



**THE WHARTON  
HEALTHCARE QUARTERLY**



## PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT ALGORITHM – A FRAMEWORK FOR WINNING THE TALENT WAR

**When it comes to attracting and retaining high-performing team members, the Professional Assessment Algorithm provides a solid framework for the versatile and fluid calculations commonly involved with new career opportunities. Career decisions are influenced by several factors that we place into four categories – Opportunity, Geography, Compensation, and Timing.**

As executive recruiters solely focused on the healthcare industry, we have seen the veritable war on talent ramp up in recent months to the highest level in nearly four decades. With talent in such high demand and shifting views on remote and hybrid work environments, it is becoming increasingly critical to go beyond traditional role design and compensation packages for organizations to attract and retain top talent.

Add to the mix the complex nature of healthcare organizations and increasing demand for diverse talent, and you have a highly dynamic and volatile talent landscape rife with indefinite obstacles and barriers. When you consider the investment of time and resources spent on talent management, leaning into the Professional Assessment Algorithm helps minimize risks that could derail the process.

Effectively recruiting top talent starts from the first conversation and extends through the offer process. The framework of the Professional Assessment Algorithm provides useful checkpoints for gaining a deeper understanding of talent *before* the offer when it is often too late to have an impact on anything but compensation.

### **The Four Elements of Consideration**

From our decades-long experience working with leaders and organizations, it's become clear that we are all working through an algorithm that is unique to each of us. Life and work events alter our Professional Assessment Algorithm, and everyone's algorithm is personal and evolves throughout their career.

These four core elements aim to capture and categorize the endless factors that candidates assess when considering the next step in their career. From an organizational leadership standpoint, keep in mind that each of the four elements is independent from one another yet interrelated, so someone's perspective on one could impact how they view another. Yet, interestingly, they each carry equal weight when it comes to a candidate's final decision to accept or reject the offer.

- 1. Opportunity** – on its surface, this quadrant seems rather basic relating to the role definition (e.g., description, reporting structure, and expectations) and how that aligns with a candidate's career goals. But as we push beyond the surface, we see that leaders are assessing far beyond the basics. As candidates work through this element, many people will offer them opinions and advice on this

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category. But ultimately, only the candidate knows how proud they will be to tell people they work for the company (correlates to the organization's mission); how energized they will be to work with that group of people (correlates to the organizational and team culture); how passionate they are to take on the work at hand with the work that needs to be done to achieve success. In many cases, these decisions are title agnostic.

**2. Geography** – for this quadrant, what often comes to mind is “relocation.” Yet throughout the past year, this idea is being challenged more and more not just by talent, but by organizations. The adoption of virtual and hybrid work environments nearly overnight has caused companies and people to reassess their long-held perceptions about where the job gets done. We are seeing organizations make significant changes to their requirements for positions that traditionally made relocation mandatory. Now, companies are frequently allowing for more flexible arrangements such as being in the office or on location once or twice a month, twice a quarter, and so on. Pair that with the fact that many professionals are looking to move away from or avoid densely populated areas, opting instead for rural areas or choosing to move closer to family. This drastic, accelerated change has created an entirely new set of challenges and opportunities for organizations and talent alike. Those with too much rigidity are finding themselves on the losing side of the talent war.

**3. Compensation and Total Rewards** – from a compensation standpoint, when we look beyond the basics of lifestyle compensation needs, we see a clear trend toward the addition of non-monetary considerations and a correlation between Compensation and the three other core elements of the algorithm. While many candidates will expect additional compensation year over year, this isn't always the case if the other items are in alignment. However, the greater the disruption in Geography, Timing, or Opportunity (e.g., geographic relocation, extensive travel, significant personal timing considerations, etc.), the greater the impact on compensation expectations.

**4. Timing** – comparatively, this is one of the most dynamic quadrants. Throughout one's life, there are various demands placed on us both personally and professionally. From a professional standpoint, timing can look very different from person to person. For example, if someone's role has been eliminated and they find themselves in transition looking for a new opportunity versus when they are gainfully employed. Timing is far more dynamic on the personal side of things in relation to Geography, for instance. Maybe the candidate's children are in high school, or their spouse's career is equally dynamic. Upending their life to move someplace new would need to be balanced with a significant bump in compensation.

Knowing that these four forces are constantly in play, it becomes clear just how crucial it is to engage and communicate with your team and the potential new talent you hope to bring into the organization. Even if three of the four elements exceed expectations, if just one is misaligned the candidate may decline the offer.

Honing your curiosity and listening skills around these core categories will help you recognize which areas need additional attention or add risk, which could make all the difference for both attracting and retaining top talent. The Professional Assessment Algorithm provides a framework to identify risks and develop a solid approach to talent management resulting in a strong bench of talent now and into the future. 



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