

Queensland Police Service Preliminary Research Project

Overview

This pilot study compared the hiring recommendations of the Queensland Police interview panel for a group of 51 applicants with hiring recommendations made by AIFP. In this case all 51 applicants completed our psychological testing. A randomly selected subgroup of 13 were further evaluated using our TRAIT© Interview System. The results demonstrated an excellent ability to predict who would be unsuccessful in the entire process. Three very 'High Risk' performers were identified who otherwise would have been employed.

Background

The purpose of this study was to determine whether adopting the AIFP Profiling System could add value to the Queensland Police Service screening of police constable applicants.

Methodology

The participants were 51 Constable applicants who completed all phases of the standard screening process.

All subjects also completed the first phase of the AIFP Profiling System. This consisted of a group of psychological tests that have been specifically designed and researched for screening police applicants.

Two subjects were removed from the study, leaving a total of 49.

From these, we interviewed a random sample 13 people.

The recommendations from the Queensland Police Service panel and the AIFP test data, as well as the sub-group that were interviewed, were compared.

Results

Based only on our test data, we predicted that 19 candidates would be rejected by Queensland Police Service. Significantly, 15 of these 19 were rejected by the interview panel, who had access to all of the information from the complete selection process.

Results (continued)

This represents a "hit rate" of 79%. The likelihood that this was achieved by "luck" or chance alone is five in 10,000 ($p=.0005$).

Of the 13 people who we interviewed, our final recommendation agreed with that of the panel 11 times. While this agreement rate of 82% is encouraging, this is based on a small sample size. It would therefore be incorrect to conclude that our profiling would obtain the same results as would have been obtained using the existing Queensland Police system.

There were three applicants who the panel recommended for appointment who we found to represent a very high risk to the organisation. One applicant was seriously alcoholic. The second was extremely aggressive, authoritarian and racially biased. The third demonstrated quite poor motivation for the role.

Implications of the Queensland Police Study

This brief study clearly prevented Queensland Police from making three serious hiring mistakes. It is very difficult – perhaps impossible – to estimate the cost savings of these decisions. What can be said with certainty is that the money saved would be far in excess of the investment made in the AIFP Profiling System.

The extremely high – and statistically significant – "hit rate" in predicting who would be unsuccessful strongly indicates that the AIFP Profiling System could reduce the number of panel interviews. These are extremely costly and labour-intensive. Using the AIFP Profiling System unsuitable applicants could be quickly and inexpensively identified.

Case Studies

Candidate A

This woman described herself as being "gullible and easily led", being too sensitive in response to criticism, and currently being under a great deal of stress. Basic judgment and "common sense" were poor. The applicant showed very high racial bias, with no self-consciousness about this. Most significantly, this person denied significant problems with alcohol, but when confronted with the results of our profiling, it became clear that there was a very substantial problem with alcohol.

Candidate B

This man demonstrated a combination of very high racial bias, low stress tolerance and very high impulsivity. An underlying contempt for authority and past problems controlling his temper were evident. Interestingly, a prior arrest for assault (without conviction) was reported in our testing, though no record of this was found in the Queensland Police Service interview.

Candidate C

A third candidate was described as "an excellent candidate for selection to the Queensland Police Service" and was rated as Highly Suitable. During our interview it became clear that the primary motivation for becoming a police officer was extreme guilt over a younger brother having been convicted for armed robbery. No other clear motivation of this type of work could be identified. Recent psychological problems were acknowledged, though with an attempt to minimize these. Stress tolerance and practical judgment were both considered poor.

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