

# Increasing efficiency in apprentice selection with online assessment



Founded in 1927, Meiko designs and manufactures dishwashers, and cleaning and disinfection equipment for the professional catering market. With its headquarters in Offenburg in Germany, where a total of 1,100 employees and 68 apprentices are based, Meiko is represented across the globe through its numerous associated companies. In total, the company employs over 2,000 staff.

As a manufacturing company, Meiko offers great opportunities to apprentices across a diverse range of technical and industrial roles as well as roles based within its warehousing facilities. In addition, apprentices and dual students in the commercial and information technology sectors are sought each year.

## **The challenge: to ensure quality and speed up application times with online assessments**

Getting the apprentices with the right skills and a strong fit with the organisation's culture is very important to Meiko. Traditionally, Meiko has pre-selected applicants based on their school grades and then invited them to complete paper-based assessments at an on-site assessment session. And this was only possible once a certain number of applicants had been short-listed, meaning long processing times for some.

Pre-selecting applicants based on achieved school grades had served the company well in the past but is becoming less straightforward to do. "When we compare the school grades of current applicants to those of previous years, we feel that school grades are now lower. It is also becoming increasingly difficult to make a fair comparison between different schooling models or curricula", explains Ms Heike Böscheck, head of commercial training at Meiko.

As well as this concern, the traditional assessment process of waiting until there were enough applicants to assess face to face didn't allow the agility and speed needed to engage and recruit apprentices in a competitive field. In an area where there are many industrial companies vying for a limited number of applicants, having a more efficient and faster application process than other recruiting organisations can result in a competitive advantage.

With these two goals in mind, Meiko researched solutions and adopted *cut-e* online assessment processes to support it.

## **The solution: identifying requirements together**

To gather the input of all stakeholders in the recruitment process, *cut-e* conducted a workshop at the Meiko Headquarters in Offenburg. The initial task was to define the requirements for each of the various training programmes or tracks so that these could then be converted into distinct batteries of tests measuring the relevant skills and abilities.

As well as using cognitive performance or ability tests, Meiko decided to also ask applicants to complete a work-oriented, self-assessed personality questionnaire *shapes (basic)*. This questionnaire is specifically designed for entry-level positions and requires no previous work experience, therefore ideal for assessing young people and potential apprentices.

Although the results of the competency-based assessment provide a good starting point for discussions with the applicant, Meiko wanted to compare the existing candidate profiles to a desired profile. To do this, Meiko defined a target profile and this was then included in the assessment report by *cut-e* using colour coding to show variances. The final report template is comprehensive and presents the ability test results, the personality profile mapped against the desired profile and an overall fit score.

## **The result: applicants appreciate the speed and flexibility of the new process**

With this in place, candidates are now invited to complete the online test as soon as their application has been received. Test results from the online assessments have now replaced both the school grade-based pre-selection and the on-site paper-based test. Applicants appreciate the flexibility that online testing has brought them. "Now applicants have two weeks in which to complete the online assessment, and they are able to decide for themselves when to do this. They feel less stressed about completing the assessments," says Ms Böschek.

*"Meiko is a good example of how innovative applicant selection processes can be designed. By switching from pencil-and-paper assessment to an online process, Meiko has been able to reduce the time to offer and achieve a fairer and more objective decision-making using relevant assessment."*

Miriam Langner, *cut-e* consultant

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