

## **MAT – Multi-tasking Ability Test:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Emerging Job Complexity**

Many jobs in an emerging global economy are multiple-dimensional. That is, employees are expected to perform jobs that require a broad range of skills such as written documentation, oral communication, identifying and managing details, solving problems, receiving voicemail, reading and responding to email messages, and quickly learning and applying new information.

The dynamic natures of these jobs create a major problem for organizations that want to quickly and efficiently measure applicant skills. Few, if any written tests, application blanks or interviews are able to evaluate job skills.

In response to the need for better pre-hire tools, we examined data from hundreds of job analyses covering thousands of positions looking for common activities associated with either success or failure. We discovered four major clusters that need to be measured.

1. Communication...The ability to communicate and respond to principles, ideas and thoughts expressed by co-workers, managers and customers. This is an essential element of performance where jobs require employees to understand and spell common business-related words normally learned in high school; read and respond to emails; and, review and retain information contained in voicemail messages.
2. Attention to Detail...The ability to quickly identify errors in numeric data. This skill is often associated with employees who check documents for errors, edit, proofread, and perform order-entry. It often involves working with numbers such as stocking units, inventory, accounting numbers and business reports.
3. Problem Solving... Problem solving and critical thinking has become a greater component of job performance as organizations shift toward expanded job roles, Employees are increasingly expected to learn on the job and make quick decisions that were previously done by managers.

- Attitudes, Interests and Motivations (AIMS)...Having the right skills for a job is only one part of job performance. The rest depends on “will do” factors such as liking the nature of the work or caring about doing a good job. Research shows (among equally-skilled employees) that attitudes, interests can make up to a 100% difference in job performance.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE SURVEYS**

The MAT Battery includes four skill exercises that present the candidate with content and criterion validated items in a timed format. A short description of each instrument follows:

### **Attention to Detail Skills**

The candidate has two minutes to examine 20 sets of three numbers and identify duplicates. This exercise is content-valid for jobs that require comparing numbers, completing forms accurately, examining written data for inaccuracies, and other tasks requiring an ability to recognize subtle differences in information.

*Item example:*

*A company assigns SKU codes to each of their products. A valid code should contain three, different 7-digit numbers (i.e., numbers cannot be duplicated). Examine the following SKU numbers and identify which ones contain duplicates:*

1.	3709611 3708612 3706612
2.	1778652 1776653 1776653
3.	6274531 6265431 6275432

### **Business Vocabulary Skills (Part of the Communication Section)**

The candidate has 5 minutes to read and decide which of 40 words are misspelled. If a word is misspelled, the candidate is asked to spell the word correctly in the blank space provided. Words were chosen from commonly misspelled business-related words taught in high school. This exercise is appropriate for jobs that require correct spelling in correspondence.

*Item Example:*

	<i>Check if OK</i>	<i>Or, Spell Correctly</i>
<i>Paper</i>		
<i>Computor</i>		
<i>Elevater</i>		

### **Understanding Communication Skills (Part of the Communication Section)**

The candidate has 5 minutes to review 22 business-related statements and decide what they mean. Words were chosen from high school vocabulary lists. This section is appropriate when it is important for employees to have a vocabulary suitable for business communication.

*Item Example:*

*Mary's boss told her to be discreet about the plan. That means Mary:*

1. *Should be cautious*
2. *Must tell others*
3. *Should volunteer her thoughts*
4. *Could make a decision*
5. *None of the above*

### **Multi-Tasking Skills**

The candidate is given a total of 30 minutes to complete two separate tests delivered concurrently on one computer screen. On one side of the screen, the candidate is asked to solve 20 business-related problems. Concurrently, on the right side of the screen, they receive 20 notifications announcing the arrival of voice mail and email messages and answer 20 questions about what they read or heard.

The multi-tasking section evaluates the candidate's ability to effectively solve problems in an active multi-tasking environment.

*Item Example:*

*You take an inventory of office supplies every week. You noticed that 60 memo pads were used during the first week of August. On the average, how many memo pads were used each day that week?*

*60*

*50*

*15*

*12*

*None of the above*

## **SETTING SCORES**

Setting scores for a skills survey is not a simple "more is better" process. Instead they fall into a "too little", "too much, and "just right" category. "Too little" will cause job performance to suffer. "Too much" will cause the applicant pool to "shrink" and employees who may become bored.

We set the "just right" scores by having current employees take the MAT battery and then use one of two scoring strategies:

- 1) Strategy One: have satisfactory performers anonymously take the battery and statistically sent the bands based on their scores.

- 2) Strategy Two: have all performers take the battery, compare scores to job performance, and set the bands accordingly.

This process accurately defines (i.e., validates) the battery specifically for jobs in your organization.

## **INVESTMENT**

AIM / MAT Profiles are NOT training or workshop tests. They are designed to predict job performance. As such, we are committed to helping every client get the best out of our systems.

We look forward to helping you to reduce turnover, increase personal productivity and decrease training time. Please call if you have any questions.

**\*\* Lindsay Colitses, President, Windridge Consulting LLC, 425-697-2700 / 888-805-7845**