

Candidate Test Preparation over the Internet

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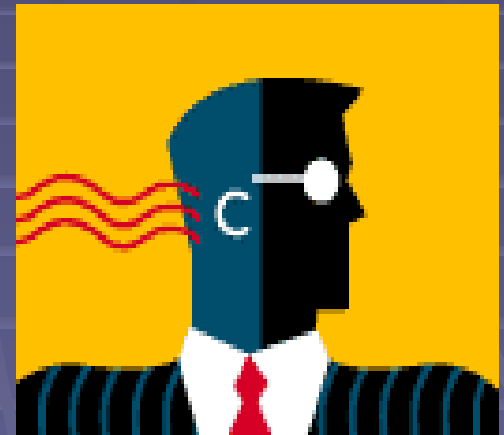


Overview

- How and Why
- Problem Solving
- Candidate Preparation for written test
- Group Exercise #1 – Developing your own computer-based assessment
- Candidate Preparation for oral test
- Group Exercise #2 – Publishing on the Web
- Lessons Learned
- Questions and Answers

1984 - Present

- CPS develops and administers Interpreter tests for the State of California
 - Medical Interpreter
(State Personnel Board)
 - Administrative Hearing Interpreter
(State Personnel Board)
 - Court Interpreter
 - (Judicial Council)



The Problem

■ LOW PASS RATES –

Administrative Hearing Interpreter

- 2000 – 2001 = 21%
- 2001 – 2002 = 31%
- 2002 – 2003 = 22%

■ LOW PASS RATES –

Court Interpreter

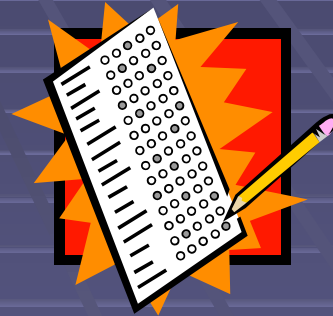
- 2000 – 2001 = 8%
- 2001 – 2002 = 8%
- 2002 – 2003 = 6%



Why?

■ The Test

- Content unrelated to requirements of the job?
- Content at too high a level?
- Overly stringent raters? Biased raters?
- Subjective rating?



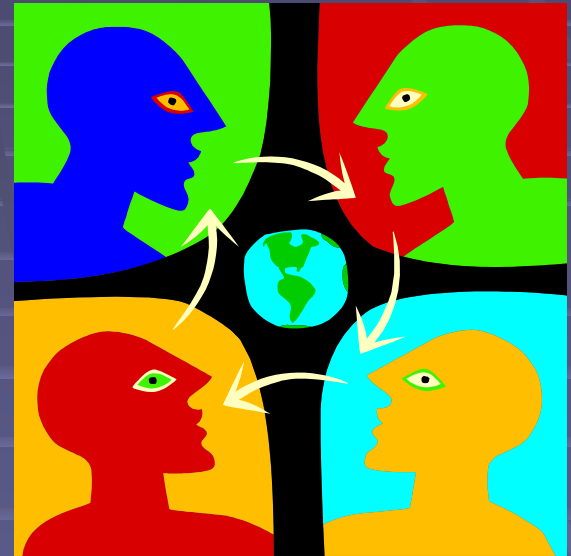
■ Candidate Instruction

- Curriculum unrelated to requirements of the job?
- Insufficient resources (e.g., quality instructors, language lab equipment, lab staffing)
- Training not at the level required by the job?



SPB Advisory Panel

- Interested Parties Meet to Discuss
 - The testing company (CPS)
 - The educational institutions (Public and Private)
 - Certified Interpreters in the field and Interpreter Association representatives



SPB Advisory Panel

- Panel agreed
 - Tests are geared at the appropriate level given consequence of error on the job
 - Schools' curriculum at the appropriate level



- Final Determination
 - The majority of the candidates taking the exam do not currently possess the skills *in the appropriate amounts* to pass.



Problem Solving

- Increase Candidate Skills
- Realistic goals
 - Help **borderline candidates** bridge the gap
 - Send a clear message about the **requirements** of the profession
 - Provide a tool for **self-screening**
 - Widely **accessible** and free of charge



Demystifying the Test

- Candidate Test Preparation
 - Long and short term preparation advice from experienced, certified interpreters
 - Two practice written tests with performance feedback
 - Two practice oral tests with sample renderings
 - Reference books and links to educational institutions

Prep Guide Development

- Same development team wrote practice test material
 - Multiple reviews and revisions
- Debut to Advisory Panel
 - Multiple reviews and revisions
- Debut to CPS rater team
 - Multiple reviews and revisions



Software

- Computer-based sample written tests
 - Perception 2.0 2001 software published by Question Mark Computing, Ltd.
- CPS staff impressions
 - Software training needed
 - Easy to use with logical procedures
 - Limitations include an inability to provide feedback and total score (one or the other)! Limited HTML capabilities (i.e. buttons, aesthetics).



Exercise #1 – Design your own test

- Break into groups
- Design one sample multiple-choice question with QuestionMark
- Use “Wizards”
- Integrate into Assessment for web publishing



Oral Test Preparation

- Optimal use with high-speed Internet connection
- Sample Oral Tests
- Sample Renderings
- Multiple Audio Files



Sample Oral Renderings

- Experienced, certified raters performed test component cold for realistic test performance
- Semi-organized chaos at the recording studio
- Mistake required re-recording (1 ½ hours of lost time)



Publishing on the Web

- Three methods
 - IT Intensive - Paper
 - Semi-IT Intensive, maybe – MS Word
 - DIY – ‘Contribute’ software



Exercise #2

- Exercise #2
- Create and edit a webpage using an MS Word file as a template.



Integrating IT and HR

- HR has vision and content
- IT has tools and equipment
- Symbiotic relationship
- Successful integration requires:
 - Communication, communication, communication
 - Patience and kindness
 - Creativity for problem solving
 - Humor (not necessary but certainly helpful)



Effective Internal Communications

- Lessons learned from the HR perspective
 - **Put it in writing** – oral instructions are easy to give - easy to misunderstand
 - **Make hardcopy edits** and go over them with IT staff to ensure comprehension
 - **Implement quality control** checks to ensure accuracy of edits and prevent work overlap
 - **Follow-up with staff** to ensure progress is being made

Effective Internal Communications

- Lessons learned from the IT perspective
 - **Don't instantly assume** that HR staff have the skills and/or resources to do IT-related work
 - **Ensure audio portions** (or anything requiring auxiliary support) **are correct** upon creation
 - **Identify the absolute highest authority** for revisions prior to publishing on the net



More Lessons Learned

- Selecting Software
 - Identify available resources/budget
 - HR staff
 - IT staff
 - Match software to resources
 - Large, technology-adept HR staff w/small IT staff
 - Large, savvy IT staff w/small HR staff
 - Resources may drive software selection
 - Question Mark vs. ASP
(which is right for you?)

Developing Internal Relationships

- Stay focused on final goal
- Restrain the control freak
- Trust staff's talent and experience
- Encourage personal creativity
- Communicate often
- Acknowledge freely



Questions and Answers



- Helping you achieve your goals....
 - Questions for CPS Webmaster
 - Questions for Test Development Staff
- Share your experience with candidate test preparation
- Share experiences with website design



**THANK
YOU!**