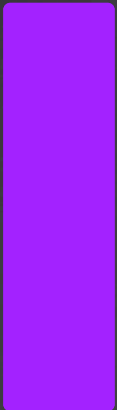




HIRING FOR CULTURAL FIT

What you need to know
to get started



Introduction

Organizations are increasingly turning to the concept of “culture fit” for successful recruiting and hiring. Ensuring that new hires have values and beliefs that align with those of the existing organizational culture can be even more important than skills, qualifications, and experience when it comes to successful hiring decisions. For example, an organization that thrives on teamwork among its employees should aim to hire candidates who enjoy and do well working within a team setting. An employee who prefers explicit instruction and supervision would struggle in an organization that emphasizes employee empowerment and autonomy. Employees whose values are congruent with those of their organization are more satisfied with their jobs, more productive, and tend to turnover less often.

The challenge for assessing candidates is being able to clearly identify the company culture in order to best define “fit.” Culture can be a vague and subjective concept. Oftentimes, hiring managers need guidance for properly assessing culture fit. This is where assessments can play a key role, whereby certain key cultural competencies can be identified and measured as part of the screening process.

As selection experts, we feel that looking at organizational culture is an important part of the selection process. We do this by examining the degree of fit between the candidate and the organization. When there is a match, or a higher degree of fit, employees are more likely to be satisfied and are less likely to turnover. When an organizational fit assessment is paired with a competency-based assessment, you are not only able to identify high performers, but you can also identify those who are more likely to stay with the organization.

In order to get a good idea of the organizational culture and work environment, a job analysis should be conducted. By having conversations with job content experts, you can determine the values of the company and how the job is structured. For example, is the organization very collaborative and does it require teamwork? Is there a lot of variety involved in work tasks? Does the job require being very adaptable to changing circumstances? After getting a better understanding of these elements, measures of fit can be incorporated into the hiring process.

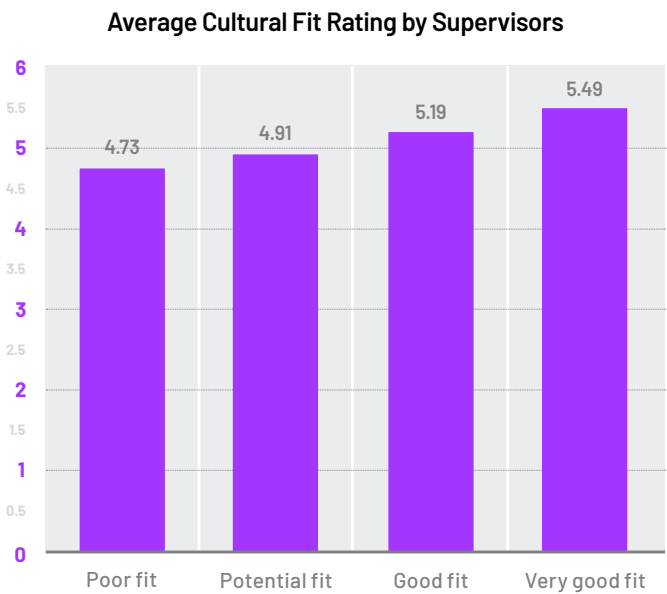
In particular, these elements can be examined in interviews. Interviews are a good opportunity to assess the candidate’s desires and motivational fit to the organization and the job. Furthermore, organizational culture and fit can also be incorporated into online assessments. Some of our fit assessments and sales assessments take this into account. This information provides supplemental information to help guide your hiring decision. For example, when you think about a sales job, there are many different types, which range from those that are strictly commission-based to those that are focused on building long-term relationships with clients. By understanding what drives candidates—are they satisfied by money or by developing relationships—you can get a feel for whether the candidate will be a good fit for the job and organization.

To better understand how to properly hire for cultural fit, let’s look at a few case studies.



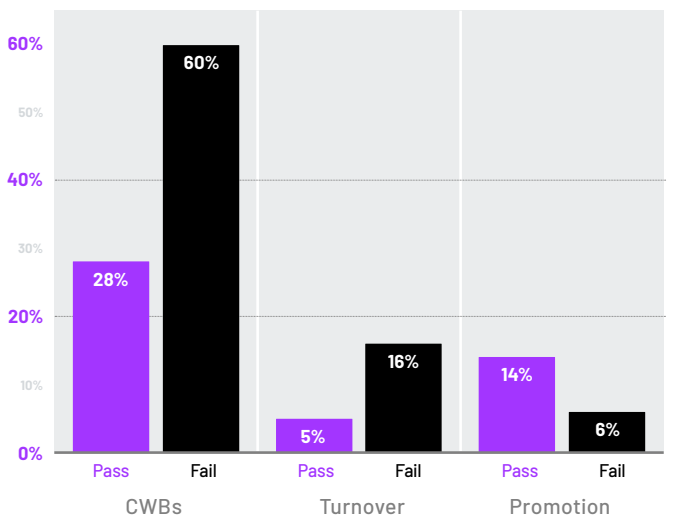
Help wanted: retailer seeking employees for innovative technology positions

We were tasked with helping a large retail company identify ideal candidates to fit within the “innovative culture” of their technology department. By incorporating a customized cultural fit index into the assessment scoring, we helped our client select the technology candidates who were rated highest in key cultural components of job performance, including technical savviness, innovative thinking, and openness to change. Candidates who scored high on the assessment (Very Good Fit) were almost three times as likely to be rated as high in cultural fit by their supervisors compared to those candidates who scored as Poor Fit.



Safety and teamwork – must haves for a healthcare organization

A large healthcare organization contracted us to create an assessment that helped them select RN’s into their organization who fit within their unique culture. A series of focus groups with incumbents and discussions with stakeholders helped to determine the key components that define the core values of the organization. We determined the organization needed individuals who valued effective communication and teamwork, put safety first, and preferred a dynamic work environment. Using this information, we created a culture and values fit index that was incorporated into the customized selection tool used for hiring RNs. Candidates who passed the scoring profile not only tended to be rated higher in terms of cultural fit, but they were over two times less likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviors or turnover and two times more likely to be promoted than the candidates who failed.



Conclusion

After looking at these two case studies, it is clear that using assessments is beneficial in hiring for cultural fit. While culture and job fit can provide good information to help improve your hiring decisions, it’s necessary to ensure that you are focusing first on assessing whether the candidates have the necessary skills to be successful in the role. After determining that the candidates are capable, the fit information can improve your ability to hire higher performers who will likely stay with the company.

