available employee will eventually be hired, who drives business productivity and proves to be a decent cultural fit.

The assumption

“Past behaviour and experience, is an indicator of future performance”. This phrase is the cornerstone guide or rule in the hiring process.

By assessing what someone has performed in the past, it provides an insight into a consistent pattern of thinking, and even the way they look and walk what’s in his resume?

We judge on first impressions. Some candidates are very comfortable and love talking about themselves. However, if you’re faced with an introvert that’s not comfortable open- ing up about their ability, as a hiring manager, you’ll struggle to get value out of the conversation. The candidate inadvertently ”misses the oppor- tunity” because they can’t express themselves.

What happens to the super tal- ented guy that simply takes a while to warm up to people? Potentially, the best guy for the job will be cut from the shortlist, and his latent genius remains undiscovered.

STEREOTYPES

Having a preconceived notion means we have formed an opinion before actual experience or first-hand knowledge.

In the context of hiring the best talent, a preconceived notion filters a candidates suitability based on our personal bias, preference, and in some cases dare I say, prejudice.

Not only is this unprofessional, but if you continue in this manner, you are also making decisions that no longer serve the greater good of your organi- sation.

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The problem with hiring the same people means there is usually a con- sensus on all matters. Hiring to create a culture of “yes men” is liked to working with people that always tell you what you want to hear. The status quo is not challenged, and therefore decisions are made without healthy debate. Projects sometimes continue down an ill- devised track to their demise, with stakeholders left scratching their heads wondering how it all happened.

How to hire the best talent?

There is no need to reinvent the wheel. I believe the reason for hiring mistakes is attributed to our approach to the process. If shortcuts are taken during the process, or if you choose to forego some or all the tools in the suite of assessment, you are clearly not get- ting the complete picture of candidate fit. A good result becomes a case of pure luck, and a bad result means you’ve wasted time and money.

Here are five tips for hiring the best possible candidate:

1. Clearly identify your hiring needs — By hiring a candidate, what operation problem is this recruit- ment campaign addressing? What opportunity is your organisation capi- talising on?

2. Don’t hire out of desperation — Most times it is less costly to not hire, than it is to hire the wrong candidate.

3. Be objective — Hiring activities should always serve your hiring objective.

4. Follow the process — Put some rigour when utilising each tool of assessment. When used in com- bination, the cumulative effect of all recruitment activities gives you the best predictive information, on a can- didate’s future job performance.

5. Perform extensive background checks — The more people you speak to that know the candidate, the clearer picture you’ll have about their consistent behaviours, and suitability for the position.

Stellar past performance does not guarantee they will perform the same way in the future.

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THE JOURNEY TO SUCCESS STARTS HERE

**THE MALAYSIAN CAREER FAIR 2014**

Date: 30 March 2014
Time: 9am – 6pm
Venue: Lancaster London Hotel, London, UK

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Crowd of students at the UKEC-GRADUAN Malayan Career Fair 2013; more than 3500 individuals attended the fair.

**WHAT TO EXPECT IN 2014**

- **Something new this year:** UKEC Awards
  - The United Kingdom & Eire Council (UKEC) of Malaysian Students will launch its inaugural UKEC Award, an annual scholarship to study in the UK and Eire. The award which comprises six categories, is an initiative to help increase the scale, quality, and creativity of student-organised events.

- **Student Networking Session With Datuk Seri Abdul Wahid Omar**
  - Dato’ Seri Abdul Wahid Omar, Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department, will be sharing his professional journey and his advice on overcoming the struggles that happen in both career and life to students from all backgrounds.

- **Session with JPA and MARA scholars**
  - JPA and MARA scholars will get a chance to meet and greet with Abdul Wahid.
  - On top of that, these scholars will get an opportunity to engage and network with the top leading Malaysian employers at the career fair.

---

**List of participating organisations:**

1. ALIA Bhd
2. Axiata
3. 3M Malaysia Products
4. ACCA
5. CIMB GROUP
6. Cimb Bank Berhad
7. Chemical Company
8. CCM
9. CCM Pharmaceutical (M) SDN BHD (STERILE), CCM
10. CMM
11. ExxonMobil subsidiaries in Malaysia
12. Employee Provider Fund (EPF)
13. Gamuda Berhad
14. INTEL Malaysia
15. IHI
16. Khazanah Nasional Bhd
17. Kompulan Wang Perusahaan (KWAP)
18. KPMG in Malaysia
19. Largue
20. Maybank
21. Maxis Berhad
22. NCC Consulting
23. Nestle Malaysia
24. OCBC Bank (M) Berhad
25. Petronas
26. Pharmacia Berhad
27. PwC Malaysia
28. Securities Commission Malaysia
29. Shell Malaysia
30. Samsung Malaysia Electronics
31. Sunway Group
32. UEM Group Bhd
33. UEM Corporation
34. Talent Corporation Malaysia Bhd
35. Taylor’s Education Group
36. Teach for Malaysia
37. Telekom Malaysia

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**CROWD AT THE FAIR**

- **Alia Ishak, Corporate Client Solutions, CIMB Investment Bank**
  - “It was a great networking event – with the organisations that attended and also students from all over the UK.
  - There was a wide range of organisations that attended the fair, which made it easy for me to go around and ask questions pertaining to job opportunities back home.
  - I managed to land myself a few offers from big organisations too! I had some interviews done on the spot but specifically for CIMB, I was called for an interview with the director of HR at our London office.
  - Who knew, four years later, here I am still with the firm, having just recently worked in CIMB London and now back at the KL office doing client coverage.”

- **Nurlisa Ahmad, Process Engineer, ExxonMobil**
  - “The fair helped me understand the relevance of my degree to various positions. Little did I know that my degree in Chemical Engineering would be relevant even to the banking sector.
  - I was very lucky to have secured a job through the fair. I was asked for a pre-interview with ExxonMobil during the career fair where I eventually made it to the final stage and eventually nailed the job. I joined Exxon two months after my graduation.
  - Needless to say, the fair was a worthwhile experience. It was a great way to ‘shop’ for job opportunities, network, and make personal contacts with recruiters from various organisations. It also gave me an insight into the current job market in Malaysia.”

- **Ainun Kuan, Production Executive (Sterile), CCM**
  - “With a crispy new resume in my folder, clad in formal attire and my best hair do, I marched into the career fair through a sea of fresh-faced students hunting for a desirable job. It was actually my first job-hunting experience, so I did not know what to expect.
  - I thought it was an excellent way to secure a job as well as meet with potential employers from various field.
  - I was interviewed for an opportunity by CMM and was quite lucky to be offered a job. A meeting with the fair was worthwhile. I gained a lot of knowledge from it.”

- **Jeremy Ng, Associate in PwC Advisory, PwC Malaysia**
  - “The aim of the fair is to have a consolidated platform for the Malaysian student population in the UK to effectively and efficiently engage with recruiters and chart the beginnings of their career.
  - It is not very often you get the luxury of the best employers from Malaysia fly over to engage you personally, all in one place.
  - The fair provided a fantastic opportunity for me to get to know many Malaysian companies better.
  - I had the privilege of getting to know my future employer, PwC, through their people who drive the culture of the workplace. It provides another perspective when considering which companies to apply for.”

- **Syeda Farhia Preanka, Global Maybank Apprentice, Maybank**
  - “I had a very unique experience at UKEC Malaysian Career Fair. My initial intention was only to explore opportunities in Malaysia as an international student, but in the end, I gained more than that!
  - Not only did I land a conditional job offer with Maybank at the fair, I also entered the Grand Finals of the Maybank GO Ahead Challenge, an international business case competition organised by Maybank.
  - I always see career fairs as reality checkpoints offering both personal and professional development learnings. It’s an extremely value-adding and enriching experience for students to learn more about the job market.”

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**INDIVIDUALS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES AND TIPS WITH THE MALAYSIAN CAREER FAIR**

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TOP 10 WAYS TO WOW YOUR NEW HIRE

1. **MAKE ORIENTATION ROCK!**
   Make sure you have an orientation and onboarding process. But don't stick to the usual boring orientation routines. Those are for boring companies with boring people. Find fun and exciting ways to show them around the office and introduce your company. You can even throw in riddles and quizzes at the end of the orientation and of course, don't forget to reward them for paying attention.

2. **BEGIN NOW!**
   There are many things for the new hires to learn when they first join a new job, and it may require a lot of training. Start the training process immediately upon hire. Don't give them any time to meander at the office. Plan before the new hire arrives what their training schedule should be.

3. **INTRODUCE NEW TECHNOLOGY UPFRONT**
   Get your new hires familiarised with the technologies used in your company. This is well aware of all the good things the company has to offer them. This would also give them something to be excited about and to look forward to. Tell them about the amazing secrets including the weekly badminton games and other "side benefits" that the new office provides. They will be pleased and this may inspire them to work harder and play harder.

4. **CREATE AN ONBOARDING SCHEDULE**
   It would be good to prepare a schedule for your new hires for their first few days. Arrange the tasks they need to do and people they need to meet, so you don't have them sitting around on their first day not knowing what to do when their mentor or supervisor is held up by something else.

5. **GET EVERYTHING PREPARED ON DAY ONE**
   Make sure your new hires have everything they need when they come in on the first day. Notify the people who are involved in the onboarding process so they can have everything ready by day one, such as the email account, business card, desk, direct telephone extension and so on. Don't let them go through one month of working at your company before they get their namecards.

6. **BENEFITS, BENEFITS, BENEFITS**
   Let your new hires in on the perks and benefits of the job. Make sure they are well aware of all the good things the company has to offer them. This would also give them something to be excited about and to look forward to. Tell them about the amazing secrets including the weekly badminton games and other "side benefits" that the new office provides. They will be pleased and this may inspire them to work harder and play harder.

7. **ASSIGN A MENTOR**
   Sometimes it can be tricky for new hires to integrate comfortably with the rest of the employees who have been there before them. Assigning them someone to guide them helps them feel more in place and provides them someone to approach if they need something.

8. **ENCOURAGE FREQUENT FEEDBACK**
   Ask for constant feedback from your new hires. Getting feedback is one of the best ways to stay connected to your new hires. Getting feedback is one of the best ways to stay connected to your new hires. Getting feedback is one of the best ways to stay connected to your new hires. Getting feedback is one of the best ways to stay connected to your new hires. Getting feedback is one of the best ways to stay connected to your new hires. Getting feedback is one of the best ways to stay connected to your new hires.

9. **MAKE THEM PART OF THE FAMILY**
   Make sure they are introduced to every member of the family on the first day. Better still, get every single employee (or division head if you are in a big company) to explain to them what they do in their jobs and how that contributes to the company's goals. That's like killing two birds with one stone—the new employee gets to know everything in the company (and everyone) and the old employees have a constant reminder (everytime a new employee comes) of the job that they do and how it aligns to the company goals.

10. **FIND FUN AND EXCITING WAYS TO SHOW THEM AROUND THE OFFICE AND INTRODUCE YOUR COMPANY. YOU CAN EVEN THROW IN RIDDLES AND QUIZZES AT THE END OF THE ORIENTATION.**

By TERRY SMALL
mystarjob@leaderonomics.com

SO, how are your New Year's resolutions going so far? (I thought I should give this time before checking in.)
Ninety-two per cent of people don't make it, according to the University of Scranton. So, what do the 8% do right?
There are probably numerous reasons why the 8% succeed with their resolutions. Here's where it starts: these people pay attention. They pay attention to the gap.
One of the most important things I've learned in my life is that between stimulus and response there is a gap. Success is determined by choices made in the gap. This is where your resolutions have a chance.
So, what's this gap?
I recently read a brilliant explanation by Susan Goldsworthy. I met her numerous times while I was presenting in Switzerland. She is an international executive coach, award-winning author, former Olympic finalist, and one of the brightest friends I have. This year she co-authored, with Walter McFarland (Chairman of ASTI) Choosing Change - How Leaders and Organisations Drive Results One Person at a Time.
The key is to be mindful. To be awake. Train your brain to notice the gap and the choices that are available for you to choose. This is difficult, until it's not. Remember, you are never stuck. Your brain is capable of great change! Your brain can change itself and a brain changed is a life changed.
Bob Marley once said, "Some people feel the rain. Others just get wet."
Congratulations on learning something about your brain today. The Brain Bulletin is committed to help to do just that. Always remember: "You are a genius!" Enjoy your brain.
Terry Small is a brain expert who resides in Canada and believes that anyone can learn how to learn easier, better, faster and that learning to learn is the most important skill a person can acquire. To interact with Small, email mystarjob@leaderonomics.com
Leverage them. Know what your biggest strengths are. Choose those most, and arrange them in order, with number five being the one that represents you the most.

You are not your weaknesses. These are not your downfall. These are things you can use to leverage on, things you can use to push yourself further.

In order to leverage your strengths and improve on your weaknesses, you first need to know yourself. Kaplan observes that most people compare themselves with others, and to feel superior or inferior towards them based on their strengths and their weaknesses.

The thing is, every individual is different and we all function differently based on our personalities. It is important to know yourself and your capacities.

Your strengths are things you can leverage on, things you can use to push yourself further. On the other hand, your weaknesses are not your downfall. These are areas you need to improve on. It is not something you lack. It is something you need to develop and build.

In his book *You’re Really Meant To Do: A Roadmap for Reaching Your Unique Potential*, author Robert Kaplan observes that most people actually have no clue what their strengths and weaknesses are. Kaplan believes that people should take ownership of assessing themselves. After all, it is for their own personal development.

### Table 1: Action-Oriented

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<th>Artistic</th>
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<td>Detail-Oriented</td>
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<td>Spontaneous</td>
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### Table 2: Aggressive

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<th>Bossy</th>
<th>Chaotic</th>
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<td>Contemptuous</td>
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<td>Mistrustful</td>
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<td>Relentless</td>
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<td>Short-sighted</td>
<td>Shy</td>
<td>Sloppy</td>
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<td>Stubborn</td>
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<td>Strict</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vague</td>
<td>Wasteful</td>
<td>Wild</td>
<td>Worried</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Why It’s Important to Know Your Strengths and Weaknesses

**Many people ask if it’s worth their time to just focus on strengths or work on improving weaknesses? Generally, it would be better to focus more on your strengths.**

These are things you are already good at, so you won’t need to invest too much of your time and effort in it. Focusing on your strengths is about seeking opportunities instead of problems. Instead of focusing on the negatives, focus your energy on the things you are good at.

Focusing on things you are weak at decreases your self-confidence, enthusiasm and overall performance. Usually, not much is achieved by trying to fix one’s weaknesses.

Having said that, working on your weaknesses is important as it contributes to personal growth.

When you have something you are not good at, improving it even slightly can make huge change in your overall performance. Don’t try to fix or get rid of your weaknesses. It won’t work. Instead, work around your weaknesses. Find ways where they don’t hinder you or stand in your way.

For example if you have an event to plan, you know you need posters for it and you are not artistically creative but you are excellent at coordinating, use your strengths here. Get a team to design the posters and coordinate with them to ensure you get what you want.

I believe that it is equally important to understand both your strength and weaknesses. It is essential for self-development and personal growth.

There are a lot of wonderful things you can achieve if you know your true potential and the things you are capable of doing.

By HYMA PILLAY
hyma.pillay@leaderonomics.com

Hyma Pillay is a key member of the Leaderonomics content team who delights in taking personality tests and finding out more things about herself and how she can use her strengths for the best causes. You can email her at hyma.pillay@leaderonomics.com

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**Take a Look at Yourself**
Psychometric assessments are like controlled medicines. Prescribed by a qualified doctor, and used in the right doses and correct circumstances, they make for more efficient and accurate hiring.

For experienced candidates, it gives hiring managers more insight into a candidate's thinking style, motivations and preferences. It also allows us to focus on potential areas for development. At the entry level, it helps graduate recruiters from drowning in a sea of resumes. I've seen the law of unintended consequences at work and sometimes good candidates slip through our fingers or bad candidates come through when:

- You don't know what you're testing for.
- Untrained HR staff administer tests that they can't properly explain to the candidate leading to inaccurate results. Poorly explained to hiring managers, these reports can also be misinterpreted.
- Hiring managers treat the assessment as the final decision making tool rather than as part of the decision making process.
- There is a tendency for interviewers to go on auto-pilot during an interview, purely based on assessment results.

Instead of seeking to clarify, understand and validate the results, they come in with their mind half made up, which is a situation that sometimes leads to bad hiring decisions.

Hiring managers should not see the use of assessment tools as an opportunity to abdicate accountability in the hiring decision. The ability to size up and hire the right people through the face to face interview is a must have competency in any manager's skills arsenal. The right assessment tools help them make better decisions.

CLAUDIA CADENA
Director, Strategic human capital management
President & Group CEO’s office
SapuraKencana

Psychometric testing has its benefits and disadvantages. These aspects need to be considered before organisations make a decision on how to use them for the purpose of managing talent.

**ADVANTAGES**

1. **Perceived objectivity.** When making talent management decisions, organisations are many times challenged by employees about how those decisions are taken and who takes them.

   In order to "legitimise" decisions and provide a sense of objectivity, many organisations use psychometric tools to "validate" information which has been obtained via perceived "subjective" methods like 360 degree feedback and performance ratings.

2. **An additional data point.** Making recruitment decisions can be supported by the use of psychometric tools.

   Some candidates are very effective/impressive in the way they express themselves and convey information during the interviews. However, these impressions are very soon crushed once the candidate joins the workforce.

   Using some of the available tools, will enable recruitment teams to have additional information to validate information gathered via the review of the candidate's curriculum vitae, the interview and reference checks conducted.

3. **Versatility.** Some psychometric tools can be used for a variety of purposes with varying degrees of reliability. They can be used for recruitment, to identify interventions to strengthen soft skills and for career profiling or advancement.

   Therefore the same tool can be used at different times in the employees' life-cycle within the organisation, which in itself provides a sense of continuity and clarity, instead of having to use different tools which can be confusing and at times even contradicting when results are analysed.

**DISADVANTAGES**

1. **The ultimate data point.** Managing talent is not a scientific / numerical discipline. It requires the ability to understand business requirements, understand the individual’s strengths and areas for improvement and the ability to make decisions that will ultimately serve both the business and the individual at the same time.

   As these decisions are complex and more often than not there are no clear cut answers, many leaders opt for using psychometric results as the single most powerful and influential tool to make their decisions.

   The tool disregards how others view the individual, how the individual interacts with people and how the individual has performed in the past within the organisational environment.

   The tool in isolation will not give the full picture which is required to make talent management decisions that are effective and relevant.

2. **Gaming the system.** Psychometric tools require that candidates are candid and place themselves in the work environment as it is and not as they may want it to be.

   Many candidates have difficulties in doing exactly that, and at times they end up replying the questionnaires using what they perceive to be the ideal situation instead of their own reality.

   It is very prevalent to have psychometric results which are totally the opposite to what the individual is perceived to be in the workplace, or to the perception created after an interview.

   It is for this precise reason, that psychometrics should only be used as an additional data point, and not the most important data point.

3. **Which one to choose.** There are so many psychometric tools in the market and each of them claim to be the ultimate solution for our talent management problems.

   When selecting a tool, it is important to understand how the tool was developed, how it was tested, what it intends to review and analyse and how can the results be used.

   Many times, it is equally difficult trying to ascertain what the tool is trying to achieve in itself, that the focus shifts from making a talent management decision, to trying to justify the validity of the tool with top management.

   So, will I use psychometrics in managing talent? My answer is, it depends. I have used them in the past, and I have implemented talent management efforts without them. I can't say that using psychometric tools has given me any better or more accurate results than not using them.

   What I can say, is that the power of the psychometric tools can be derived when we use them in a mature way as an additional data point to validate/compare/contrast the information gathered internally.

   It is also a good tool to provide feedback to the employees. However, if there is no rigour in educating those decision makers on the validity and limitations of the tool, the risks of using them outweigh their benefits in my opinion.