USA Hire:

The Case for Better Assessments

Human Resources Solutions

Hiring
Excellence

CONNECTING with TOP TALENT

Learning Objectives

- Share information about USA Hire and additional assessment options

- Discuss the impact of USA Hire and other assessments

- Share agency successes in implementing alternative models

- Identify opportunities to introduce various assessment options

- Challenge you to change one practice that will improve the hiring process at your home agency

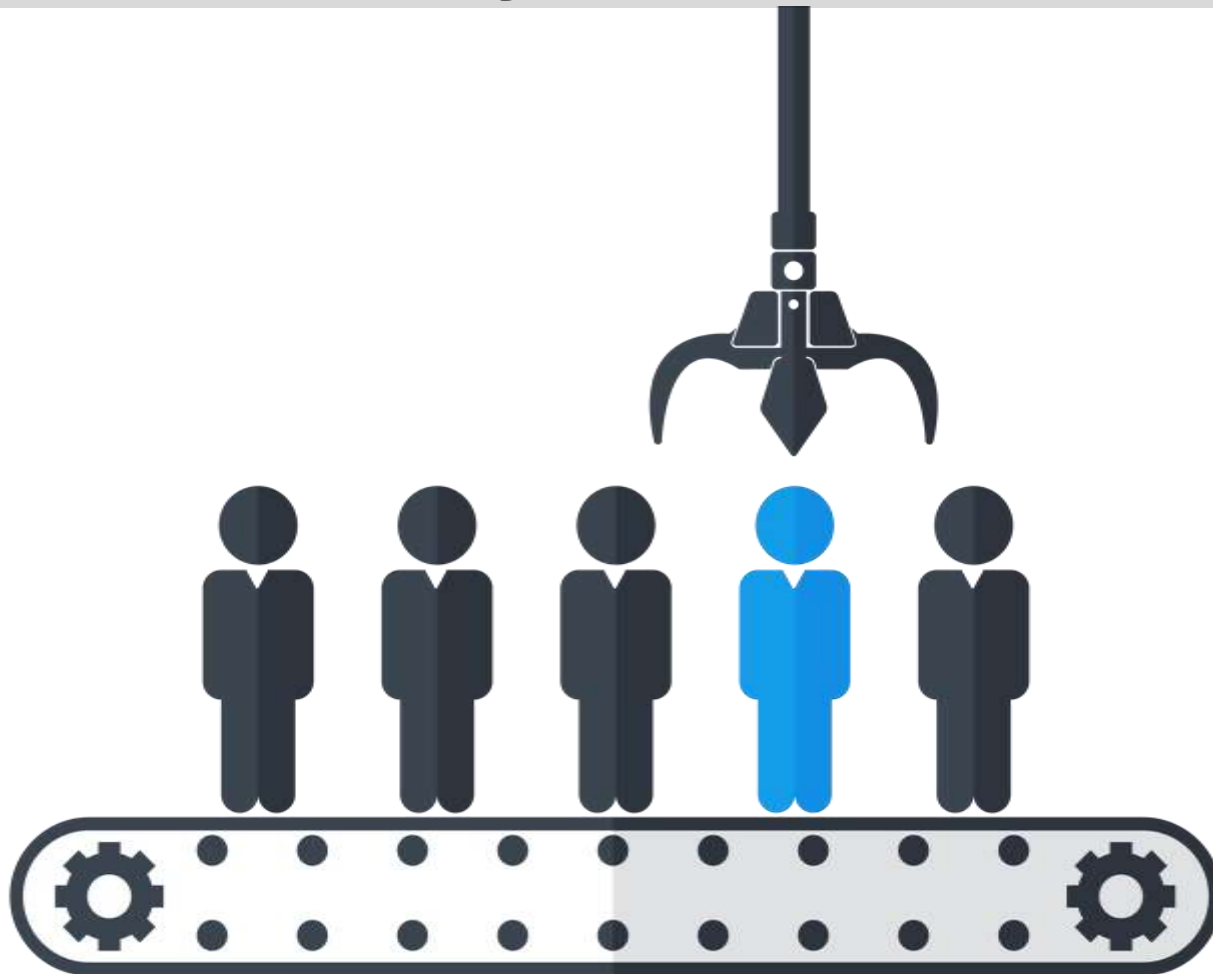# Would you use this to evaluate job applicants?

What about this?

OK, how about this?

Let's try this instead

A Typical Self-Rating Assessment Question

Competency: Decision-Making

Please indicate your level of competence in making decisions:

A. <u>Little or None</u> – You do NOT want me making decisions for this agency

B. <u>Some</u> – I have been known to make some bad decisions in my life

C. <u>Adequate</u> – Good and bad decisions are a roll of the dice for me

D. <u>Advanced</u> – I can make decisions independently and competently

E. <u>Expert</u> – I am more than happy to take full responsibility for all your executive-level decisions

*OK, maybe not typical but you get the idea.

MYTH:

The only way to rank large numbers of eligible applicants quickly and efficiently is with a self-report occupational questionnaire (OQ).

FACT:

Although OQs are widely used due to the relative ease with which they can be developed, administered and scored, there are other assessment options that can be used to rank large numbers of eligible applicants efficiently and effectively - and that do not rely on self-report ratings!

One Alternative

A Promising Option

"The types of assessments included in USA Hire have been shown to be better predictors of job performance than point-method ratings of training and experience. Therefore, USA Hire has the potential to improve the quality of hires across the Government while providing economies of scale for all agencies."
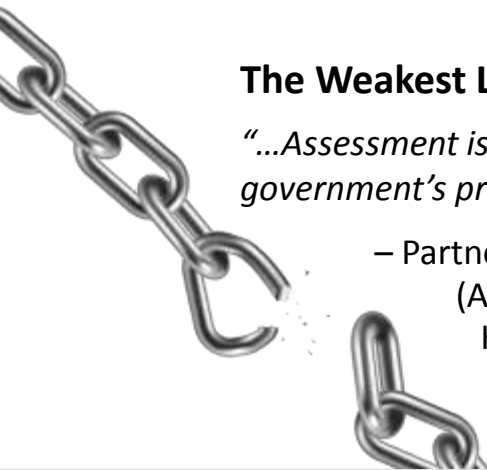
— MSPB FY2013 Annual Report

The Weakest Link

"…Assessment is the weakest link in the government's problematic hiring chain…"

– Partnership for Public Service & PDRI (August 2010). The Weakest Link: How Strengthening Assessment Leads to Better Federal Hiring.

Agencies that have used USA Hire

- Bonneville Power Administration
- Broadcasting Board of Governors
- Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
- Corporation for National and Community Service
- Agriculture (NRCS)
- Commerce (ITA, NOAA)
- Defense (Army, DFAS, DLA, Navy)
- Homeland Security (CBP, OCHCO, NPPD, TSA, USCIS)
- Labor
- Justice (ATF, DEA, EOUSA, USAO)
- Interior (FWS, NPS)
- State
- Executive Office of the President
- Federal Maritime Commission
- Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service
- General Services Administration
- Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission
- Office of Personnel Management
- National Security Agency
- Railroad Retirement Board
- Selective Service System
- U.S. Office of Special Counsel
- U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission

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The Bottom Line:
A Case for Better Applicant Assessment

1. **Barriers exist:** The Federal hiring process is complex and there are some challenges to hiring the best applicants.

2. **The self-rating problem:** Applicant inflation of skills reinforced by current HR processes making it difficult to identify best qualified candidates

3. **Better assessment possible:** Better applicant assessment/testing is possible now—No Act of Congress required!

4. **Impact of decentralized hiring:** Federal agencies are not equipped with resources and expertise to take full advantage of high-quality applicant assessment tools.

5. **Importance of assessment strategy:** Better assessment is not just about better tools but also good assessment strategy.

Hiring **Excellence**

What is USA Hire?

- OPM-owned online assessment platform
- Delivers high-quality, professionally developed assessments via enabling technologies (e.g., CAT, branching role play, automated scoring engines) to aid agency decision-making processes.
- USA Hire solutions can be delivered in unproctored or proctored environments depending upon the specific needs of an agency.
- Designed to be user-friendly and attractive for both applicants and HR Users.
- Fully integrated with OPM's USA Staffing Talent Acquisition System.

Types of USA Hire Assessments

Standard Assessments
(*immediately available*)

Online unproctored USA Hire assessments that can be included in a specific vacancy immediately. They require no additional analysis, development, validation, or customization.

Custom Assessments
(*require time to develop*)

Costs for custom USA Hire projects are managed through an Inter-Agency Agreement, separate from the agency's use of the standard assessments.

Types of USA Hire Assessments

Standard Assessments (*immediately available*)

- Developed using a government-wide Occupational Analysis to identify critical competencies

- Approved and maintained by OPM

- Cover 76 occupational series

- Can be paired with an Assessment Questionnaire measuring technical competence

- Types of assessments include:
  - **Reading Assessment**
  - **Reasoning/Math Assessments**
  - **Interaction Assessments**
  - **Situational Judgment Assessment**

USA Hire

Custom Assessments (*require time to develop*)

Examples include:

- Validation that a current standard assessment applies to a different series at that agency

- Development of new assessment content unique to a specific agency

- Any proctored assessment

- Any hurdled assessment process managed at USA Hire

- Any agency testing or assessment material the agency would like hosted on the USA Hire platform

- OPM also offers the Supervisory Situational Judgment Test (SSJT), the Project Management Simulation, and an Automated Writing Assessment

USA Hire Item Types

On-line Static Assessments	→	Computer Adaptive Tests (CAT)	→	High Fidelity Simulations

On-line Static Assessments

- Supervisory Situational Judgment Test

- Occupational Interaction Assessment

Computer Adaptive Tests (CAT)

- Reading

- Reasoning

- Math Reasoning

- Occupational Interaction

High Fidelity Simulations

- (Avatar-based) Occupational Judgment Assessment

- (Avatar-based & Branching) Project Management Simulation

A USA Hire Assessment Question
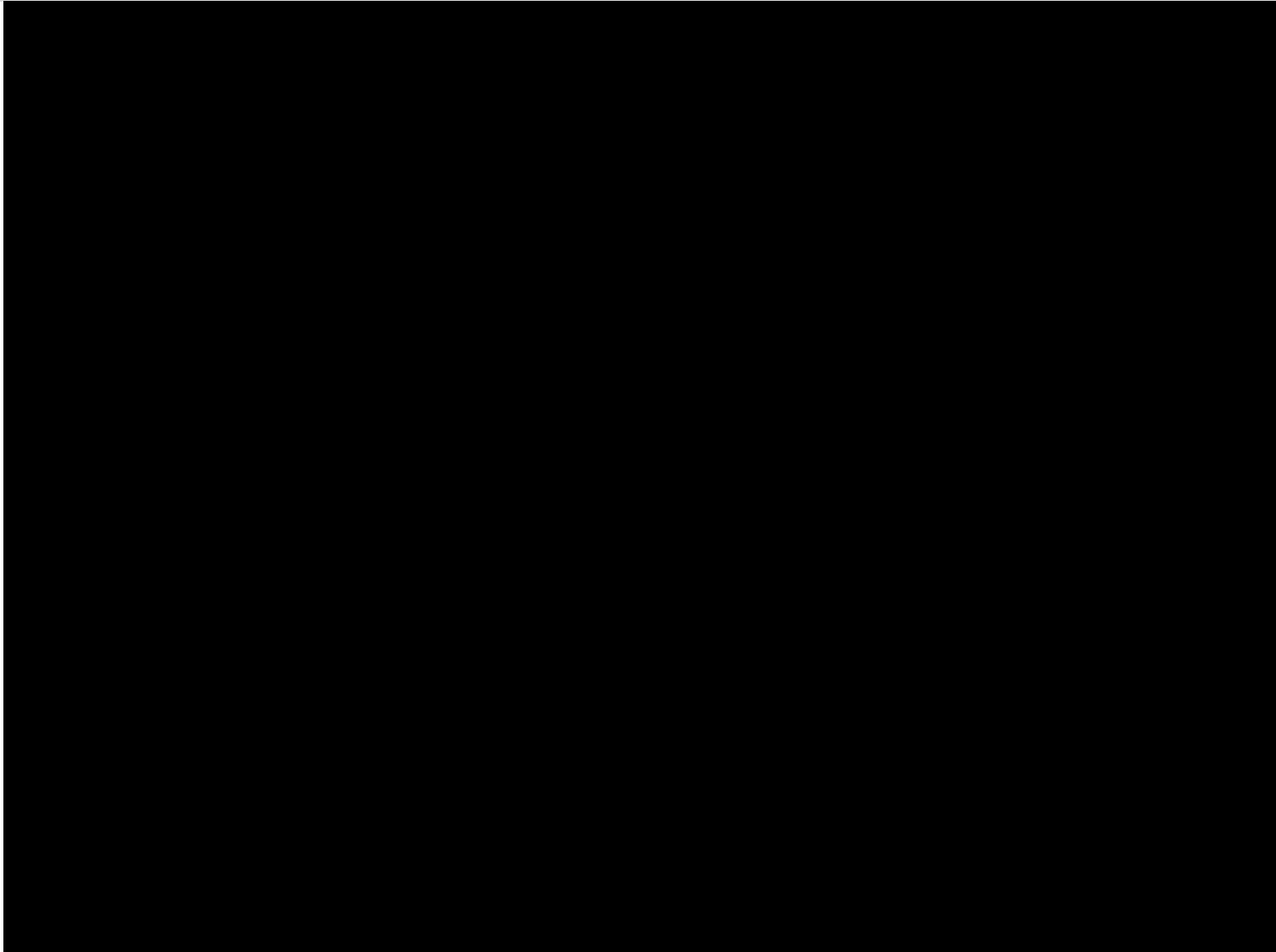
Sample USAHire
Role Play (Branching) Item

OPM Branching RolePlay DEMO   Progress

Watch the following video and then answer the question below.

Step 1. Scenario

Background Information: You and your coworker, Susan, are peers at the same job level who are supporting a project that will be ongoing for the next several months. You both work for Kathy. You have split up the responsibilities so that you are each in charge of one part of the project in preparation for a big meeting next week (5 work days from today). This meeting was planned weeks ago in order to work around the schedules of the senior leaders who will be attending. Though there are other team members working on the project as well, you two are ultimately responsible for its success. The other team members working on this project have all been assigned their tasks. Everyone has additional responsibilities beyond this project. Susan walks up to your cubicle.

Given the scenario, pick the options that **most** and **least** closely match how **you** would respond.

Step 2. Courses of Action   **Most**   **Least**

I'd really like for there to be a way that we can all get our work done   ○   ○
by the established deadlines. Can you tell me more about what's
going on with your schedule?

I really think that you can get this done if you re-prioritize what you   ○   ○
need to do. Maybe you just need to work a little harder to make sure
everything gets done.

I hate to tell you this, but you will have to push through and get this   ○   ○
finished. Unfortunately, there's no wiggle room on this deadline and
everyone on this team is busy.

We're both responsible for the success of this project, so we need to   ○   ○
figure out a way to get the work done together.

✓ Record answer

USA Hire Standard Assessments

Some of the Occupational Series Covered

XX99	Student Trainee (multiple series)	0560	Budget Analysis
0018	Safety & Occupational Health Management	0675	Medical Records Technician
0025	Park Ranger	0679	Medical Clerk
0080	Security Administration	0801	General Engineering
0101	Social Science	0802	Engineering Technician
0180	Psychology	0810	Civil Engineering
0201	Personnel/HR Management	0830	Mechanical Engineering
0203	Personnel Clerical & Assistance	0856	Electronics Technician
0301	Misc. Administration & Programs	0950	Paralegal Specialist
0303	Miscellaneous Clerk & Assistant	0962	Contact Representative (Clerical)
0304	Information Receptionist	0996	Veterans Claims Examining
0305	Mail & File	0998	Claims Clerical
0318	Secretary	1001	General Arts & Information (Prof)
0326	(OA) Clerical & Assistance	1035	Public Affairs
0335	Computer Clerk & Assistance	1101	General Business & Industry (Clerical)
0343	Management & Program Analysis	1102	Contract Specialist
0344	Management Clerical & Assistance	1165	Loan Specialist
0346	Logistics Management	1311	Physical Science Technician
0391	Telecommunications	1316	Hydrologic Technician
0401	General Biological Science	1421	Archive Specialist (Professional)
0404	Biological Science Technician	1702	Education & Training Technician
0462	Forestry Technician	1801	General Inspection
0501	Financial Admin. & Programs	1802	Compliance Inspection & Support
0503	Financial Clerical & Assistance	1910	Quality Assurance Specialist
0510	Accountant	2005	Supply Clerical & Technician
0511	Auditor	2102	Transportation Clerk & Assistant
0525	Accounting Technician	2210	Information Technology

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Benefits of USA Hire

Scientific evidence exists supporting the use of assessments like those administered via USA Hire. Validity coefficients quantify the relationship between scores on a selection assessment and job performance. The higher the coefficient, the better we can predict job performance.

Cognitive Ability	**.65**	
Structured Interviews	**.58**	
Biodata Instruments	**.35**	
Work Sample	**.33**	Validity Coefficients
Situational Judgment	**.26**	
Conscientiousness	**.22**	
Training & Experience Point Method	**.11**	

Schmidt, F., Oh, I-S & Shaffer, J. (2013). The Validity and Utility of Selection Methods in Personnel Psychology: Practical and Theoretical Implications of 95 Years of Research Findings. Presentation for the Personnel Testing Council Metropolitan Washington.

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ACWA Mythbuster

MYTH:

Agencies are required to use the OPM-developed rating schedules or written exam for ACWA positions.

FACT:

- OPM released a memo on March 6, 2009 specifying that "agencies are not required to use ACWA and may use an alternative assessment tool" provided it is validated (i.e., job-related), complies with the DEOH and uniform guidelines.

- Agencies are permitted to develop or procure a custom assessment for ACWA positions.

The USA Hire Assessment Process

| Applicants submit resume, supporting documents, and respond to OQ | → | Applicants who self-report meeting MQs receive link to USA Hire battery | → | Applicants complete USA Hire Assessments | → | Applicants assigned to quality categories based on USA Hire and OQ scores | → | HR verifies MQs and other screen outs for those identified as BQ |

Benefits of USA Hire

How does USA Hire help agencies identify top talent?

- **Quality Assessments** – Designed to measure success on the job as demonstrated by many years of scientific research on personnel assessment methods.

- **"Whole Person" Assessment** – Designed to measure general competencies critical for success across Federal occupations based on comprehensive government-wide job analysis.

- **Ease of Implementation** – Easy to implement and applicant-friendly. Off-the-shelf assessments ready to go for 76 occupational series.

- **Advanced Technology** – Leverages the latest advances in technology with innovative online assessments (online simulations, computer-adaptive testing, avatars, branching role plays, and automatically-scored writing assessments).

- **Federal HR and Assessment Expertise** – Maintained by OPM personnel psychologists with many years of experience implementing high-quality, valid assessments for use in Federal hiring.

- **Better Hires!** – The bottom line is higher quality assessments result in better hires.

USA Hire: By the numbers

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180,000+ | Number of applicants who have started assessments in USA Hire, with 93% completing the assessment

94%; 87% | 94% agree the USA Hire online assessment process is user-friendly; 87% satisfied with the online assessment process
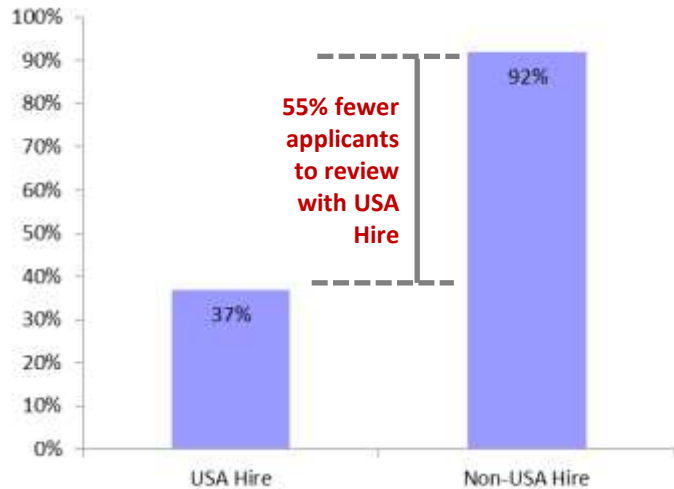
58% | Percentage of applicants who have opted out of the assessment process, decreasing burden on HR specialists
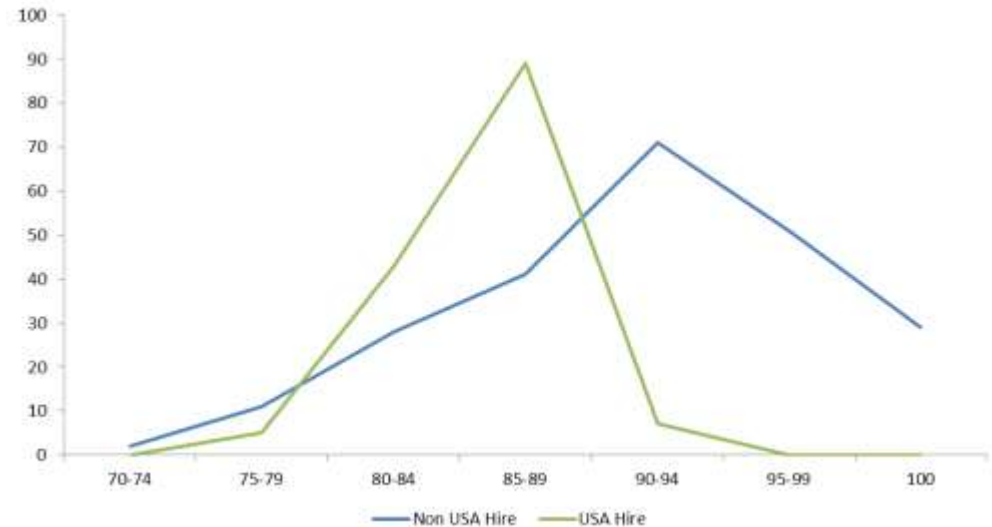
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Case Study (USA Hire vs Non-USA Hire)

%Eligible and Best Qualified after USA Hire/Non-USA Hire Assessment

55% fewer applicants to review with USA Hire

USA Hire/Non-USA Hire Score Distribution

Findings: USA Hire results in significantly fewer applicants for HR review, **reducing the time required to review applicants**
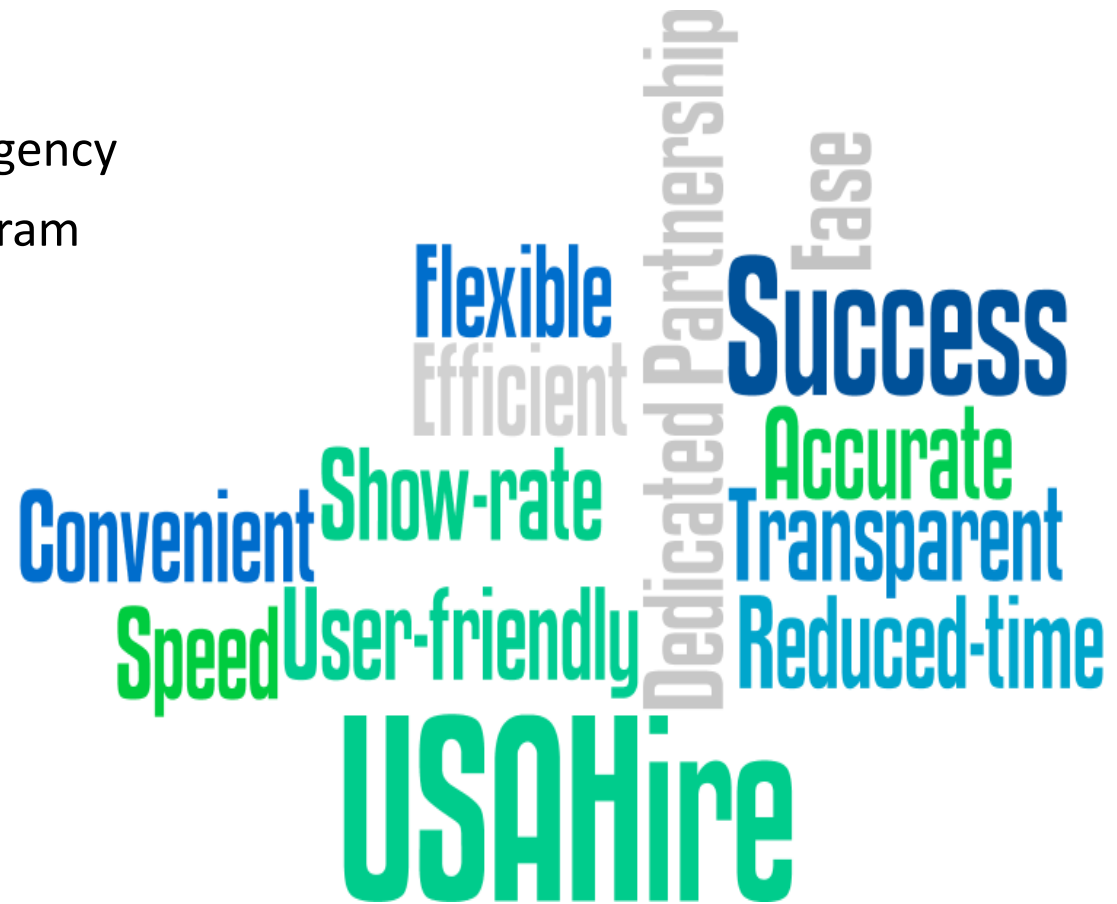
USA Hire provides a **more 'normal' score distribution**, as opposed to the self—assessment which tends to skew at the high end of the range.

USA Hire resulted in a reduction of 10 hours of staff time for applicant review

Success Stories

Agencies

- A Large Law Enforcement Agency
- GSA Emerging Leaders Program
- A Large Defense Agency
- DOJ Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys

Sound Familiar?

"We can't afford online assessments."

I can find people with the right technical skills but I need someone who can talk to customers, get along with others, lead a team."
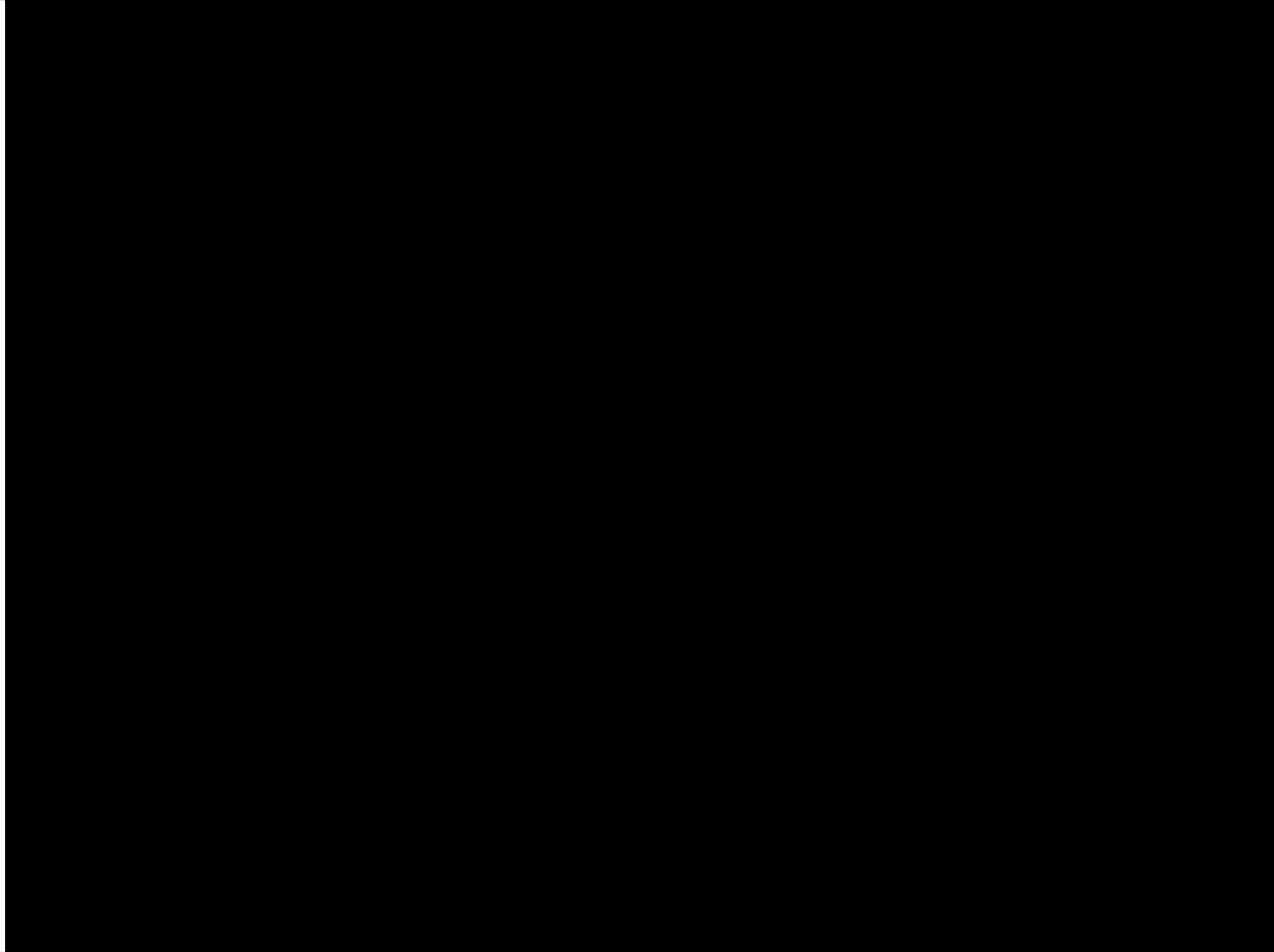
"How can everyone be in BQ?"

"I will know it when I see it. I don't need an assessment to find the right person."

"I want to be able to hire the same way the private sector hires."

"I don't think anyone on the referral list is a good candidate."

"All applicants lie."

Putting USA Hire into Practice: Coordinating with your Hiring Manager

Hiring Managers: A Call to Action

1. Strategize! Think about your upcoming hiring needs and plan accordingly

2. Use an accurate and up-to-date position description/job analysis for every vacancy

3. Provide recruitment input

4. Ensure use of the highest quality assessment possible for every vacancy

5. Evaluate outcomes

HR: A Call to Action

Pick at least one action that would have a major impact on hiring for your agency and try a new approach. Examples include:

- Collaborate with hiring manager(s) through the relevant portions of the hiring process.

- Analyze recruitment data to identify the optimal outreach strategy, and execute on it.

- Update position descriptions or job analyses to reflect current position needs.

- Select the most appropriate hiring authority/ies to meet the hiring goal.

- Assess the whole person through an appropriate assessment strategy.

- Use the highest quality assessment possible for every vacancy.

- Ensure applicants are informed of their status at key touch points (application, referral, selection).

Want more info?

Email us at: USAHire@opm.gov

Find us on the web:
https://www.opm.gov/services-for-agencies/assessment-evaluation/online-assessment/