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## How to hire the right person

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An Avaunt Performance Knowledge Development White Paper

***Avaunt is a company dedicated to*** providing you with solutions to meld corporate advancement with individual performance. A company and its success is driven by each individual achieving optimum performance in their specific role.

Our philosophy is founded in the thinking that corporate performance is driven by the melding of people and process - we like to think of it as a top down approach. What is 'top down'? It's working from corporate culture and senior executive character, to internal benchmarking to define job performance criteria, to individual performance factors that will determine their potential for success.



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**"First Who ... Then What.** We expected that good-to-great leaders would begin by setting a new vision and strategy. We found instead that they first got the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats-and then they figured out where to drive it. The old adage 'People are your most important asset' turns out to be wrong. People are not your most important asset. The right people are."

*Jim Collins*



## How to Get the Right People in the Right Job

By Phillip Christman *President, Avaunt Performance*

Understanding that getting the right person in the right job drives performance excellence is a simple idea to grasp. As every leader and manager knows, however, it is a very difficult idea to execute. And, frankly, most of us don't do it very well. Why not? The answer to this question has been the focus of twenty years of worldwide research on job performance undertaken by Dan Harrison, Ph.D. involving numerous jobs and industries. The research has provided two key answers to the question of why we have trouble getting the right person in the right job:

1. Determining the requirements of the specific position is as important as assessing the person. Job traits, both those that are required and those to be avoided, must be accurately defined.
2. We need better information into an individual's ingrained preferences and tendencies in order to predict job performance. Just as the land determines the flow of water, ingrained preferences and tendencies define behavior and performance.





## Begin Selection with the End in Mind

Can you go to a file and put your hands on a job profile for each of your critical positions; one that defines the traits that are imperative for success in performing that job? In the words of Shakespeare's Hamlet, "Ay, there's the rub." Very few people charged with selection have this level of information. As is true with any strategic decision, the better your information the better your decision. During your career you will be confronted over and over again with the business problem of getting the right person in the right job. There is now a methodology-the Harrison methodology-that will help you solve this problem successfully. One of the goals of the Harrison methodology is to help you frame the business problem so that it is susceptible to rigorous information-based analysis-no more shooting in the dark.

**The purpose of this paper** is to give you insight into how to get the right person in the right job by helping you better understand how to determine job traits and gain superior information into an individual's ingrained preferences and tendencies. The payoff for consistently selecting top performers can be spectacular. For instance, a study of salespeople in forty-four Fortune 500 firms shows that the top performers added value equal to eighty-eight times their salary.

In research across numerous jobs and industries Dr. Harrison identified 130 traits that impact behavioral requirements for job performance. The research and methodology distill with unprecedented clarity the traits that mark star performance in a particular job. The scope of these traits includes both those traits that create outstanding performance and those traits that need to be avoided-those traits that inhibit performance. So how do you apply these traits to help you solve your business problem of getting the right person in the right job? The answer is a job performance template.

The value-added of sales stars: S. Slone and Lyle M. Spencer, "Participant Survey Results," Hay Salesforce Effectiveness Seminar, Atlanta, 1991," referenced by Daniel Goleman, Working with Emotional Intelligence, Bantam Books, 1998.

## Begin Selection with the End in Mind (cont.)

At the core of the Harrison methodology are comprehensive, generic job performance templates for fifty jobs. A template prioritizes, individually weights, and chooses which of the 130 traits are needed as they relate to that particular generic job. The generic templates provide the foundation-the starting point-for customizing a template to reflect the priority of the traits for your specific jobs. The result is that you can go to a file and put your hands on a job profile that defines the traits that are imperative for performance success in each of your key jobs. You can frame the business problem of getting the right person in the right job so that it is susceptible to information-based analysis. In addition to the generic template base, Dr. Harrison has built Researched Job templates for specific positions in specific companies across a wide range of industries and positions. In any case-customized or researched-the templates are all based on first establishing the correct performance criteria that drive desired results.





## How Do You Know If Someone Has The Right Stuff- The Right Traits?

You now know the traits you are looking for because you have a job performance template. How do you know if a candidate has those traits?

The Harrison methodology identifies an individual's traits through a web-based assessment questionnaire that was developed based on two leading-edge performance theories: Enjoyment-Performance Theory and Paradox Theory. Ongoing research confirms 85% accuracy in identifying the traits that predict individual performance. The reliability is above 90% when customized and combined with eligibility testing and behavioral interviews.

One reason that the Harrison methodology is successful in identifying traits is because it looks at behavioral patterns. As human beings we have ingrained preferences and tendencies- we tend to do the things that bring us enjoyment and avoid the things that bring displeasure. Based on application of this Enjoyment-Performance Theory, the Harrison methodology gives you insight into what tasks an individual likes and what tasks an individual dislikes. If you like a task you will do it more often; if you dislike a task you will avoid it. If you dislike a task that is important to success in your job, by nature you are not highly motivated to perform that task and at some point this negatively impacts your job performance. This gives rise to the first of two important fundamentals in your hiring strategy: use the Harrison methodology to identify and hire the people who like to do the tasks that are important to success in the job.

There is another fundamental that is important in consistently selecting people with the right stuff for a particular job. You are looking for people with balanced versatility. What is that?

### *How do you get the right person in the right seat?*

How can you determine that before you hire? Equally important, is constant development of your talent.

Avaunt specializes in the Harrison InnerView selection technology, which is one of the most predictive instruments in the world, and uses it in our 'top down' approach to integrate your vision and culture down to the individual performer to ensure execution of strategy.



## What is Balanced Versatility?

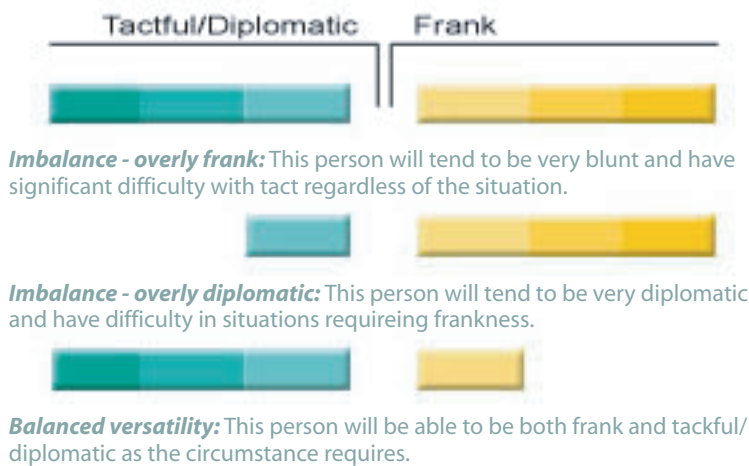
Balanced Versatility is actually a new yardstick for performance. Understanding whether I like a task predicts my motivation to do the task; balanced versatility predicts how effectively I will execute the task from a behavioral perspective. Balanced versatility is rooted in the precept of Paradox Theory that our lives involve dealing with a series of paradoxes. Each paradox is a relationship between two seemingly opposite traits—such as the relationship between tact (diplomacy) and frankness in communication. Are you tactful or frank?

That's an impossible question to answer because as a human being you have the capacity to be both tactful and frank. In fact, to be an effective communicator you have to be both. Therein lays the paradox. The key performance competency for effective communication is not whether you are tactful or whether you are frank; rather the key competency is whether your range of behavior is able to extend to both aspects of the paradox by being both frank AND diplomatic as required. If it does, you have achieved balanced versatility—the versatility to balance tact and diplomacy with frankness as the circumstance requires for effective communication.

In his work with Paradox Theory, Dr. Harrison has identified the key paradoxes that relate to organizational performance in such critical areas of performance as interpersonal relatedness, decisions, innovation, communication, authority-power, motivation, strategic clarity, organization and leadership. The Harrison methodology prioritizes the paradoxes as they relate to a particular job and, based on the answers to the assessment questionnaire, identifies how balanced an individual is in regard to each key job paradox. Top performers have achieved balanced versatility in regard to each of the key job-related paradoxes—a range of behavior that extends to both aspects of the particular paradox.

### Balanced Versatility

Balance versatility is about achieving communication effectiveness. With Balanced Versatility, a person is able to be both frank and diplomatic, as the circumstance requires. Because the individual has a range of behavior that extends to both aspects of the communication paradox, the individual will be very effective in interpersonal communication.



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## *A New Competitive Weapon: Achieving Balance*

Dr. Harrison's research has uncovered a missing priority in achieving the competitive potential of an organization: balanced versatility. Some of the symptoms of a lack of balanced versatility in an organization include:

- ◆ Employee dissatisfaction and turnover, which is estimated to cost two or three times salary due to interviewing, training and loss of productivity in many jobs.
- ◆ Customer dissatisfaction and defection due to poor handling.
- ◆ Ineffective decision-making and team leadership.
- ◆ Poor sales performance.

Companies experiencing these symptoms obviously know they need to do something differently. The capabilities that typically alleviate these symptoms tend to be in the area of good communication skills, interpersonal skills and initiative. Because these are soft skills, it has heretofore been hard to pinpoint the extent to which they are lacking in an organization and whether a candidate for a position truly has them. By measuring balanced versatility, however, the Harrison methodology can pinpoint root causes.

## **User-Friendly Information for Decision-Makers**

A primary reason for developing the Harrison methodology was to help decision-makers solve the business problem of getting the right person in the right job by providing the information needed to make consistently good selection decisions. In order to truly facilitate the decision-making process, technical behavioral information needs to be presented in a non-technical way. The bottom line question in selection is: will the person do this job-are they suitable? Because a straightforward question deserves a straightforward answer, behavioral information is summarized in a numerical grade between 0 and 100. The grade is shown on a job suitability graph that then equates the grade to "suitable," "possible," or "may not be suitable." The job suitability graph also lists the traits that are necessary for success in the job and graphically shows as to each trait whether the individual is ideal, sufficient, a little lacking or severely lacking. Frankly, there is a lot of information to distill into this user-friendly format for decision-makers. The Harrison methodology ensures validity by performing over 200,000 calculations and cross-reference's for each choice a person makes when filling out the assessment questionnaire. In addition to the job suitability graph, decision-makers receive detailed information regarding the individual's motivations and balanced versatility in regard to the key performance paradoxes relative to the particular job.

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**As a result of the Harrison methodology** making the selection process more susceptible to information-based analysis you are able to minimize:

- ♦ The natural bias an interviewer has when evaluating a candidate.
- ♦ The risk of selecting a person who interviews well but does not really have the qualities to be a top performer.
- ♦ The risk of rejecting a person who does not interview particularly well, but has the qualities to be outstanding in the job.

An information-based approach is particularly effective in streamlining the hiring process in high-volume hiring-situations, for instance, where a company is interviewing ten-to-fifteen candidates daily during the year. Candidates who are unsuitable or marginally suitable can be screened-out at the beginning of the process to enable interviewers to optimize their time and the company's resources by focusing only on suitable candidates.

One of the attributes that Jim Collins found in companies that took their performance from good to great was an ability to get the right people in the right jobs. The Harrison methodology provides the how: how to quickly move your processes for hiring and performance development to high performance (great) from wherever it is currently. As Collins observes, "The old adage 'People are your most important asset' turns out to be wrong. People are not your most important asset. The right people are."

Over 15 validation studies have been conducted within companies. In addition, an independent study has been completed demonstrating high Construct Validity. The Harrison methodology includes the most sophisticated lie detection methodology available. It has four levels of security against an individual trying to fool the assessment instrument. Computer cross-referencing reveals even the slightest attempt to deceive the assessment and the design of the questionnaire makes it virtually impossible to see through.

## User-Friendly Information for Decision-Makers (cont.)

Let's look at an example. Since we have explored the paradox of communication in this paper, let's take a look at how a communication imbalance was pinpointed in a large

national bank. One department in the bank was performing at a mediocre rate but on par with other markets in the country. This was alarming to the president because he believed this market was "rich" and should present an opportunity to perform much better. In addition, morale in this department was low and some people had quit. Each member in the department completed an assessment questionnaire. The results showed several areas of imbalance. One key area was in communication. The manager of the department had an extreme communication imbalance: he was extremely blunt. Follow-up interviews with his direct reports confirmed that this lowered their morale and dampened their initiative in attacking the market.

Once the problem was pinpointed the question was how to restore balance to the department. The president of the bank considered two options: replace the manager or work with him to improve his ability to communicate. The president chose the latter and the manager of the department was willing. The manager successfully completed a coaching program designed to help him achieve balance between frankness and tact. As his communication became more balanced, the morale and performance of his group improved. Communication balance was restored to the group.

Had the bank been able to identify the communication imbalance during the hiring process it would have reduced the risk of low morale, turnover and poor performance in the department. Today, during the hiring process the bank can identify a lack of balanced versatility and make better hiring decisions. The bank can now frame the business problem of getting the right person in the right job so that it is susceptible to information-based analysis.



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