

## **Rapid-Result Oral Fluid Testing: Reducing Costs and Time to Hire**

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Did you know that at least 60% of job candidates discontinue the online application process because of the length and complexity of the process (and some experts believe the percentage is even higher)?<sup>i</sup>

With that in mind, consider this all-too-familiar scenario: A company needs to fill 30 vacancies. They go to the expense of reviewing applications and resumes, interviewing candidates, and choosing the people they think are best qualified for the jobs.

As part of the screening process, the company asks 50 candidates to drive 10 miles to a clinic where they will provide a urine sample for a drug test. The drive takes about 30 minutes with traffic and the wait time at the clinic is two hours. Not everyone is willing to go to that much trouble so only 20 show up to void a sample. The company then identifies 30 more candidates who then go through the same time-consuming process.

In the meantime, of the 20 original finalists who stuck it out and had their urine samples sent to the lab for analysis, five have moved on and found employment elsewhere. The company must once again identify additional candidates. The company will also wait days to get the results back from the laboratory for the 15 remaining applicants from the original 20 who actually showed up at the collection site. And all of that costs money, about \$400 per new person hired when all factors are considered.

### **Hiring Can Be Challenging**

Human resource (HR) leaders know that recruiting costs are too high and candidate conversion is too low.

Finding the right person to hire in today's competitive job market can be challenging and the last thing employers need is for the drug testing process to make the whole experience even more difficult. But in today's environment where various reports show many adults 18 and older are using drugs,<sup>ii</sup> the drug test is critical and the right person for the job, which in some cases involves safety-sensitive or public-facing positions, should be someone who can pass a drug test.

Pre-employment drug testing has proven to be an extremely valuable tool for employers who are concerned about maintaining the safest possible workplaces. A federal government study found that 30% of substance abusers who are employed full-time indicate they would not work for a company that conducts pre-employment testing, which is good news for employers who conduct drug testing because, among other reasons, they don't want to face the inherent risks associated with hiring drug users.<sup>iii</sup>

But how a company screens applicants for drugs during the interviewing process can have a huge impact on the success of the company's efforts to find and hire the best possible candidates. For example, if the pre-employment screening process is too complicated, takes too long to complete, and requires the employer and applicant to wait several days to learn the result of the test, it's very

possible the right person for the job will be working elsewhere by the time a decision is made to hire that person.

One nationwide company that hires about 20,000 people annually recently compared standard lab-based urine drug testing with rapid-result oral fluid testing to determine if one method was more efficient than the other and would improve the hiring process.<sup>iv</sup> The “before-and-after” results were stunning.

### **Lab-based Urine Testing**

Relying on traditional lab-based urine testing, the company found it typically waited 4-6 days to get final drug test results. The process of sending applicants to an off-site clinic to provide a urine sample and the time involved resulted in a less-than-desirable experience for the applicants and resulted in many complaints. Only about 80% of the candidates deemed worthy to hire actually made it to a successful Day 1 start.

Further, it cost the company a lot of money. For instance, the company spent approximately \$1.6 million on the 20% of the candidates (about 4,000 applicants) that never started with the company because, in many cases, they’d accepted employment elsewhere.

### **Rapid-Result Oral Fluid Testing**

The company then implemented rapid-result oral fluid testing using the OralTox device from Premier Biotech and found that the onboarding process went faster and the overall cost to hire the best possible candidates decreased significantly. By conducting rapid oral fluid tests on-site where the job interviews were taking place, the company was able reduce the time to conduct the test and get a negative result back to about 10 minutes instead of 4-6 days.

Overall, 95% of the candidates became “same day” eligible, meaning the company was able to offer jobs to the vast majority of desirable candidates on the spot. This is important because HR professionals know conversion to employment improves when candidates are same-day eligible.

And the entire process for the applicant from providing an oral fluid sample to learning the test result and getting a job offer improved so dramatically that complaints dropped by 75%.

Perhaps, the biggest benefit for the company was the money it saved. They estimated a savings of \$15 per test or \$300,000 annually in hard costs.

### **Rapid Oral Fluid Testing**

As many companies look for ways to continue screening applicants and employees for drugs while at the same time improving their return on investment from drug testing, rapid oral fluid testing makes a lot of sense. After all, compared to other testing methods, oral fluid samples are easier and faster to collect and much more difficult to subvert alleviating the costs associated with drug test cheating. Plus, a rapid-result oral fluid test conducted on-site with results available within about 10 minutes makes it possible for employers to improve the pre-employment screening process and make same-day hiring decisions.

Additionally, oral fluid testing is considered highly accurate. In 2019, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) issued the following statement about the science of oral fluid testing:

“The scientific basis for the use of oral fluid as an alternative specimen for drug testing has now been broadly established and the advances in the use of oral fluid in detecting drugs have made it possible for this alternative specimen to be used... with the same level of confidence that has been applied to the use of urine.”<sup>v</sup>

## Conclusion

In a 2023 survey of drug testing providers, 46% predicted that oral fluid testing will be the most used drug testing method in the future, the same percentage that predicted it will be urine testing. That marks a dramatic change in how drug testing professionals perceive oral fluid testing.<sup>vi</sup>

In a survey of employers in 2023, approximately 38% indicated they currently utilize some form of oral fluid testing, either lab-based and/or rapid testing. When asked if they were planning to add a new drug testing methodology, 22% said they were considering oral fluid testing, the number one response.<sup>vii</sup>

Reducing the costs and time to hire is motivating a growing number of employers to take a serious look at rapid-result oral fluid testing. It just makes good business sense.

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<sup>i</sup> Study: Most Job Seekers Abandon Online Job Applications. SHRM. March 2016. <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/technology/study-job-seekers-abandon-online-job-applications#:~:text=According%20to%20CareerBuilder%2C%2060%20percent,abandonment%20rate%20may%20be%20conservative>

<sup>ii</sup> Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/reports/rpt42731/2022-nsduh-nnr.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> Why Drug Testing? Current Consulting Group. 2008. Page 34.

<sup>iv</sup> OralTox® Case Study: Reducing Costs & Time to Hire. Premier Biotech. INSERT SOURCE/LINK

<sup>v</sup> Mandatory Guidelines for Federal Workplace Drug Testing Programs—Oral/Fluid. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). October 2019.

[https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs\\_campaigns/division\\_workplace\\_programs/final-mg-oral-fluid.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs_campaigns/division_workplace_programs/final-mg-oral-fluid.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> Drug Testing Industry Survey. Current Consulting Group. May 2023.

<sup>vii</sup> Ibid.