



simplifying human resources

Regardless of your public agency's size, type or geographical location, CODESP has the ideal web-based talent assessment tools to fit your needs. Improve candidate quality, hire more efficiently, cut costs, and boost employee performance.

Customer Survey

Have you completed the CODESP customer survey yet? Our annual survey provides us with valuable information about what our customers need allowing us to communicate about our products and services. Please complete by COB 4/20/12 - click the link:

[customer-survey-link](#)

April 2012

In this issue:

Page

- 1 Survey, Invoices & Intents
- 2 Webinars & New Items
- 3 Supreme Court Ruling
- 4-5 Item Analysis
- 6-7 Admin Assistant Selection
- 8-9 Conferences

Invoices and Intents

The invoices for 2012-13 have been sent out to our customers. We are using FreshBooks for our accounting system and the email you will receive will provide you with a link to open the Invoice. We are also collecting Intents from our members. If you have not received an Invoice, contact us at codesp@codesp.com. Intents are available on our website under **Join CODESP / Public Ed.-Districts Schools/Colleges**.

During 2011-12 we provided a variety of monthly webinars and significantly increased our selection of test materials, including those in our computerized item bank. This coming year we will be updating our job description builder, adding a module catalog for ordering multiple choice test items and cataloguing our interview questions. These product/service enhancements will be provided to our customers without an increase in the annual fee. We hope that your organization continues to be a customer with CODESP to access these services. Check out our fee structure on our website at www.codesp.com / **Join CODESP**. There are no changes in fees for public education agency members.

**Don't forget to Vote for the 2012-13
CODESP Board Member Election!!!!**

CODESP Webinars

(Register at www.codesp.com)

Labor Relations & Bargaining - Co-sponsored by CSPCA

Summary: Rex Randall Erickson, attorney for Zampi, Determan & Erickson LLP, will examine the process of putting together initial proposals, regaining management rights, negotiation strategies, union negotiations and concerns regarding polarizing issues, and working with board members and administrators during difficult negotiations.

Location: Webinar at your workstation

Date & Time: 4/24/2012 - 10:00 to 11:15 AM PDT

Avoiding Salary Survey Nightmares - Co-sponsored by CSPCA

Summary: Avoiding Salary Survey Nightmares (Everything you need to consider when planning and conducting a salary survey). Peter Rogosin, President of Publicpersonnel.com, will discuss how to effectively develop a salary survey and collect the data.

Location: Webinar at your workstation

Date & Time: 5/15/2012 - 10:00 - 11:15 AM PDT

Linking Job Analysis Data to Job Descriptions - Co-sponsored by CSPCA

Summary: Presentation by Eliana Ceja. Job Analysis is an essential tool to build HR tools. The information gathered through desk-audits, observations interviews and/or questionnaires is vital to building accurate job-related job descriptions. Participants will learn how to easily link gathered information to the job description.

Location: Webinar at your workstation

Date & Time: 6/26/2012 - 10:00 - 11:15 AM PDT

New Test Materials

New Materials developed & added in the following areas since February 2012

Maintenance & Construction	Reading Comp / Probation Passage	Food Service /Math Figure	Refuse and Recycling Math
Pumps and Motors	Reading Comp / Customer Service Passage	Kitchen Utensils Identification	Instructional Aide Lesson Plan Figure
Flame Arrester System Figure	Reading Comp / FERPA Passage	Kitchen Knives Identification	Athletic Baseball Equipment Chart
Water-Special District Maintenance	Schedules/Room Charts	Clerical Evaluations	English Usage Proofreading
Power Point	Food Service Menu Planning	Total of 218 new Multiple Choice Items	

**19 new interviews and
12 new selection tools in the areas of Performance Exams, Writing Exams, and SAFs**

SUPREME COURT ISSUES BRINKER DECISION

EMPLOYERS NEED NOT ENSURE EMPLOYEES TAKE MEAL PERIODS

The California Supreme Court has definitively ruled, “An employer’s obligation is to relieve its employee of all duty, with the employee thereafter at liberty to use the meal period for whatever he or she desires, but the employer need **not ensure** that no work is done.”

The initial case was filed against *Brinker International (parent company of Chili’s Restaurant)* by employees involved meal periods, rest breaks and working off-the-clock. Specifically, the case raised three important wage and hour questions: (a) whether employers were required to “ensure” that employees not work during a meal period; (b) when must rest breaks occur; and (c) when was a second meal period required. It also raised issues as to the suitability of class action certification based on these types of issues.

With respect to meal periods are the following portions of the Court’s ruling:

- The employer’s obligation is to “provide” an uninterrupted 30-minute meal period; not to “ensure” that employees do no work during meal periods.
- The employer satisfies its obligation if it relieves its employees of all duty, relinquishes control over their activities, realistically permits them to take an uninterrupted 30-minute meal break, and **does not impede or discourage them from doing so**.
- If employers **prohibit** employees from working during a meal period, this actually could be **inconsistent** with the employer’s obligation to relinquish control over the employee and how he or she spends the time.
- When an employee works five or more hours, the employer has three options: (a) “provide” a meal period; (b) consent to a written waiver if the shift will end in one additional hour or less; or (c) obtain agreement to an on-duty meal period, if applicable, based on the circumstances. Failure to comply will subject the employer to the additional one-hour of pay penalty.
- As long as the employer “provides” the meal period, if work does continue, the employer will not be liable for the additional one-hour of pay penalty, but will be liable for the time worked, including any overtime that results therefrom.
- Employer knowledge of an employee working through a meal period is not proof of a violation by the employer; employees cannot manipulate flexibility, which an employer may allow, to generate liability.

On the other hand, an employer may not undermine a formal policy of providing meal breaks by pressuring employees to perform their duties in ways that **impede or discourage them from actually taking a non-working meal break**.

The following is still applicable to all California employers:

- Establish clear, written rules regarding meal periods, rest breaks, overtime and off the clock work
- Instruct supervisors and managers in the proper implementation and enforcement of these policies
- Do not tolerate any practice or conduct that in any way **impedes or discourages employees from taking the rest and meal breaks to which they are entitled**.

ITEM ANALYSIS DEFINED

An item analysis involves many statistics that can provide useful information for improving the quality and accuracy of multiple-choice items, but as always, it is very important to conduct a job analysis so that the test that is being scored is job-related (content valid).

The Item Analysis Report aids in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the test item. It is a statistical report that provides detailed distractor analysis based on raw scores. The discrimination level of a question, the difficulty, and essentially the effectiveness of a question are statistically calculated.

If you have low numbers of candidates (typically under 30) taking the examination, the statistics will not be valid. You will have to give the test several times to determine reliability. The statistics available will let you know if your test is too easy or too difficult for that particular group of candidates only. You may have very different results the next time you administer the examination. Remember that inferences about a population can only be made from a random and representative sample of that population.

Item Analysis typically includes total possible points; sample size; standard deviation; median score; mean score; reliability coefficient (KR20); highest score and lowest score. The detailed Item Analysis Report expands the analysis and provides a difficulty, discrimination, and point-biserial correlation coefficient for each distractor.

Difficulty: The most effective questions in terms of distinguishing between high and low scoring individuals will be answered correctly by about half of the individuals. In practical terms, questions in most tests will have a range of difficulties from low or easy (.90) to high or very difficult (.40).

Questions having difficulty estimates outside of these ranges may not contribute much to the effective evaluation of individual performance.

- Having a few relatively easy questions in a test may be important to verify the mastery of some KSAs. Keep tests balanced in terms of question difficulty.
- Very difficult questions, if they form most of a test, may produce frustration among individuals. Some very difficult questions are needed to challenge the best individuals.
- If a question is very easy, so that nearly all individuals answered correctly, the question's discrimination will be near zero. Extremely easy questions cannot distinguish among individuals in terms of their performance.
- If a question is extremely difficult so that nearly all individuals answered incorrectly, the discrimination will be near zero.
- The most effective questions will have moderate difficulty and high discrimination values. The higher the value of discrimination is, the more effective it is in discriminating between individuals who perform well on the test and those who do not.
- Questions having low or negative values of discrimination need to be reviewed very carefully for confusing language or an incorrect key. If no confusing language is found, then the job-relatedness of the question needs to be critically reviewed.
- A high level of guessing on questions will result in a question discrimination value near zero. (Consider changing your minimum qualification pre-screening procedures).

Discrimination: An item should discriminate between upper and lower groups. These groups are based on total test score. Sometimes an item will discriminate negatively, that is, a larger proportion of the lower group than of the upper group selected the correct option. This often means that the applicants in the upper group were misled by an ambiguity that the applicants in the lower group failed to discover.

- Item analysis data are not synonymous with item validity. An external criterion is required to accurately judge the validity of test items. By using the internal criterion of total test score, item analyses reflect internal consistency of items rather than validity.
- The discrimination index is not always a measure of item quality. There are a variety of reasons why an item may have low discrimination power:
 - a) extremely difficult or easy items will have low ability to discriminate, but such items are often needed to adequately sample job content and objectives;

b) an item may show low discrimination if the test measures many content areas and cognitive skills. For example, if the majority of the test measures "knowledge of facts," then an item assessing "ability to apply principles" may have a low correlation with total test score, yet both types of items are needed to measure attainment of minimum qualifications.

- Item analysis data are influenced by the number of individuals being tested, candidate pool demographics, test instructions provided, screening methods, job title, test preparation materials provided, chance errors, etc. If repeated use of items is possible, statistics should be analyzed for each administration of each item. - Mehrens and Lehmann (1973)

Point Biserial: The Point Biserial is considered the single best measure of the effectiveness of a test item. Generally, the higher the value, the better the discrimination, and thus the better the item. A positive value indicates that candidates were more likely to answer "this" particular question correctly if they scored high on the overall test. A negative value would indicate an inverse relationship between candidates' correctly answering the question and their overall test scores.

Distractors: All of the incorrect options, or distractors, should actually be distracting. Preferably, each distractor should be selected by a greater proportion of the lower group than of the upper group. If, in a four-option multiple-choice item, only one distractor is effective, the item is, for all practical purposes, a two-option item.

Distractors that are not chosen by any examinees should be replaced or eliminated. They are not contributing to the test's ability to discriminate the good candidates from the poor ones. Do not be concerned if each distractor is not chosen by the same number of examinees. Different kinds of mistakes may very well be made by different numbers of candidates. Also, the fact that a majority of applicants miss an item does not imply that the item should be changed, although such items should be double-checked for their accuracy. One should be suspicious about the correctness of any item in which a single distractor is chosen more often than all other options, including the answer, and especially so if that distractor's correlation with the total score is positive.

Reliability Coefficient (KR20): As with many statistics, it is dangerous to interpret the magnitude of a reliability coefficient out of context. The reliability of a test refers to the extent to which the test is likely to produce consistent scores. It reflects three characteristics of the test:

- The intercorrelations among the items -- the greater the relative number of positive relationships and the stronger those relationships are, the greater the reliability. Item discrimination indices and the test's reliability coefficient are related in this regard.
- The length of the test - a test with more items will have a higher reliability.
- The content of the test-generally - the more diverse the subject matter tested and the testing techniques used, the lower the reliability (very common with job knowledge tests)

Sample Individual Test Report from CODESP:

Office Assistant II CATS Standard Item Analysis Report

Agency:		Date Scored:	08/31/2011
Job Title:		Date Printed:	04/13/2012
Possible Points:	100	Candidates in Group:	87
Highest Score:	94	Median Score:	81.00
Lowest Score:	59	Mean Score:	80.31
		Standard Deviation:	8.56
		Reliability Coefficient (KR20):	0.84

No.	Correct Group Responses			Point Biserial	Difficulty Index	Correct Answer	Response Frequencies					Non Distractor
	Total	Upper 27%	Lower 27%				A	B	C	D	E	
1	88.51%	100.00%	75.00%	0.40	0.89	C	1	0	77	9	0	B
2	71.26%	83.33%	58.33%	0.27	0.71	A	62	0	0	25	0	BC
3	93.10%	100.00%	75.00%	0.41	0.93	A	81	3	2	1	0	

Admin Assistant Selection Methods

Your department is in the business of hiring and evaluating employees for your organization. As a result, it is your job to constantly ask, "What makes an excellent employee?" This is not a hugely difficult question to answer. In general we want employees who are hard-working, responsible, competent, and will fit the personality of the job and organization for whom they work. The second question, "How do we measure these qualities?" is the more difficult question to answer. The fields of psychology and business have outlined a fairly systematic and scientific approach to this second question, as you probably are well aware. Furthermore, if you are using CODESP, you are quite familiar with knowledge, skills, and abilities testing to assist you in finding those excellent potential employees.

As with any department or organization, we often get in a rhythm with our operations. This serves to streamline what we do creating positive effect through efficiency. But, as with any good rhythm we may need to be proactive and update the status-quo periodically to implement improvements. It is kind of like the idea of fire prevention rather than firefighting.

Let's apply this idea to something real - our organization's admin assistants. Here is a position that has evolved greatly over the last twenty years. But what has evolved less are the job descriptions and the overall importance of such a position within a large organization or department. This is very often the first person that the customer or public communicates with and through. This is the person that streamlines the work of your offices. This is the person that understands the existence of office politics and methods of communicating accordingly. This is the person that controls the organization of work and priorities. This is the person that handles the most confidential office materials. Often work goes in and out through this person. Their value to your organization is immense. And it is your job to choose the methods and tools to select them. What traits are you assessing? There are a variety of tests and assessment tools that have been used to select administrative assistants for decades. But times have changed and CODESP will not continue to provide some of the methods that are frequently requested such as office procedures or standard record keeping or telephone answering techniques. Some have already been discontinued by CODESP, such as providing a standard typing test to our customers.

Ability to keyboard accurately is required by most classifications and should be assessed. But typing under the extreme pressure of restricted time, except in positions like 911 dispatcher where speed is a factor, is not always the best method to assess these candidates. Some of the best candidates that are highly qualified in using office software and producing accurate materials are cut when given a typical typing test. Since tasks such as typing long documents is restricted to only a few positions and most office workers only use a computer to input data, the test and the time to complete it should be adjusted to reflect actual duties performed. If you are using a speeded typing test, emphasize accuracy and use a realistic time that relates to the actual job performed.

Thus as times change CODESP will be adjusting what is sent to customers. Although multiple choice test questions in areas such as office procedures, standard record keeping, telephone answering techniques and many of the human relation items are frequently requested they may be substituted by other test materials. Office procedure questions were relevant when there were secretarial courses and when students learned the defined or "correct" method of performing tasks. Today's workplace is too varied and the tasks for administrative assistants are too diverse. Managers come with their own sets of needs. Many of today's managers and most of the younger generation prefer to formulate and send their own correspondence, and typically it is

through email. Filing is done electronically by the person who last opened the file. Correct responses to some human relation questions depend on the people, the situation and where the candidate worked previously. Office procedures are learned on the job. Therefore, many of the test questions related to these areas need to be re-evaluated.

Thus, we at CODESP continue to emphasize and offer the questions that will determine the competencies listed above that can be assessed through a multiple choice test. We have thousands of test questions that will help your agency assess administrative assistants. If you think you have received the same ones as before and want new, hit **Send Back** or create a new request, and state that you want new/parallel items from what your agency has been sent in the past. Please be specific as to the type of item you would like.

Items that we currently have which are still relevant include attention to detail (filing numerically and alphabetically, sorting, proofreading); basic math (job-related word problems and standard math problems); English Usage (spelling, grammar, punctuation, spelling and effective writing); reading comprehension (including job-related figures and interpreting rules and regulations); and software skills (Word office software). Some of the other competencies of a strong administrative assistant cannot be assessed through multiple choice tests. So it will be our mission to work with you to develop new situational judgment items, interviews, and performance tests to better hire for these most important positions.

We ask for your assistance and that of your subject matter experts to refine our materials in each of the competency areas that can be assessed using a multiple choice test and to explore other testing methods to ensure that our selection methods are doing more than screening out “bad” employees. We want our tests to select “excellent” employees. Thus, CODESPs challenge to our members and subscribers is to consider your own list of competencies for these positions and send us materials (samples of work-products), ideas, or subject matter experts to help us develop new ways of selection or new selection materials to hire for these competencies.

Furthermore, we have developed a survey of situational judgment items for an administrative assistant. We ask that you send the survey to the applicable sample within your own organization to help provide us with the necessary feedback to validate these items and get them entered into our item bank for you to use. Link to Survey provided by request by emailing paul@codesp.com

Please consider these competencies as you brainstorm new selection items and/or methods. If you would like to accept the challenge CODESP has set forth, please take a moment to provide your feedback, and email it to tests@codesp.com. We appreciate any feedback you may have.

Conferences

SIOP 27th Annual Conference



Harrah's - Las Vegas
\$74 Deluxe Rooms

Program offerings:

- Foundational
- Strategic
- Experimental
- Expanded Tutorial

International Personnel Assessment Council Annual Conference July 22 - 25, 2012

Keynote speakers:

- David Campbell
- Wayne Cascio
- Scott Highhouse
- Kevin Murphy
- Rob Ployhart

The conference will open on Sunday, July 22nd with a variety of half-day and full-day workshops. The program offerings will feature separate session tracks on Monday through Wednesday designed to meet the needs of each conference attendee. Join us as we take Vegas by storm.....again!

The call for session proposals and online registration will be announced soon!



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*"Promoting excellence in
personnel selection practices"*

Join us in San Jose

Training May 9, 2012 & FREE Meeting May 10 - 11, 2012

| HOTEL

Radisson Plaza Hotel San Jose Airport

www.radisson.com/san-jose-hotel-ca-95112/san_jose

1471 North Fourth Street, San Jose, California 95112

Make reservations by April 20th by calling 1-800-395-7046. Be sure to ask for the WRIPAC rate of \$121/night (plus tax and fees). Shuttle service is available to and from the airport and hotel.

| TRAINING &

MEETING LOCATION

Santa Clara County

Office of Education

1290 Ridder Park Drive, San Jose

A daily shuttle for 15 people is available from the hotel to the training and meeting location.

| TRAININGS

Choose one of the following two trainings available May 9, 2012

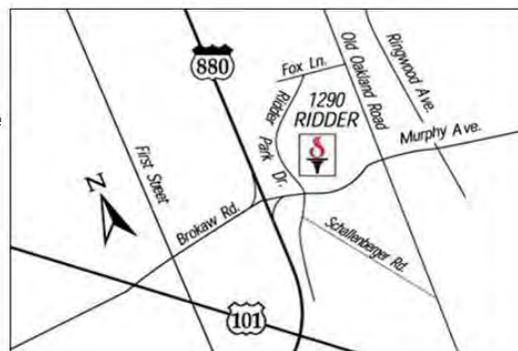
Fee: \$125 / members or \$150 / non-members **Time:** 8:30 - 4:30

DEVELOPING AND ADMINISTERING STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Trainer: Mike Willihnganz

PASS POINT SETTING: ADDING VALUE TO WHO MAKES THE CUT

Trainer: Shelley Langan



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