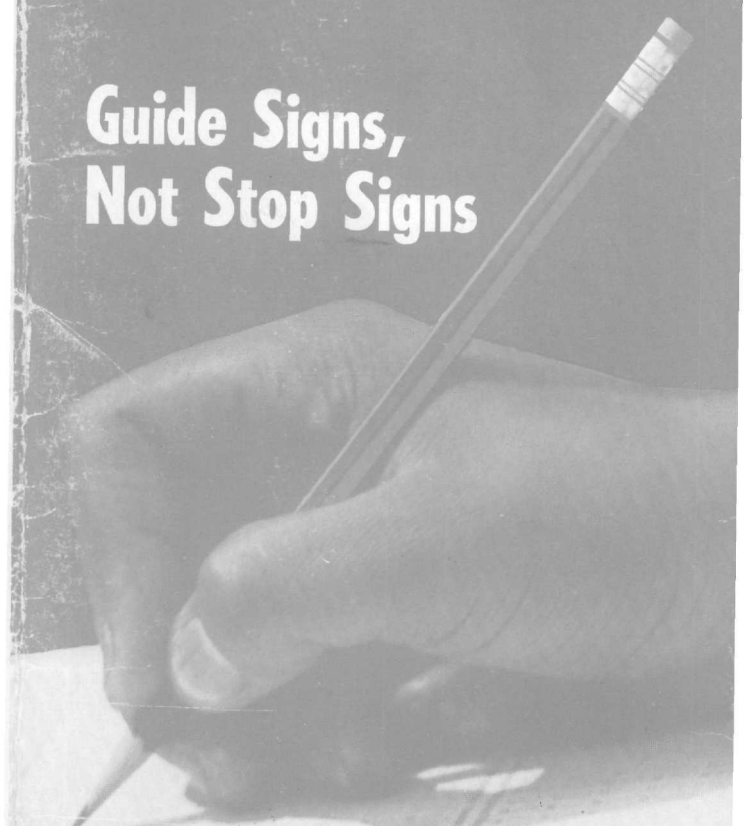
EMPLOYMENT TESTING:

Guide Signs, Not Stop Signs



U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
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General Electric Co.

EMPLOYMENT TESTING AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Thomas Wilson's* career with a large nationwide department store chain began six years ago when he walked into the personnel office of one of its big Midwest stores looking for a job as a manager trainee. Seemingly, he possessed all the attributes to make him well-qualified. But he faced more than the usual obstacles common to job seekers. Because he was a Negro, Thomas Wilson couldn't be sure that a sales job, much less a potential managerial position, would be open to him.

But Albert Charles,* personnel manager of the company, had discovered some time before that the series of pre-employment tests which he had introduced was not accurately reflecting job potential of minority group candidates, who, he found, were performing better on the job than on the tests. So he eliminated all tests except one for candidates who came from what he considered "culturally disadvantaged" backgrounds, and he made the personal interview the decisive factor in selecting employees.

*actual names not used.

Like many personnel managers of expanding companies, Charles was beset by the need to find enough competent employees to keep up with the needs of his company's rapidly growing operations. This admittedly was one factor in his decision. But he and the company also wished, as he described it, "to keep in step with the economic and social developments taking place in the nation." Doing so, they felt, was consistent with sound business practice.

As it turned out, both Wilson and the company that hired him benefited from the change in testing procedures. After one test and a personal interview, Wilson got the job. And just recently he became the chain's first Negro store manager.

"If we had used our usual testing procedures, I don't think we would have hired Wilson at all," Charles admits. "Finding a good manager for a big store is not an easy job," he points out, underlining the fact that equal opportunity can also be good business.

Charles and his company are not unique among the Nation's industries in re-evaluating the relationship between their hiring procedures and the number of minority group members on their payrolls. While they are sincerely interested in providing equal opportunity, they are just as concerned with assuring themselves an adequate supply of able employees in a tight labor market. But now they are beginning to question the efficacy of their old methods of recruiting personnel.

Are they discriminating unintentionally by the improper or unwise use of tests; by setting irrelevant minimum requirements for employment; by insisting on over-qualified employees for certain jobs; by failing to provide interviewing and testing environments that enable minority group members to demonstrate their actual abilities?

Testing and other selection procedures are, after all, only a means to determine efficiently which prospective employees will be able to function most effectively on the job. There is strong evidence that many companies are being sidetracked as they attempt

to achieve this goal. Here are some observations by personnel and management experts:

● Most employment managers and interviewers are white. Most of their experience has been with white applicants. They become skilled at the work of selecting white workers for their companies. The chances are they are less skilled at evaluating Negro applicants. They have had less experience interviewing them. They are not likely to get the same response from Negro applicants as from whites. The tests do not seem to "fit" as well. Reference checks may be less useful because, on the average, the Negro has had less schooling and less employment of the kind easily recognized and assessed by white interviewers. Negroes are less accustomed than whites to being in company employment offices. They are ill at ease there and often succeed only in putting their worst foot forward. As a result, they tend to be underrated and to be "screened out" from job consideration.

National Industrial Conference Board study: "Company Experience With Negro Employment"

● It is possible that large numbers of persons are unemployed because they cannot

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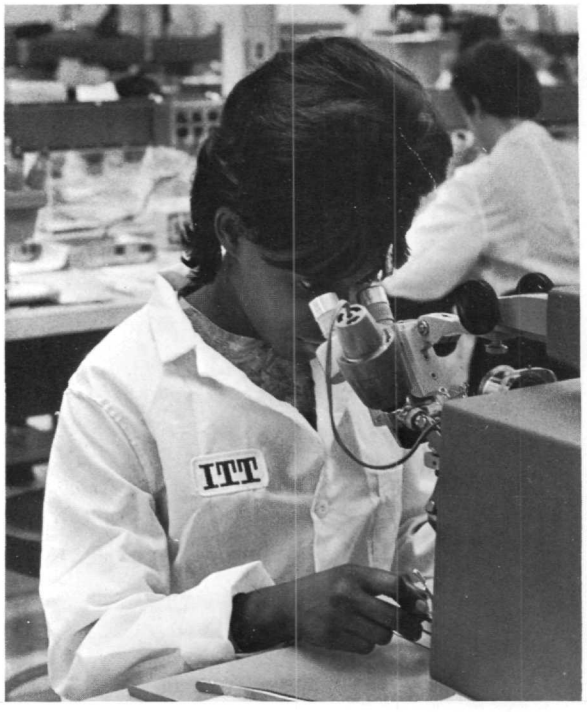

pass the standard aptitude tests given by many businesses and industries. Yet, when these "unemployables," as they are called by society, are given specially designed counseling and training and placed in an atmosphere of acceptance, they prove to be productive, dependable employees.

Joseph Ross, president, Federal Department Stores, Detroit, Mich.

● Many minority individuals who could successfully learn and perform jobs are being rejected for employment through the use of inefficient selection practices. Many of these practices are based more on tradition and feelings than on hardheaded business sense.

Technical Advisory Committee on Testing to the Fair Employment Practice Committee of the State of California.

● Psychological tests, as presently designed and applied, tend to be irrelevant to job requirements and to disqualify some applicants for the wrong reasons.

Employer's Guide to Equal Opportunity, The Potomac Institute, Washington, D. C.

● The Negro is frequently at another disadvantage when he takes an employment test. . . . Negroes suspect that tests have been often used in the past as an excuse for disqualifying Negroes. Whether the suspicion is fully justified is irrelevant. Its mere existence is sufficient to establish an unfavorable psychological atmosphere.

Harvard Business School research study.

● Many so-called job requirements, such as high school graduation, may not be essential to job performance. A firm that requires high school graduation of all entering employees for jobs involving largely manual work may be rejecting many persons with greater capability and skill than some high school graduates.

Howard C. Lockwood, corporate manpower and management development specialist, Lockheed Aircraft Corporation.

● Employers have discovered that they may be inadvertently excluding qualified minority applicants through inappropriate testing procedures. Indeed, such testing may discriminate in employment and promotion just as

effectively as the once-common "white only" sign. On the other hand, employers who use tests, but treat them as only one of several factors in the hire or promotion process, have found valuable employees in minority groups who would have been excluded if the tests were the sole and controlling factor.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: "Guidelines on Employment Testing Procedures."

● Tests valid for one ethnic group are not necessarily valid for other ethnic groups . . . That is, test scores may predict job performance for one ethnic group but not for others. Where this occurs, a test should not be used for ethnic groups for which it has little correlation with job performance, as superior workers stand no better chance of being selected than do poorer workers. . . . . .

Two-year study by Research Center for Industrial Behavior at New York University.

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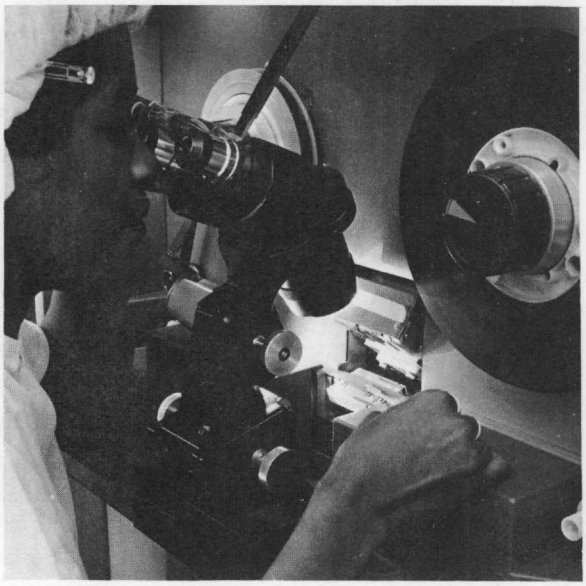


Such comments have proved startling to personnel managers who have come across them and they may still be so to those who are unaware of the existence of such problems. Examples of inadvertent discrimination in testing may be particularly disquieting to those who have specifically instituted testing programs in an effort to bring an objective, color-blind criterion to the hiring process.

Too often, however, those who did so thought they were adopting a panacea, when it was only a tool — and one that can backfire at that.

There is no question that testing is a valuable selection instrument, which — when properly used — can provide an employer with objective information on the abilities of job applicants and increase the likelihood that those selected will perform effectively on the job. Tests can also benefit prospective employees by guiding them into the right jobs for their abilities and interests.

A research study by the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission asserts that "careful selection and administering of tests and validation of the testing instrument within an industrial setting may be the most desirable means to achieve the goal of full utilization of the nation's human resources."

But notice some key phrases in that statement: *"careful selection and administering of tests"* and *"validation of the testing instrument within an industrial setting."*

A well-managed company would hardly use a production-line system merely because someone said it was a good one or just because it had worked elsewhere; neither would it extend the system's use to other products without making sure that it would perform effectively in each new case. Many companies, however, are much more cavalier about how they handle their testing procedures.

"The time has come," says Philip Ash, research assistant to the vice president for industrial and public relations of Inland Steel Company, "to remedy the all-too-common practice of taking a convenient brief intelligence test off the shelf and using it for all jobs, without local norms, without criterion data relationships, and, in fact, frequently without any demonstrable relevance to the selection problem at hand."

And Saul W. Gellerman, manager of personnel research, IBM World Trade Corporation, has asserted that, "Too many companies have installed tests that had proved to be valid elsewhere without troubling to revalidate them locally."

Employment experts agree that the closer a test is identified with an actual job, the more validity it will have — and the less likely it will be to screen out applicants for reasons unrelated to potential job performance.

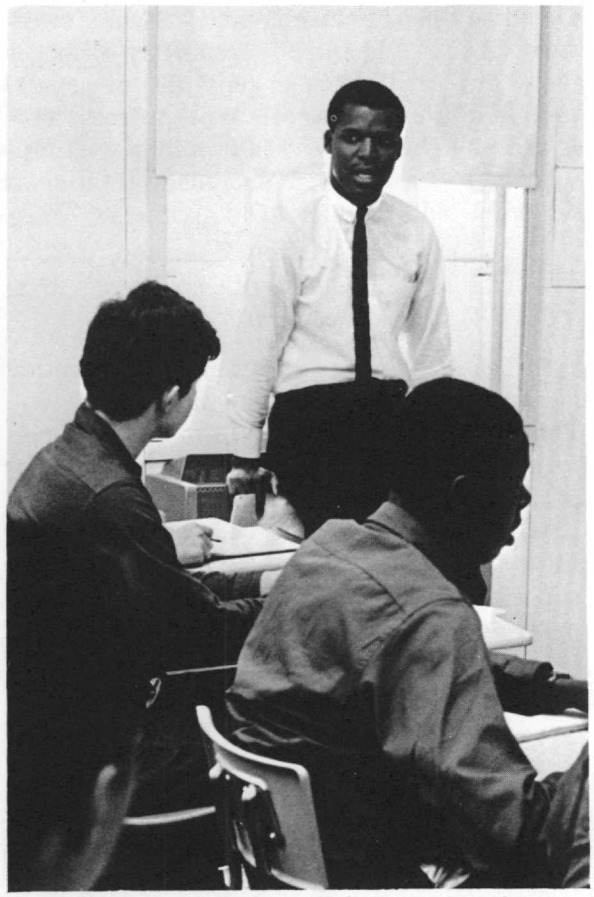
Dr. Felix M. Lopez, Jr., manager of manpower training and research of the Port of New York Authority, contends that, "It's vital to find out the critical factors of a job — usually the motivational factors are most important." But, he notes, "You'd be surprised how little employers actually know about what makes for success on the job. . . ."

Poorly conceived or poorly administered tests, or those not valid for pertinent abilities, can eliminate applicants who could become successful employees. If those improperly screened out are primarily members of minority groups, the testing procedures may very well be discriminatory.

It is especially ironic that, despite good intentions, the improper use of tests can serve to defeat one of the very purposes for which some companies have adopted them, that of helping to provide equal employment opportunity.

PERILS AND PITFALLS OF TESTING

Just how does unintentional discrimination in testing come about? Research into the testing of minority group children offers some insight into why Negro adults as a group, for example, may score lower on employment tests than white applicants from middle-class backgrounds. Young people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and these include many—but by no means all—Negroes, Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans, have been found to be handicapped in test performance by such factors as home and family structure, school relationships, and personality and social characteristics. These youngsters may have had little experience in receiving approval for success in learning a task. Some may come from cultures where rapid performance is not given the importance it



Radio Corporation of America

has in others. Such youngsters are at a marked disadvantage on standardized tests, which for the most part have been designed to test the white, middle-class child. An adult emerging from such a background faces many of the same obstacles and may be conditioned, before he takes the test, to fail it. Yet he may perform very successfully on the job.

"By now it is a fairly well-established fact that, for whatever reason, nonwhites achieve significantly lower scores on most paper-and-pencil standardized tests used in employment situations," observes Dr. Lopez. His words are echoed by other personnel experts from many parts of the Nation as well as by some test-makers.

"I think every responsible test-maker recognizes the possibility that certain tests may place a premium on types of background, or types of information, that are not possessed to the same degree by all examinees," says Roger T. Lennon, director of the test department of Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.

The question of cultural influence on test scores, it should be noted, is not merely the outgrowth of recent concern over civil rights. Many years ago, for example, the General Electric Company, at its Schenectady plants, found that applicants from Polish- and Italian-speaking homes were handicapped in taking verbal tests of mental ability for jobs that did not require verbal proficiency. The company's personnel men compensated for this by substituting non-verbal tests in cases where applicants fared poorly on the standard tests.

To apply this thinking to the present-day employment situation, the employer should make sure that the tests he is using do not eliminate applicants who can perform successfully on the job but who may not perform successfully on the tests. Should a company seeking manual workers, for instance, test for verbal proficiency? Many employers do this. Others demand high school diplomas, even though the completion of high school may have little or no relation to filling the job at hand with a capable employee.

Even aside from unrealistic requirements, there may be reservoirs of abilities in applicants from minority groups that testing does not reveal. Psychological studies bear this possibility out by suggesting that while such persons may score low on tests, they may tend to achieve far better than expected on the job.

"Human beings are strongly influenced by what others expect of them," says Dr. Benjamin Spock, the noted authority on child behavior. "This has been demonstrated in a variety of natural situations and also in experiments. When people feel that others expect them to behave well or achieve highly, they tend to meet the challenge."

This is well illustrated by the experience of the Federal Department Stores of Detroit. This company, which like most in its field is continually faced with the problem of finding competent salespeople, took 16 youths from culturally and economically deprived areas — all of whom had flunked standard employment tests — and put them through a special 10-week training course. After completing the program, 14 became permanent employees of Federal Stores and two were employed elsewhere — even though all of them had been discarded as "unemployable" by the employers whose tests they had failed. As a group, the trainees averaged well above the sales level expected of new employees, and the individual performances of all but two of them exceeded what had been predicted by sales aptitude tests.

Cases such as this one have spurred new thinking about the use of training programs to give the disadvantaged the little extra boost they might need to succeed in some jobs.

Some personnel men have found, too, that they had been setting their hiring standards higher than was really necessary. An executive of a large and diversified company tells of a situation in which large numbers of relatively unskilled employees were needed quickly to start production in a new plant in a labor-tight area of the East Coast. "So we hired lots of people we ordinarily would not have taken because of their test scores," he said. "And we found that lower test scores than we had previously set were perfectly okay."

His was only one of many companies which found to its surprise that rigid cut-off scores and other arbitrary requirements really weren't so sacred after all. Unfortunately, these discoveries usually are made only in periods of special strain.

Sometimes an unplanned move can have salutary results. The industrial manager of a large corporation, which, he said, "had gone all out for aptitude and psychological testing" and which didn't hire applicants if they didn't score well on tests, tells of this development:

"Then our president became interested in employing the handicapped. When our personnel people said that many of them didn't qualify, he blew his top and said, 'To hell with those tests! Hire some of them anyway and put them to work where they'll be useful!' So we did, and most of them worked out very well.

"That caused us to realize that while our standards were screening out the incompe-

tent, they were also screening out a lot of capable people. We became aware that the tests were a major factor in screening out Negroes, Spanish Americans and foreign-born. We haven't discontinued the tests, but we no longer eliminate people solely on the basis of the tests."

International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation

In addition to the fact that minority group members tend to score relatively lower on written tests because of psychological, cultural, and educational factors, the actual questions themselves are sometimes "loaded" against them. Here are several examples taken from widely used tests:

I. Does R.S.V.P. mean "reply not necessary"?

II. A man who spends his money lavishly for non-essentials is considered to be:
   1. fortunate
   2. thrifty
   3. extravagant
   4. generous
   5. economical

III. In general it is safer to judge a man's character by his:
   1. voice
   2. clothes
   3. deeds
   4. wealth
   5. face

It doesn't require an overdose of sensitivity to determine that an applicant reared in the culture of poverty might answer these

questions differently than someone from the white middle-class in which the questions — and the answers — were developed. But just as important is the fact that such questions may be totally irrelevant to the determination of the skills needed to perform effectively or the job to be filled.

These examples, of course, are isolated examples taken from tests of 50 questions. But they are glaring enough to raise doubts about whether there might be a more pervading, but more subtle, bias in the total tests involved. And even a question or two might mean the difference between getting a job and being rejected when a company uses a rigid cut-off score to screen out applicants.

There can be little doubt that the questions in many tests, particularly those that measure intelligence or mental ability, are steeped in subject matter, vocabulary, and modes of thought that are characteristic of white, middle-class homes. This is one reason why employers should carefully re-examine their testing instruments and procedures and not accept them on blind faith.

"Professional psychologists," the National Industrial Conference Board observes, "always have described testing as an aid to understanding the individual, but test hawkers have been less restrained in making claims for their product."

Cultural bias in job testing, it should be noted, could be a two-way street. Whites might not fare so well on a test rooted by a Negro setting. Take these examples from a test developed in California as a "tongue-in-cheek" demonstration of how tests could be made to discriminate against whites as easily as they can against Negroes:

I. Cheap chitlings (not the kind you purchase at a frozen food counter) taste rubbery unless they are cooked long enough. How soon can you quit cooking them to eat and enjoy them?
   1. 15 minutes
   2. 2 hours
   3. 24 hours
   4. 1 week (on a low flame)
   5. 1 hour

II. If a man is called a "Blood," then he is a:
   1. fighter
   2. Mexican American
   3. Negro
   4. hungry hemophile
   5. redman or Indian

III. The opposite of square is:
   1. round
   2. up
   3. down
   4. hip
   5. lame

White job applicants hypothetically taking this test might resent with good cause being expected to know that chitlings, (a southern dish popular with Negroes) should be cooked a full 24 hours, or that "blood" is the term some Negroes use to describe themselves, or that "hip" is the opposite of "square."

The testing environment also can be an important factor. Let us suppose that the personnel department of a company is housed in a particularly attractive work area. The floors are carpeted, the walls wood-paneled and hung with pictures, and the offices tastefully decorated and occupied by well-dressed men and women. Altogether, the department reflects the desired image of a successful, forward-looking, prosperous company, just the kind of picture to make prospective employees eager to work there. But think for the moment of the disadvantaged youngster or adult applying for a job there. He or she may find the atmosphere completely foreign; it may even be paralyzing.

Does this mean that such trappings of success and good taste are discriminatory? Of course not. But many minority group applicants may be particularly ill at ease in a testing situation. Not only may the surroundings be strange, but the anxieties normal to any job-seeker may be magnified. They may be relatively unfamiliar with testing; many of them may also feel that the tests are hurdles designed to deny them the jobs they seek. And members of disadvantaged groups tend to be particularly sensitive to any mannerisms that might be considered antagonistic, sarcastic or condescending. Test administrators should be aware of these feelings and

should make it a point to try as much as possible to alleviate test anxiety.

Some companies do this by taking special pains to assign personnel people who generate warmth and understanding to testing situations. Others try to make sure that members of minority groups are among those who administer their tests.

There are differences of opinion over how high to set standards for new employees. Some companies feel that every newcomer should have managerial potential, while others contend that since only a small percentage will ever achieve supervisory jobs, more realistic levels should be set. "We need far more workers than we need bosses," says the employee relations chief of a New York publishing company, "so if we consistently hire overqualified people for lower-level jobs, we'll have unhappy employees and high turnover rates, both of which are costly and damaging to smooth operations."

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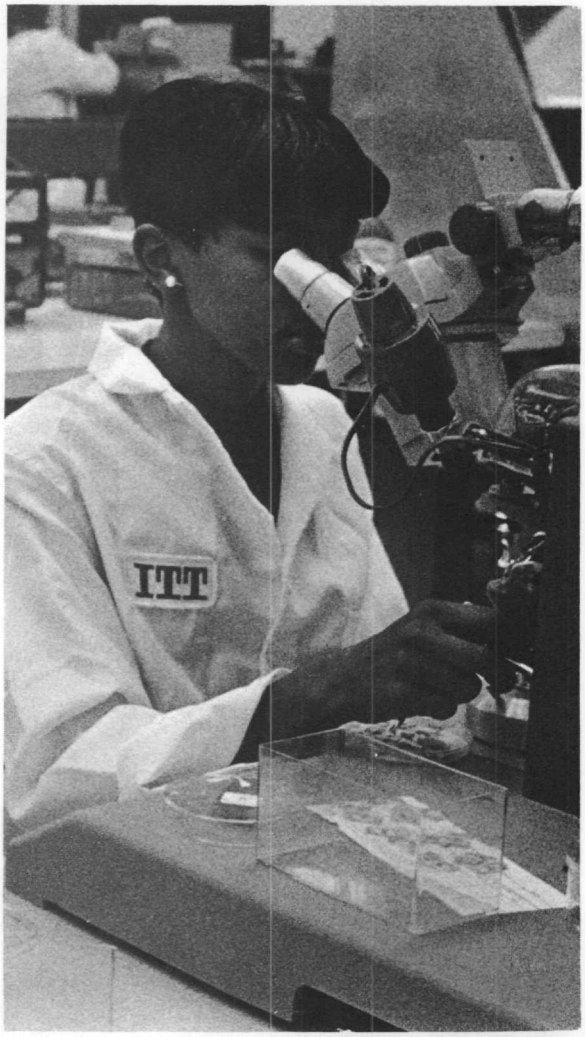
WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING

Concern over inadvertent discrimination through the use of tests and other selection practices has arisen relatively recently. But, despite the fact that it is new and that some personnel men are still unaware of the exist-



United States Steel Corporation

ence of the problem, many others have been giving it much thought in an effort to come up with some solutions. In general, those who have already tackled the problem have decided to retain their tests, but have made sure that they do not occupy a dominant position in the selection process. At the same time, new emphasis has been put on the personal interview.

General Electric notes, for example, that "testing is only one of three steps in the recommended G.E. hiring procedure, and G.E. recruiters are frequently warned against giving too much weight to any test." The company feels that the careful preparation of job specifications, in which "great pains are taken to see that the specifications accurately reflect the abilities actually required to do the job," is important in guarding against discrimination in hiring. Those who prepare the specifications are cautioned against basing them on opinions or impressions rather than on objective analysis of the work the applicant will be required to do.

To illustrate the dangers of loose and stereotyped images of the desirable applicant, G.E. personnel people tell about a company that decided to hire older women during World War II. None of the supervisors wanted to accept them in their departments. When asked why, they said past experience had shown that older women were not desirable workers because they were poor producers, had a higher rate of absenteeism, and caused more rapid turnover. When the company ran a study to verify these impressions, it found just the opposite to be true. Older women had proved to be better producers, stayed longer, required less supervision, and had better attendance records than did younger women.

Therefore, the G.E. policy is to pay careful attention to the preparation of job specifications to prevent the erection of artificial barriers that are not valid to the performance of the job at hand. G.E. says it gives equal consideration to the conduct of the two interviews in its hiring process — a preliminnary interview and an in-depth session that is the final step. "It is in the interviewing that compensation can be made for any possible test aberrations," the company says. "Indeed G.E. interviewers are taught to examine test results for clues to those areas about which we, as a prospective employer, ought to know more. The interviewer is expected to go beyond test results that appear to show some deficiency, whether of intelligence or personality, and make his own evaluation."

The Norton Company of Worcester, Mass., takes a somewhat similar approach, but generally tests only college-trained people and not production employees. "Our general philosophy on tests is that they are helpful and indicative, but not final or absolute," reports Frank Zacher, director of personnel. "We feel it is unrealistic to make a decision on tests only. In our final decision, tests never carry more than 15 percent to 20 percent weight."

King Whitney Jr., president of Personnel Laboratory, management consultants, notes that "tests can screen out the obviously unstable or unintelligent — but can't be relied upon to consistently detect minor differences."

Validity is a vitally important, and frequently troublesome, ingredient in determining the real worth of a testing instrument. Many personnel men overlook it entirely and others rely on a "seat-of-their-pants" approach. But it should not be minimized. "One useful way to evaluate the validity of a test is to consider the relevance of the content of the test to the actual content of the job (for example, a typing test)," says an Ohio company's personnel psychologist. "Where test content does not have such clear relevance to the job, it is important that data be generated to show that scores people make on the tests bear a significant relationship to some meaningful measure of how well they perform on the job."

"There are two commonly used approaches to this type of research," he explains. "The first is to give the proposed test to a group of employees and then compare the scores they make on the test with some measure of the quality of their job performance. The second approach is to give the test to applicants, but not use the resulting scores in making hiring decisions. Then, after a period of time, test scores for those applicants who were hired are compared with a measure of how well they are performing their work."

Obviously, if there is no adequate correlation between the test scores and the quality of job performance, the tests are not doing what they were meant to do and should be discarded in favor of a more valid instrument.

An upstate New York company reports that its corporate policy is to determine the validity of all tests before they are actually used in the employment decision. The company employs several certified psychologists who offer consulting services to all company units on test validation. In most cases, the tests are validated against actual performance criteria in the specific area or unit in which it is to be used.

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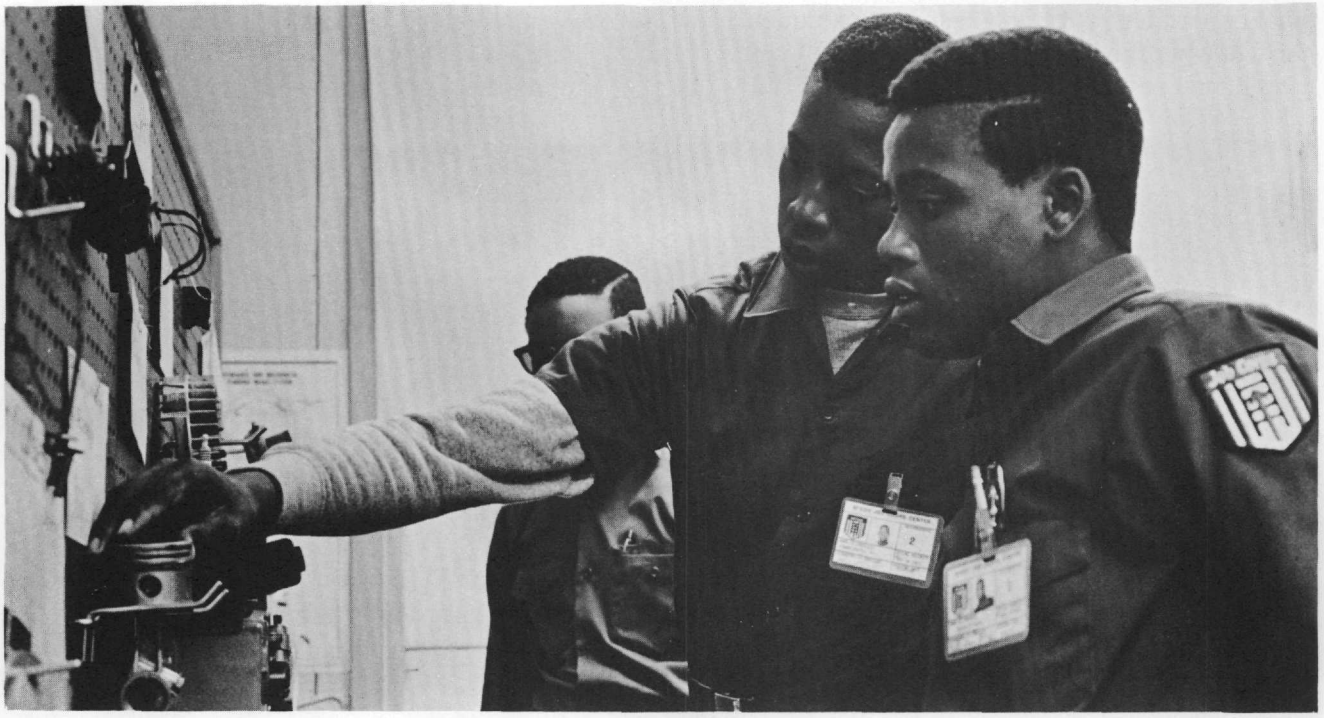


A personnel executive of a diversified industrial company with headquarters in New York also reports a desire to come to grips with the problem of validity. "We're going to recommend that the company embark on a

program of complete validation of all tests," he says. "We'll have to sell our top management on the idea that this is a problem. But we're going to ask for this."

Dr. Lopez of the Port of New York Authority has some strong views on the subject. "The usual multiple-choice written test is one of the most discriminatory instruments against culturally disadvantaged people," he asserts. "A better indication of success on the job is the actual personal accomplishment of the applicant — what he did with what he was given. A high school graduate from a white, middle-class background might be an under-achiever, while the completion of high school by a Negro youth from the ghetto might be a real expression of drive and motivation.

"We ought to use a much wider spectrum of selection instruments and interpret them in reference to the applicant's background history," he believes. "In this new approach, we must experiment with new testing techniques, particularly those whose origins are not rooted in the educational and academic climate of 50 years ago. I am particularly intrigued by the potentiality of situational and performance tests and am currently experimenting with such techniques as in-basket tests and leaderless group discussion tests."

The employment interview has many staunch supporters among those seeking to avoid any cultural bias in their employee selection procedures. The technique had become suspect, they note, because of the danger of conscious or subconscious bias among those doing the interviewing. But now that this pitfall has lessened because of the growing progress made by minority group workers and firm equal opportunity directives from top management, the employment interview as a major selection weapon has regained much of its former role.

"Even applicants for clerical jobs who fail our short mental-alertness test are frequently hired if an interviewer can find reasons to hire them," notes a spokesman for a New York-based insurance company. "For example, a satisfactory high school record would certainly override the results of the test . . . The other tests we use at the clerical levels are

Carl Byoir & Associates, Inc.

completely objective skills tests for typing and stenography."

"In a generally tight labor market," he adds, "personnel interviewers have special instructions to try to find reasons to hire people. We make a real effort to do a thorough job of interviewing and evaluating background (e.g., an applicant's high school record) in the hope that we can decide the applicant can do the job, even with unfavorable test results."

L. J. Allen, personnel manager of the Brown Shoe Company of St. Louis, Mo., also makes it clear that he doesn't consider tests to be a hard-and-fast, rigid determinant. Summing up his company's policy, he says succinctly: "We use tests as guide signs, not stop signs."

"Our basic purposes in testing are to predict probable job success and adequate job tenure," he explains. "For years we have considered tests as simply one of the many devices that we use in selecting employees, and it has not been our practice to set up arbitrary screening-out requirements in the form of specific number levels, etc. . . . and we have never required high school diplomas as a condition of employment.

"For supervisory jobs and those requiring specialized office or technical skills or knowledge, we do some additional testing. However, even in an area as critical as training for factory management, we soften the requirements in two ways. First, we give supplementary, non-verbal tests, to which we attach particular importance where the verbal test seems marginal. Secondly, we clearly identify testing as merely one of the things that we use in making selections."

The vice president for personnel of a Minnesota company says that his firm uses test scores in this way: "If they are about what could be expected, we file them along with other pertinent information. If they are exceptionally high or disappointingly low, we usually use this information as an indication that perhaps we would try to find out why. As for test results being a critical factor in our decision as to whether or not we will hire an individual, the answer is no. I, personally, feel that anyone who did hire or

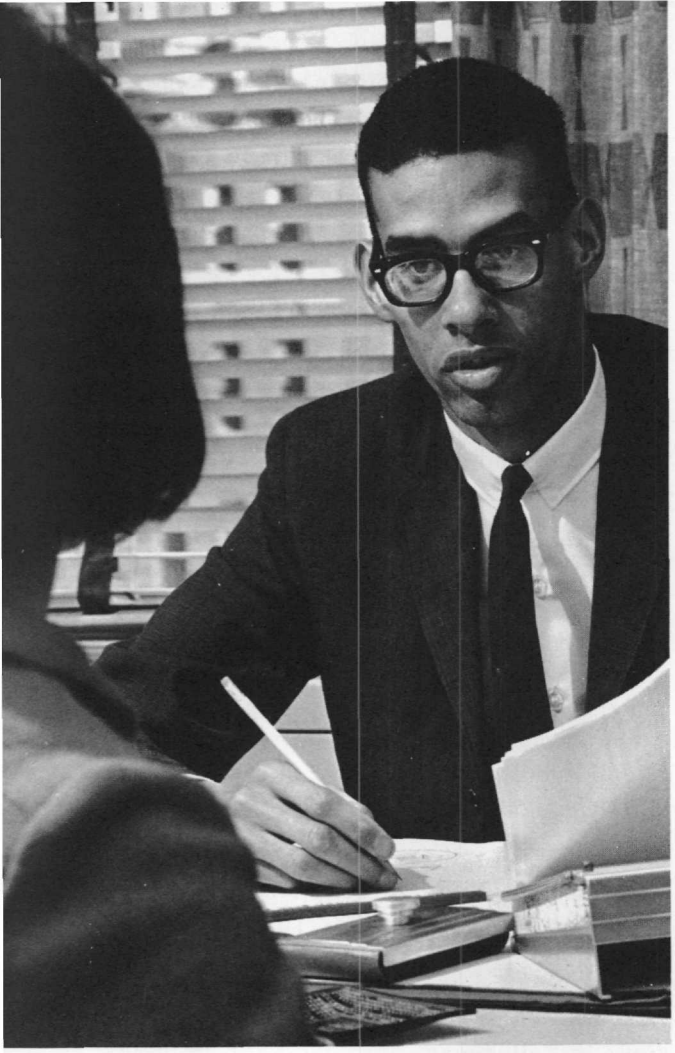
reject on the basis of tests, even as a major factor in the decision, either believes in magic or has holes in his head."

A major oil company reports that it has been giving a great deal of consideration to its over-all testing program as it affects minority groups, particularly Negroes. Some changes are already in the works. "First," the company says, "we are planning a shorter test battery on the assumption that this will be less imposing and fear-provoking. Secondly, whether or not this shorter battery includes our old language test or a new one, we are considering making this test untimed. Thirdly, we are concerned about so-called 'culture-free' tests."

This company notes that it has sensed, in using testing in the case of stenographic positions and entrance jobs in its plants, some general difficulty with the testing situation as a whole on the part of minority-group applicants. It suspects that a lack of "test sophistication" might be the cause.

In a recent discussion, the company adds, officials of a predominantly Negro college in Texas expressed their concern over this lack of test sophistication and indicated that they were combating the problem by increasing the exposure of their students to testing situations of all types, and some of the more common pre-employment instruments in particular.

Several companies have taken extra steps to recruit Negro employees. Such steps include advertising in the Negro press and in the publications of other minority groups; working with community organizations and job placement centers; encouraging minority applicants to prepare application forms "in advance of arrival"; and the establishment of special courses and training programs. General Electric, for example, has printed an attractive but relatively simple booklet containing 50 case histories of Negroes at work in the company. The brochure includes their pictures and brief company and personal biographies that tell "How they earned their jobs in industry . . . Their progress on the job . . . Their hopes and plans for future progress."



United States Steel Corporation

The impact of spreading this encouragement to youngsters brought up in an atmosphere of closed doors and limited opportunities can be far-reaching. R. H. Mulford, president of Owens-Illinois, noted recently that he had been advised that "for every young Negro man or woman whom we employ in a professional or managerial capacity, twenty young Negroes will remain in school who would otherwise become dropouts."

Referring to the need sometimes to take special steps to reach potential minority group employees, Mr. Mulford said that in one situation the company could not find Negro girls who were qualified for secretarial and clerical positions it wanted to fill.

"Our investigation showed that this high school system actually discouraged Negro

girls from taking secretarial courses," he explained. "Their experience had been that girls so qualified had suffered the heartbreak of not being able to utilize their talents — they were victims of discrimination."

In this case, he added, the company, with the advice and assistance of prominent Negroes, selected a number of young ladies and subsidized their secretarial education on an accelerated basis in private schools.

"At the same time," Mr. Mulford said, "with the willing cooperation of a number of other companies, I am sure that we have convinced this school administration that a secretarial education is eminently worthwhile for any Negro girl who is so inclined."

A large New York company also has taken special action to reach minority group members who currently cannot qualify on even minimum employment standards. "Our largest plant," a spokesman says, "has established several special courses attempting to upgrade both white and Negro applicants to the point where they could qualify for certain semi-technical and trades jobs."

General Services Administration

A GUIDE TO SOUND TESTING PRACTICES

Companies that have come to grips with the problem of inadvertent discrimination through the improper use of testing procedures have developed a number of ideas on how to avoid the pitfalls of testing. They

suggest that others may profit from their experiences by paying attention to the following hints:

1. Determine and state in specific terms the exact nature of the abilities necessary for the job.

Clearly indicate what equipment or tools the employee will be required to use; the level of arithmetic he must know; the type of writing he will have to do; the kind of instructions he will have to understand, and the types of problems he will face.

Written job requirements will facilitate choosing the correct selection procedures and also will tend to limit subjective judgments and bias in interviewing.

Make sure that stated job requirements are essential to performance on the job and do not call for vague and arbitrary standards such as "must be intelligent" or "must be high school graduate" or "must have potential to advance to higher level."

Do not confuse social acceptability with capability to do the job.

2. Choose tests on the basis of specific job-related criteria.

Make sure they are valid for the individual job and setting and relate to the applicant's ability to perform the desired function.

3. Make active efforts to seek out and employ "qualified" minority-group applicants.

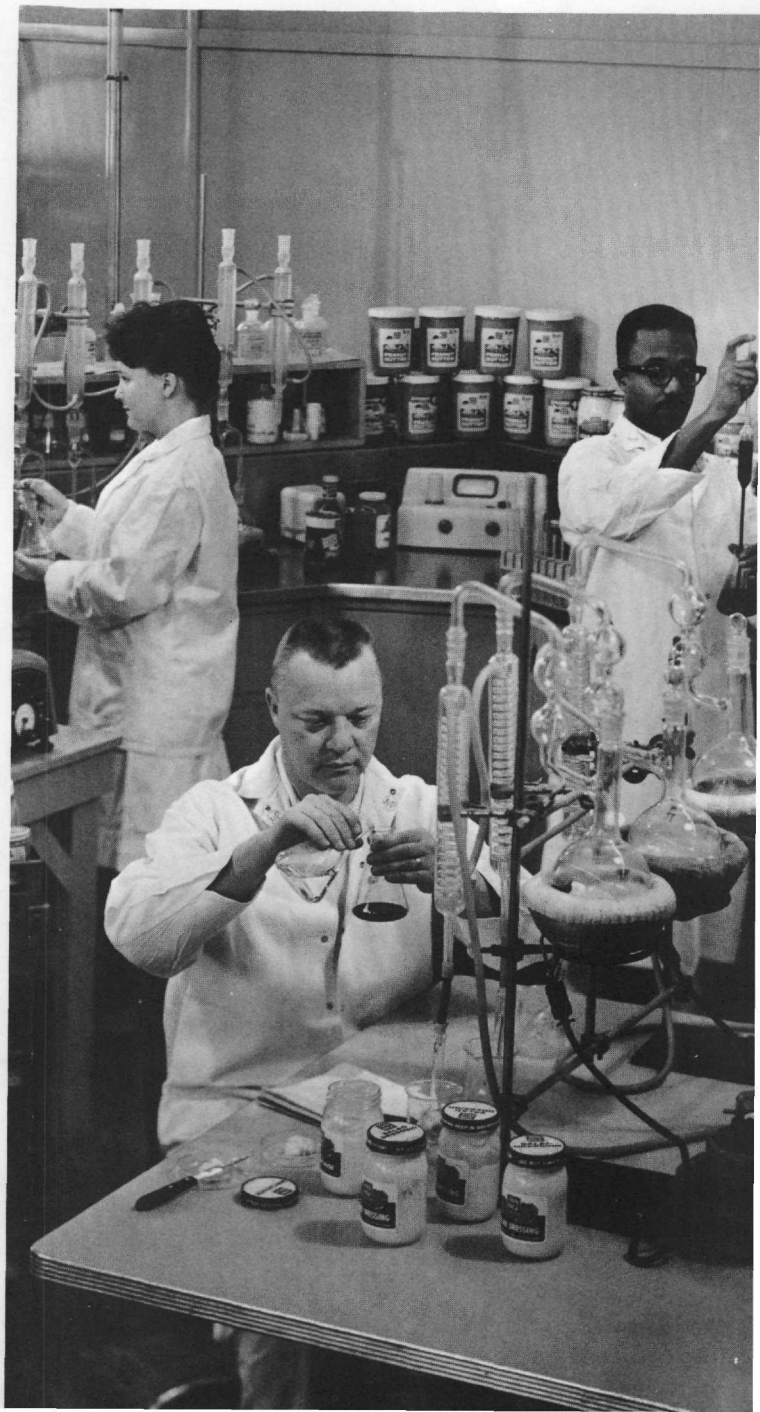
An intensified recruiting effort is justified to live up to the spirit of the Civil Rights Law and because minority-group members, as a result of discouraging experiences in the past, are often hesitant to apply for jobs they actually are capable of filling successfully.

It's not good business to overlook any pool of talent that might provide capable employees.

4. The screening and interviewing of minority applicants should be conducted by personnel thoroughly committed to the policy of equal employment opportunity as well as knowledgeable in intergroup relations.

Employment personnel should be aware that minority applicants are often especially sensitive and apprehensive in the employment situation. Many of them feel that tests are designed to exclude them; they may have had little experience with written tests, and they may have problems with the English language. They may also dress and look differently, and may appear less confident and less knowledgeable to the uninitiated. Yet they may be fully productive workers in many jobs.

Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co.



The interviewer should be able to communicate his own and his company's sincere desire to treat all applicants equally. He should be able to put the applicant at ease so that he will give a true picture of himself and his abilities.

5. Do not set unrealistically high test-score standards that will lead to the hiring of over-qualified employees.

This can result in low morale on the job on the part of the over-qualified person who may not be sufficiently stimulated by the work he is doing and therefore can lead to higher turnover rates and increased recruiting costs.

6. Make sure tests are not screening out those applicants (particularly minority group members) who are capable of performing effectively on the job, but whose cultural or economic backgrounds handicap them in taking the tests.

7. Use testing as only one indicator among others in the hiring decision.

There should be a clear awareness that where the applicant has not shared in the predominant middle-class verbal culture, the test score may significantly underestimate his potential.

Personal characteristics such as achievement, motivation and dependability may be even more important than test scores in indicating successful job performance.

Look at the whole individual, not just at one specific characteristic, in making a decision.

8. Tests should be developed by reputable professional psychologists who are competent in conducting testing programs in an industrial setting.

9. Retesting should be offered to applicants who have availed themselves of the opportunities for more training or experience. Since we have noted the disadvantages that minority group members often face in the testing situation, they should be given repeated chances, within reason, to demonstrate their real capabilities.

10. For many jobs the difference between an unqualified applicant and a qualified one may be a modest amount of training. Government funds are available to employers who will assist the unemployed to become qualified through training. Consideration should also be given to the possibility that just a little more learning time on the job might result in a considerably better performance on the part of applicants whose backgrounds lacked relevant learning opportunities.

U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is a temporary, independent, bipartisan agency established by Congress in 1957 and directed to:

- Investigate complaints alleging that citizens are being deprived of their right to vote by reason of their race, color, religion, or national origin, or by reason of fraudulent practices;
- Study and collect information concerning legal developments constituting a denial of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution;
- Appraise Federal laws and policies with respect to equal protection of the laws;
- Serve as a national clearinghouse for information in respect to denials of equal protection of the laws; and
- Submit reports, findings, and recommendations to the President and the Congress.

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This paper was prepared by Myron Kandel on assignment from the United States Commission on Civil Rights. It is the result of numerous interviews with psychologists and corporate officials from all parts of the United States and a review of published source material on the subject.

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