



# SKILLS TESTING & SCREENING

From gamification to use in careers guidance, the horizons for skills testing are getting broader and broader. Whereas tests themselves are also getting more and more accurate at narrowing down suitable candidates for hire. The future for assessments really is bright, as Onrec discovers:

Simon Bichara, CEO of HiredByMe has seen much development in pre-employment screening. He says that going back before the financial crisis many clients would rely on their recruitment agent to carry out the appropriate checks, and while they may

have had a right to audit, this was rarely applied in practice. "The world has changed. These days clients (especially in more regulated industries such as financial services, healthcare and energy) are not only specifying in detail what checking needs to be undertaken – they

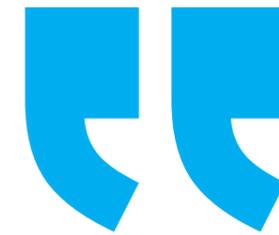
are also carrying out regular audits with significant financial penalties for failure. And to make matters worse, the number and complexity of these checks is increasing year on year, as risk appetite from clients continues to fall." Bichara comments that as a result 'immediately

available' candidates are not really 'immediately deployable'.

Bichara continues: "For contractors and interim managers in particular this has become a burden, with more and more professionals reporting time on the bench while waiting for screening to be completed between roles. In a survey we carried out 70% of contractors were unhappy with current screening processes; and 35% had lost more than £1000 in the last year due to pre-employment screening delays." Later this year his company will be launching the Portable PES, which they believe will address many of the issues in the market –, allowing recruiters to deliver a better service (at lower cost) to candidates and clients alike – with the competitive advantage of getting back to "immediately deployable" candidates. It's also portable from role to role, so that after the first screening only minor "top-ups" are required, considerably reducing the effort required.

Jason Pierce- CEO at skillsarena comments that companies now favour focusing on value-based recruitment and assessing candidates based on their core values and attitudes. Pierce says: "There is a big focus on value based skills. There has been a shift in our customers assessing these before they assess core skills such as numeracy, literacy and IT."

At Cubiks, they've seen an increase in the use of informal self-selection questionnaires or videos that enable candidates to get more information about a role before making the decision to apply, says Kate Sobczak, their Principal Consultant. "In terms of sifting criteria, employers are moving away from educational requirements in an effort to enhance diversity and social mobility. In addition, employers are placing less emphasis on ability tests; with more screening including a wider range of aspects such as job and cultural fit, values, working styles and motivations." Sobczak notes that there has been a bigger call for tablet and mobile enabled assessments, but admits that his technology is still in its early days, and there are significant challenges in its successful implementation – not least because completing tests on the go may mean participants are distracted or could potentially have their connection interrupted.



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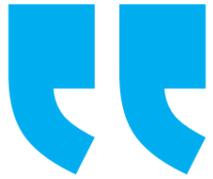
Sobczak looks forward to people assessment processes becoming even more streamlined through time. She says that with more user-friendly ATS platforms emerging, this will make it even easier to provide fully integrated assessment tools. "I'm also excited about the huge benefits that using big data can bring for talent management professionals. As employers gather more and more meaningful data, we'll be able to assist them with using people analytics to get real insight into their workforce, fine-tune assessment practices and build on data to anticipate trends and plan for the future."

Regarding mobile, Andreas Lohff, Founder and Co-Director of cut-e says that though personality testing via mobile devices has become popular, they're now also starting to see a demand for cognitive ability testing on mobile devices. Most employers now have a candidate-centric recruitment process, says Lohff. "Their candidates fully expect to take online tests as part of their initial application. As a result, employers now want to work with vendors who can seamlessly integrate their assessments into the recruitment process and work with their existing application and HR information systems. cut-e has already integrated with more than 30 systems globally and the list is growing. Based on this experience, we've created a 'checklist for success' (<http://www.cut-e.com/advisory/technical-integration>) to help organisations work through integration

challenges. It highlights specific 'points to consider', and questions to ask, to help you transfer data, enhance the candidate experience, ensure standardisation, include the assessments you want, access the results and ensure the security of the data (including how and where it is stored)."

Lohff also reports a growing trend towards pre-application screening and self-selection, with employers increasingly using Realistic Job Previews to help candidates self-assess whether they are right for the roles on offer, and gamified assessments are coming to the fore. "Employers want to attract a wider pool of applicants by providing an entertaining game. However, in their quest to make the selection process distinctive, employers mustn't lose sight of the fact that games are not 'fun to play' when a job is at stake. You have to introduce the right 'gamified assessment', one that will help you make a fair and objective selection decision." The latest global survey at cut-e shows that employers are taking a 'packaged approach' to assessments. Vendors are starting to pre-package specific tests to help low-volume recruiters hire for specific roles which have a proven general profile, such as a retail assistant.

Modern online instruments can even enable employers to offer career guidance says Lohff. For example, cut-e has worked with Siemens in Germany to develop an online 'pre-application' assessment which analyses the preferences and strengths



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Kate Sobczak, Principal Consultant, Cubiks.

of school leavers and helps them choose the right apprenticeship programme. The company offers 200 different apprenticeships, so the results guide young people by suggesting which programme is best suited to them.

Candidates will increasingly want quick and appropriate feedback from any assessments they complete. In the future, Lohff suggests it may be possible for candidates to use their assessment data as a badge when applying for roles (“I’ve scored in the top 10% of the population for problem solving”). However, there are issues around who would store this information and how. Vendors will increasingly create new assessments to meet specific selection needs, such as different aspects of ability. At cut-e, they currently have tests measuring innovation and creativity, ethics, values, team management and strengths as well as all the usual personality, situational judgement and cognitive ability tests. Lohff predicts that there will increasingly be a need to integrate assessments with other HR systems and Applicant Tracking Systems and this will put more emphasis on data protection and data security.

Predictive analytics is becoming increasingly important believes Lohff. A data driven approach to selection allows employers to hire only the individuals who will thrive in the role and the organisation. It helps employers to better determine what success looks like and it impacts on the whole talent acquisition and talent management strategy. The data collected at the selection stage will increasingly be used by employers to help them make talent decisions throughout each employee’s lifecycle.

According to TalentSky CEO and Founder Rick Devine, the latest in online screening and testing is Professional Social Media 2.0 that has a “peer review” method with the promise to expose skill proficiency with greater accuracy. Devine suggests that as the industry moves from jobs to skill demand, people will see specifically what employers are looking for. They can then showcase those skills which the employer can see. “This creates confidence in the navigation of the career, and reduces the need to look for a job. That is, if a person showcases the skills that employers want, and employers can see that development, opportunity will present itself. The employment system needs to evolve to one that speaks a common skills language for all those who work to understand. It’s not about job titles, it’s about skills and skill sets that are in demand.”

## How do you combat fraud and verify results are from the correct candidate?

Andreas Lohff, Founder and Co-Director at cut-e

“You need to create an ‘honesty contract’ with your candidates. Make it clear that they will be re-tested if/when they’re invited for interview and that any major discrepancies will be investigated.

More importantly, you need to make sure that the instruments you use are stable and fake-proof in themselves, by using technologies such as item generator concepts and adaptive testing, but also by designing item formats that are actually hard to break. At cut-e, we have developed all our measurement tools for unsupervised online use from the onset, and always with an eye on how to make them as fake-proof as possible.”

Jason Pierce at skillsarena

- By testing in a controlled environment - you can ask the candidate to come into the office to take the test.
- In the case of remote testing, we provide an honesty statement for the candidate to fill in. We recommend they are re-tested at interview to ensure the results from both tests were clearly answered by the same person.
- We also provide unique methods of validating the candidate at the point of registration.



Empower your Human Resources – recruit, manage and develop key talents



ONLINE SKILLS TESTING



BESPOKE TEST DEVELOPMENT



PSYCHOMETRIC EVALUATIONS



COMPETENCY & SKILLS MAPPING



CONSULTING SERVICES

Pre-test your candidates for the skills you need – giving you the evidence to recruit with confidence