

## Select Inc. Unveils New Tool to Help Transit Agencies Hire Best Workers

A leading supplier of pre-employment assessment testing has released a new tool to help recruit transit supervisors and operators.

Select Inc., a Vancouver, Wash.-based consulting company, has developed a three-part hiring test designed to help companies avoid wasting millions of dollars every year training employees who are not working out. In order to get the right people in a transit agency, the right people need to be hired up front, Geoff Rodgers, vice president of business development for Select Inc., told *UTN*.

The company's tool is designed to recognize the critical aspects of a given job based on three methods of measuring applicants: work interest and willingness compatibility; self-description; and work-related judgment.

Under the work interest and willingness compatibility component, applicants applying for a post are given criteria to demonstrate the values, culture and expectations of the work. The company notes that many performance and turnover problems have occurred because employees have different expectations of the job than the employer.

By allowing each applicant to assess themselves against these work values, many of these problems can be avoided. By profiling applicant attitudes toward these work values, an agency can predict an applicant's fit with the transit culture.

Under self-description, Select Inc. notes that applicants can provide valuable information regarding critical work behaviors, which will predict their performance on the job. Using a forced-choice format, the questionnaire asks applicants to choose between two critical work behaviors.

### How the Scenarios Work

For example, one scenario asks transit supervisors what they would do if a newly hired coach operator has notified you that he is off the route and lost. The applicant then selects one A-E response, which varies from contacting the coach operator by radio and guide him back, to making a map that details the route.

Under work-related judgments, applicants are placed in critical situation scenarios and their choice of action is measured against the consensual judgment of a panel of experts. Applicant knowledge, skill and/or ability is measured in the context of the work and factored into the equation of who is best qualified.

For the last three years, Lane Transit District in Eugene, Ore., has been using Select Inc.'s process because it found that interviews alone were not very effective in finding the best candidates, according to Mark Johnson, director of transit operations for LTD.

"Interviews are 50/50 in my experience," Johnson told *UTN*. "People can do well in an interview and not really be able to have the ability to do the job well, and this just gives us the ability to determine who will really be successful in a job and that's played out."

As a result, LTD contracted with the nearby company to develop a test to screen applicants and help the transit agency make a determination if they would be successful in the post.

In developing the test, LTD and other transit agencies sent their supervisors to Select Inc. where they went through a two-day process to develop what makes them a good supervisor.

After that process resulted in more quality supervisors being hired, LTD assisted the company in developing a test for bus operators.

### Anecdotal Evidence Suggests Test is Working

Although it is still too early to determine how effective the test has been with operators, anecdotal evidence suggests that the transit agency is now getting higher quality hires.

"The last two recruitments that we had, we used that tool for operators," Johnson said. "And again, the quality of candidates that we've moved to actually hire has been very good, and we think that it has really helped us to hire the right people in that position."

Although the three components test different qualities that an applicant brings to the table, Johnson said it is the overall score that is the most important.

"You may have somebody that scores strong in one area and maybe not so strong in another area. You are really looking for an overall fit for the position," Johnson said. "And that's what I think this does is really give you a well-rounded understanding of the person's ability to do the job."

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