

Selecting an assessment tool (supplier)



There are many great recruitment tools out there, but how do you choose the right one for your program?

You might have an existing relationship or have never used assessments before, it doesn't matter, you still need to consider a few things when deciding to either choose or stay with a supplier.

While it is good to know who your peers are using, it doesn't necessarily mean they are the right supplier for you. So, what do you need to consider when embarking on a robust supplier selection process? Here are a few things to consider looking at (not necessarily in order of importance):

Reputation: it is good to talk to your peers and understand what has worked/hasn't worked so well, but it is equally important to look at online reviews by candidates (e.g. like Whirlpool Forums). This will give you a good idea of how easy/difficult candidates find it. Remember to look at this objectively. It's highly likely that candidates will talk negatively about any type of assessment, but there may be some insights that will help you better understand the experience from the candidate's perspective.

Integration: if you (because of volume) need integration to be seamless, make sure you get a deep understanding of the relationship between their platform and your applicant tracking system (ATS). Don't take their word for it that integration works, ask them to show you or give you names of other client organisations who use the same ATS so that you can speak to them. This is one area where the 'devil is in the detail'. A poor integration piece can cost you time and resources later. Note, if your applicant volumes are lower (i.e. < 1,000 applicants) you may decide that the cost of integration outweighs the benefits.

Cost: understand how the costing model works and do some calculations based on volumes you expect to use. There are usually two different types of costing models: pay per use or subscription. Depending on the volumes you intend to put through assessment, it may be better to go with an annual subscription, so you know your costs up front (great for budget management). Alternatively, if the numbers are smaller or you will only invite certain candidates to assessment, then a pay per use model might be cheaper. Integration costs also need to be considered as there may be a cost from both the supplier and your ATS supplier (make sure you check this with each party).

Off-the-shelf or tailored solutions: your recruitment process may already be defined, but you should be prepared to allow suppliers to provide suggestions for how their tool adds value to your process (they may even have their own suggested process). Off-the-shelf products will usually be more cost effective, but you will need to make sure they complement your recruitment process and provide you with the data you need to make hiring decisions. Tailored solutions will have a development cost, but it could be worth the investment if you are looking to assess candidates for organisational specific capabilities, values and attributes.

Account management approach: determine what account management setup will work the best for you. Does the supplier provide a specific contact point for you to liaise with throughout your campaign? Is there a help desk or support area for technical issue response? Agree with the supplier how many check-in meetings you will have and whether they will coordinate a campaign debrief to share learnings with you (to form part of your overall review). Lastly, confirm what training you will be provided with and how this will be delivered. If you only do one campaign a year, then reference/training materials might also be very useful.

Candidate experience: questions to ask include; How long do assessments take to complete? What candidate support is provided (e.g. online 24/7 support)? Are there any minimum technology requirements candidates will need to have to complete the assessments? Is reasonable adjustment considered and/or managed for candidates with a disability? Is the assessment available in different languages? Are assessments mobile enabled (particularly if candidates can complete your application form on mobile)? Do candidates receive their result or some feedback from the assessment? Ask for sample assessments so that you can take them yourself (as part of the review), this way you will have first-hand knowledge what the experience is like.

Validity: the supplier should be able to take you through and explain (in simple terms) how their assessments are valid. You need to understand the data that will be captured about your candidates and how you can use this information to make selection decisions. This information gives you assurance that you are using the right assessments for the right reasons. It is also helpful to understand this in case you are challenged either by candidates or by internal stakeholders.

Access to data: the format and accessibility of candidate data/reports is also an important factor. If you are going to collect the data, it is important you can access it easily and in a format that you are able to understand/interpret (unless of course you are an Org Psych). Consider whether the assessments you use for recruitment can also be used to inform your development program (this is where you get double value).

Timeline: you need to be very clear on when go-live is for your campaign and get assurances (in writing) that the supplier can meet your timeline (assuming your timeline is reasonable of course – see below). You can also ask the supplier to give you information around contingencies to ensure you are comfortable that they have plans in place to ensure delivery is on time.

As you can see there is a lot to consider, and this doesn't even include the procurement strategy you may need to follow. As a guide, allow a four-week window to approach suppliers and have submissions submitted and up to an eight-week implementation timeline (if you need to integrate the system with your ATS). In between, it's up to you how long you take to review the submissions and reach a decision (again depending on what procurement policy you need to follow).

I think assessment suppliers (particularly in the Grad space) are generally pretty good and keen to help you implement a tool that will deliver a successful recruitment campaign.

Lastly, don't be afraid to negotiate. Once they better understand your needs, they may be able tailor solutions and work within your budget. You just need to be clear on what is a non-negotiable for you and your organisation, that way if they can't meet it, you can notify the supplier sooner rather than later (and save everyone's time). And on that note, it is good practice to provide each supplier with feedback on why their proposal was not successful.