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Ten innovations show the cutting edge of assessment

Howard Grosvenor presents ten cutting edge innovations that can help recruiters make bolder use of assessment to achieve their goals.

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Version 1.0 October 2016

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Today's recruiters want their assessments to deliver four objectives: to differentiate their employer brand, to provide an engaging candidate experience, to deliver process efficiency and, most importantly, to provide robust and objective data about which candidates will thrive in the role and fit their culture.

Consequently, there is an increasing demand for assessments that are more distinctive, appealing and effective. This is triggering greater innovation in the assessment industry. With technology offering new possibilities, now is an exciting time for recruiters. Here are ten cutting edge innovations that can help you make bolder use of assessment to achieve your goals:

1. **Data-informed job analysis.** Technology can help us gather more and better data when we want to find out what activities people do in a job and the knowledge and behaviour required for success. Further, this data may be more readily shared – the O*NET project is a well-established platform for this – leading to greater accuracy in understanding the job space and benchmarking similar jobs against each other. Better job data also helps with targeting training interventions and working out what 'in-role experiences' you need to provide.

2. **New and shorter assessments.** A broad range of assessments is now available, including new tests that measure specific traits, attributes and skills, such as creativity, ethics and team management. Pre-application interactive job previews, as well as development and 'career-choice' assessments, can help candidates to better understand their strengths and choose the right career path. Moving on from item-banks, some of the latest assessments feature 'item generators' that create questions in real time when the assessment is deployed, giving a truly unique candidate experience. To reduce the amount of time that people spend being assessed, shorter, more engaging assessments are now available that can also be completed conveniently on a mobile device.

3. **Realism in assessment.** With video and virtual reality, it's now possible to create assessments that are more realistic than ever before – not just in terms of simulations and realistic scenarios but using realistic people. This means that candidates can now take part in virtual face-to-face role-plays, with a digitised person, at a much earlier stage of the selection process. 'Real' assessments offer employers a new way of differentiating themselves and they have high face validity – in other words, candidates see them as appropriate assessments for the role. However, care is needed when designing 'real' assessments, as there's a danger of becoming so preoccupied by the virtual possibilities, you lose sight of what you're trying to measure.

4. **Predictive analytics.** Today's assessments seamlessly integrate into the recruitment process and work across each organisation's application management and HR information systems. The resultant analytics from assessments will help you to understand what success looks like and allow you to fine tune your process, so your future talent decisions will be even better informed.

5. **Gamification.** Gamification usually means adding game mechanics and approaches into your assessments, such as competition, different levels, badges and point scoring. This is different from a game-based assessment, which takes psychometric measurements from an actual game. Gamification must be thoughtfully deployed. You must introduce the right assessment – one that provides the necessary data points to measure the required traits – so you can make a fair and objective selection decision. Skill is needed here to design a game or gamified assessment that will universally appeal to a diverse pool of talent.

6. **Paradata.** Paradata is the valuable information and insights that can be gleaned from 'how' a candidate completes an assessment, such as their response time or the choices they make. In the past, assessing candidates was like measuring footballers simply by the number of goals they score. Now, so much more information can be generated, similar to a footballer's 'heat map' showing their movement on the pitch, whether they make productive

runs, whether they track-back etc. A similar level of analysis is now possible in assessment. The vast number of data points that are now available from assessments – essentially a vector of behaviour – usually means you can make more accurate decisions about your candidates. Also, because the way each of us processes information and responds in assessment tests is unique, it's now possible to create a 'psychometric fingerprint' for each candidate. Knowing not only what score a candidate achieved but how they went about it can help you to prevent cheating and spot potential.

7. **Easier customisation.** No employer wants to run exactly the same assessments as a competitor, but in the past customisation has been an expensive option. More flexibility is now available, so recruiters can have off-the-shelf assessments with bespoke aspects that make them more engaging or more personalised. You can customise both the 'input' – the format of the assessment and its 'skin' – as well as the 'output', in terms of the analysis and the reports that are produced.

8. **Greater objectivity from video interviews.** Video interviews provide the advantages of low cost and convenience but they can also reinforce unconscious bias. Recruiters can overcome this by providing training for those who will evaluate the videos; by asking clear, structured questions and by introducing a scoring system. You can check the accuracy of your video assessors by adding 'benchmark candidates' into the process. Voice recognition technology is also being developed which can add value to the analysis of video interviews. This technology evaluates psychometric qualities around personality, motivation and cognitive capability by analysing a candidate's vocabulary, tone, pace and syntax.

9. **New-style assessment centres.** The latest assessment centres can help recruiters to engage applicants, provide a personalised and compelling candidate experience and identify who is right for the role. By using tablets, you can deploy video clips and conduct quizzes that can be instantly scored, plus you don't have to worry about printing out materials for each candidate. Customer-interaction role-plays can be undertaken with live actors and new-style teamwork exercises can be developed.

10. **Smarter validation.** The predictive models used in the validation of assessments have become more sophisticated and new ways of predicting attributes are constantly being developed, for example uncovering someone's personality by analysing their Facebook profile using machine learning algorithms. These models can help recruiters understand more about a candidate's likely behaviour.

By adopting these innovations, recruiters will not only sharpen their selection process, hire the right people and make better all-round talent decisions, they'll also obtain far greater value from their assessments.

About the author Howard Grosvenor
Howard Grosvenor is the UK Director of Professional Services at *cut-e*, the international assessment specialist. He designs, implements and leads talent management and assessment projects for clients large and small. As an experienced HCPC-registered Chartered Occupational Psychologist, he understands the practical details of business psychology as well as the strategic agenda of organisations. Howard is passionate about the application of psychology in the workplace and about developing innovative, tailored solutions that meet stakeholder needs.

cut-e is a world leader in the design and implementation of innovative online tests and questionnaires for recruitment, selection and development. *cut-e* helps companies identify people with the right capabilities and cultural fit to deliver optimal business results. *cut-e* carries out over 12 million assessments per year in over 70 countries and 40 languages.