



JOB BENCHMARKING 101



A WHITEPAPER BY THE BROOKS GROUP

What's a benchmark?

Why do I need one?

How's it done?

There's a pit in your stomach. You sifted through dozens of resumes until you finally found what looked like the perfect fit. Your optimism was confirmed during the interview when the candidate nailed question after question. She was intelligent, charming, confident, and she was previously successful in a competitor's organization—you knew you'd found the right person. And you hired her.

Fast forward 2 months, and you're wondering what happened to the person you met in the interview.

What went wrong?

Unfortunately, this scenario is all too familiar—especially when you're looking to fill sales roles. People often make hiring decisions based on “gut feelings,” but basing an important selection decision on subjective data and past performance can often lead to disappointment down the road.

To truly find a candidate that will be successful in the position you're looking to fill, it's necessary to look beyond experience and skillset, and minimize subjectivity **by analyzing objective measurements of the whole person—and what naturally motivates them.**

Of course, it's important to find someone with the correct skills and competencies, but unless an individual is naturally rewarded by the type of work the position requires—and fits well within the culture of your organization—those skills and competencies carry little weight.

So how can you remove the guesswork and subjectivity from the hiring process and find the candidate that has the necessary traits to excel in your open position?

You come to a consensus on the exact behaviors, motivators, and personal skills that are going to be needed for success, and you create a benchmark of the perfect candidate.



What's a Benchmark?

Without a crystal clear picture of the type of candidate you're looking for, you're basically searching aimlessly in the dark. A benchmark acts as a blueprint, allowing you to objectively measure all candidates against an established ideal.

Benchmarking is an interactive process used for employee selection, development, retention, management, and succession planning. The system results in key accountabilities specific to the job that can be used to generate recruitment assessments and formulate job descriptions.

Benchmarking enables you to assess the job itself, and identify talent that is uniquely matched to the requirements, motivators, and culture associated with the job.

Job benchmarking takes the guesswork out of hiring and workplace dynamics in general, making it easy to **remove common biases often associated with the hiring process**. Instead, factual data based on job requirements provides a solid foundation for hiring and coaching success.

Job benchmarking identifies:

- **Key accountabilities**
- **Personal skills (competencies) for superior performance**
- **Behavior styles and intrinsic motivators rewarded by the job requirements**

Job benchmarking provides:

- **Clarity around what the position needs today and into the future**
- **A guide for objectively selecting the best-matched candidate**
- **A reference for creating targeted interview questions**
- **A talent development strategy for the lifecycle of the employee**



Why do I need a benchmark?

Using a benchmark in your hiring process helps you to determine which candidates are most likely to be top performers and achieve long-term success within the role and your organization. The process itself creates alignment around what a particular position requires for success, and it helps to determine what qualities will be needed in the role as your organization moves into the future.

In other words, benchmarking doesn't just clone your current top performers, it allows you to build a template for high performers of the future.

Through the process you'll determine the top 3 motivators that are rewarded by the position, the top 7 personal skills that a candidate will need for success in the role, and the 3 behavior traits that best fit the job requirements and culture.

As your candidates are assessed and compared to the benchmark, you'll get a "[dashboard view](#)" of where they most closely fit, and which areas aren't as tightly aligned. That information can then be used to craft targeted interview questions to uncover and gain clarity around any gap areas that exist. If you do decide to move forward with the candidate, you'll be able to create a personalized onboarding process as well as a tailored coaching strategy to maximize their performance capabilities.

How is the benchmarking process executed?

The benchmarking process can be broken into 4 key phases: Setup, Key Accountabilities, Survey, and Results.

1 Setup: Identify the Job and "Subject Matter Experts"

It's important to understand why the job exists, how success in the job is measured, the history of the position, and how it fits the company strategy. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) are people within the organization that have a direct connection to the job—they may include

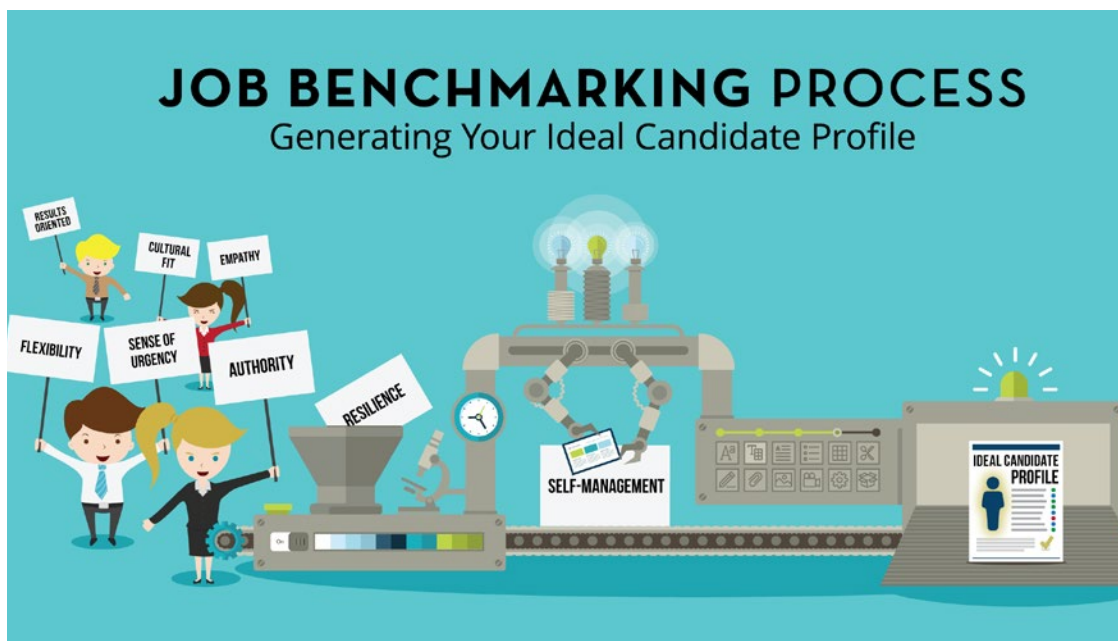


a manager who has been in the role before, top performers currently in the same role, or anyone who will be directly affected by the performance of the person in the new position.

It's important that the people involved in creating the benchmark are very familiar with the day-to-day activities of the position.

2 Key Accountabilities: Define, Prioritize, and Weigh Key Accountabilities

In an interactive session that is conducted either live or via conference call, the SMEs will come together to identify the key accountabilities of the job. Factors of an organization's unique corporate culture will be taken into consideration as well. This session is facilitated by a certified specialist who will keep the group focused on the main contributions the holder of the position makes to the organization, while moderating with an objective, outsider's perspective. Five final key accountabilities are identified, prioritized, weighed, and measured.



3 Survey: Respond to the Job Survey and Review the Multiple Respondent Report

Through a multifaceted job report, the job benchmarking team will individually complete a survey while keeping in mind the 5 key accountabilities and culture requirements. Once those individual surveys are reviewed and merged, the final report will illustrate a clear picture of the job. This merging of SME input works to secure internal alignment and assessment objectivity.

The picture of what the ideal candidate looks like becomes clear, and everyone involved in the interview process will be able to evaluate candidates using the same score card.

4 Results: Compare Talent to the Job Benchmark using a Comparison Report

Now you're ready to use your benchmark! As personal assessments are administered, results will appear in a Comparison Analysis Report that recognizes the strengths and weaknesses of each individual specific to the job, and will include recommended interview questions. Within the framework of a company's overall selection process, an effective hiring decision can be made and **productivity can begin immediately**.

As hiring managers review applicants, they won't have to question, "Can this person do the job?" Instead, they'll be able to focus on selecting the best person to do the job within your organization's unique culture.



How long do benchmarks last?

When creating a job benchmark, it's important to consider not only what the job requires today, but also what it will require as your organization moves into the future.

We live in an era that has been coined "The Fourth Industrial Revolution." As technology constantly evolves and customer sophistication increases, businesses are forced to meet the changing demands in order to stay ahead of the competition.

It's becoming increasingly clear that what works today won't necessarily work tomorrow.

The Future of Jobs Report released in 2016 by the World Economic Forum finds that on average, by 2020, more than a third of the desired core skills of most occupations will be comprised of skills that are not yet considered crucial to the job today. Today's job markets and in-demand skills are vastly different than the ones of 10 or even 5 years ago, and the pace of change is only set to accelerate.

To keep ahead of the curve and avoid the disruptive aspects of change, **the current best practice is to update established benchmarks every 2 years.** This recommendation applies to all benchmarked positions, but committing to a bi-annual review of sales benchmarks is especially critical, as changing technology and consumers' access to information has a significant effect on frontline selling roles.

Today, there are already large mismatches between the actual supply and demand of key work-related skills and difficulty filling sales roles, as indicated in ManpowerGroup's 2015 Talent Shortage Survey, which ranks 'Salesperson' in the top 10 most difficult roles for employers to fill.

In today's economy companies need to adapt quickly to changing needs in the marketplace and regularly redefine qualifying criteria for key positions.



You should routinely conduct audits to ensure that your benchmarks are still up-to-date and relevant:

- **Review your organization's visions, goals, and objectives to see if they have changed since the benchmark was created.**
- **Have a look at the department in which the position resides. Has it changed direction, or is it about to?**
- **Discuss with the current jobholder how closely their job fits the present description.**
- **Talk to others who work directly with that person to check that they agree.**
- **Review the job's relationship to other jobs in the organization and to the organization as a whole.**
- **Evaluate how your customers are changing. What demands are being placed on them that affects how you serve them?**

At the very least, reviewing job benchmarks should be a part of your annual review. Analyze which skills will remain consistent and which ones will need to be updated while you're setting strategies for breaking into new markets.



Agility will prove to be a differentiating factor in the coming years, and organizations that have the ability to understand current skills base while accurately forecasting and preparing for future job requirements will maintain the competitive advantage.

Conclusion

Hiring the right people is the most important piece to your organization's success. In order to find the right people, however, you have to know exactly who you're looking for. The key to sourcing top talent—and keeping it—is figuring out exactly what your open position requires for success, and selecting a candidate that's naturally wired for those requirements.

Job benchmarking alleviates the guesswork involved in the hiring process by providing objective measurements and identifying the candidate most likely to excel in your organization—today and into the future.

Learn more about developing a benchmark for your open position and request a consultation [here](#).

**Start Improving Your Hiring
Success Today**

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