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# Improving Call Center Applicant Experiences

Preprint · August 2019

DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.20755.63521

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## Improving Call Center Applicant Experiences

*PointLeader Research Series 2019*

### ABSTRACT

*The PointLeader Research Series 2019 presents actionable results from our library of job analysis, assessment validation, and performance improvement studies for HR professionals. In this paper, we summarize ten years of evaluative results regarding applicant and HR experiences from our continuous improvement process with the PointLeader job applicant system.*

**Dr. Scott Davies**

**Sarah Schaible**

PointLeader Predictive Analytics, Inc.

# Improving Call Center Applicant Experiences

*PointLeader Research Series 2019*

Life in a call center begins with the dreaded job application and assessment process. Typically long, seemingly biased, and mostly not understood by human resource staff; improving applicant experience is a win/win for applicants and employers. In this paper, we summarize 10 years of evaluative results regarding applicant and HR experiences from our continuous improvement process with the PointLeader job applicant system.

## **For most, little has changed.**

Twenty years ago, the length of an application and assessment processes for call centers varied from 1 - 2 hours, depending on the vendor and approach. For most, little has changed. At PointLeader, our research findings focused improvement efforts on increasing readability, reliability, fairness, and validity of job applications and assessments. This work allowed us to reduce total time for applicants to complete both the job application (i.e., 15 min.) and PointLeader Potential Assessment (PPA; 15 min.) to 30 minutes, with no adverse impact or reduction of predictive validity. In the paragraphs below, you will learn what we have found to be important to improving the applicant experience.



## **Fairness of the experience drives applicant reactions to the job and employer as a business.**

Our research supports that those with a positive candidate experience are more likely to perceive it as fair and become promoters of the business, regardless of outcomes; whereas those who perceive it as unfair, will more likely report negative experiences and become detractors. Therefore, it is critical for organizations to be cognizant of the way their process is being perceived by candidates. For our part, we continually devote R&D resources to ensuring the fairness of the PointLeader experience for applicants. Plus, our most successful clients provide us with exit interview data from job applicants and customer satisfaction data to optimize variance in the applicant experience factor leading to positive reactions for the business.

## **Playing into fairness perceptions are observations of the assessments used in the process.**

When candidates get fatigued or bored by assessments, they often drop out of the process, which can lead to negative perceptions of the business brand. SHRM<sup>1</sup> found that 60% of job seekers drop out of the process because of the length or complexity, which increases costs and time to hire for organizations. We have found that rigorous content development, technology enhancement, and user testing will achieve 95% completion rates of the assessment. The keys to completion are fairness, readability, and relevance, which drive applicant engagement.

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## **Engaged applicants complete assessments.**

Evidence for engagement of applicants is found psychometrically in person fit indices to applicant response patterns from our 3pl scoring model. Qualitative evidence comes from exit interviews and cognitive labs. All three of these sources support our predictive model with item fairness and alignment positively impacting applicant engagement, which in turn, moderates the completion rate. Applying these results to the PPA has led to a 95% completion rate, an industry high, which speaks to the quality and fairness of the assessment. Provided in an easily readable combined English / Spanish format, candidates do not mind that PPA is 180 questions, given that the assessment appears to be fair, valid, and related to the job.

## **Simplicity and effectiveness of the process improve human resource outcomes.**

Our research has demonstrated that simplifying the hiring process has several advantages. For instance, one of our call center clients implemented the PPA and found they would have made 7% better hiring decisions, if they had simply eliminated the interviews and based decisions solely on assessment outcomes. By adding a validated assessment to the process, less pressure is put on the organization's interviewers, freeing up their time and energy for more important tasks. Even when interviews are still used, having candidates take the PPA allows the organization to focus on candidates who are truly a good match and not invest time in applicants who would not succeed in the position.



POINTLEADER 2017

## **Life in a call center does not need to begin with anything dreadful.**



Applications and assessments need not be long and cumbersome, must never be biased, and can be easily understood by all parties. Our research has improved applicant experiences to be a win/win for employers, applicants, and the community. We appreciate your interest in our research and hope that you will consider using PointLeader for all of your job applicant needs!

<sup>i</sup><https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/technology/pages/study-most-job-seekers-abandon-online-job-applications.aspx>