

# The Finish Line

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## Job Benchmarking and Candidate Assessments – What’s the Deal?

The use of job benchmarking and job candidate assessments has grown in recent years. What are they, and why should you care?

Job benchmarking is the process of characterizing what behavioral style, motivators, and talents a job calls for. Job benchmarking allows us to “let the job talk”, and identify what the ideal candidate looks like. Candidate assessment is the flip side of the job benchmark. The candidate assessment looks at the behavioral style, motivators, and talents of an individual. There is a third component that links the other two—the gap analysis—that makes clear those areas where the candidate is not a good fit for a job. Viewed another way, the gap analysis shows where the job is not a good fit for a candidate.



*Why use assessments?* Studies show that a good fit between a candidate and a job is a key factor in job satisfaction, productivity, and retention. Nobody likes getting turned down for a job, but ultimately making sure a person is a good fit for a job is a win-win proposition.

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## The Silent Side of Communicating

Whether negotiating the biggest deal of your career, coaching your team, or describing a project, keep your ears open. Otherwise, you may talk yourself right out of the room.

### To be a better listener:

- **Try not** to judge. Even if you disagree with what’s being said or the way it’s presented, resist planning a rebuttal. Focus on understanding the message, not critiquing the messenger.
- **Commit your** full attention as soon as the other person starts to speak, not just when you hear a word or phrase that interests you.
- **Do whatever** it takes to limit distractions.  
*Examples:* Suspend incoming phone calls, remove unnecessary papers from your desktop, or meet in a neutral area, such as a conference room.



*Tip:* If you’re entering a room, ask the speaker to wait until you’re both comfortable to start the conversation. In addition, extend the same courtesy when someone comes to your office.

Source: *Negotiate Like the Pros*, by John Patrick Dolan, Berkley Publishing Group, New York, NY 10016.

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## One Minute Ideas

### Roadblocks to Success

Here are some career mind-barriers found especially among new entrants to the workforce, from **News From Kaplan**, a fact sheet published by Simon & Schuster.

- **Waiting to be discovered.** Instead of making contacts, such people think they will be magically rewarded with fame and riches.
- **Impostor belief.** Some people feel they're not really qualified to do the kind of work their employers want them to do. They're afraid of being exposed as incompetent.
- **I shouldn't get paid for what I do:** It's easy for me. This belief usually crops up among people who are talented and love their work.
- **Fear of failure.** New workforce entrants often fear they won't be hired or will end up penniless.
- **Fear of success.** Some people are afraid of doing well because they can't imagine being recognized as an expert in their fields. They may even think that fame and fortune will hurt them in some way. They may think that family and friends will like them better if they stay "small."

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From an employer's perspective the cost of employee turnover is calculated at between three and five times the person's annual salary. It is a hidden cost of doing business, and one that is easily avoided.

From an employee's perspective, if you are in the right job, you will be happier, less stressed and more productive. If you are in the wrong job, your performance won't be as good, and you will end up leaving the job, or being asked to leave.

The engine behind this whole process is the assessment tool. Most assessment tools have an origin in human development theory, but the good ones have been validated in the real world and have an amazing degree of accuracy and utility.



#### An assessment is:

- ✓ A great source of insight into a person's behavioral style, motivators, and talents
- ✓ An excellent way to "let the job talk"
- ✓ A useful tool to coach an individual, or to assist an individual in guiding and directing their own personal development
- ✓ An integral part of candidate screening and a complement to a resume, work references, and job interview

#### An assessment is NOT:

- ✓ An IQ test
- ✓ A test of job-related skills and knowledge
- ✓ The only criteria used in determining the fit between a candidate and a job
- ✓ A substitute for a resume, work references, and job interview

Assessments are great tools. However, like all tools, they are only as effective as the people using them. In looking at assessment tools as either an employer or employee, work with someone who knows how to use and interpret the assessment in an effective way. If your reaction to an assessment is "NO way!" and not "Aha!" seek a second opinion. Ask your spouse, co-worker, peers, etc... read your assessment and get their opinion. You may be surprised!

*Our perceptions of our self are often different than how others perceive us.*

– Adapted with permission from David E. Smith, Performance Dynamics Systems

### Court Sends Gripe Warning

You've already advised staffers not to gripe on the job. Thanks to a federal appeals court ruling, they'd better listen.

The court upheld a doctor who fired four nurses for complaining about their work schedules in front of patients.

The judges concluded that "grousing" within earshot of customers was "inherently bad conduct." This gives managers the legal footing to punish employees who mutter where customers can hear. Source: *The Personnel News*, Santa Clara, CA as printed in the *Managers Edge*

