

## **Hiring Solutions Offers Pre-Employment Behavioral Testing Software and Training**

by Robin R. Mueller

“Presidents and managers think they are good judges of character when it comes to hiring people,” says **Maryanne Preston**, president of **Hiring Solutions**. “But studies prove they’re not.”

A 1991 Michigan State University study showed that a job interview provides only 14% validity as an indicator of future performance. A job application rates just a 37% validity.

“It’s important to do a background check to see if a job application is true and correct,” adds Preston. “Many people are hired based on past experience. But that doesn’t mean that a person hasn’t just spent five years in the wrong job. That’s why job-fit testing (personality testing) is so important.”

Personality/behavioral testing is an indicator of future performance and has a validity rating of 58%. “And, if you create a benchmark, or profile, based on your most successful salespeople or best employees and then match job applicants to that profile, the validity rating goes up to 75%!” she explains.

Preston sells personality/behavioral testing software to companies to help them hire the right people for various positions. “**The Hiring Suite**” pre-employment testing software assesses an applicant’s personality, aptitude and integrity.

“**Interactive Sales Strategy Index**” assesses an applicant’s outside selling skills. The “**Managing for Success**” series helps managers learn how best to manage and motivate their employees.

Preston also conducts sales training and distributes sales tapes that improve people’s skills in the weak areas pointed out by the tests.

“People seem to think that psychological testing costs thousands of dollars,” she says. “Yet, our software is under \$800. “Software-based testing has grown very sophisticated, and is accurate and fast. The sales assessment software is interactive, allowing people to learn the correct answer and be trained at the same time.”

Preston trains her clients on how to use and apply the findings of the software and continues to supply them with scoring units.

**Hiring Solutions also will do it all for clients who request it—testing, scoring and consultation.** Preston also partners with a company that provides reference and background checks for Hiring Solutions’ clients.

“My clients get as much help and time from me as they need,” Preston adds. “I’m available for questions and resources anytime.”

She also counsels presidents and managers on “how to set up a consistent, efficient and legal hiring process that fits in with their administrative goals,” she adds, and provides them with a customized job application, should they need one.

“I enjoy teaching companies how to do hiring right in order to increase their success,” she adds. “Personality impacts everything, because it is such a combination of traits. Hiring the wrong employees costs companies thousands of dollars in lost productivity and poor public relations.”

Preston earned a degree in psychology cum laude from San Francisco State University. When her daughter and son were small (they’re now 17 and 14), she held part-time sales and management positions in St. Louis and Detroit.

She has managed an exercise franchise, sold cosmetics, worked for a plumbing company, done direct sales and management for a home party firm and served as sales rep for an ad agency, placing national television commercials.

“Placing commercials was an interesting job I created. I could work out of my home with a computer. My dog, house and even I appeared in some of them,” she laughs. “I always sought out jobs where I could make it happen and still have the freedom to be available for my children.”

Three years ago, Preston became a full-time independent sales rep for a recruiter, doing personality testing for companies, “and learning everything about business, testing and human resources. I loved every part of the sales, assessment and training.”

Last November, she was serving for the third year as a member of the judging committee that chooses entrepreneurs to receive awards during National Small Business Week.

“I read all their bios, and they were so inspirational,” she recalls. “As they explained what they did and didn’t do, it didn’t look so hard to me any more. I looked at my personal sales and realized I could start my own business.”

In February 1999, she became a distributor for two major testing manufacturers. “I’m on track to double my 1998 sales this year,” she says happily. “It is so much fun and so exciting to own your own business, to figure out your Unique Selling Proposition, to find your market and to make the contacts.”

“My interest in psychology and everything I’ve learned in every job has seemed to come back to help me in my business,” she adds. Many of her previous clients stayed with her, and Preston began marketing to associations like the American Sub-Contractors Association, Material Handling Equipment Dealers Association, The Jack Miller Network, the Association of General Contractors and the Independent Electrical Contractors Association.

“When I get one or two clients within an association, I can use them as referrals,” she says. She also works with many insurance companies that need to test support people.

Weekly, Preston fax broadcasts a sheet describing her software and services to 100 companies. She’ll follow up with other faxes and phone calls. She networks among many groups, including the Small Business Network, the RCGA and other chambers. She also belongs to two local leads groups.

Preston recently presented a seminar to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and stays in contact with her clients through a quarterly newsletter. She’s working with a consultant to fine-tune her website, [www.Hiring-Solutions.com](http://www.Hiring-Solutions.com)

Her commitment to marketing has paid off, professionally and financially. She consults with her clients, half in St. Louis and half around the nation, mostly by phone. “I am fortunate to have found a business in which I use so many of my interests and skills,” she says. “And I can do this business anywhere.”

She may “retire” to Florida in the future, but admits she won’t retire from her job. “It’s difficult to strike a balance. I enjoy my work so much I find myself in my office at all hours, serving my clients or seeking new ones.”

Robin R. Mueller, president of Write Direction, writes newsletters, brochures, direct mail letters, proposals and more for diverse corporate clients.

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