

Delivering the UK's Largest Online Testing Contract to the Royal Mail Group

Each working day, the Royal Mail Group collects, processes and delivers more than 84 million items to 27 million addresses across the UK. In recent years the company has undergone a huge transformation and has turned losses of more than £1 million a day into a £537 million annual profit. This success has given it a base to meet its next set of challenges, one of which includes the enhancement of its recruitment processes.

Employing over 180,000 people, the company never had a problem with the quantity of job applicants it receives, but the quality had never been given the priority commensurate with a rapidly developing business. Royal Mail Group wanted to identify those people with the right attitudes sooner, allowing it to reduce its rate of staff attrition and improve the quality of people hired.

"We receive over 250,000 applications a year," said Dianne Crookes, Project Manager at the Royal Mail Group. "At any one time, we have 1,500 vacancies, so we wanted a more efficient and robust process in place that would allow us to concentrate on the candidates who had the potential to meet our business demands."

Reducing Resource Costs

Previously, the process was resource heavy. "Although candidates applied online, we needed to telephone interview candidates before inviting them to an assessment center," said Emma Turner, Development Advisor at the Royal Mail Group. "Invited candidates would then complete a numerical test and a sorting test and were required to attend a line manager interview. Successful candidates would then be offered a job. It was a very long and laborious process."

One of the inherent problems faced by the organization was the

failure of some candidates to actually turn up for the assessment center, adding a further waste to the bottom line.

"We needed to bring in the sifting process much earlier, so we could focus on those who could actually meet the requirements of the role, and reduce our recruitment costs," said Emma Turner.

Selecting Kenexa®

A process was undertaken by Royal Mail's online recruitment partner in conjunction with Royal Mail stakeholders to find a supplier that could provide online tests for its three main brands: Royal Mail, Post Office and Parcelforce Worldwide. "We knew exactly what we wanted and after an in-depth review of the suppliers, we knew Kenexa was the perfect partner," said Crookes. "Kenexa was able to demonstrate it could do what we wanted technically and it had a proven track record."

With over 250,000 applications a year and with candidates potentially completing two online assessments, this project became the UK's largest ever online testing contract.

Reviewing Existing Processes

Kenexa's consultants spent three weeks reviewing the existing recruitment processes and tests as well as visiting sorting and delivery offices across the UK to undertake a detailed job analysis to obtain an understanding of what managers looked for in an ideal candidate.

Designing Customized Questionnaires

Two products were designed—an online sorting test and a 'work style' questionnaire, both of which integrated seamlessly

with the company's recruitment technology. The sorting test is a timed simulation exercise asking people to sort mail initially by postcode and then by full address. The work style questionnaire measures nine key personality traits: agreeableness, compliance, conscientiousness, drive and energy, leadership and influence, management of emotions, openness to change, positivity, and social confidence—traits that were considered essential for a career at the Royal Mail Group.

A series of self selection questions were also developed to enable candidates to gain a realistic job preview of the role that they are considering applying for. The questions allow potential applicants to gain an understanding of their suitability for the role and whether they should consider applying.

"We are now in a position to pre-screen candidates at the beginning of the process," said Dianne Crookes. "When we invite people to the interview stage, we now know they're the people we are most likely to want to hire, and they are the people from the applicant pool that are most likely to be a success in the role."

Business Benefits

This has helped the Royal Mail Group—and its three brands—reduce its recruitment cycle by five days so that within a week, the company can now open up a job, have applicants apply, be assessed and ready for the interview stage.

Since the process has gone live, the Royal Mail Group has been delighted with the results. Emma Turner said, "We've really enjoyed working with Kenexa and sharing its experience. We have different requirements than many other employers, but Kenexa has been very flexible so we could get what we wanted to out of the system."

"When we set out, we wanted to increase our competitive advantage and the perception of the Royal Mail to future candidates, and increase the quality of candidate, while reducing the candidate cycle time. All these objectives have been met and we're now reaping the benefits."

At present, more than 5,000 tests a week are being administered and by next year, the recruitment team is forecasting it will have made substantial savings.

Maurice Harbottle, Head of Recruitment at Royal Mail Group concluded, "Kenexa's tests will bring enormous commercial benefits to our business. An improvement in the quality of staff and a reduction in our staff attrition rate will make an enormous impact on our profit and loss account."

www.kenexa.com
866.391.9557

About Royal Mail Group

Founded over 370 years ago, the Royal Mail Group processes and delivers more than 84 million items to more than 27 million addresses and employs over 180,000 people. Website: www.royalmailgroup.com