

## IMPROVING SELECTION DECISIONS AROUND THE WORLD

**L**ike many companies in recent years, PSP has become more involved with international assignments. Our customers have called on us to assess U.S. candidates for expatriate assignments, as well as foreign nationals who are being considered for work in the U.S. or abroad. For example, we recently assessed a Brazilian manager being considered for a sales assignment in Australia.



PSP's services have been used in over 25 countries. We help our clients assess manufacturing workers and managers on location. For many years, PSP has assessed job candidates for positions in the United Kingdom, Mexico, China and Australia.

### Unexpected Training and Development Needs

PSP's benchmarks for hourly workers in the United Kingdom and China have enabled us to alert our client companies to unexpected training and development needs. For example, our testing revealed that Chinese hourly workers are more competitive and less team-oriented than popular cultural stereotypes would indicate. Therefore, exporting U.S. team manufacturing concepts to China presents some challenges for which the company can now prepare.

We have translated our assessment instruments into Spanish and Chinese as well as "United Kingdom British." For key management positions, we have conducted interviews via video conference or telephone. For hourly, supervisory and technical personnel, we have online testing or faxable answer sheets that make candidate profiling easy and quick in any part of the world.

### Innovative Approaches Are Required

Selecting workers in non-English speaking countries often requires innovative approaches. While our translations have been well received, PSP has also used paired comparison assessment techniques, wherein assessment ratings are decided on the relative strength of one skill or competency versus another. This technique is particularly useful for assessing current management personnel in a multisource or "360 degree" format. PSP successfully used this system for the assessment of 52 top executives in 15 European countries with a multinational U.S.-based company. The paired comparison assessment technique is easily adapted to foreign

cultures and allows for direct comparisons between management personnel from different cultures.

International assessments require flexibility and an awareness of specific behavioral traits that are often a part of particular cultures. Paired comparison assessments can be highly useful as this approach does not require giving a "poor" rating, which is inappropriate in several countries; only the relative strengths of several skills are rated. Our clients tell us that our assessment of international as well as domestic candidates gives them crucial information for understanding the strengths and weaknesses of their personnel. As a result, they make better decisions regarding individual-assignment fits. PSP's assessment information also enables companies to provide appropriate training and support services early on, before problems develop.

### Measuring Key Competencies

International assignments for U.S. expatriates naturally must consider factors such as family situations, cultural interests and awareness, and openness to new experiences. Most expatriate assignments require a strong skill set as well as strong business knowledge. Energy level and work motivation are especially crucial, as international work usually requires greater effort. People skills are a must, as one's success is dependent on meeting and



conversing with people who, even when they are speaking your language, may do so with different cultural expectations. Fortunately, PSP's assessments are able to measure many of these attributes that enable managers to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of their expatriate and international employees. As PSP's international assignments grow, we continue to develop different approaches for helping our clients operate more effectively in the global marketplace.