



**Responding to Employers’ Lament:** They keep sending me people who don’t have the skills we need. “They” are secondary and post-secondary schools, 1-stops et al.

The following introduces Learning Resources within the context of Job-matching and the alignment of employer demand with the competencies of individuals future workers bring to the workplace.

Context

The above lament antedates the Employment Act of 1946 and it is what “school-to-work to work” was intended to correct in the mid-‘90s. The concern is now expressed by workforce and economic developers saying that there is a need to align (employer) demand with (workforce/ learning developers) supply. Alignment and the ability to match individuals’ skills to available jobs share similar goals.

If the following is a fair visualization of the skills required of jobs – which of the skills are the problem?

<i>Job Type</i>	<b>Academic Skills</b>	<b>Technical Skills</b>	<b>Soft Skills</b>	P P R O F E S S I O N A L S K I L S T E S T S
<i>Basic or Entry Level</i>	CASAS, TABE, CRC or ABLE	NOCTI; MSSC; IT, ASE, AWS, NIMS;	<b>Workforce Readiness Skills</b>	
<i>High Wage and High Skills</i>	WorkKeys	Prove It and others	<b>Workforce Success Skills</b>	

Secondary and post-secondary education continues to focus on the Academic and Technical Skill columns. Graduates’ skill levels are assessed, developed, reassessed and credentialed. While there are problems associated with producing enough graduates with requisite levels of these cognitive competencies, they are not the primary issue for many employers.

When employers meet and discuss the workforce priorities, when states survey employer satisfaction, the absence of effective soft skills – of effective workplace behaviors - are most frequently identified as the heart of the problem. [A recent report from South Carolina’s Department of Workforce and Commerce](#) is clear and persuasive in this regard. If soft skills are a major issue, how do employers address the problem – and, with what success?

## A proven response

LRI's soft skills assessment, development and credentialing technology – called AccuVision – enables employers to screen in applicants who have the specific soft skill competencies that different jobs and different levels of jobs require. AccuVision is also used with incumbents – and in preparing people for the job market - to identify where development is required. For example:

**Regions Bank** uses AccuVision to assess about 30,000 bank teller applicants per year, using the bank teller programs. People must reach a defined cut score to qualify for an interview. Hiring people who have the soft skills Regions requires significantly impacts turnover.

Another customer, the nation's largest credit union has found that before using AccuVision their turnover was 41%. With AccuVision it has dropped to 19%.

**Progress Energy** and **TVA** use a different AccuVision in support of leadership development. Candidates seeking to move into leadership positions are assessed to determine the extent to which they already have some of the competencies these firms require. Development plans are established based upon deficits identified through assessment; re-assessment shows the extent to which individuals document that they are building the skills promotion requires.

Pre- and post-assessment also provides important insight into how effective existing education and training is at building behavioral competence.

AccuVision has been used to assess over 4,000,000 people. It is easily administered, valid, legal, predictive and without adverse impact.

## Summary

Employers want to know what competencies they can expect – what skills they will get - when making a hiring decision. Employers who complain about the soft skill deficits of applicants and their workforce development supply chain have a shared opportunity:

- Employers can identify in job-postings and on job orders the soft skills required of jobs. LRI provides competency lists for a wide range of positions – from entry-level to managerial. Employers can check-off the skills they require; and/or, they can confirm or determine these skills by benchmarking – using LRI's soft skill assessment programs.
- When specific competencies identified by employers are communicated to workforce developers, the task of building competencies that align with employers' requirements becomes efficient, coherent and measureable.

This is a road that leads to continuously improving workforce development outcomes and effective job-matching for employers.

For additional information – including the ability to experience Internet-delivered soft skills assessment, please contact:

Alan Lesure, President.