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## Instant MBA

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### [Headnote]

ACADEMIC INSIGHTS MADE INTELLIGIBLE

### PREDICTING MANAGERIAL SUCCESS

Hiring the right manager can be costly if you get it wrong. But a study from researchers at the University of Toronto, McGill University and the University of Hawaii may hold the key for getting it right. They found that computerized "executive intelligence" tests, which assess the cognitive functions of the prefrontal cortex of the brain, accurately predicted managerial competence. Participants who do well can manipulate many ideas at once, avoid impulsive actions and react thoughtfully to novel situations. "This is the first demonstration of the unique potential of executive-function tests to more accurately determine who will and who will not excel," says senior author Jordan Peterson. The addition of these tests to nonstandardized interviews, say the authors, would result in a productivity gain of 33% per hire.

### GROUP WORK = LOWER TURNOVER

If you run a call centre, you've probably experienced huge employee-retention challenges-but a new study proves it's not a lost cause. In their research for "The Canadian Call Centre Report," Ann Frost of the London, Ont.-based Richard Ivey School of Business and Danielle van Jaarsveld of Vancouver's Sauder School of Business found that as much as 31% of the workforce in Canadian call centres turns over each year. That's no surprise, since employees who work phones generally face monotonous tasks, low pay, high performance monitoring and high stress. But their examination of nearly 400 centres found that operations that organized at least 30% of their staff into self-directed, problem-solving work groups had almost half the "quit rate" of call centres with less than 30% of staff in these teams. -KA

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