



FARMERS®

CASE STUDY:  
FARMERS INSURANCE

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Pat Nangle  
Manager of Actuarial Administration  
Farmers Insurance



## Farmers Insurance Leverages Assessments to Select Best Professional Candidates While Improving Hiring Efficiencies

Third largest in the United States for personal lines of property and casualty insurance, Farmers® Group, Inc., serves more than 10 million families across 41 states. The company’s products include homeowners, auto, business and life insurance, as well as financial services.

Well known and highly respected for its brand, Farmers Insurance offers its customers not only competitive, innovative products, but also peace of mind. Part of this peace of mind comes from Farmers’ top-quality employees. Outstanding expertise, professionalism and effective communication are essential ingredients Farmers seeks when selecting candidates.

### Challenge ►

#### Need for Advanced Selection Processes for Professionals

Although Farmers had been using excellent selection techniques, filling product manager and actuarial positions required insight that was difficult to obtain without assessments. Often applicants were right out of graduate school, with little or no proven experience to evaluate. Intensely quantitative and analytical, the positions demanded a variety of innate capabilities, such as rapid compilation with accurate communication of highly complex information. Therefore, candidate potential was difficult to discern in interviews. Screening and interviewing was time-consuming, large numbers of applicants had to be interviewed, and it was a challenge to identify top-quality applicants.

“We want to do everything we possibly can to select the right candidates,” said Pat Nangle, Manager of Actuarial Administration at Farmers. “It’s a big chunk of money for the company if we make a wrong hire. It’s at least a year’s salary—and these are well compensated individuals.”

### Solution ►

#### Assessments: Identifying top Candidates, Improving Interviews

When Bill Martin, now Senior VP of Marketing Merchandising for Farmers’ Auto Homes Specialty Umbrella, joined the company in 2003, he highly recommended **Assess Systems™**. “We definitely had a need for testing and a standardized way of looking at applicants across careers. Different interviewers have different opinions, so we wanted a standard across interviewers,” said Bill. While at his former position with Transport Insurance Company, Bill was impressed with the accuracy of **Assess™**, **Assess Systems’**



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flagship assessment product for professionals and managers. He noticed **Assess** worked just as well at Farmers. “New hires actually show the same qualities that **Assess** indicated they have,” Bill said. “You can get tests that are skills tests—but with **Assess**, you figure out whether or not it’s a fit.”

**Assess Systems’** longstanding expertise in professional and managerial selection made a dramatic difference. The company combined **Assess** with the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking and Raven’s Progressive Matrices cognitive ability tests. The resulting comprehensive, multi-level candidate evaluations give Farmers a complete picture of innate characteristics, personality and work preferences, as well as thinking, working and relational styles. Specific hiring recommendations prioritize candidates and supplementary interview probe questions help uncover hidden information.

“There are a lot of tools available, but **Assess** goes more in depth and provides the profile that other companies don’t,” said Pat. “The assessments show a person’s score on a scale from zero to a hundred as compared to others. This is very helpful to me and all our hiring managers. The probe questions that are part of the report are also helpful to managers who do one-on-one interviews. **Assess** provides questions in areas where the person scored outside the norm—and that’s what you want to look at.”

## Result ►

### Return on Investment (ROI) in Less Than Twelve Months

Farmers benefits from the efficiency and cost effectiveness **Assess** provides. Fewer candidates have to be interviewed to find the best fits, and those who are brought in are of higher quality. This gives hiring managers more time to spend on other critical tasks.

“**Assess** helps identify candidates who are a better potential fit, and that creates less time impact on our management team. That savings is a very positive thing for the company,” Pat explained. When it comes to an ill-suited candidate, “It’s a time savings and a cost savings because we’re not spending all that money bringing the candidate here and then spending a whole day of management team members’ time interviewing,” she said.

The added objectivity provided by the assessments helps minimize human error. Both retention and overall hiring process efficiencies have greatly increased. “**Assess** saves making a bad hire,” Pat said. “I would say within nine months to a year it paid for itself.”

### Impact on Employee Development

The assessments are a seamless, integral part of Farmers’ selection process today—but the company leverages more than just the assessment results and interview probe questions. **Assess’** standard output includes onboarding recommendations for developing new hires, and Farmers gives these to managers for employee development. “A lot of things from **Assess** go into

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the person's performance plan for development for the coming year,” said Pat. The company also uses an individual's quantitative and analytical scores to help determine upward mobility in the organization.

### User-Friendly Tool for Putting the Right People in the Right Positions

The ability to uncover hidden candidate information and use it at critical points of the selection process gives Farmers a competitive edge. Clear, easy-to-understand, in-depth reports are an added advantage. “It's user-friendly—which to me is the most important thing in the world,” Pat said. “I strongly believe in **Assess**. I think it's a great tool.” Farmers' future plans include customized competency modeling and a position-specific, criterion-related validation study to fine-tune the assessments for even faster screening

“Anything that can help in a hiring position is really important. **Assess** does help a tremendous amount—because the last thing you want to do is put someone into the wrong position or make a bad hire. Then nobody's happy because the person isn't doing the kind of work he or she is good at doing, and management isn't getting what they want from that individual,” said Pat, who believes job fit is also in the community's best interest. “You want to put people in the right job.”

Pat values the responsiveness and support she receives from the consultants at **Assess Systems**. “They're always so nice and so friendly and so helpful, it's fantastic,” she stated. “They're a wonderful group to work with. They really know what they're doing, and they do it very, very well.”



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