

# National Telecommunications Provider Selects High-Quality Candidates Using Assessments and an HR Portal From Assess Systems

**W**hen millions of voice, high-speed Internet and cable customers are counting on a provider for superior, individualized service, that provider must hire high-quality candidates. Widespread consumer influence creates high visibility and extensive customer interaction, particularly for front-line employees.

## Need for Improved Performance, Retention and Hiring Efficiencies

Hundreds of locations and high volumes of applicants made choosing top-performing call-center agents extremely challenging for a major U.S. communication, entertainment and cable provider in 2003. Lack of formal screening processes contributed to selection inefficiencies for the company's recruiters, whose many interviews took time away from other critical tasks. In addition, interviewing was inconsistent due to decentralization. Not every call center had expert interviewers or used the standard metrics—and not all candidates knew the job requirements.

According to the Human Resources (HR) director for the communication provider's Cable Division, "We wanted not only to improve the performance and the quality of work, but also to have a higher retention level. We wanted a legally defensible tool that was an objective screen-out tool, and not just a data point."

## Solution: A Customizable, Consistent—yet Flexible—Selection Tool

The communication provider examined popular call-center screening products and found them restrictive. "They were off the shelf. We couldn't customize them with our philosophy of customer service. We couldn't add anything or modify them," the director explained.

Then a third-party recruiter highly recommended **Assess Systems**. Based on this endorsement and **Assess Systems**' tailoring and customization potential, the provider went forward—and never looked back. From the start it was clear that **Assess Systems** grasped the provider's requirements immediately.

"They understood the core professional roles and the behaviors we expect from our call-center agents. And they sat through several hours of training on our internal philosophies so they could understand and better create the tool for us—so we were impressed right away," said the director. "They were able to embed within the tool our library of behavioral questions that we have sanctioned."

The implementation went smoothly. **Assess Systems** provided valuable assistance with promoting user adoption across the communication provider's locations. Based on proven, psychologically sound tools that ensure legal compliance with regulations such as those involving minorities, the system brings process consistency while generating specific interview questions for individual candidates. The director mentioned that the new selection process promptly yielded financial returns due to an immediate reduction in employee turnover. She credits this to better job fit from the use of **Assess Systems**' tools.

## Additional Candidate Assessments and a Unifying HR Portal Web Site

The communication provider was well satisfied with the call-center candidate selection tool implemented in 2003 and requested additional assessments. Building on the call-center agent validation work, **Assess Systems** transported the tools to other call-center positions in 2004 and eventually validated and deployed assessments for call-center supervisors in 2005. As a result of additional transportability and validation studies in 2006 and 2007, assessments for field technicians, field-technician supervisors, retention agents and sales call-center agents were included. “We’re definitely bringing in the right people as a result of using these tools,” the director stated.

**Assess Systems** innovates based on client-specific needs instead of taking a one-size-fits-all approach. Having determined that the provider’s nationwide decentralization called for an HR portal, **Assess Systems** developed a portal Web site with the provider’s branding. It serves as a single location for job-related information, candidate information, new-hire training material, administrative processes and more.

“The portal is clear, concise and complete. It’s an incredible resource,” said the director. “It houses everything. It’s about the entire process, the rationale behind the process and the competencies we’re driving toward.” Entirely company-centric, the portal even integrates third-party vendors the provider uses.

## Assessments That Include Employee Development

For years, the communication provider successfully used **Select** for hiring non-exempt employees. However, when it came to promoting internal candidates to supervisory positions, employee development tools and a 360 component were needed in addition to selection assessments. The **Assess** platform proved to be the ideal solution. The communication firm decided to transition all the **Select** assessments for supervisory roles to **Assess** and leverage the **Assess** development reports and **Assess 360** module for employee development. These tools help establish a supervisory candidate’s eligibility and give the candidate feedback and self-development recommendations for preparing for the new role.

## Future Plans: Career Guidance Tool to Optimize Talent

Promoting individuals into a role requiring an entirely different skill set presents a common problem: Is the new role a good fit? The communication provider’s next initiative is to evaluate upwardly mobile candidates across a range of positions and suggest ideal job roles. Such visioning promotes retention and optimizes existing talent.

“The **Assess** tool is versatile in that you can build multiple competency models and profiles. It isn’t only for supervisors. We can administer the survey to an internal candidate and run as many of the models against the results as we want,” the director explained. “Some people look at the supervisor position as their only next step. I think that’s short sighted, because not everybody’s meant to be a supervisor! I’d like to put folks in the best-fit job so they’re happy and successful, and they stay with the company. The **Assess** tool gives us the advantage.”

The provider values the open communication that characterizes its partnership with **Assess Systems**. “The tools are great, and the customization is awesome—but what most impresses me is the relationship we have,” stated the director. “We’ve always been very open and free to express things. I hold **Assess Systems** up as the epitome of what a vendor relationship should look like. Others pale in comparison.”

