Brains Matter; or Why You Should Hire Smart People
Few topics generate more heated discussion and controversy than that of intelligence. People seem to hold widely differing and strong opinions on questions such as: Is IQ a good measure of intelligence? Is intelligence learned or inherited? Are intelligent people more successful than their less-intelligent peers?

We're concerned with the relationship between intelligence (or what is technically referred to as general mental ability) and job performance—specifically, do people with higher intelligence outperform their peers with lower intelligence? Not surprisingly, this is a topic in which there is no shortage of opinions. But don't put much weight on opinions. You should look for hard evidence. And there is actually quite a bit of hard evidence to draw upon. Certain facts are beyond significant technical dispute. For instance: (1) IQ score closely matches whatever it is that people mean when they use the word intelligent or smart in ordinary language; (2) IQ scores are stable, although not perfectly so, over much of a person's life; (3) properly administered IQ tests are not demonstrably biased against social, economic, ethnic, or racial groups; and (4) smarter employees, on average, are more proficient employees. I understand that some of these conclusions may make you uncomfortable or conflict with your personal views, but they are well supported by the research evidence.

All jobs require the use of intelligence or cognitive ability. Why? For reasoning and decision making. High IQs show a strong correlation with performance in jobs that are novel, ambiguous, changing, or in multifaceted professional occupations such as accountants, engineers, scientists, architects, and physicians. But IQ is also a good predictor in moderately complex jobs, such as crafts, clerical, and police work. IQ is a less valid predictor for unskilled jobs that require only routine decision making or simple problem solving.

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