

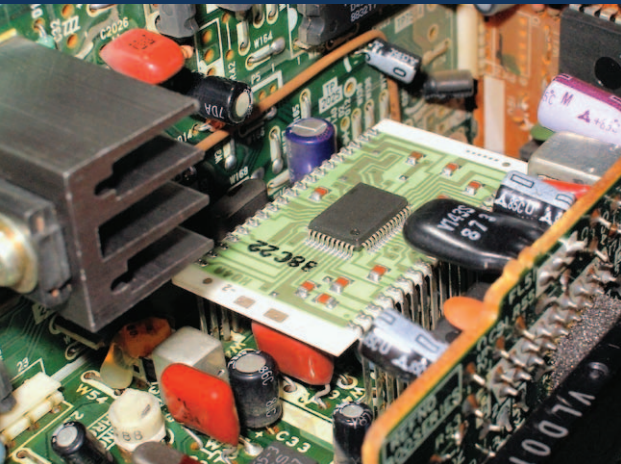


TTI Establishes Successful Talent Management Strategy by Partnering With Assess Systems™

CASE STUDY: TTI

“It really helped them find out things that were not easily uncovered in an interview. The tools were improving the quality of the new salespeople being hired.”

Former Vice President
Human Resources
TTI



Global leader in the authorized distribution of passive, connector, electromechanical and discrete components, TTI, Inc., is the preferred specialist distributor for numerous OEM customers and electronics manufacturers worldwide. TTI provides a broad product line as well as customized supply-chain solutions. From its headquarters in Fort Worth, Texas, the company operates more than 50 global locations.

TTI places a strong emphasis on talent management strategy. It is critical that employees are chosen and groomed for individual and organizational success.

Challenge ►

Problems Selecting the Best and Optimizing Performance

When one of the former vice presidents (VPs) of Human Resources at TTI sought an assessment solution in 1998, he didn't know it would lay the foundation for an American Society of Training and Development (ASTD) Excellence in Practice Award for TTI in 2009.

The 1998 through 2001 time span had brought dramatic growth for TTI. As the company expanded, so did the number of employees in the field and at corporate headquarters. However, the absence of screening and assessment tools meant hiring was based solely on interviews in the corporate and branch offices. Observation and instinct were used to make decisions. The Human Resources department strongly suspected that it was not hiring top talent, thus limiting the company's potential. Two roles, inside sales and outside sales, were targeted in particular.

“These were key positions for the company and for the success of the sales organization,” said the former VP. “Given that business was growing and we were adding people, we didn't want to compound the problem by selecting people who were not the best out there.” TTI needed a personality measure to help identify applicants who would succeed in either inside sales or outside sales. The company also sought to pinpoint individuals with potential for success in managerial roles.

Solution ►

Improved Quality-of-Hire Through Assessments

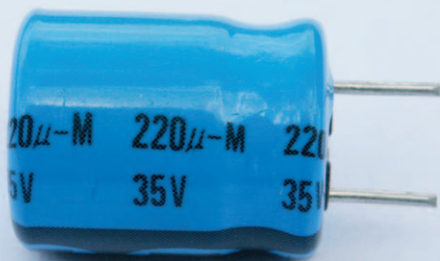
In prior positions at other companies, the former VP had seen significant results from the use of **Assess Systems'** assessments to help select salespeople and sales managers in retail. “We saw an impact in terms of a reduction in turnover and higher



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performance on the part of people who were selected using this tool,” he said. Based on this experience, **Assess Systems** was chosen for an implementation.

Because they helped identify strong potential candidates as well as those who should be eliminated, the assessments were greatly appreciated by TTI’s general managers. “The impression they had was that there was a dramatically positive effect,” the former VP said. “It really helped them find out things that were not easily uncovered in an interview. The tools were improving the quality of the new salespeople being hired.” Management also expressed appreciation for the fact that the assessments were easy to read, user friendly and not very technical.

New Opportunities Emerging from Certification Workshop

TTI welcomed the assessments and depended on them for selection. When Laurie Kane, Ph.D., SPHR, joined the company as VP of Human Resources Development in 2006, she and Myran Dill, SPHR, the current VP of Human Resources at TTI, attended **Assess Systems**’ competency modeling workshop. TTI was using **Assess Systems**’ flagship assessment product **Assess™**. At the workshop, which is called **Assess** Competency Certification, Laurie and Myran learned the process of competency model development. The workshop empowered them with knowledge, skills and convenient technology products, including the Competency Model Library, so they could quickly and easily create custom models.

When Laurie and Myran became aware of all the development capabilities that come with **Assess**, the two professionals immediately grasped the product’s potential for development in addition to selection. They realized **Assess** would be of great benefit at higher organizational levels. The two then built a number of effective competency models for TTI. “We looked at job accountability and made sure we tied the competencies back to it,” said Laurie. The models targeted positions at five different levels—individual contributor, supervisor, manager, director and VP—by functional responsibility.

Rapid Adoption Starting With the IS Department

When it came time to begin using the models for development, buy-in was essential. Laurie and Myran started with the Information Systems (IS) department. Because of the process-oriented nature of the products, IS—a process-oriented department—quickly embraced the new method. “The senior VP in the IS organization was telling his peer group what a great experience he had with his folks,” said Myran, who knew the critical nature of buy-in. “Right away we had a person on our side.”

Due to TTI’s long-term use of the assessments, adoption was rapid across the remainder of the company. According to Myran, “Our managers and our leaders were already totally confident in the tools they had been using for years. They didn’t push back at all. They bought right in and embraced it immediately. Laurie and I were both almost stunned at how quickly they said, ‘Oh, we like this. This is fun!’” Now, when TTI needs to establish a new

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“**Assess**’ competency modeling is the foundation for the practice, which advocates a closed-loop system encompassing hiring, development, performance management and succession planning. Had we not discovered **Assess**, we would not have been able to put the other pieces together.”

Laurie Kane, Ph.D., SPHR
VP of Human Resources Development
TTI

position, one of the first things top-level management requests is a competency model for the job. “We’re not having to push. They’re pulling,” Myran said.

Development and Succession Planning Using Assess

Laurie designed a specialized in-house workshop that gives herself and Myran the opportunity to address development planning. **Assess** is at the core, helping them avoid the shotgun, one-size-fits-all approach to training and development.

Attendees take assessments online prior to the workshop, resulting in development reports for each person. “They get their reports when they get into class,” Laurie said. “We reinforce the tools during that session and show our management team how we use them for selection, development and succession planning. We also reinforce the importance of individual accountability towards individual development.”

Participants talk through the competencies during the workshop. “It accomplishes some real motivational work with the team that the supervisor doesn’t have to do in a more disciplinary-type way,” said Myran.

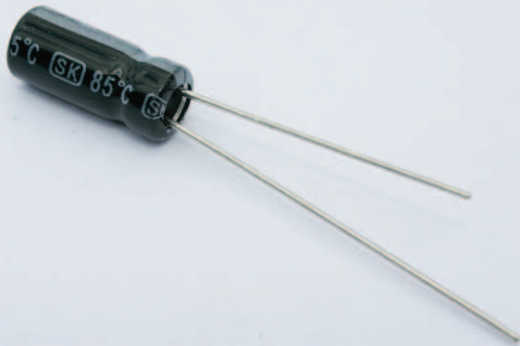
Development for managers, director and VPs incorporates **Assess 360**. Everyone, including front-line supervisors, has a personalized development plan based on up-to-date assessments.

Result ►

Proof Positive: ROI in Productivity and Retention

TTI had been using the assessments for approximately a year when Laurie received comments from hiring managers. “They said, “What we find is that new hires reach productivity much faster when they fit the model than when they don’t,” she stated. Myran indicated that interviewing is now more effective, onboarding is easier and learning curves are shorter. When hiring was at its usual pace, managers made decisions faster because they knew what to look for, thus shortening time-to-hire and improving productivity because positions were filled more rapidly.

TTI has also seen a tangible return on investment (ROI) in terms of retention from 2006 to 2008. “We started using custom competency models at the end of 2006. That year, TTI had experienced an unprecedented employee turnover that was several percentage points higher than our industry average. After one year of using the models, our employee turnover had declined by almost 20 percent from the previous year. Last year, employee turnover rates declined by another 18 percent. Toward the end of last year, the economy was shifting and the unemployment rate was going up, but not enough in the earlier parts of the year where we still weren’t experiencing enough turnover to make that much difference,” Laurie said. “We looked at hires in a particular year and how many of them we lost during that year. You start to see a difference in ’07, and that’s when we really got the process off the ground. Is it a hundred percent due to that? Well, we didn’t change the way we compensated people significantly, we’d done



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Myran Dill, SPHR
VP of Human Resources
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a lot of training with our managers regarding how to manage and lead people more effectively, but the use of custom competency models was the only real process that had changed in any significant manner.”

2009 ASTD Excellence in Practice Citation



In 2009, A Strategic Closed-Loop HRD System, written by Laurie about TTI’s talent management process, received an ASTD Excellence in Practice Citation. **Assess Systems** staff received the citation on TTI’s behalf in Washington, D.C.

Assess’ competency modeling is the foundation for the practice, which advocates a closed-loop system encompassing hiring, development, performance management and succession planning. Laurie refers to this end-to-end process as strategic talent management. “Had we not discovered **Assess**, we would not have been able to put the other pieces together,” she said.

Future Plans: Using *Assess Progress* for Performance Development

TTI’s CEO saw the need to link performance to the competencies, and the performance management product **Assess Progress** became the next step. Laurie envisions this feedback mechanism becoming the critical piece required for world-class employee development.

The longstanding business partnership between TTI and **Assess Systems**, along with TTI’s advanced use of the models, led to a special licensing arrangement. Based on this partnership, TTI intends to pursue additional unique opportunities.

Both Laurie and Myran are extremely pleased with **Assess Systems** and its people. “They do a great job. There’s not a single concern we’ve had regarding our business relationship for the entire eight and a half years we’ve worked with them,” Myran stated. “They’ve been very responsive to our needs.”



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