



CTIS Sees Dramatic Workforce Transformation Using Assessments to Help Select Employee Base

CASE STUDY: CTIS

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Mike Soros
Vice President & General Manager
CTIS

Cable Television Installation & Service, Inc. (CTIS), is a thriving telecommunications contractor with an excellent reputation. Headquartered in Tampa, Florida, the company has served major cable companies for more than 20 years. CTIS provides residential installations, home networking, technical support and more. Current clients include Comcast®, Bright House Networks™ and Time Warner®.

CTIS’ mission emphasizes integrity, professionalism, dependability, quality and continuous improvement. To support this mission in what is a very challenging, high-turnover industry, the company places great value on retaining a dedicated, skilled talent base.

Challenge ►

Selection and Retention Problems Costing Millions

Cable installers are in a critical, challenging role requiring both technical ability and people skills. Few people aspire to being “the cable guy,” a job involving uncomfortable working conditions, the unknowns that come with handling a variety of issues and people, and fee-based pay. Telecommunications contracting is not immune to the quality and retention difficulties that exist in construction-type industries.

Mike Soros, Vice President and General Manager of CTIS, saw that the company had very poor retention despite extensive job advertising and diligent training. At first he was not aware of the extent of the problem. “I was shocked to see that, in the year 2007, we were at 142-percent turnover,” stated Mike. “I put the numbers together on what it was costing us. It was in the millions of dollars.”

Mike began an aggressive search for ways to address the turnover. When it came to selection, CTIS’ installers had to be able to serve both the cable companies and the individuals who use cable. However, installer selection procedures were customarily very informal, lacking testing and screening. The company had made efforts to improve its interviewing techniques, but no solid plan or methodology existed.

Solution ►

Single Source for Personality and Cognitive Abilities Testing

One of CTIS’ clients had excellent results using **Assess Systems™** for employee screening. When Mike heard about this, he began to investigate. Due to CTIS’ complex selection requirements,



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both personality assessments and cognitive abilities testing were needed to get a complete picture. Mike interviewed **Assess Systems** as well as a cognitive abilities provider. Because **Assess Systems** also offered cognitive abilities testing and the CTIS human resource (HR) department would not be part of the screening, choosing **Assess Systems** as a single-source provider was the right decision.

“I didn’t want to get involved with two different companies. I wanted to keep it simple,” Mike said. “We weren’t going to have our HR manager doing this. It was going to be out in the field. **Assess Systems** already had knowledge of the cable industry. Why reinvent the wheel?”

The dramatic 142-percent turnover data from 2007 helped Mike quickly gain CTIS managers’ buy-in. **Assess Systems** conducted a thorough on-site analysis, complete with installer and manager interviews, to gain information for designing the cognitive abilities test and for customizing **Select™**, **Assess Systems**’ job-specific assessment for non-exempt employees. **Select** identifies candidates with the right fit in terms of innate ability, attitude and personality. The product also provides individualized interview questions to help probe a candidate’s potential weak areas.

By August of 2008, **Select** became essential for hiring in the field. “We’ve hired better people,” said Mike, who believes that using **Assess Systems**’ solution is a crucial foundation. “It saves people in the field a lot of time, too. It’s made a big difference, and I think every project manager would tell you that.”

Result ►

Productivity Improvements With Reduction in Training Needs

Having combined the assessments with better onboarding, training and employee-relations strategies, CTIS has seen dramatic productivity increases. According to Mike, “Some of the project managers said, ‘I can do so much more work with less people.’”

New hires learn faster, and less training is needed. This is directly attributed to the assessments. “The quality of the guys in these training sessions is like night and day. From the very bottom up, everybody is a better quality individual coming in the door,” said Mike. “We’re going to take one of our trainers and turn him into a field supervisor because the need to do training has gone down.”

Significant Drop in Turnover and Extensive Cost-of-Labor Savings

“In 2008, after we had everything in place less than six months, we went from 142-percent turnover to 104 percent. Through May of 2009, we were at 40 percent,” Mike stated. “It has to do with a lot of things, the economy included—but you’ve still got to hire



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good people. It’s an incredible turnaround. Everybody feels it.” CTIS’ turnover rate has now dropped well below the 60-percent industry average.

Mike’s goal is to reduce turnover to 50 percent in 2009. “Our hiring costs have gone down by hundreds of thousands of dollars,” he said. “Our cost of labor went down about three percent. When your cost of labor is \$16 million dollars a year and you take three percent of that off, you’re talking a lot of money! It keeps going straight to the bottom line.”

Marginally productive people cost CTIS money. Fortunately, assessments act as a safeguard to preserve economic advantage in difficult times. “Thank goodness we have assessments now, because, in this economy, people who get laid off are the bottom-of-the-ladder players. If they’re the ones coming in the door, we’ve really got to test them and screen them out. There are so many more of them,” Mike commented.

Plans to Identify Managerial Talent Using Assess

The next step is to identify and develop future project managers. CTIS intends to leverage **Assess**, a competency-based professional and managerial assessment that comes with development and succession-planning capabilities. **Assess Systems** has already helped create the competency models. “We’ve got to find out who we want to develop,” said Mike. “We’ve got to get development tools and make sure they’re successful. That’s the only thing that’s stopping me from growing the business.”

Mike attributes much of CTIS’ recent successes to **Assess Systems’** solutions and people. They have also given him confidence to move forward. “They’ve been very helpful any time I’ve called or needed anything. They’ve always been there,” Mike said. “They’ve done a great job for us—absolutely.”



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