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COLUMNISTS

Blanche Evans

Patti Brotherton

Stephen Canale

Joeann Fosslund

Julie Garton-Good

Bill Koelzer

Kathy Lamancusa

Denise Lones

Mike Merin

Terri Murphy

Gary Onks

Jack Peckham

Peter Post

Michael J. Russer

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Dr. Gary Seigel

Robert Siciliano

Robert Wendover

Dirk Zeller



Performance Predictions Automated By New Software

by Blanche Evans

If you are a broker who wants to be more certain about hiring a new agent, or if you are a prospective agent contemplating a career in real estate, a new software tool developed by an online assessment and training company, [Upward Motion](#), may provide a better way to make the decision.

The new software is specifically designed for the real estate industry as a predictor of success - will your new hires be successful as real estate agents? Will you be happy in the real estate industry?

Equal partners and developers Igor Kotlyar and Kim Ades have designed the real estate assessment program to go beyond personality testing to discover applicants common sense to cognitive skills. Using simulated situations via video with virtual clients, the program tests how applicants might behave in job-related situations. At some points in the exchange, the program will throw up a question, the answer to which could lead agents down different courses of action.

The simulation concentrates on "soft" skills in four areas:

1. Establishing rapport
2. Listening and comprehension skills, and understanding a client's needs
3. Managing the sales process, and moving it forward
4. Closing

"The simulation is supported by two other tests," explains Kotlyar. "A personality profile - extroversion and the desire to be with people, conscientiousness, the need for achievement, and we are looking at emotional stability. The third test is one of general mental ability - it predicts the ability to learn new techniques."

Kotlyar, who holds a doctorate in organizational behavior, says there are several pilot sites in Canada and the U.S. where tests are being taken by licensees.

One pilot program is being launched by [Preston and Geraci](#) Realtors, in North Carolina. Tony Jarrett, vice president and general manager says, "I took the test myself, and my wife took it and so far, I've been impressed."

"The test takes about 45 minutes with three simulations. At the end, it will say this person has a good shot or this person does not, and there is a disclaimer that this test should not be used as the sole tool for hiring," says Jarrett.

What Jarrett says he appreciates is that the test is real estate-centric. "I spend about seven weeks training each agent, so I want to know that they are suited for the job and what strengths and weaknesses they have so we can work on making them stronger," he says.

When the results are tallied, the test can be printed instantly and reviewed by the broker/manager and applicant.

In designing the tests, developers Kotlyar and Ades used real agents for input. "We had some high and low performing agents come to the office," says Ades, "the low performing agents said, 'If I had known this when I started, I would not have gone this way.'"

Retention is another benefit. "These are things outside the personality, and this helps me to say to a new hire, 'you need to think about these things,'" says Jarrett. "I think too many brokers just want to bring people in, and then they can't make it after a few months. If I can use this test to guide people in the right way, even it means saying 'real estate isn't for you,' I think that is useful."

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