

# Employment Barriers (EB)

## Training Manual

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## **PRODUCT DESCRIPTION**

The Employment Barriers (EB) is a brief, easily administered and automated (computer scored and interpreted) test specifically designed to reveal barriers to employment.

The EB contains 116 items, requires a low sixth grade reading level and can be administered in 20 minutes. The EB is a self-report assessment instrument that is administered and scored on-site. Reports can be available within three minutes of test completion. The EB has been researched and standardized on employees.

## **SIX EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS MEASURES (SCALES)**

- 1. DEGREE OF CONFIDENCE SCALE:** Measures how truthful the employee was while completing the Employment Barriers. This scale identifies self-protective and guarded employees who minimize or even conceal self-report information. The EB identifies faking. The Degree of Confidence Scale also identifies the reading impaired.
- 2. ALCOHOL SCALE:** Measures employee alcohol proneness and alcohol-related problems. Alcoholism costs industry over \$15.6 billion annually due to absenteeism and medical expenses.
- 3. DRUGS SCALE:** Is an independent measure of drug abuse and drug-related problems. The burgeoning awareness of the impact of illicit drugs (marijuana, cocaine, crack, heroin, etc.) on industry emphasizes the need for a test to identify drug use and abuse.
- 4. WORK ORIENTATION SCALE:** Is an adjustment and work appraisal measure. It incorporates the employee's attitude, employment history and overall work adjustment.
- 5. STRESS MANAGEMENT SCALE:** Measures how well the employee copes with stress, tension and job pressure. Stress exacerbates employee problems and contributes to absenteeism, insurance payouts, employee errors, and "early quit".
- 6. SELF-ESTEEM SCALE:** Reflects a person's explicit valuing and appraisal of self. This scale incorporates an attitude of acceptance - approval versus rejection - disapproval.

## **EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS (EB)**

The EB identifies employee need, substantiates employment risk and provides objective employee screening.

Computerized assessment is far superior to the outdated practice of manual testing. Hand scored tests are notoriously slow and unreliable. In marked contrast, the Employment Barriers (EB) improves accuracy, saves staff time and is cost effective. This makes a wealth of important information available and dramatically improves the chances of accurate employee screening.

EB tests can be given directly on the computer screen or in paper-pencil test booklet format. Regardless of how the tests are administered, all tests are computer scored on-site and reports are available within minutes of test completion.

The Employment Barriers (EB) is an employment screening instrument designed to augment existing employee hiring practices. Applicants complete the EB in 25 minutes and reports are available on-site within three or four minutes of test completion. **The EB is cost effective and permits all employees to**

**be screened annually, or as needed.** Scale scores are calculated for each of the six EB scales and summarized in EB reports. EB scale scores below the 70th percentile do not indicate significant problems. **EB scale scores between the 70th and 89th percentile are problem risk scores. EB scale scores at or above the 90th percentile are in the severe problem range.**

Some company’s follow-up on scale scores in the 70 to 89<sup>th</sup> percentile (problem risk) range with a “focused” interview. Focused interviews zero in on problem risk scale scores. Employee scores at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile represent **severe problems** and should be handled accordingly.

Similarly, some companies refer employees that score at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile (severe problem) range on the **Alcohol Scale** or **Drugs Scale** for urinalysis or blood tests. Such procedures are still cost effective because only approximately ten percent of employees would be referred for additional tests. The dollars saved could be substantial, with no compromises in the quality or accuracy of employee screening. **These procedures ensure that employees are only referred for additional and expensive alcohol or drug tests on an as needed basis.**

By merging the latest in psychometrics with computer technology, the EB accurately assesses employee behavior and identifies employment risk. Hiring staff can now objectively gather a vast amount of relevant employee information.

The purpose of this manual is to describe the EB and explain how it works. Throughout this manual, emphasis is placed on understanding the EB and the assessment system it represents.

The Employment Barriers is designed for employee assessment. It augments established employment review procedures and experienced staff judgment by providing objective and accurate employee information in a timely manner.

## **RISK LEVEL CLASSIFICATION**

Each EB scale score is classified in terms of the risk range it represents. These risk level classifications are calculated individually for each of the six empirically based scales as follows:

<b>PERCENTILE RANGE .....</b>	<b>RISK RANGE</b>
0 to 39th percentile.....	Low Risk
40 to 69th percentile.....	Medium Risk
<b>70 to 89th percentile.....</b>	<b>Problem Risk</b>
<b>90 to 100th percentile.....</b>	<b>Severe Problem</b>

## **PRESENT, PAST OR FUTURE TENSE**

Test items are worded in present tense, past-tense and future-tense. Read items slowly and literally. If it wants information on the past it will be worded in the past-tense. If it wants information on the present, it will be worded in the present-tense.

## **EMPLOYEE’S SELF-REPORT**

The last sequence of items (items 107 through 116) in the EB represent the employee's self-report. There are four options or answers to each of these items and the answer selected by the employee is printed in the EB report.

Applicant self-report answers reveal important motivational, attitudinal and perceptual information. These answers represent the employee's perception of his or her situation and needs, therefore, they may differ from objective scale scores. **This enables further comparison of each employee's motivation and attitude with objectively obtained scale scores.** For example, a person may report "no problem" with regard to their alcohol pattern, even though their score on the Alcohol Scale is above the 90th percentile (severe problem) range. On the other hand, it is also important to note when the self-report responses are consistent with their corresponding objective scale scores.

## **RECOVERING APPLICANTS**

A person who does not presently engage in alcohol or other drug abuse may score above zero, but would score in the low risk range (question #112). However, experimentation, casual use or prior involvement with alcohol and other drugs will result in an elevated score. That is why a follow-up interview is recommended. **In addition, a significantly elevated score (above the 70th percentile) on the Alcohol or Drugs Scale could be obtained by a recovering alcohol or drug abuser, consequently the employee should be asked if he or she is recovering, and if recovering, "how long have they been abstaining" from alcohol or other drug use.**

When an employee states they have been abstaining for less than six to nine months, and they have an elevated Alcohol or Drugs Scale score, the interviewer should pursue this area of inquiry.

## **EVALUATOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS**

Space has been provided in the EB report for staff member observations and recommendations. In most instances, these observations and recommendations will be consistent with EB findings. However, in some instances the staff member may have an observation or recommendation that differs from the EB report. This is OK! The staff member may obtain important information from another source (employee, prior employer, relative, records, etc.) which influences their recommendations. In these situations it is recommended that the staff member document this additional source of information in writing along with related recommendations in the space provided in EB reports.

## **VALIDITY**

**Definition:** Within the context of assessment, **validity** is a general term for accuracy of measurement. Valid test results are essentially free from error and accurate. In contrast, invalidity refers to distortion of test results due to errors in measurement. Invalidity may be due to employee's guardedness, denial, faking, reading things into questions, emotional instability, reading impairments, etc. An invalid test means test results are distorted and not accurate.

When reviewing Employment Barriers results, look at the employee's **Degree of Confidence (Validity) Scale** score first. Degree of Confidence Scale scores at or below the 70th percentile are valid (or accurate). Degree of Confidence Scale scores in the 70 to 89th percentile range are likely accurate, however, they should be interpreted carefully. Degree of Confidence Scale scores above the 90th percentile indicate the EB test protocol is invalid. Invalid test results mean that EB scale scores may be distorted by the employee and are inaccurate.

A Degree of Confidence Scale is considered necessary, if not essential, in any objective assessment instrument. In most hiring, pre-employment and employment settings, employees are cooperative. However, it would be naive to assume all perspective employees answer all assessment questions truthfully. All interview and self-report test procedures are subject to the dangers of untrue answers due to defensiveness, guardedness or deliberate faking. The Degree of Confidence Scale measures how

truthful the employee was while completing the EB. This scale detects guardedness, defensiveness and deliberate falsification or faking.

Degree of Confidence Scale scores in the 90 to 100th percentile range generate a special one page report explaining validity and invalidity. Possible reasons for the elevated Degree of Confidence Scale score are discussed. The usual EB report is not printed because the test was invalidated and results are inaccurate. However, when the Degree of Confidence Scale Score is below the 90th percentile, the usual EB report is provided.

## **ORAL INSTRUCTIONS**

Oral instructions to employees before they begin the EB are important. A straightforward approach is recommended. For example:

*"We would like you to complete this test so that we can better understand you and your situation. Please answer all questions honestly. It is also important that you do not read anything into these questions that is not there. Just answer each question truthfully."*

Giving the employee an example often helps them understand. The example you use will be influenced by your employee population, experience and intent. It should be individualized to your situation and needs. The following example is presented for clarification as to how an example might be included in your oral instructions. We obviously recommend that you develop an example that is appropriate to your employee and employment needs.

Last week an employee told me while taking the MMPI (a clinical test) that he could not answer this question True or False. "I am attracted to members of the opposite sex." When asked why, the employee replied, "If I answer True, you will think I am a sex maniac. If I answer False, you will think I am a homosexual." I told the employee that "this test does not ask you about being a sex maniac or a homosexual. It only asked if you are attracted to members of the opposite sex. **When you interpreted it to refer to sex maniacs or homosexuals, you were answering a different question.** Do not read anything into these questions that isn't there, because if you do, you will invalidate the test and may have to take it over. **There are no trick questions or hidden meanings.** Simply answer each question True or False." If the employee misinterprets or changes the meaning of test questions, the test will be invalidated.

A few minutes of oral instructions can put the employee at ease while providing structure and clarifying expectations. Such procedures can greatly reduce your invalidity ratio while making the assessment procedure more acceptable to the employee. Some agencies type out oral instructions for the staff so they can have a ready reference. Other companies establish different types of instructions that are appropriate to their employee population and assessment milieu.

## **EXPANDING DATABASE**

Copyrighted EB software is designed with the capability of "**saving**" the test data from each test in a confidential (no names) manner for ongoing research and analysis. No employee names are saved in the cumulative database nor do they appear in EB research or annual summary reports. **The EB expanding database is statistically analyzed each year.** This is a unique advantage of the EB, at no additional cost to EB users.

## **TRUTH-CORRECTED SCORES**

Another sophisticated psychometric technique involves "Truth-Corrected" scores which are individually calculated for each of the six EB scales every time a test is scored.

The Degree of Confidence Scale establishes how truthful the employee was while completing the EB. Truth-correction factors are derived from correlations between the Degree of Confidence Scale and all other scales. These factors are statistically determined in ongoing EB research. This procedure enables identification of the error variance associated with untruthfulness and then it is applied to each scale score, resulting in Truth-Corrected scores. Raw scores may only reflect what the employee wants you to know. Truth-Corrected scores reveal what the employee is trying to hide. Truth-Corrected scores are more accurate than raw scores.

## **DEGREE OF CONFIDENCE SCALE**

The Degree of Confidence Scale determines how truthful the employee was while completing the test. This scale identifies guarded, defensive or self-protective employees who minimize or even deny problems and concerns. The Degree of Confidence Scale identifies faking.

## **WORK ORIENTATION SCALE**

The Work Attitude Scale is an employment adjustment and work appraisal measure. It incorporates the employee's attitude towards work, employment record and work orientation.

Work Attitude and behaviors are often missed by other pre-employment screening procedures. Yet, we know that employee replacement and training costs continue to grow. The Work Attitude Scale is designed to help identify employees that will succeed.

## **STRESS MANAGEMENT SCALE**

This scale measures the employee's ability to cope with stress. How effectively one copes with stress determines whether or not stress affects one's overall adjustment. Stress exacerbates other symptoms of emotional, substance abuse and adjustment problems. Markedly impaired stress coping abilities are frequently correlated with identifiable mental health problems. Thus, the Stress Management Scale facilitates evaluation of this important area of inquiry in a non-offensive and non-intrusive manner. A Stress Management Scale score at or above the 90th percentile warrants consideration of a more comprehensive interview or evaluation.

The Stress Management Scale is much more than just a measure of stress. **It measures how well the employee copes with stress.** Two people can be in the same stressful situation, however, one person is overwhelmed and the other person handles it well. The Stress Management Scale accounts for these different reactions to stress.

## **SELF-ESTEEM SCALE**

The Self-Esteem Scale consists of terms which are rated to describe self-esteem. This is a rapid procedure of self-rating wherein the client describes his or her own self-esteem in commonly used everyday vocabulary.

Self-Esteem refers to a person's perception of self. It reflects an explicit valuing and appraisal of oneself. Self-Esteem incorporates an attitude of acceptance-approval versus rejection-disapproval of oneself. The Self-Esteem Scale score is descriptive of the person one believes oneself to be. Many believe that a person's behavior is a reflection or expression of their self-concept. Negative self-esteem has been related to maladjustment and victim self-concepts. The theory goes, "the client sees himself/herself as bad or worthless and acts accordingly."

## ALCOHOL SCALE

The Alcohol Scale measures the employee's alcohol proneness and alcohol-related problems. Alcoholism is a significant problem in our society. Woolfolk and Richardson noted in "Stress, Sanity and Survival" (1978) that alcoholism costs industry over \$15.6 billion annually due to absenteeism and medical expenses. The harm associated with alcohol abuse--mental, emotional and physical--is well documented. The cost and pain associated with alcohol problems are staggering.

The Alcohol Scale measures the severity of employee alcohol use and abuse. Alcohol proneness, alcohol-related problems and alcohol abuse are evaluated. Alcohol refers to beer, wine and other liquors.

## DRUGS SCALE

The burgeoning awareness of the impact of illicit drugs emphasizes the need for any assessment to differentiate between licit and illicit drugs. **The Drugs Scale is an independent measure of the employee's drug-related problems and the severity of problems if they exist.** Without this type of scale, many drug abusers would remain undetected. The EB differentiates between "alcohol" and "drug" use and abuse.

## **FIVE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

- 1. How do you know when the employee is truthful?** There have been several literature reviews on the poor performance of the interview and its paradoxical lack of validity. Of course interviews and test results are subject to employee truthfulness. The EB Degree of Confidence Scale measures truthfulness, identifies denial and reveals attempts to minimize problems. Raw scores reflect what the employee wants you to know. **Truth-Corrected scores reveal what the employee is trying to hide.** Truth-Corrected scores are more accurate than raw scores.
- 2. Why does the EB include 5 scales?** In addition to establishing an employee's truthfulness and substance (alcohol and other drugs) abuse potential, the EB measures, work orientation and stress coping abilities. Many of these important areas of inquiry are missed by other assessment procedures. The EB is much more than just an alcohol or drug screening test. EB scales provide a sound empirical basis for decision making.
- 3. Why is a built-in database important?** It saves staff time and money while providing research and annual program summaries--at no additional cost. **Summary reports can describe your employee population demographics and their special needs. EB database functions relate to quality control and program review.** These unique and copyrighted features are very important to comprehensive employment screening. Does your assessment system have a built-in database? At no additional cost?
- 4. Is confidentiality important?** Yes! Users are encouraged to delete client names from their test database. Once client names are deleted they are gone and cannot be retrieved. Deleting client names does not delete demographics or test data which is downloaded into each tests database for subsequent analysis. This proprietary name deletion procedure involves a few keystrokes and insures client confidentiality and **HIPAA (federal regulation 45 C.F.R. 164.501)** requirement compliance.
- 5. How does the EB save staff time?** The EB is a self-report test that is completed by the employee, either individually or in group testing settings. There are no forms or questionnaires to be completed by the staff. EB reports can be available on-site within minutes of test completion. **Staff report writing, substantiation of decision making, and record keeping needs are met with EB reports.** EB reports eliminate the need for mailing employee information to out-of-state offices for data processing and then waiting for these reports to be returned. EB reports reduce the need for urinalysis, drug tests, time



consuming interviews, record searches and checklists to be completed by staff. EB reports are timely, comprehensive and save staff time.

### **DELETE CLIENT NAMES (CONFIDENTIALITY)**

You have the option to delete client names from your online database, all clients personal information is encrypted when saved by you, the user, and decrypted when you open the file. Once you delete client names -- they are gone and can not be retrieved. Deleting client names does not delete demographic information or test data. Deleting client names protects employee confidentiality.

### **TEST DATA INPUT VERIFICATION**

You have the option of verifying the accuracy of test data input into the computer. In brief, the test data input verification procedure involves entering the test data twice. If the test data entry is the same the first and second (verification) time, then the test data was accurately entered. If there is a discrepancy between the first and second (verification) time the test data is entered, each discrepancy (or inconsistent answer) will be highlighted until corrected. You can't proceed until all entries from the first and second data entries match. Test data entry takes less than two minutes.

### **SPECIAL (99% SCORES) REPORTS**

When the Degree of Confidence Scale score is at or above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile all other scale scores are automatically set to the 99th percentile. In other words the EB report is modified due to the extremely inaccurate test protocol. And in place of the scale description or paragraphs explaining the scale score, a one-page explanation of validity - invalidity is printed. A test protocol is inaccurate and invalid when the Degree of Confidence Scale score is at or above the 91st percentile. The special 99% procedure only occurs when Degree of Confidence Scale scores are at or above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile.

### **CONTROL OF EB REPORTS**

The EB report is designed for staff use. It is not recommended that EB reports be given to the employee to read or take home. It is not recommended that employees take any EB materials (test booklet, answer sheet or report), including the computer generated report out of the screening office.

In most cases it is a mistake to allow employees to read their EB reports because they will typically get "hung up" on a word or term. It also places them in a defensive posture. Such a procedure also implies the report determines the review decision, which is not the case. It is recommended that EB results, when reviewed, be explained, without giving the employee the report to read. Results should be discussed within the context of established procedures and criteria.

### **RETEST**

EB reports will state when an employee's report is invalid. If employees invalidate their EB, it is recommended that they be given the opportunity to be retested. Prior to retesting, the oral instructions should be reviewed with the employee. If the retest is still invalid, that person may be untestable at that time.

### **CHECK ANSWER SHEET FOR COMPLETENESS**

Check the employee's answer sheet for completeness when it is turned in and before the employee leaves. No items should be skipped and both true and false should not be answered for the same question. In these instances, the employee should be informed that each question must be answered in

accordance with the instructions, and be given the opportunity to correct or complete their answer sheet. Skipped or omitted answers are scored by the computer in the deviant direction, since it is assumed that these items were omitted to avoid admitting a "negative" response.

## **TIME SAVINGS**

The EB provides a vast amount of relevant information quickly and accurately. It consists of 116 items, can be completed in 25 minutes and reports can be available on-site within 4 minutes of test completion. The EB report facilitates a "focused" interview that can result in significant savings in staff time, with no compromise in the quality of the service provided.

The EB can be administered individually or in group testing settings. Regardless of how it is given, all EB's are scored online.

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### **How to Login**

With your Username and Password you are now ready to login and begin testing. To login click the LOGIN button in the upper right corner.

Type in your username and password (both are case sensitive). Below these boxes click on the Login button, this takes you to your account page. On your first visit to this page you will see that you have 1 test credit in your account. We give you one free test credit to enable you to familiarize yourself with our tests and our website.

Click on the "Continue" button or the "Account Summary" button to go to your Account Summary Page.

The Account Summary Page shows Account History, Test Credits Used and Test Credits Available.

There is a drop down box to show the list of available tests and a link to print test booklets and answer sheets.

### **How to Administer a Test**

Before you proceed, please be aware that there are *two test administration options described*.

#### **1. Paper/Pencil Test Administration (Data Entry Method)**

*The first option* is to print the test booklet and answer sheet, both of which are available in English and Spanish. The client then answers the questions on the answer sheet in pencil. The paper-pencil test administration option allows you to test in groups which can save considerable time. Some evaluators do not want to tie up their computers administering tests and prefer paper-pencil testing. When testing is completed the answer sheet data is entered online and a report is generated.

If the paper-pencil method is selected, click on the "Print Test Booklets" link on the screen and print the test booklet and answer sheet; both are available in English, Spanish and other languages.

## 2. On Screen Online (Internet) Test Administration

*The second option* is online (on the screen) test administration. This allows the client to sit at the computer and answer the test questions on the screen. Regardless of how tests are administered, all tests are scored and reports generated and printed while online.

Click on the name of the test to be administered. This takes you to the Main Menu page for the test selected.

### How to Score a Test and Print a Report

*When you have selected your preferred method of test administration* click either "Administer Test to Client" (in which case the client would enter his/her answers on the screen), or "Enter Test from Answer Sheet" (client will use the paper/pencil method).

The next screen will be "Client Information" (name, age, sex, education etc.). When you have completed this information, click the "Information Correct" button which will take you to the "Court History" page. Depending on the test you have chosen some tests have a court history section, some do not. Each screen allows the option to choose "Cancel" or "Information Correct" to proceed.

After completing Court History, the next screen is for client answers to the test questions. If the client has used the on-screen method, the questions and answers will be displayed to the client on the screen. If the paper/pencil method was used to test the client, you may enter the answer sheet data at your convenience by typing 1 for true, 2 for false, etc. For multiple choice questions, enter 1, 2, 3 or 4.

Again, this screen allows the option to choose "Cancel" or "Information Correct." If "Information Correct" is chosen the option is still available to cancel or abort the entry and not charge the account. At the end of the test a notice will appear alerting you that one test credit is about to be used. To save the test record to the database click "Yes." To cancel or discard the test entry, click "No." ***When "Yes" is selected, your account will then be charged 1 test credit.***

Highlight the client's name and click on the "Supervisor Options" button to proceed to that client's supervisor options page. Here you can print the report, verify the answer sheet data entered and delete the client's name. The default page that appears is the Print Report page. To print the report, click the "Continue" button. To verify the data entered or delete the client's name, click on the appropriate tab at the top and follow the instructions.

In summary, procedures are designed to be concise, easily followed and swiftly executed, so that they will not detract from test administration.

The test administration is now complete. However, you are still in the test Main Menu screen and if you wish to administer another test, click on the "Account Summary" link on the right of the screen. This will take you back to your account summary page where you may check for available test credits, purchase additional test credits, select other tests to administer or edit previously administered tests. Otherwise just close your browser window to exit the website.

### How to Verify Data Entry

The Verify Data Input procedure allows you to enter the answers a second time for any particular client. This feature insures that the responses are input into the computer correctly.

From the main menu select the client's name and then click on the "Supervisor Options" button. This will take you to the Supervisor Options page. Click on the tab labeled "Verify Data Entry" and then click on the "Continue" button. You will now be presented with the answer grid so that you can re-input the answers.

As you input each answer, the computer will verify that it matches the answer you originally entered. If it does, the computer will automatically move on to the next response. However, if the answer you input does not match the original answer, you will be immediately alerted to the discrepancy between the two responses via a message box.

The message box will notify you as to which answer did not match the original input. The message box will display what the current answer is and what the original response was.

At this point you should review the answer sheet to verify what the correct response for that particular question is. You will then click "OK" if the answer input this second time is correct and the computer will accept this response and move on to the next answer.

If, after reviewing the answer sheet, you discover that you have erroneously input the wrong answer, click the "Cancel" button and the computer will allow you to enter the response again.

Continue with these steps until all answers have been input. Using this feature insures the accuracy of the data input.

### **How to Delete Client Names**

This procedure allows the user to delete the client's name from the test record. Use this option to protect client confidentiality once you are done with the test record.

From the main menu select the client' name and then click on the "Supervisor Options" button. This will take you to the Supervisor Options page. Click on the tab labeled, "Delete Client Name" and then click on the "Continue" button. You will be given the opportunity to cancel this procedure at this time. **USE WITH CAUTION!** Once the name has been deleted it **CANNOT** be restored. When you are absolutely certain that you are ready to proceed, click on the "Continue" button. That's all there is to it. The name will be deleted from the record and you will be returned to the main menu. Notice that the name you just deleted is no longer visible in the client list.

### **Live Support Chat**

Throughout our site, after you have logged in, you will find "Live Support" buttons. Clicking on these buttons will open a "Live Support" chat window that puts you in touch with an Online-Testing.com technical support staff member.

Support staff is available for these "Live Support" sessions between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time, Monday through Friday. If you need to leave your computer during the chat session, you can return within 24 hours and resume your online conversation.

### **TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

If you have any questions Professional Online Testing Solutions, Inc. is only a telephone call away. Our telephone number is **(800) 231-2401**, fax **(602) 266-8227**, and E-mail **info@online-testing.com**. Our offices are open 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time, Monday through Friday.

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