



CASE STUDY

DELIVERING
WORLD-CLASS
CUSTOMER SERVICE



Hospitality Industry

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Partner Contact Information

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imagine great people®

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ProfileXT[®] and Customer Service Profile[™] Delivering World-class Customer Service



ANALYSIS

The best assessments are designed to be reliable for analysis and decision-making.



BEST PRACTICE

Companies like this one understand the limitations of an assessment and how the information will be used.

Luxury Hotels and Resorts

A privately held, ultra-luxury hotel management company based in Dallas, Texas, has more than 20 properties around the world, including the U.S., England, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Dubai and the Caribbean. The organization is a recognized leader in the resort industry and has received more than 200 awards and honors from the likes of *Travel + Leisure*, *Conde Nast* and *Forbes Traveler* magazines.

Overview

In 2004, organization leaders began to look for a partner to help reduce turnover and increase productivity. The company ultimately selected Profiles International because of its variety of reports, language capabilities and customer service. They use two products – ProfileXT[®] and Customer Service Profile[™] (hospitality version). The core objectives have stayed in place over the years, including lowering recruiting costs and increasing employee engagement. Today, however, the organization's relationship with Profiles has evolved, as has the application of these two tools. As described by the corporate human resources manager, "We have evolved to a point where we can take what we have and leverage it in ways we couldn't have imagined in the beginning."

ProfileXT[®]

The ProfileXT, which takes about an hour to complete, assesses individuals in three key areas – thinking style, behavioral traits and occupational interests.

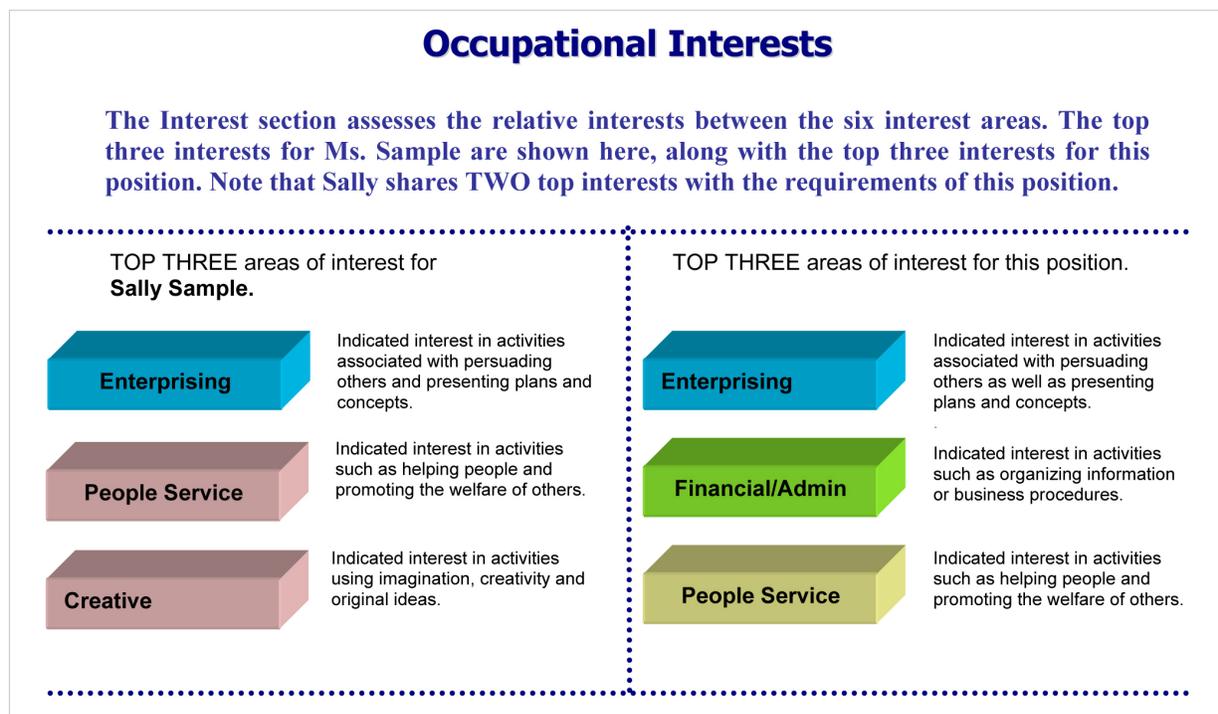
- 1. Thinking Style** – The corporate human resources manager refers to this as "the smarts." The tool evaluates an individual's verbal and numerical reasoning; the responses are either correct or wrong. A weighted average score is computed based on the type of role. For example, numerical reasoning would not be as critical for an HR role as compared with a role in accounting.
- 2. Behavioral Traits** – Referred to by industry leaders as "the hearts," this part of the tool assesses 10 esoteric "feel good" characteristics. Examples

of the behavioral traits include energy, assertiveness, sociability, attitude, decisiveness, independence and objective judgment. These questions are subjective, and there is no correct or wrong answer.

Profiles developed a distortion scale that helps its clients determine if people are being honest with their responses. The tool asks four different questions that evaluate the same trait in determining if an individual answers them consistently. The more consistent the responses, the higher the distortion scale is – which leads to the conclusion that the individual is being truthful. As the corporate human resources manager stated, “Some candidates will tell you what they think you want to hear. This scale increases the reliability of the responses.”

- Occupational Interests** – This section assesses an individual against six areas of interest. As described by the corporate human resources manager, every job has some areas that are more applicable than others. For example, in the human resources profession, “people service” is high. Every job has three areas of interest that are more important and three that are less important. The theory is that, if an individual’s areas of interest match, he / she will be happier in the role and be a better performer. (See Figure 3.) The corporate human resources manager clarified, “We don’t rely on this part of the assessment as much. We like balance in our people. It is ‘nice to know’ information, but we have never not hired a candidate because their interests don’t align to our patterns.”

Figure 3: Sample Text from “ProfileXT”



Source: Profiles International, 2009.



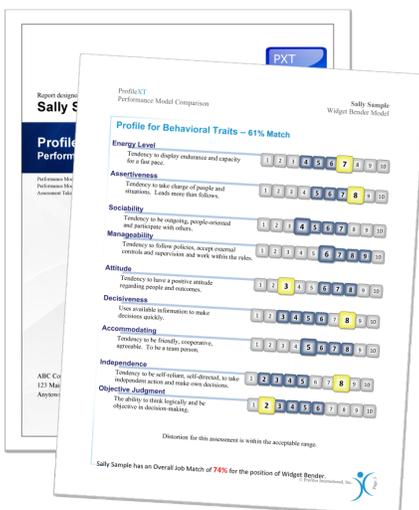
BEST PRACTICE

Custom assessments should be evaluated and updated to align to company-specific needs and criteria.



KEY POINT

If someone is not performing well, the company can run a report to see deficiencies and patterns of where the employee is not aligned to the job profile.



ProfileXT Application

The ProfileXT is used for three distinct purposes in the hospitality industry – selection of new hires, coaching, and career and succession planning.

Selection of New Hires

The luxury hotel and resort organization requires all management candidates to complete the ProfileXT at the final stages of the interviewing process. A placement report compares the persons profile against a pre-determined job pattern. The company initially used the ProfileXT predefined job patterns. Over time, however, the company was able to develop its own patterns customized to the company's culture and positions, so that it would have a more accurate tool. As the company experienced, the creation of custom job patterns can happen quickly. Every six to 12 months, the company revisits patterns and updates them based on the current top performers and dynamics with which it is dealing.

The corporate human resources manager shared that 30 percent of the hiring decisions is based on the ProfileXT report, in addition to interviewing data and feedback, work history, and reference checks.

Coaching

The company progressed from only using the tool for placement to understanding its application in talent management. For existing employees, a coaching report can be created. If someone is not performing well, the company can run a report to see deficiencies and patterns of where the employee is not aligned to the job profile. The report offers coaching tips for managers to be able to coach employees into alignment. For example, an HR role requires a numerical reasoning range of five to eight out of 10. The corporate human resources manager shared that her numerical reasoning score was a two. The report gave detailed guidance to her manager on how to coach her to the job pattern. The report suggested that she be assigned numerical-based projects to force her to use numbers.

Career and Succession

The ProfileXT report can be used to assess individuals against a future position. The system can take the results of the ProfileXT assessment and indicate the jobs for which employees are best-suited. For employees, the

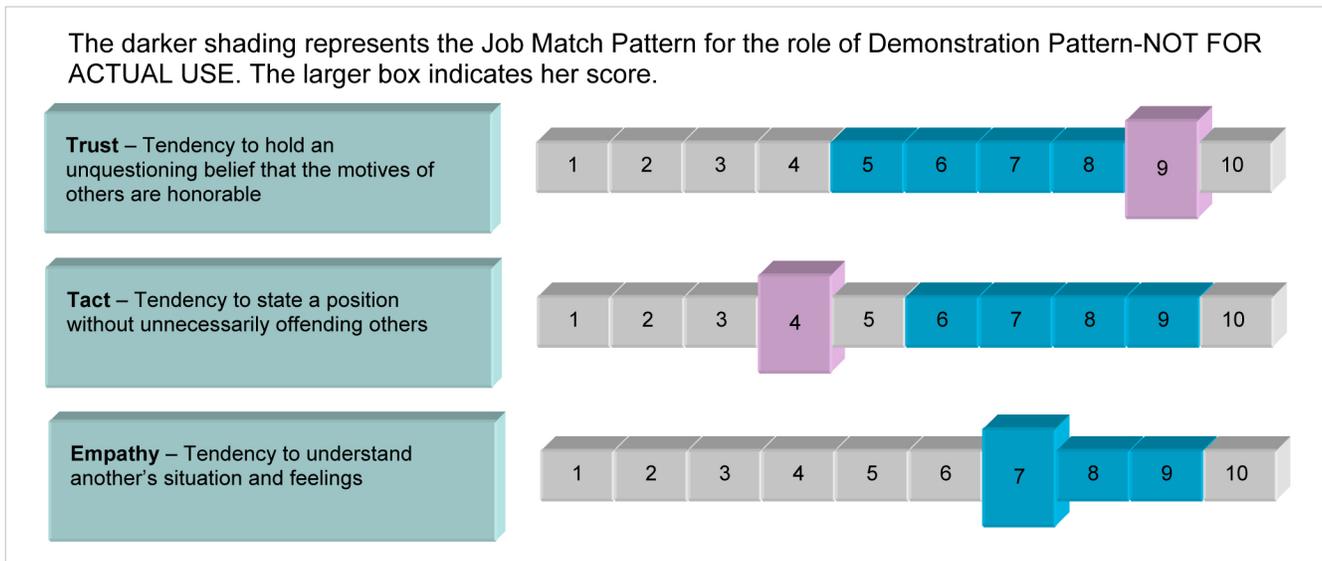
tool is also useful for helping them to make career decisions. If an individual is at a crossroads, the company can give him / her the assessment to find out what jobs he / she is closely aligned with, based on personal interests and styles.

Customer Service Profile™

The Customer Service Profile™ (CSP) is similar to the ProfileXT, and measures behavioral traits and proficiencies in mathematics and vocabulary. A ‘thinner’ version of the XT, the CSP measures six behavioral characteristics (instead of 10) that are most relevant to a career in customer service. The six areas are trust, tact, empathy, conformity, focus and flexibility. The assessment gives managers a good indication of how people will interact with their guests.

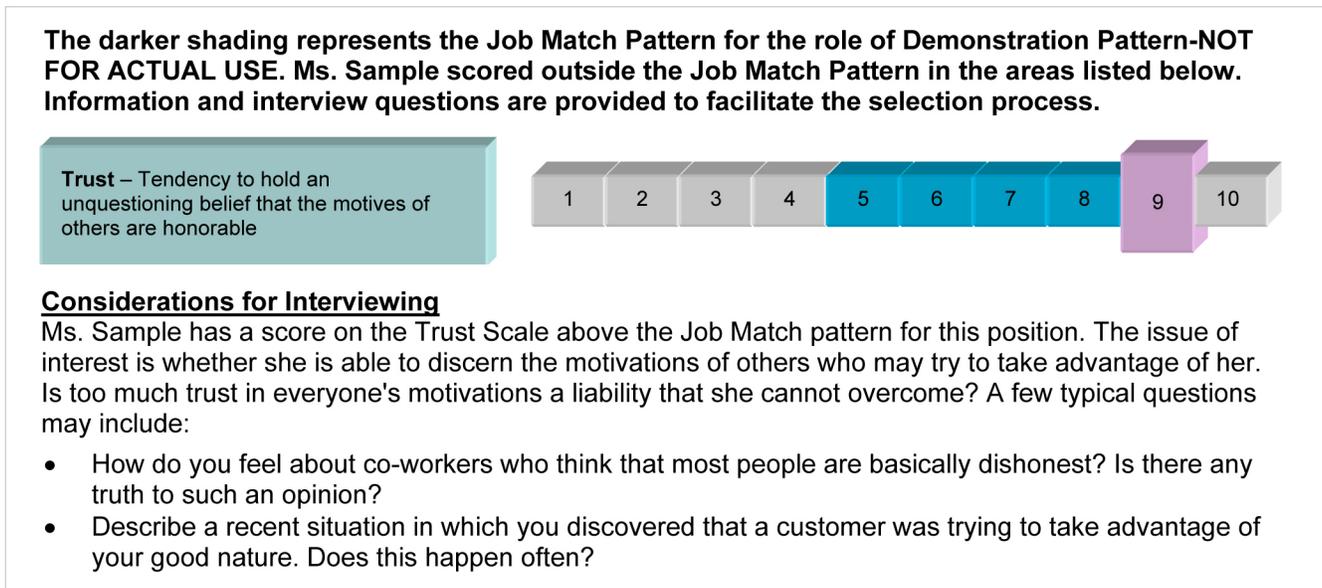
The CSP report is presented in five sections, including behavioral characteristics (see Figure 4), proficiencies, job match percent and considerations for interviewing (see Figure 5). The last section, the company service perspective, evaluates the degree of alignment between the individual’s perspective on providing service to the customer and that expressed by the company.

Figure 4: Sample Text from “Summary of Behavioral Characteristics”



Source: Profiles International, 2009.

Figure 5: Sample Text from “Considerations for Interviewing”



Source: Profiles International, 2009.

“ Recruiting expense per hire dropped by almost 80 percent. The cost for a “good matched” employee is about \$3,600 versus \$5,200 for a “poor matched” employee. ”

The customer service perspective asks individuals to indicate if they agree or disagree on 50 statements about the philosophy of guest service. Examples of statements include the following.

- Generally, when my patience with a guest reaches its limits, the best option is to get my supervisor involved.
- Guests need to feel that I have the capability to serve their needs without supervisory support.
- If a guest has trouble understanding what I am saying, I should ask someone else to explain it to them.
- Even though I may personally disagree with a patron, they should always be served cooperatively.

“We have evolved to a point where we can take what we have and leverage it in ways we couldn’t have imagined in the beginning.”

CSP Application

The organization began using the CSP assessment in 2008. The tool (available in Spanish and English) is only used for its hourly line-level positions and is utilized more so by its properties than at the corporate office.

The corporate human resources manager admits that the company has not evolved in its use of this tool as much as the ProfileXT. For example, they are just beginning to build custom job patterns. The company divides its jobs into two groups – front of the house and back of the house. For the “front of the house” positions, it expects more and better customer service. The company is building patterns for high, medium and low guest contact. Examples of the segmentation of roles into these three categories include:

- High – Doorman, front desk agent, concierge;
- Medium – Cafeteria worker, room attendant; and,
- Low – Gardeners, launderers.

Business Results

Company leaders have realized a number of key benefits by using the ProfileXT and Customer Service Profile assessments.

- Nearly 10 percent more “poor matched” employees are being terminated than those who were a “good match.”
- Average tenure of employees who are a “good match” is a running total 16 months and growing, as compared with only 11 months for “poor matched” employees.
- Recruiting expense per hire dropped by almost 80 percent. The cost for a “good matched” employee is about \$3,600 versus \$5,200 for a “poor matched” employee.
- “Good matched” employees continue to grow their skills and capabilities; while “poor matched” employees’ capabilities are almost stagnant.

“We now make more informed hiring decisions, selecting people who will stay with us longer. But it doesn’t end there. Profiles’ products have become an important part of our culture. We use the terminology and the concepts in our performance reviews, our recruiting decisions and everyday discussions. If we took the products away from our managers, we would be dealing with some disappointed internal guests.” - Corporate Human Resources Manager

