

Getting the Right Job Fit for Your Employees

With Deborah M. Muno

With wages and benefits consuming one of the largest costs of any organization's budget, it is important to get the most bang for your buck. Part of making sure you do just that is making good hiring decisions. That sounds easier than it oftentimes is. But if you have the right tools in place to assist you in hiring decisions, it really is pretty simple.

One company out there that provides assessment tools to companies and other organizations to help make the hiring process a success is Muno, Summers & Associates. For 11 years they have been working with all types of employers, but they have a solid focus on the career college industry. That's because managing partner, Debbie Muno began her career in the career college industry, and, having spent about a decade there, has an "extreme amount of passion for the career college industry."

"I think that the industry fills a niche that provides so many people with the opportunity to really make their lives and the lives of their families so much better," Muno says. "A lot of people don't understand what schools do and how they do it. They're kind of on the outside. But having lived in the industry for almost a decade I understand it, and I know the challenges. Now, certainly it's changed in the 11 years that I've

been out, but the fundamentals are still the same; the passions are still the same; the purpose is still the same."

Muno, Summers & Associates helps employers assess and evaluate the hard wiring employees have, as well as the soft skills. Assessment systems enable clients to select the right people for the right positions, and, once they're all in the right places, they provide them with coaching and development information to maximize each person's potential.

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Clearly this is important when first hiring, but it's equally important when looking to promote someone into a different position. Let's examine the hiring and promotions processes a little more closely and how assessments can help in each.

So often, Muno says, they'll hear of a school that took, for example, the best admissions representative they had and promoted him to the director of admissions. And then there are all kind of issues that happen after that

occurs. Or, they'll take the very best instructor and take her out of the classroom and make her a department head; there are all kinds of issues on the back end of that, too.

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tative so good at that job, or made that faculty member so incredible in the classroom, is probably the very same thing that is hampering them now that they've moved into management positions," Muno explains. "A good example is if you look throughout

the history of sports. It's a very rare occurrence that a star player becomes a great coach, because you need a whole different type of wiring to be the coach—the motivator who can succeed through others—than what it takes to be the person who wants the ball at the

buzzer to make a three-point play to win the game.

"We want to be able to hire round pegs for round holes, and promote the square peg into the square hole, if that's what the management role takes," she continues. "You can't squeeze an apple all day and expect orange juice to come out of it. Unfortunately, that's what a lot of places keep doing."

The company's mission, Muno says, is to help employers hire the right people into the right job, but also to promote the right people into the right positions and continue to do so.

"A school today can assess someone with our assessment, get their hard wiring and see what that measurement is, and hire them into a position for which they're maybe 85 percent matched—assuming the school has already done all the typical things they would do in a hiring scenario, like the background check, the face to face interview, reference and credential checking, and so forth. The school can then call up that information and compare it against every other position inside the school," she says. "They can see that a person has the right



DEBORAH M. MUNO

began her professional career at the age of 12 when she co-hosted a weekly children's television show in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania called *The Trolley Show*. Four years and three nationally syndicated shows later, she continued on with high school and competitive

gymnastics, earning two consecutive state titles. In 1985 she entered Penn State University, University Park, to pursue a major in broadcast journalism and a minor in sociology, and was a member of the Women's Gymnastics Team.

After graduation in 1989, she began a public speaking career with a two-year career school in Pittsburgh. She quickly moved into the admissions department, and, after six years as a successful admissions representative, was

promoted to the position of admissions manager. It was in this position that she began a search for assessment tools that would enable her to identify and hire top producers for her team. After finding and using tools from Profiles International for two years, she left her position at the school and began an assessment distributorship in Pittsburgh, Pa. After three successful years in Pittsburgh, she joined forces with Jeff Summers, owner of an assessment distributorship in the Midwest, and relocated the headquarters to Tampa, Florida in 2001.

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raw material, the right stuff, if you will, and that if they prove themselves successful in one position, they could be promoted (to other positions for which they're matched). You can start doing career 'pathing' with folks very early on."

Muno stresses, however, that just because you run a succession planning report on a 24-year-old who has been hired into an entry-level position, and the report says that person would make an excellent executive director at one of your campuses, you can't take them with no experience or developed skills and make them the executive director.

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"What it does mean, however, is that we know we've got someone here who has a future with the organization. It then becomes incumbent on the school to make sure that they coach and develop this person to their maximum ability, that they provide them with mentoring and skill set development, and that they bring them along the way so they can develop all the skills they need to by the time they're ready to ascend to that executive director role," Muno says. "So it not only lets a school take a Polaroid shot of getting the right people in the right job today, but it lets them do some future planning for these individuals several years down the road."

Muno says they can measure things about people in an occupational assess-

ment that is designed specifically for the workplace, but where it really goes above and beyond is that they're not only measuring personalities—which is a huge piece of job fit because it accounts for about 40 percent of someone's overall success in a job—but they're also measuring what they call "thinking style." In other words, they measure a person's cognitive capacity. That thinking style also accounts for about 40 percent of job fit.

The third piece they measure is interests. "That doesn't carry as much weight; it only accounts for about 20 percent of job fit," Muno says. "But when you realize what we're looking at, we're actually measuring the things that

employers are always asking: Can they do the job? Will they fit in with the way we want the job to be done, and do they even want to?"

Besides the opportunity to get the right people into the right jobs, Muno, Summers & Associates can offer employers an entire leadership development system. It helps make people they've promoted become great leaders.

"This process measures a person's leadership skills; it kind of runs a diagnostic on them, if you will. We're able to point out areas they're really good in—what their strengths are and such. Because now that they're managers, we want them to keep doing the things that are leadership strengths," Muno says. "We'll also pull out skill sets or areas in which we want them to work on and develop. Once we pull those out, we have a training program on the back end that

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will target those areas that are development areas. It's really a continual system of evaluation and development."

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"Consider this analogy: Tiger Woods is a great golfer, but that doesn't mean he can quit practicing. Everyday he's out there working to develop and enhance his skills even further. It's that whole concept of the biggest room in

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the world is always the room for more improvement," Munro says. "No matter what level a manager is, it's really important to

run that diagnostic and see what they're doing great to keep capitalizing on it; and, what areas they have that need to be developed further. It's constant personal development and improvement."

That helps schools be more fiscally responsible because employee turnover is an exorbitant cost in any industry, on any level. And it can be especially costly when you've promoted someone into the wrong position.

"Let's say you've taken that great admissions person and promoted him to director of admissions, and it was an apple to an orange kind of move. If that person no longer stays with the organization, now you're out your best admissions representative, you're still missing a manager and you've had all that disruption in that department. That costs money, too. And in a career college, that impacts the students," Munro says.

This leadership development system not only helps an organization from a fiscal standpoint, but it helps on the people side of things, too. When you have the right people in the right jobs and you're promoting the right people to the right management positions, or you're redistributing your talent by taking a person from one position and moving them into another where they really fit, you have great employee experiences, explains Munro.

"Human beings are really at their best when they're engaged in things where they're capitalizing on their strengths. And when that happens, those employees want to come back and do it again tomorrow," she says. "That reduces a lot of the stress and tension in the workplace, and it increases employee productivity, which also trickles down to the individual student. If everybody in a school is in the right fitting job, imagine the positive impact that makes on every student who passes through the doors. How many more students can a school retain because they've got the right employees in the right spot? How much more productive is the school as a whole because they've got a system that really enables them to put the right people onto the right bus and into the right seat, and then let the bus take them where they need to go. That's really what it's all about.

"We can do what we call job match patterns for every position inside the school, and we develop those job match patterns based upon top performance. Once we have the pattern and an employee has been assessed, we can compare that person to that pattern. One of the reports that is available to our clients is a coaching report. So whoever is managing Jane Doe, for example, would get this customized coaching

report about her, and it would tell her manager exactly how to coach her to maximum success. They can't change her, but for those areas where she doesn't fall into the pattern, the manager can look at this report and know exactly how to coach around those areas. It's very beneficial for people to have their employees assessed."

There are many different aspects to the assessment tools system and the management training tools. But, in essence, Muno, Summers & Associates gives their clients the unique ability to peek into the future and look at who their future leaders are. If they learn that now, they can begin grooming, prepping, developing, coaching and training those folks, so that when they are five, 10 and 15 years down the road,

they're not shocked, and they know they have an actual plan for the future.

"When you look inside these schools, there are tangible things that are important—really

nice facilities, great computer labs, and state-of-the-art equipment,"

Muno says. "But, at the end of the day, if you don't have the right human beings

in the right jobs in those schools, those things don't do you a lot of good. From a school's perspective, if you can put the right people into the right jobs and have your managers be fantastic leaders, you really have a solid human capital system."

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