

Northern Employment Services Chooses Kenexa Prove It!® to Enhance Candidate Assessments

Founded in 1993, Northern Employment Services is a leading independent UK recruitment agency in the North West of England. Each year the company supplies permanent, temporary and contract staff for office, industrial and management positions for more than 200 clients, ranging from SMEs to FTSE 100 organizations.

The company's impeccable reputation for professionalism and efficiency stems from the considerable time it spends in cultivating relationships with key organizations in the area.

"We always strive to exceed industry standards, and we work relentlessly to match ideal candidates to their ideal jobs," said Lynne Townsend, Commercial Branch Manager at Northern Employment Services.

On average, the company registers over 1,500 candidates each year and places hundreds of these candidates into a wide range of temporary and permanent jobs.

An integral part of sourcing for these vacancies is the company's use of skills tests. "We recognize the benefits of being able to guarantee candidates' skills so we can meet the ever-changing demands of our clients," said Townsend.

For many years, the company invited candidates into its offices to register and take skills tests. "In what has been an increasingly competitive environment, it was important for us to maximize time and resources. By having candidates come into our offices, we weren't maximizing the number of candidates that we could register."

Seeking an Alternative Partner

In order to improve efficiency, the company decided to look at alternative vendors. Northern Employment Services spoke with Kenexa about Kenexa Prove It!®, Kenexa's skills testing solution.

Kenexa Prove It! is an automated, web-based skills assessment tool that enables organizations to accurately identify qualified candidates. The system contains more than 1,000 validated assessments for clerical, software, call center, financial, healthcare, industrial and technical job classifications.

"We'd been using our previous skills tests for a long time and we weren't unhappy with them. We found Prove It! offered better quality and better value for the money," said Townsend. "With Prove It!, we could have an all-in-one package. With other providers, it was extra money for this and that."

Internet-Based Administration

The main benefit for Northern Employment Services was the Internet-based administration that Kenexa Prove It! offered. "Candidates are now able to take the tests at home prior to registering," said Townsend. "This has allowed us to increase significantly the number of candidates we can now register."

Offering Kenexa Prove It! skills tests remotely has meant that consultants at Northern Employment Services can spend more quality time with candidates when they meet face-to-face. "It has also meant we have a better gauge of candidates' skill levels so we really know where to probe and also to identify any training needs that may need addressing," added Townsend.

Consultants at Northern Employment Services have access to the complete suite of Kenexa Prove It! tests and most often use Microsoft applications, such as Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint, which are integrated into the system.

Quality of Assessment

The Kenexa Prove It! system provides the company with program simulations. This requires candidates to complete an actual software task in a fully functional software environment. To enhance the simulation, all documented methods of completed tasks are supported, including menu bars, right-click menus and keyboard shortcuts.

“The tests are very easy to administer,” said Townsend. “We have not come across one single problem, and the feedback from candidates has been extremely positive.”

With Kenexa Prove It!, candidates can take tests as normal users or power users, depending on the level of job role they are applying for. This gives consultants at Northern Employment Services greater flexibility in administration.

Results for the skills tests are automatically generated and the candidate report details actual scores, percentage scores, question-by-question analysis and scores by topic.

Presenting Kenexa Prove It! to Clients

Northern Employment Services had also used Kenexa Prove It! as a selling tool with its clients. “Prove It! is an integral part of our introductory discussions with new clients,” said Townsend.

“When we meet prospective new clients, we always give them a demonstration of the system and show them the detailed reports that the system provides about the candidates. Clients want to be reassured that the candidates we present to them for interviews are of the highest quality.”

Benefits to the Organization

The Northern Employment Services team is delighted with the benefits that the Kenexa Prove It! system has provided to the agency. According to Townsend, “Prove It! has brought so many benefits to our organization. We are now able to register more candidates and our clients are extremely happy with the enhanced quality of the candidates they interview. Overall, it has allowed us to increase the speed of all of our processes. It really is the perfect skills testing system for our business.”

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About Northern Employment Services, Ltd.

Northern Employment Services, Ltd. is a privately owned UK recruitment agency with central offices based in Rochdale, serving a geographical market covering the north of England. The company's relentless drive and pride in its work has been constant since its formation in 1993. Website: www.northern-employment.co.uk