

It is not just Gen X or Y candidates who have played a lot of video games who like the tests. "We haven't seen any adverse impact," says Ken Troyan, SunTrust Bank's chief staffing officer. "There's some mythology—if you will—about older people not being computer-savvy, and that's just not so." One study found that the simulations also tend to result in less of a gap between minority and white candidates than when paper-and-pencil tests are used.

HR experts warn that companies need to be sure they are not simply buying glitzy simulations that do not translate well to the jobs for which they are hiring. Also, the screening tools could potentially eliminate candidates who have trouble with simulations or computers but might make good employees. You should still use the U.S. Department of Labor's "whole person approach" to hiring, says one HR professional. The whole person approach factors in the results of a variety of accepted tests along with prior

actual performance and interview results to get the most complete picture of an employee or candidate.

Questions

1. What do you think are the prime advantages and disadvantages of "virtual tryouts"?
2. Do you think there would be any EEO concerns regarding this system?
3. Do you think virtual job tryouts might be better suited for some jobs than others? If so, which ones?

Sources: Karen Vilardo, "KeyBank's Success With the 'Virtual Job Tryout,'" *Journal of Corporate Recruiting Leadership* 5, no. 4 (May 2010): 24; Ira S. Wolfe and "Success Performance Solutions," *The Total View Newsletter* (May 12, 2010); Connie Winkle, "HR Technology: Job Tryouts Go Virtual," *HR Magazine* (September 1, 2006), <http://www.shrm.org/>; Gina Ruiz, "Job Candidate Assessment Tests Go Virtual," *Workforce Management Online* (January 2008), <http://www.workforce.com/>; "Clients and Case Studies," *Shaker Consulting Group* (March 27, 2011), <http://www.shakercg.com>.

Case Study 2 Pros and Cons of Cleaning Up the "Resu-mess"

Electronic job-application submission systems can leave HR and hiring managers drowning in a sea of résumés and applications. Some large retailers can get a million or more résumés a year. Even small businesses can find themselves flooded with them. For example, when Raising Cain, a Louisiana-based fast-food chain, opened an office in Dallas, the firm needed to hire 35 people. It received 10,000 résumés and had to hire an outside firm to help sort through them.

It's not surprising harried HR personnel, managers, and business owners are increasingly using application tracking systems and other types of résumé screening software. Ajax Systems and Kenexa are two firms that offer close to a thousand online assessments, with prices ranging from a couple of bucks to \$50 a test. Many job boards now feature prescreening questions as well and have algorithms to recommend candidates similar to the way Amazon.com recommends products based on what a person has purchased in the past.

Not all HR professionals are fans of résumé screening software, however. Managers tend to pile on huge numbers of key words so that very few applicants can make it past the screen, says Peter Cappelli,

a University of Pennsylvania professor who has written a book called *Why Good People Can't Get Jobs*. Different kinds of software also have different kinds of glitches. Many of them don't read serif type styles such as Times Roman well, and those résumés get rejected. Some systems ignore headers and footers. So, if an applicant puts his or her contact information in the header, it may end up being deleted. In other cases, unqualified applicants have learned to "pepper" their résumés with a job's keywords to get past résumé-screening software.

In an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, Cappelli relates an incident in which an HR manager put his own résumé through his company's screening process and got rejected. In another instance, an engineering firm received more than 25,000 résumés for a job but none of the candidates made it past electronic screening.

There is also a lack of the human touch and judgment in the process. Managers don't end up seeing interesting résumés—résumés from people who have different skills or life experiences that would translate well to the job. Consequently, a lot of people who would make excellent employees never get a glance.