

# CODESP

Cooperative Organization for the Development of Employee Selection Procedures

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## Diversity: What We Know But Don't Always Think About

As HR professionals, we frequently hear and use terms and expressions like "culture", "diversity", "innovation", and "our world is getting smaller". Often it seems we are trying to find a balance between change and "efficiency through consistency". We try to expand our workforce by hiring employees with differences in thought, background, and culture, yet still in line with the values of the organization's vision and mission. So how do we successfully accomplish this task?

Our latest online webinar speaker, Maria Elena de Guevara, from HR Works outlined many of these issues last month. She expressed that obvious differences like race, sex, and national origin are merely surface characteristics which tell

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## Upcoming Webinars

Sign up for our upcoming webinars and keep your employees up-to-date on current issues surrounding HR and organizational issues!

**November 2 - 10:00-11:30 AM PDT**

**FEHA / ADA ~ Understanding your Obligations and Developing Solutions**

Presented by Rachel Shaw, Consultant for the Monjaras & Wismeyer Group

**November 9 - 10:00-11:00 AM PST**

**The High Cost of Getting Even - Understanding and Preventing Retaliation Claims**

Presented by Lynn D. Lieber, Esq. CEO of Workplace Answers

**November 16 - 10:00-11:00 AM PST**

**The Bully & the Bottom Line: The Hidden Cost of Workplace Aggression**

Presented by Lynn D. Lieber, Esq. CEO of Workplace Answers

Webinars are available for on-demand viewing for customers and subscribers at [www.codesp.com](http://www.codesp.com) after login under **Links/Webinar Archives**.

## New Test Materials

Since August 1st we have added 323 multiple choice items to our banks!

The new items fall into the following areas:

- Accounting
- First Aid
- HVAC
- Insurance
- Mechanics
- Personnel
- Taxes
- English Usage
- Clerical
- Grounds
- Math
- Library
- Word Processing
- Emergency Management
- Public Information
- Health
- FLSA
- Nutrition
- Purchasing
- Telecommunications

If you need additional multiple choice items developed, please do not hesitate to ask! We will be happy to assist you. We only ask that you give us at least 10 days and some direction for contacting an SME or relevant source materials.

## Maintenance & Safety Modules

Modules of items specifically selected based on past test performance will be available soon to test for maintenance and safety competencies, broken down by category, job type, and job level. Modules can be mixed and matched based on minimum job requirements in the following areas:

### Maintenance Modules

- Glazier
- Asbestos
- Asphalt
- Carpet
- Fencing
- Kitchen Appliances
- Concrete (Outdoor, Indoor, General)
- Locksmith
- Roofing
- Tile
- Windows
- Putty
- Metal Works (Drills, Machinist, General)
- Building
- Plaster
- Masonry
- Machinery

### Safety Modules

- AHERA
- Asbestos
- Boiler
- CA General Industry Safety Orders
- Chemicals
- Electric
- Food Service
- Fire (by type)
- General -Trades
- Equipment (by trade)
- Ladders
- Lifting (by trade)
- MSDS
- OSHA
- Pesticides
- Playground
- Risk Management (by type)
- Tractor
- Tools (by trade)
- Warehouse
- Welding

## Upcoming Meetings and Conferences:

## PTC-SC Annual Conference - Friday, Nov. 5

The Portofino Hotel, Redondo Beach, CA

<http://www.ipacweb.org/ptcsc/calendar/>

**"From Good to Great: Improving Our Outcomes in Testing and Selection"**  
*Keynote Speaker - Dr. Neal Schmitt, Michigan State University*

### Other Speakers

Ilene Gast, US Customs & Border Protection

Robin Gurien, OC Dept. of Education

Rod Freudenberg, LA County Office of Education

David Whitney, California State University, Long Beach

## WRIPAC Job Analysis Training and Meeting in Carlsbad Feb. 1-4 For more info: [www.wripac.org](http://www.wripac.org)

Have you updated your CODESP tests lately? It's quick and easy to pick up any changes we have made to multiple choice items: just log in to [CODESP.com](http://CODESP.com), click on [Create a Test](#), open the packet of test items and click "[Create Test](#)". And voilá! The items will all be updated in your newly created test. Don't forget to re-label the old test in your Test Library afterwards so you don't re-use it.

## Join or Subscribe to Services

Does your public agency need any of these?

- Employment test materials
- HR Training, including FREE webinars
- Online testing capability
- Job analysis
- Classification
- Recruitment services
- Job description assistance
- Low cost HR consulting for special recruitments, classification and job analysis studies

Public educational agencies are eligible for consortium membership. All other public agencies, afterschool programs and other non-profits can subscribe to CODESP. Visit our website to learn how we can make your HR processes more efficient through our low-cost services: [www.codesp.com](http://www.codesp.com)

## What We Know But Don't Always Think About Continued from first page

only a part of the story. Diverse organizations understand and exemplify the premise that the more diversity of thought, experience, and background, the greater potential for creative ideas, effective results, and employee engagement. As managers, especially HR managers, we must build effective relationships across difference to achieve an inclusive organization. She used the symbol of the Native American medicine wheel to show how movement and change can show us the pathway to harmony.

So what are the characteristics of diversity, and how do we ensure that we are selecting for these differences? Or, maybe the better question to ask is, "why are we currently *unable* to select for such differences?" If we validate our selection tools through the proper methods using a job analysis, SMEs, and validation studies which take diversity into account, our tools should be selecting the best possible candidates, right? Well, maybe. It depends again on how well we understand diversity and some of the methods we can use to attain it.

There are also issues of diversity that are not so obvious that should be considered. Within a given geographic area there can be large varieties of people with certain cultural values that are not based on their appearance or the language that they speak, but based on where they were raised. These differences may be reflected in how employees view and react to management and to each other. It may also affect how they respond to situations. Thus it is important to take such differences into consideration when developing selection materials. (For more reading on this topic check out: *Statewide Differences in Personality: Toward a Psychological Geography of the United States*. *Author*, Peter Jason Rentfrow / September 2010, *American Psychologist*).

A few questions we may want to start asking about our organizations when developing and validating selection tools include: What is management's view of diversity? What are my own biases? How are we determining test content? Who is on our selection panel? What is the cultural and ethnic make-up of our organization's recruitment area? Where are we advertising the position? Where are our candidates coming from? For what industry, job or trade are we recruiting? Answering such questions may bring light to reasons why it has been difficult to select a diverse workforce.

*Who is screening applicants and determining our test content?* Selecting individuals to screen applications and determine the test content is often the

most difficult aspect of any selection process. Often it is easiest to find that SME or supervisor who has the time to talk to you.

*Who is on our selection committees/interview panels?* When recruitment for a position is open, time is obviously of the essence. Because of this we are more inclined to do what we have always done in the past and use panelists that we know and who are easiest to get to agree to show-up. This may lead to inadvertent diversity issues because we chose panelists that may have unknown biases.

Best practices can also be borrowed from other government agencies that have successfully addressed diversity. Attend diversity training programs or network with others in your area. Some tips include the following:

Before beginning opening a position for recruitment, it is essential to have the support of top management and the department for which you are hiring. Include inclusion and diversity into your agencies core professional competencies. Employees should understand the value of diversity and that embracing inclusiveness is essential for managers who want to successfully incorporate the next generation into the future of the organization. These skills represent core competencies that are essential for developing diverse leadership in the changing environment of management. Agencies can build and/or incorporate these competencies through management training programs that can improve management members' sensitivity to multi-ethnic and multi-cultural concerns.

Include in your broad advertising approach postings on Internet sites, journals and newsletters that reflect a variety of ethnic and cultural groups.

Make everyone in the organization a recruiter including encouraging them to network and visit leaders of community organizations including churches, mosques, temples and clubs. This will not only benefit those that participate in and work within the community, it will also build trust among some of the local citizens.

Consider providing training programs for applicants on what jobs are typically available, training and educational opportunities that will assist them, and how to apply. Don't forget existing employees who may need additional skills to promote into management positions.

Human resource staff members are essential to the diversity process. They should oversee the assessment process to ensure that all aspects are handled fairly and consistently.

Make sure that the test content does not cause adverse impact. Review the reading level of the test materials so that it matches the reading level of the materials used on the job. Don't make the test difficulty level go beyond what is required on the job as a method of reducing the number of applicants. Instead add job-related layers that include a supplemental application, multiple-choice test (when appropriate) and a standardized interview.

Selection committees/interview panels should be as diverse as possible. This may require inviting community leaders to participate. Those that the candidates are meeting throughout the process should provide a comfort zone so that they can perform as well as possible.

Training those involved in the hiring process is also essential. The tendency to select employees that are just like them, or clones of themselves, can occur.

Selection committees/interview panel members may put too much emphasis on education and experience and not enough on behavioral factors such as flexibility, creativity, currency in the area of specialty and interpersonal skills. This can add to diversity issues. Train committees how to evaluate candidates correctly and provide them with scoring sheets that allow room for these areas if these behavioral traits are determined to be job related.

Talk to your committees/panels about accents. The bottom line is: Does the candidate understand the questions? Can you comprehend the candidate? Make the committee and panel members understand that we all have some type of accent, and they are to evaluate the candidate on their ability and not make judgments on any other factors.

Remind them that persons with disabilities who can demonstrate their ability to do the job with or without accommodation are eligible for hire. They are often assessed based on their appearance if the disability is observable.

### Why Does Diversity Matter?

To build on past successes and create a workplace that mirrors the population it serves, this next generation of employees should be mentored by current supervisors and managers who understand the importance of a diverse workplace. Organizations as a whole need to value diversity as a core competency of staff and actively support training.