

HIGHLIGHTS

Employers Using Video Games in the Hiring Process

Looking for more dynamic ways to appraise job applicants, some employers are turning to video games. Hiring experts tell Bloomberg BNA that video games can uncover “intangibles” about job candidates that were not previously detectable. “Games are used to evaluate creativity, problem-solving abilities, the ability to multi-task and the ability to stay focused,” says Ran Schwarzkopf of the University of California Irvine Medical Center. **Page 173**

When HR Helps the Business, It Also Helps Itself

Human resources professionals should be changing the way CEOs think about creating value in an organization, and in turn, highlighting the business worth of HR itself, speakers say at the Human Capital Institute’s 2014 Workforce Planning and Analytics Conference. Shawn Gilfedder, president & CEO of McGraw Hill Federal Credit Union, says that HR needs to illustrate to executives that employees should be viewed as an asset, not an expense. **Page 191**

Gap Joins Other Retailers in Raising Minimum Wage for Its Employees

A federal minimum wage increase faces uncertainty in Congress, but Gap Inc. announces it has joined a handful of other national retailers and at least one fast food company that have chosen to voluntarily raise the pay floor for hourly workers. Gap says it will boost the minimum hourly pay for workers to \$9 starting in June and to \$10 a year later. **Page 175**

EEOC Can Contest UPS Return-to-Work Rule as Illegal

A federal judge in Chicago rules that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission can pursue its claim challenging United Parcel Service Inc.’s policy of discharging employees who can’t return to work after 12 months of leave, finding that the rule may be an unlawful qualification standard under the Americans with Disabilities Act. **Page 184**

NLRB Advice Unit Finds No Violations in Wal-Mart Firing Strikers

Wal-Mart’s firing of two employees may have been influenced by their participation in strikes at Florida stores, but the retailer showed that it would have fired the employees even in the absence of any legally protected activity, the National Labor Relations Board’s Division of Advice concludes. **Page 176**

Practitioners, Employers Welcome Delay of ACA Employer Mandate

The Treasury Department’s delay of the employer shared-responsibility provisions for some employers under the Affordable Care Act was welcomed by practitioners who say the final rules provide much-needed relief, although they warn that there will be some “growing pains” for employers as the new reporting process is brought into play. **Page 180**

ALSO IN THE NEWS

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS: HR plays unique role in championing the importance of a high-quality workforce, former Labor Secretary Robert Reich says. **Page 192**

RETALIATION: Appeals court says worker complaint to HR was too vague, dismisses retaliation claim. **Page 183**

WHISTLE-BLOWERS: Fired manager of Colombian firm lacks whistle-blower claim, appeals court affirms. **Page 186**

HEALTH CARE: Guidance on ACA 90-day waiting periods issued in final, proposed rules. **Page 177**

WORKFORCE STRATEGIES

Social Media: When employees leave, do the social media contacts they’ve developed for business purposes belong to them or to the employer? *Workforce Strategies*, accompanying this issue, looks at how courts in the U.S., the U.K. and Canada are addressing this increasingly important issue.

Bloomberg BNA Surveys

Join Our Survey Panel: Share your knowledge by participating in Bloomberg BNA surveys, and you can receive free copies. Go to <http://www.bna.com/surveypanel>.

Lead Report

Hiring

No Longer Just for Teenage Slackers, Employers Using Video Games as Hiring Tool

Looking for more dynamic ways to appraise job applicants, some employers are turning to video games.

Hiring experts say that employers are using video games to uncover “intangibles” about job candidates they were not previously able to detect.

“Games are used to evaluate creativity, problem-solving abilities, the ability to multi-task and the ability to stay focused,” Ran Schwarzkopf of the University of California Irvine Medical Center in Orange, Calif., told Bloomberg BNA Feb. 10. “Some [companies] are using them to evaluate the personality of applicants hoping to identify aggressive or more passive tendencies in a player,” he said.

Wasabi Waiter Screens Medical Residents. Schwarzkopf, assistant clinical professor of orthopedic surgery, said that video games help the center evaluate medical resident candidates.

“I always have an issue selecting new residents,” Schwarzkopf said. “All of our applicants are in the top percentile of their respective institutions, so we were looking at stuff you can’t quantify. We use games to get a hunch on who is better among the applicants and who fits the profile of our top residents.”

To develop this profile, Schwarzkopf asked those completing their residency to play the video game Wasabi Waiter, developed by Knack, a firm that develops skills-based video games for employers. He then recorded how the game profiled each resident and used the top scores as a blueprint in his search for applicants with the same attributes.

“If you know what you are looking for, you can build a blueprint to compare which variables are important to the company,” Schwarzkopf said.

“In the future, with this tool, we may be able to bring more clarity to how we discuss and characterize applicants,” he said. “With this, we may be able to supplement some of our current screening processes and begin to look at all of the characteristics of a candidate.”

Pros and Cons of Gamification. Karl Kapp, professor of instructional technology at Bloomsburg University in Bloomsburg, Pa., and author of *The Gamification of Learning and Instruction*, said that video games can probe deeper than traditional screening tools. Games force people to perform, whereas job interviews, personality assessments and even interviews “rarely compel performance beyond speaking with others,” he told Bloomberg BNA Feb. 18.

“What a well-designed game can do is to observe the application of skills, evaluate how quickly the person acted, how accurate they were and where they clicked

or explored as they played the game or applied knowledge to solve the presented challenge,” Kapp said.

Kapp believes gamification will become standard in the hiring processes. “It will work really well for some items like skills application and measurement,” he said.

Kapp cautioned that because the practice of developing video games for screening job applicants is far from universal, if not handled correctly, a company can get into some trouble. “The game must be carefully crafted to measure what it purports to measure, and that measure must be something valuable in the job,” he said.

“Companies utilize these techniques to get into the areas they can’t in the interview process,” said Mike Bleadorn of Right Management.

“You will have to, at some time, show that the criteria observed and measured in the application game is indeed criteria that is critical to success on the job,” Kapp said. “There has to be a linkage; no linkage means that there is a potential for disputing hiring decisions based on a score in a game.”

Mike Bleadorn, vice president and principle consultant with Milwaukee-based Right Management, the talent management arm of the ManpowerGroup, told Bloomberg BNA Feb. 20 that online simulations are increasing as a hiring tool.

“Companies utilize these techniques to get into the areas they can’t in the interview process,” Bleadorn said. “These types of screening tools allow a deeper understanding into the different facets of the person.”

Bleadorn said that among companies screening candidates for director positions and above, about half are adding online simulation to their assessment process. “Online job simulation gives a great look into how that person will perform job duties and provides a lot of feedback about how people go about doing their work,” he said.

Before implementing any new technology, what’s most important is that the organization knows what they are trying to assess, Brandy Hickerson, human resources manager for the America’s West region of Right Management, told Bloomberg BNA Feb. 20. “Information gathered in any skills assessment should map back to the position, and data collected from any assessment tool is only one data point among many, and is not necessarily a pass or fail.”

BY CARYN FREEMAN

To contact the reporter on this story: Caryn Freeman in Washington at cfreeman@bna.com

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Simon Nadel at snadel@bna.com