# Integrity Testing: A Staffing Industry Best Practice

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Reference checks have been around for a long time. I don't know exactly when they started, but I do know that by the time P. L. Travers published Mary Poppins in 1934 they were common enough for the nanny's declaration of "Oh, I make it a rule never to give references" to be somewhat shocking for its brazen disregard for hiring norms. Reference checks are still a key component of any hiring process, and in recent decades they've been joined by drug testing and criminal background checks. Most employers use at least one or two (and sometimes all three) of these processes before extending a job

offer and sometimes even before conducting an interview. All of these efforts aim to ensure that a new hire is an asset to the company—and not a problem down the line.

These tests aren't perfect, though, and employers are constantly searching for new ways to stop the occasional "bad egg" from slipping past the checkpoints. Enter integrity testing, a relative newcomer to the field of pre-employment testing that has the potential to give you a leg up on the competition.

Integrity testing can help companies assess the potential of an employee to engage in dangerous or unproductive behaviors at work. Integrity tests are psychological profiles that measure a candidate's attitudes about following rules.

If you're thinking to yourself, "Adding another pre-employment test to the hiring process will take up time and cost money," consider this: companies that use integrity testing actually save both time and money. For example, companies save time when they're less likely to have to go through the search and interview process again when new hires don't work out because of problematic on-the-job behavior. They also save time by having fewer disruptions (because of injury, etc.) to work time. And the testing itself doesn't take much time at all: for example, one company's test can be completed in as few as eight minutes!

The most noticeable savings are those that affect the company's bottom line. One pre-employment testing firm, Insight Worldwide, has identified how integrity testing can help an organization reduce its cost-related risks in two big areas:

Workers' Compensation Claims

—Identifies workers' compensation fraud predators

 —Identifies repeat workers' compensation offenders

—Identifies applicants who admit to safety risks

Loss Prevention

—Identifies employee theft risks

To get an idea of the kind of savings that are possible, take a look at these numbers. One of Insight Worldwide's clients, an Oregon-based window manufacturer, has seen the percentage of workers' compensation claims that come from new hires drop from 40% to 12.3% since the company implemented integrity testing. And after another client, a staffing firm in California, started using integrity testing, the "average number of hours worked by ... new hires increased by as much as 30%, and retention was increased."

The results speak for themselves! Small wonder, then, that in April 2013 the American Staffing Association identified integrity testing as a "best practice" for its members.

If your organization isn't already using integrity testing to screen prospective hires, you may want to consider jumping onto this bandwagon. Just be sure that whatever testing you use is relevant to your hiring needs, is fully EEOC and ADA compliant, and meets all state and federal guidelines. For a little extra effort up front, you'll reap dividends in both time and money down the line.