Artificial Intelligence for Hiring (Did I roll my eyes out loud?)
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Hiring the right people is one of the most important decisions a business can make. When it comes to hiring new employees, there are a number of attributes that most businesses would agree are required. For example, a new employee must possess the necessary hard skills, experience and soft skills to fill a given position. Hard skills and experience are for the most part quantifiable, while required soft skills may be more difficult to capture. And yet personal experience suggests that historically businesses hire based on knowledge and experience and fire based on soft skills. As a result of this missing success indicator, businesses are turning to pre-hire assessments that help weed out some of the candidates and create a better job fit, including neurological based-tools such as Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The use of pre-hire soft skill assessments is growing, as companies attempt to be more predictive in their hiring process. According to the Talent Board's 2017 Candidate Experience Research report, 89 percent of companies are using some form of pre-employment assessment tool. The is up from 82 percent in 2016. (1), (2). Using pre-hire assessments is estimated to be an 800-million-dollar market. (3).

With this need in mind, businesses still tend to look for a quick-fix approach to hiring. Everyone wants some holy grail that will rank candidates and offer up only the best. "Just help me assign a number from 1 to 100 for each candidate." "Let's use the latest and greatest technology to assess body language, facial expressions, voice inflection and word choices to reveal job-related soft skills." How about we feed all the resumes from our top producers into a computer algorithm and the black box will create the perfect fit!"

No matter what selection criteria is selected, no tool should be used as a sole basis for the decision-making process. Most agree that best practice hiring requires a combination of several data-gathering approaches to capture the value of a potential employee. Such approaches may include; a resume review, face-to-face structured interviews, plus pre-hire assessments that help articulate specific job-related soft skills.

Employers should be cautious however, when selecting an assessment tool in the hiring process by keeping in mind that the ultimate goal is to put in place a predictability model that maintains defensible reliability and validity.

For example, before using any pre-hire assessment a business may want to consider a couple of the more basic concerns, especially in light of some of the newer approaches such as the use of Artificial Intelligence.

I. Does the assessment company provide evidence that the tool does not introduce adverse impact such as discrimination in some form?

The headline in the October, 2018 Business Insider is a case in point, "**Amazon built an AI tool to hire people but had to shut it down because it was discriminating against women**" (4). The article explains how Amazon fed ten years of good hires resumes into a system and the big data created a benchmark for performance. But they forgot to tell the computer that over those years, gender hires had changed so the algorithm was systematically rejecting women. It also is applying an old paradigm that all we need to do is clone our best rather than benchmarking the actual job. Building for the future by hiring based on the past may not be the best approach.

II. Does the assessment provide statistical documentation that the assessment measures job-related performance?

A September Wall Street Journal article explored two companies who are using data-science or artificial intelligence to determine who gets hired (5). While the process may in time prove to be both reliable and predictive, at present there is very little data to support that micro facial expressions, voice inflection positive word choices reveal job related soft skills. The key in this concern is on job related skills. Human resources are only too aware of the need to only collect interviews and application material that is specifically job related.

Conclusion
Technological advancements throughout society are occurring at an ever-increasing rate. Neurological discoveries and associated investigative tools are leading to new understandings of human behavior never before explored. While the future of artificial intelligence for hiring and professional development is making headlines, this science requires time for peer review and refinement of new technologies. So yes, at present, I did roll my eyes out loud.

References
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