

General Mental Ability – The Best Indicator of Future Poor Performers

Last week I ordered a product online from a Wellington supplier. It was dispatched via Courier Post for an additional \$4.44.

Two days after placing the order, I received a call from the supplier wanting to verify my address. The address was correct, but according to the courier company, we had moved. Another two days later I received a call from Courier Post saying the driver had gone to our address and we did not exist.

After a couple of facetious comments reiterating the address given did exist, and I was sitting in the said office, they sent the package back out. Guess what, yet another call saying the driver cannot find your office!!

By this time I am getting extremely vexed – How simple is it to drive to 1 Pupuke Road, find the Quadrant Properties building (the only commercial building in the street)? Then, once at the building, find our office? The second time the driver arrived he reported back to head office that the Quadrant Properties building only had two tenants – we were not one of them!

Our building has 5 tenants. These are listed on a large sign board in front of the building. There is a large letter box alongside this with the street number on it. Once inside the building there is a large directory in the foyer with arrows and a further 4 arrowed signs guiding visitors to our office – any person who can read, or has a minimum level of problem solving ability, would find us in a flash. This courier driver obviously failed in both these areas.

The scientific literature on selection is unanimous in the power of using cognitive (mental ability) testing for pre-screening job applicants. In fact, if you could use just one test, a test of mental ability (numerical, verbal and spatial ability) will have the highest predictive validity of around .56.

Now, if Courier Post had spent about \$25 on a simple 10 minute mental ability test, like CLUES, this driver would not have been hired. \$25 would be a small investment to make, considering the overall cost of my delivery, not to mention dozens of other deliveries that are probably suffering the same fate.

As I mentioned, the courier cost was \$4.44 and the company made four trips. How much fuel and man hours were wasted through the actions of an incompetent driver!

My point is, when selecting new employees, it is critical to test their cognitive abilities – how proficient will the considered applicant be at learning and problem solving, a competency that will impact on job performance irrespective of the role. It's also a competency you cannot assess through interviewing.

To understand more about employee profiling or take a test drive, contact our team at AssessSystems. 09 414 6030 or email office@assess.co.nz