



## 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.

### Top Contributor for July Cathy Drake of Moorpark USD

Hearty congratulations to Cathy Drake, Director of Classified Personnel at Moorpark Unified School District, awarded Top Contributor for July 2012! Cathy and her Subject Matter Expert, Julie Judd, who is Moorpark USD's Director of Technology, worked with CODESP staff to develop new IT test items for their recruitment. Julie kindly reviewed the new items and sent her feedback within an astonishing SIX HOURS after receiving them from CODESP staff! We are delighted to be able to work collaboratively with such great professional colleagues. A big tip of the "You Rock!" hat from CODESP to Cathy and Julie and their contributions to our consortium.

### August 2012

#### In This Issue

Page

- 1 Contributing Customer New NCLB-IA Test Items
- 2-3 Greek to Me-Article
- 4 Webinar Trainings
- 5 CODESP Updates
- 6 Conferences
- 7-8 Protecting Staff-Article



### New NCLB IA Test Items



Our K-12 members can gear up for the back-to-school rush with CODESP's new versions of NCLB Instructional Aide (Para-Professional) test items. To reflect current curriculum standards and to add more test questions to choose from, CODESP is developing questions that will allow for three more versions of the test, with the goal of having it ready for fall. Contact us if you have SME's that will review the items.

The new questions will reflect the required content areas for high school graduation plus new Ability to Assist items. They will also include new and improved graphics. Non-members will NOT receive updates and past members may not be eligible to continue using our test materials.

## Greek to Me - $\Sigma, \lambda, \beta, \pi$

Within the field of selection, there is large amount of jargon and industry specific language riddled with complex statistics and mathematical formulas to help us predict and define human behavior in the workplace. Such language is vital to the field, but it can be difficult to interpret if you have little to no experience with it. For example, a test developer may say,

*“Our latest employment test has a high alpha, but its ability to discriminate quality candidates without adverse impact is low. Many of the questions are not face valid, and have low point biserial ratings after pilot testing. With the proper edits, I think we can increase criterion validity and capture 10% more of the variance in job performance, by simply focusing more on the competencies with the highest factor loadings. We will need a new SME pool too to examine the difficulty level of the questions and increase our inter-rater reliability before we determine a cut score.”*

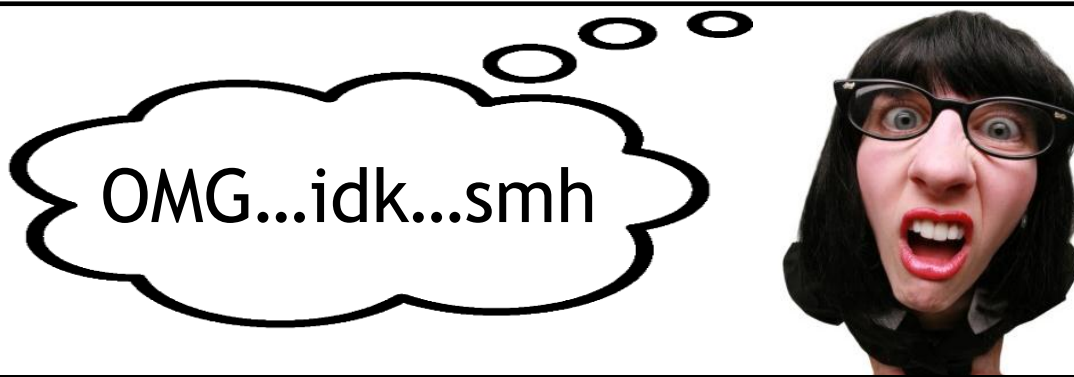
Even for the field’s most educated professionals, this is a mouthful and certainly a bit of an exaggeration. However, the point still stands that the testing field is full of statistical language, and this language can be confusing. Now consider presenting this to someone who is not familiar with these terms or statistical concepts. Chances are they are going to stop listening to the above test developer’s rant, the second he says “alpha”.

Boards, commissions, or organizational administrators and leaders are talented at organizing efforts, motivating people, communicating, initiating change, and managing conflict. Their ability to analyze the technical aspects of each department is not what makes these individuals successful leaders. This would be an impossible endeavor, thus it is important that departments such as HR be able to translate the analytical and technical language into the language of management.

The language of management may differ from organization to organization, but usually it follows some similar guidelines. Successful management language is clear, pointed, visionary, mission-driven, goal oriented, time-based, and universally understandable, with the last descriptor being the most important. If each individual in the organization does not understand the mission and vision of the organization, the organization will most likely fail. This is not to say that Human Resources should water down data to make it understandable; rather, it means that data should be presented in a format that can be clearly explained to all. If management cannot understand what you are trying to do, most likely your projects and, soon after, your job will be in jeopardy. We must help management understand why what we do is vital to the bottom line goals of the organization. Here are a few examples of how to do this:

$$\sigma^2 = \frac{n \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} x_i^2 - \left[ \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} x_i \right]^2}{n(n-1)}$$





### ***Keep the Stats in Your Office***

Rather than talking about incremental validity, percentage of variance explained, and correlation coefficients, translate the numbers into decreased costs associated with employee turnover, absenteeism, and poor productivity. Administrators do not care about validity coefficients; they care about effects to the bottom line budget and the relation of decisions to the organization's strategic goals. A 10% increase in incremental validity means nothing to an administrator, but a budget savings of \$120,000 dollars means much more.

### ***Use Positive Language***

Next, stay away from scary or negative language. For example, avoid convincing administration that employment testing and performance appraisals must be done in order to avoid litigation, and speak to the positive aspects of such systems like - increased employee diversity, productivity, motivation, morale, and job satisfaction, which in return leads to decreased litigation. Doing something for the simple fact of avoiding litigation is motivating and exciting to very few. Doing something to promote diversity and organizational morale is exciting to everyone.

### ***Shorten the Report***

We live in an overstimulated society. You probably cannot read all of your emails, Facebook statuses, LinkedIn updates, Tweets, text messages, voicemails, CODESP newsletters ☺, and employee reports. Now consider what the top administrators must try to juggle. Keep reports short and to the point. Include graphs and tables with brief explanations. Bulleted statements can be your friend. Make sure the purpose and recommendations are clear and identifiable. Include where additional information can be found if requested; otherwise, keep it short.

### ***Be Excited***

Finally, just be excited. If you have done your research and are convinced that it is the best thing for the organization to do, half the battle is over. Leaders like enthusiasm and excitement. It is contagious. If you are unable to express that excitement, find someone in your office who can. The last thing an administrator wants to do is sit in another dry meeting smothered with boring statistics and details about why this decision may help the organization. Find or be that person that tells and shows why this decision is the right decision. Think of the used car salesperson, he never approaches you with just dry automotive statistics and details about the car. There is always a show!

Overall, the point is simple - our survival in the organization is based on our ability to communicate with those top decision makers. Certainly, we need the skills of our profession, but if we are unable to translate our ideas in a way that gets the attention of administration, our skills lose value quickly. Let the organization know why your department is vital. You know why, and they should as well. There are so many communication inputs and outputs in our world today that it is easy for a boring message to get lost. Make your message exciting.

# CODESP Webinars

(Register at [www.codesp.com](http://www.codesp.com))

## CODESP Products and Services Demo For Interested and New Customers



**Summary:** CODESP's employee assessment products include multiple choice test items, interviews, writing exercises, performance tests and supplemental applications. We have more than 25,000 public agency job-related test questions in our multiple choice item banks. Our online test generation system allows customers to generate and administer custom tests from their desktops. Immediate scoring and item analysis services are included and there are no per candidate fees.

Other products include job analysis and job description tools. Free HR training webinars for customers are regularly provided in a variety of HR "hot topics" to help keep your agency's HR staff current on legislation, technology and best practices.

**Location:** Webinar at your workstation

**Date & Time:** 8/9/2012 and 8/15/12- 10:00 to 11:15 AM PDT

## Labor Relations & Bargaining - Part II Co-sponsored by CSPCA

**Summary:** Rex Randall Erickson, attorney for Zampi, Determan & Erickson LLP, will follow-up on the April 24th webinar, which can be viewed under "Links" and "Webinar Archives" once logged in to the website. Part II will focus on sun-shining the initial proposal as well as outlining and discussing the topics of impasse and management/employee relations.

**Location:** Webinar at your workstation

**Date & Time:** 8/14/2012 - 10:00 to 11:15 AM PDT

## Choosing and Using Selection Procedures Co-sponsored by CSPCA

**Summary:** Presentation by Amy Tompkins. How do we assess applicants for employment? In this webinar presented by CODESP staff, we will discuss the various types of selection procedures that HR can use to evaluate candidates. Topics include what skills, knowledges, abilities and competencies each one is best suited to assess, and what KSAs they should NOT be used for; how to use job analysis data to ensure that your exams are job related; and how to use each type of exam most effectively for selection. OPEN to all Public Agencies.

**Location:** Webinar at your workstation

**Date & Time:** 9/18/2012 - 10:00 - 11:15 AM PDT

# Results of the Customer Survey

## Changes at CODESP

CODESP is in a constant state of growth and improvement, and we want to keep you abreast some of the recent developments. Your responses to the yearly customer survey were appreciated and all comments are being taken into careful consideration. Below are some of the concerns presented within the survey that have already been addressed or are currently being addressed.

### Recent Changes

#### ***New Items***

A strong surge in developing new items has been underway in the follow areas: *IT, Library, Food Service, Water Treatment, Utility Worker, Clerical, Language Arts, Math*. You should see the new items appearing in your new requests as you update your old tests. We thank you for your resources, SMEs, and patience as we continue to move forward.

#### ***New Reporting Function and Score Upload Capability***

Any customers using online testing or CODESP scoring systems will notice a fourth report under their CATS Reports. The “**Test Scores Export**” is an Excel csv file that provides basic candidate raw and percentage scores. This report should allow easier data manipulation and conversion for internal office reporting and will allow uploading of your scores to your different applicant tracking systems. Your feedback regarding this report is welcome.

#### ***CODESP Networking on LinkedIn***

CODESP now has a networking site on LinkedIn. “**CODESP Networking Group**” a sub group of CODESP on LinkedIn. Simply join LinkedIn and join our group. We will use the forum to share and discuss current and trending HR and selection issues. Use the group to provide feedback to CODESP or network with your colleagues in the Public Sector HR world.

### Changes in Progress

#### ***Clerical/Office Module Catalogue***

Due to requests for more autonomy in the selection of multiple-choice items, CODESP has been diligently working to create an item module catalog. Your patience has been appreciated, and we are very close to introducing our Clerical/Office module catalogue later this fall.

#### ***New Instructional Aide Test Items - NCLB Compliant***

Currently new items are being developed that can be used to for NCLB compliance. The item packet should be complete this fall for the new school year.

#### ***CODESP on the Road***

At the request of our customers, CODESP will be doing more “On-Site” training this year. We look to collaborate with your central agencies, such as County Offices to host CODESP trainings for local CODESP members and subscribers in your area. Contact CODESP to set up a training session in your area.

If your concerns are not being addressed, please feel free to contact us anytime. We are always working to improve so that we may better serve you. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to the consortium.

## Conferences

w r i p a c

Multiple Choice Item Writing & Editing Training and Meeting

Double Tree by Hilton LAX, El Segundo, CA

Training Sept. 26 and Free Meeting Sept. 27-28

Training on the 26<sup>th</sup> will be from 8:30 to 4:30 with Mike Willihnganz.

Fee: \$125/member or \$150/non-member

To register or for more information about membership, visit the website below

<http://wripac.org/>

## PTC-SC

### Progressive Personnel Practices

Luncheon – Monterey Park, Sept. 5

Join **Dr. Rod Freudenberg** from the Los Angeles County Office of Education, **Steve Rivera** from the City of Los Angeles, and **Kandice Taylor-Sherwood** from the City of Anaheim. In this wide-ranging symposium, the panel will discuss innovative trends in selection, testing, and other personnel practices. Other topics will include determining what changes are needed in your organization and how to implement them. Audience participation will also guide the discussion, so please come with questions in mind.

TIME: 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Contact **Michael Cool** for registration and payment information:

[cool\\_michael@smc.edu](mailto:cool_michael@smc.edu)

RSVP by Aug. 29th

<http://ptc-sc.org/monthly-luncheon-presentations>

**Join the CODESP LinkedIn Networking Group**

**[www.codesp.com](http://www.codesp.com)**

## Hiring on the Front Lines: Protecting Staff from Aggressive Applicants

Recently a public agency reported to us that their HR staff was receiving threatening emails and mail from disgruntled applicants. As the number of applicants increase for the very few jobs available many are becoming impatient and taking out their anger on HR staff members. Because applicants can be individuals from outside the organization and current employees, this is a good time to review your violence in the workplace and emergency response procedures.

Make sure that you have a clear policy that your agency will not tolerate the following conduct or behavior in the workplace:

- Threats, direct or implied
- Physical harm to people or property
- Possession of weapons
- Intimidation or harassment
- Use of agency property or resources to harass or abuse

Have a procedure so all employees know what to do if a situation occurs. Train staff on recognizing issues such as distressed or disruptive applicants/employees.

**Distressed:** troubled, confused, depressed, highly anxious, irritable, lack motivation and/or concentration, demonstrates bizarre behavior or has suicidal thoughts.

**Disruptive:** conduct is disruptive or dangerous, verbal or physical threats, active threats of suicide or resisting help

What are the warning signs of distressed employees?

- A change from adequate to poor performance
- Excessive absence from a previously consistent attendance
- Avoidance of participation, anxiety, or dominance of discussions
- Depression, rapid speech, change in personal hygiene, sleeping on the job
- Unusual or exaggerated emotional responses that are inappropriate to the situation
- Highly emotional, repeated requests for special consideration
- Concerns regarding job duties or concerning interactions with others

How do we identify disruptive behavior?

- Hostility, aggression, or violence
- Inability to communicate (garbled, slurred speech, disjointed thoughts, rambling)
- Loss of contact with reality (seeing or hearing things which others cannot or beliefs or actions that are in contradiction with reality)
- Stalking behavior
- Inappropriate verbal, non-verbal, and/or electronic communication
- Suicidal thoughts (identified in expression or action)
- Threats of harm to self or others

Provide a floor plan to key management personnel and employees who greet customers; the floor plan should indicate entry and exit points, note where individuals are located and be updated as employment changes are made.

Provide adequate lighting in parking areas and entrances; encourage employees to walk in groups to parking areas.

Have both internal and external emergency contact telephone numbers posted in a conspicuous area.

Review the landscaping surrounding your buildings to ensure that are not any hedges, trees, etc., that intruders could hide behind.

Increase the number of security staff on duty during high-risk hours.

If stairwells lock from the outside, post warning signs on the inside to remind employees to be sure the doors lock behind them.

Provide escorts for employees who work early or late and back-up for those working alone.

The perception by employees that management is concerned and is acting to ensure their safety is a major component for combating violence in the workplace. Some points to consider that could enhance this perception include:

- Adopt a "Zero" tolerance approach to the act or threat of violence of any kind; include in your employee rules the definition of workplace violence and sanctions for threats or acts of violence. Inform applicants of the policy also.
- Develop a personal Safety Kit for all employees outlining procedures and protocol to be followed should they experience a threatened or actual violent incident.
- Devise a plan for the investigation of threats and violent acts.
- Develop a communications system for employees to report potential problems or actual incidents; make sure they know a report will not result in retaliation by management.
- Agency receptionists or other personnel such as those in HR, whose duties include front-line customer contact, should be trained to follow the established procedures and protocol in the event a threat or violent act occurs.
- Designate and train employees who will be the contact/key persons in the event of an emergency.

Safety training and taking precautions will reassure employees and let them know that their safety is of utmost importance to the organization.

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### ***“Quote of the Month”***

*“First and most obvious, bring out the three old warhorses of competition – cost, quality, and service – and drive them to new levels, making every person in the organization see them for what they are, a matter of survival.” - Jack Welch*