

Outsourcing

Predicting who will go and who will stay

One are the days when young people showed up at a fast food restaurant with a pressed shirt and polished shoes to talk to the manager in person about applying for a job behind the counter.

Kids today are applying online—and they're being picky.

And while no company can afford turnover, it's even more critical in today's environment to ensure the people you're hiring are not only a good fit for the job, but that they will stay long term.

"It's a mistake to hire the (first) person who walks in the door"—i.e., the warm-body hiring method, says Carla Bainbridge, CEO of Predictive Profiles, a Bloomington,

Minnesota-based company that specializes in preemployment screenings.

While a good referral is the safest method of hiring restaurant workers, screening candidates to fit your company's profile works equally well.

"You have to do it quickly or you lose them," she says, which is where online interviews become invaluable timesavers. "If you collect applications online you can't tell who's applying. We rank them."

Bainbridge started Predictive Profiles nine years ago after a chance meeting on an airplane introduced her to the designer of a software program that could predict the best hiring move. At

the time, she ran tech companies for a venture-backed firm and was lamenting about the difficulty of hiring good salespeople to her seatmate. It just so happened he was doing his doctoral dissertation on that subject and had developed a diagnostic tool to identify candidates who would develop outstanding track records.

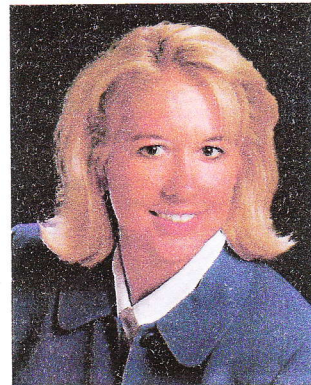
Bainbridge says she made a decision to leap. "I had to be an entrepreneur, I had no options. I was a single mom with two kids and a mortgage," she says. She licensed the product and over the years has refined it so that her firm specializes in the restaurant and hospitality industries. She's further adapted it for the franchise market.

The assessment profiles are different for sales professionals than they are for managers or customer service. The aim is to measure the candidates' ability to not only do the job, but grow in the job, and whether they will fit into the company's culture. And while it's possible to do this in-house, Bainbridge says companies are often "pound smart and penny foolish," when it comes to outsourcing.

"We continually refine and enhance our assessments through ongoing validation reports, using top performers in your existing staff as a benchmark for the future," she says.

The four-page reports generated from the online applications are easy to read and color coded: green means proceed; yellow, proceed with caution and red, redirect. The diagnostic tool works from servers to managers.

After years of gathering data from companies to understand how to customize the profile software to their company's culture, Bainbridge took the next logical step and developed Predictive Performance, a "fast-50 gap analysis." "We find out where a company's underperforming and then plug in a consultant," she



Carla Bainbridge's company, Predictive Profiles helps restaurant companies find the best hires.

said.

The surveys, in this case, are taken by customers, employees and managers. "Everyone's trying to find an edge," she says.

As an example, she tells about a large retailer who asked her to design a program to single out candidates who were sales oriented as opposed to customer service. "It bombed," she said. "What they didn't understand is those customers wanted service, not to be sold to," she said. They redid the program.

In addition, since not all good employees will make good managers, doing online assessments helps companies find the right people for a succession plan.

And since every franchisor is looking for additional value to give its franchisees, Bainbridge said offering an online screening through the company Web site and advertising that site on its cups and in-store collateral, makes sense. Who knew employee screening might one day be seen as a franchise sales recruitment tool? **ETI**

In August we'll look at how exit interviews benefit companies in an interview with Morreen Bayles of Creative Restaurant Solutions.

Now is the time to put face to face sales to work for your franchise!

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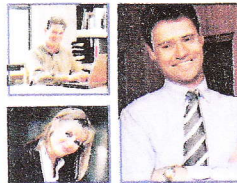
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