



## Successful staff recruitment, retention needs scientific approach



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Recruitment and retention of the right employees is one of the most difficult and critical aspects of the HR function in companies and organisations both large and small. Fortunately there are new ways for agencies and companies to select the right employees and retain them.

Lindi Dickinson, head of [Pastel People Placements](#) in [Softline Pastel](#), says the procedural progress made in recruitment and retention is even more important in small to medium-size companies.

“An important differentiator in selecting job candidates in the current environment is the identification of talent, as people's skills may often differ from their degree or diploma qualifications.” Dickinson adds that a “Predictive Index<sup>®</sup>” (PI<sup>®</sup>) service available from a third party supplier provides a highly efficient means of identifying talent. It is based upon a checklist that candidates fill in and the resulting information is extrapolated to define each candidate's inherent characteristics.

“Each job specification is matched to a specific PI questionnaire, allowing the identification and measurement of key performance areas (KPA's), which in turn assists to match the job specification with an individual's talents. “A job-seeker may have the minimum qualification requirements for the position, but the talent evaluation is the real decider. The Predictive Index offers three 'pictures' of the candidates, which assists in identifying who they really are and what they perceive themselves to be. More importantly, it also reveals their 'displayed' behaviour, in other words defining the real person behind the interview façade.” Dickinson stresses that this information is absolutely critical to enable the placement agency to determine the person best suited for a particular position. People with talent can be taught and their skills are easily modified.

“Placing the wrong candidate can be costly, and identifying the fit within the company culture is also an important aspect that the PI system is able to check. This ensures that the candidate fits the general personality picture for the

particular industry, which is important for employee retention. It is therefore also vital to conduct credit checks, criminal checks and reference checks.

“It also pays to test the competency of employees in their specified skills and their ability in various software programs – whether they are beginners, have intermediate level skills or advanced skills.”

The recruitment environment has changed quite markedly in the past decade and Dickinson says job candidates are quite particular about what they require from their employment. “They will also bring their own conditions to the employment process, for example, they want to be able to work within a radius of 10km from their home; or they want a temporary contract for the first two to three months so that they can be sure it is an environment that suits them; and they are far more litigation conscious. “

“Loyalty is on the wane. Working for the same company for 25 years is not on the agenda and candidates want to advance quickly into senior positions. Offers of higher positions and better pay and conditions elsewhere are usually taken up.” Dickinson says in this environment SME companies with up to 200 employees have to get it right first time. To achieve the desired levels of employee retention, the company has to ensure candidates fit into the company culture and receive the right training and grooming; if not - time, effort and money are wasted. “Applicable training is most important. It allows new employees to settle in quickly and provide the company with an immediate return on investment.”

Employees are no longer totally motivated by remuneration. Dickinson says potential employees place a lot more emphasis on benefits that companies are able to provide. These include crèches, canteens, gymnasium facilities and flexible working hours. “Employees look for transparency and want to feel that they are an integral part of the business by being kept informed. They look for monthly staff briefings where they are given information on the company status – revenue per department, Profit Before Interest and Tax (PBIT), new industry trends, training courses available, opportunities for advancement and so on. The environment they seek is one of lifelong learning in terms of a career, not just a job, so succession planning is important.”

As the recruitment arm of Softline Pastel Accounting and [Softline Pastel Payroll](#), Dickinson says the division not only conducts internal placements, but also placements for its national customer base. While there is an emphasis on bookkeeping and payroll skills, recruitment and retention services for sales and administrative posts are also conducted.

“We have a large channel network of resellers and installers that assist us in finding the right employment candidates for vacancies within our own organisation and our customer base.”

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