

Case Study: The Use of Prevue in a Search, Recruitment & Selection Process

By Aaron Dodd, Operations Director

Mindset recently completed an executive search, recruitment and selection assignment for a Financial Controller for Australia's leading supplier of electronic lighting and emergency systems to the Australian building and construction industry. Mindset's Prevue psychometric assessment system was integral to the process and distinct success factor in the appointment of the successful candidate.

Phase 1 – Role Definition

When reviewing the position with the client, Mindset did not just clarify the tasks and key performance indicators inherent to the role, but also determined the level of experience and qualifications required to successfully complete the job.

Numerous research studies have concluded that once the qualifications and experience have been ascertained, the determining factor for a candidate's success (or otherwise) is their personality. The corollary to this is that there must therefore be an "ideal personality" to be successful in a given role within an organisation's particular culture.

Mindset therefore used Prevue's personality benchmarking system to determine the most likely personality for a candidate to be successful in the role. This was accomplished via a rigorous and statistically proven survey methodology across key stakeholders in the Financial Controller position. The four stakeholders each independently completed an online survey coordinated by Mindset. These four sets of results were then amalgamated to create the benchmark personality to be successful in the role.

This process allowed Mindset to gain an in depth understanding of the role. Specifically;

- Key tasks and responsibilities
- Key performance indicators
- Required background and experience
- Required minimum qualifications (in this case an Accounting degree, followed by a CPA or CA)
- Required personality to be successful.

Phase 2 – Candidate Sourcing and Screening

Candidates for the position were sourced from Mindset's own candidate database. Other candidates were sourced from a variety of online job boards (such as Seek and CareerOne) as well as newspaper advertising (The Age). Mindset's researchers also sourced candidates via conventional search techniques and Web 2.0 social networking (Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter amongst others).

Likely candidates were interviewed in person in Mindset's Melbourne offices, and their likely fit and experiences determined via conventional targeted selection interview techniques. Based on these interviews a shortlist of four candidates was submitted to the client.

Mindset's client then interviewed all four candidates and was impressed by the calibre of the talent pool he met with. It was decided that based on interviews alone all candidates had the technical skills to deliver the required results. The client naturally had a strong leaning towards one of the candidates ("Mark") over the others due to personal preferences and their outward personality at interview. However the client also recognised that candidates are often able to mask certain negative behaviours in an interview and also that often positive traits can be masked in the "unreal" environment of the interview room. Sometimes even positive behaviours "exhibited" at interview can be an act or fabrication.

It was decided therefore to put three of the four candidates through the Prevue psychometric assessment (one of the candidates had withdrawn for personal reasons).

Phase 3 – Prevue Psychometric Assessment

All three candidates completed the Prevue assessment online. The test evaluates three cognitive skill factors (working with word, numbers and shapes), three broad motivators (working with people, data and things) and twelve distinct personality factors.

The candidates individual results are then overlaid onto the role's benchmark determined at Phase 1 (above). This allows a percentage fit to be determined. The Prevue Selection Report is comprehensive. A detailed commentary is provided. Also, where a result is off the benchmark a range of suggested interview questions are suggested to target why this may be and the potential effect that this mismatch might have.

All three assessed candidates were then interviewed again by the Mindset consultant. The results of their Prevue assessment were probed and their veracity further quantified. This is an important step, as with any self-assessment a participant will either answer as they genuinely see themselves (not necessarily how they actually are) or as they want to be seen (either consciously or subconsciously). If a candidate had consciously attempted to answer questions to sway the results in their favour, the Prevue system will pick this up and report on it. In fact an attempt to do this will tell an interviewer a lot about the candidate's personality (and in particular, honesty!).

Full feedback of the candidates' results was provided to the candidates along with a copy of their Prevue Individual Report. All three candidates stated that they felt that the tests results were an accurate portrayal of themselves.

At this Prevue assessment meeting, Mindset also sought copies of the candidates' qualifications, work visas (where appropriate) and drivers' licenses. Mindset also gained the candidates' approvals to contact their referees (ideally three past direct managers or supervisors).



Phase 4 – Reference Checking

Reference checks are very important in the selection of people for positions, however with Mindset they are even more important as they allow the consultant to cross check the Prevue assessment results with third parties.

Accordingly, Mindset contacted the candidates' referees and amongst sourcing other information about the candidates past positions and performance also ran their Prevue profiles past the referees to seek verification. In this case all Mindset's assessments were validated.

Phase 5 – Final Candidate Selection

Based on the results of the Prevue assessment and their references, Mindset decided that one of the three shortlisted candidates was not suitable for the position. The other two were well suited however, although one was a better fit than the other. Interestingly, the best suited candidate ("Darryl") was not the candidate that the client had a strong preference for after their first meeting ("Mark"). Mindset prepared selection reports and recommendations for the client and presented these in person so that the two candidates could be better discussed and compared.

It was clear from the reports that "Darryl" was a much better fit for the role than "Mark". "Mark" had a much more outgoing personality, relaxed manner and a big physical presence. He was intelligent and confident and sold himself well. However there were also issues to do with his decision-making abilities and his level of ambition (related to how long he would stay in the role)

"Darryl" was a much quieter individual with very strong hands-on experience in other similar sized companies. He did not sell himself as well, but it was clear from his Prevue assessment that his attention to detail was better than "Mark"'s as were his decision making abilities. He was also more settled in his ambitions. "Darryl" was also more of a team player that would better suit the client's management team.

After much discussion, the client realised that although he preferred "Mark", "Darryl" was the better candidate. "Mark" sold himself well, but the client was not looking for a salesperson, he was looking for a Financial Controller. The client changed his initial preference and an offer was made by Mindset on his behalf to "Darryl", who accepted the position.

"Darryl" started in the position shortly after and was delivering results for his new employer within only weeks of joining the company. He has been a huge success, already identifying many tens of thousands of dollars in inventory savings alone.

The client stated that "In the past I would have just made the offer to "Mark", however using Mindset's Prevue system I was able to identify an alternative who didn't stand out to me, but ended up a much better fit for the role and our company"



A Note on Retained versus Contingency recruitment and selection.

Mindset only carries out retained assignments. The client had only ever had experience with contingency recruitment companies prior to engaging Mindset for this role. Because of poor experiences with contingency recruiters in the past they were reticent to engage a retained consultant such as Mindset. However they “bit the bullet” and did so all the same.

The client now recognises that Mindset could have only given him his result whilst being retained. A contingency recruiter would have let the client select the first candidate that he obviously preferred so that they could invoice him accordingly. Further a contingency recruiter would not have been able to reject a candidate on the grounds of assessment (or for any other reason).

In the words of the client “It is now clear to me that you can engage a recruiter on contingency, but if you want a genuine ethical selection advisor to assist with the position then that consultant must be retained”.