



PHOTO BY THOMAS WASPER

Looking Up: Scott Kaufman, Humantelligence co-founder and chief executive, at the employee-survey software maker's temporary headquarters in West Los Angeles.

# Mix and Match

Humantelligence's TalentScan personality survey helps customer companies assess and focus employees' abilities.

By **NATALIE JARVEY** Staff Reporter

**F**IVE months ago, Mark Rampolla wanted to find a cheap, easy way to learn more about what makes his employees tick at startup beverage company **Zico** in Hermosa Beach. He was hiring to meet increased demand and wanted to make sure the new workers would mesh with the ones already there.

So Rampolla bought a subscription to TalentScan. In less than a half-hour, his employees could take an online survey to determine their working personality — are they rule-challengers, or decision-makers? — and Rampolla could see the report.

Marina del Rey startup **Humantelligence** launched the TalentScan software in October. The company already has secured financial backing from several L.A. investors and signed up about 50 companies that will try out the service.

Employers can use the personality test, which focus on employees' workplace values, for purposes that range from forming project teams to finding the best way to reward or discipline employees.

"Anyone we're interviewing, we have them do the TalentScan," Rampolla said. "When we hire them, we share their results with the rest of the team and share our results with them. That way they get a sense of who we are as a company."

TalentScan asks a number of questions, such as how someone would prioritize achievement and friendship, or whether a person would rather work on a team or individually.

An annual subscription to TalentScan is based on a sliding scale depending on the size of the client company. For example, the charge is \$1,000 for a 20-person company or \$5,000 for a 100-person company. A subscription gives every employee access to the software. After workers take the survey, TalentScan produces a report on the results and a number of suggestions to help employers use the survey's findings to better work with and manage their employees.

Scott Kaufman, Humantelligence co-founder and chief executive, said TalentScan is meant to be quick and easy to understand, so employees and their bosses don't have to spend a lot of time trying to figure out what the results mean.

"You don't need to learn all sorts of funky vernacular or have a degree in psychology to read the report and understand it," Kaufman said. "If you don't understand something, all the definitions are right there."

Similar personality assessments include a consulting service called StrengthsFinder from famed polling firm Gallup and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, which categorize personality types. But Rampolla said he found TalentScan is quicker, simpler and less costly.

"For a small company like ours, we can't afford the money or time," he said.

Doug Klinger, chief executive of Shelton, Conn., employment services company **LifeCare Inc.** and former president of online hiring company **Monster.com**, has tried a number of personality assessments over the years. He now uses TalentScan at his 350-employee company LifeCare.

"It's just super simple," he said. "I'm hard-pressed to find anything else out there, even

## Humantelligence LLC

**YEAR FOUNDED:** 2008

**HEADQUARTERS:** Marina del Rey

**CORE BUSINESS:** Analytic software

**EMPLOYEES:** 10; up from 7 last year.

**GOALS:** Expand client base to larger companies.

**THE NUMBERS:** Revenue of more than \$100,000 last year.

from a high-priced consultant, that functions like TalentScan does."

## Personality probe

Humantelligence was formed out of Kaufman's first company, consulting firm **YS Interactive Corp.** He co-founded YS, which specializes in helping businesses understand how to reach the Generation Y demographic, in 2003.

When Kaufman was pitching the company's services at Bank of America headquarters in Charlotte, N.C., an executive there told him that the challenge wasn't reaching young customers, but hiring young employees. So Kaufman hired a team of marketing, science and business people to study behavioral science in the workplace and develop a survey.

He had drafted the survey to focus on helping companies recruit and hire employees. A number of large customers signed up for it, including **Wal-Mart** and **Waste Management**, which would bring in more than \$1 million in revenue. Then the recession hit.

"Recruiting was over," he said. "That took us back to the drawing board." That's when, in 2008, Kaufman decided to start Humantelligence. He spun off the company from YS and began to rework the survey so that existing employees could take it instead of potential recruits.

Because of the connections Kaufman made at YS, he was able to get a number of investors on board his new project.

Kaufman said backers include executives at L.A. accounting firms **Rose Snyder & Jacobs** and **Jennings Stein & Co.**, and a number of angel investors. Kaufman has raised more than \$5 million combined from private funding rounds.

After almost two years of testing TalentScan, Kaufman officially launched it in October. So far, Humantelligence has more than 50 customers in the small and medium-size business range; he is now focused on finding bigger clients. The company also recently launched **GroupScan**, which is aimed at organizations and non-profits.

The 10-person company has operated out of an office space in Marina del Rey for two years. But when its lease ended last month, Kaufman did not renew. He's now looking for a smaller space on the Westside.

Kaufman said his company has benefited from giving the TalentScan survey to candidates. Most of his employees like to push boundaries and break rules, no surprise for a startup company, he noted.

"We're a bunch of rule challengers who don't like a lot of structure," he said. "We try to be innovative and do things differently, which is kind of what you'd expect from an early stage company."