

Motor Industry Awarding Body Manages and Delivers Broad Range of Low and High Stakes Assessments with Perception

“providing a more cost effective and efficient way of delivering its tests”

Background

The Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI), a professional association of 25,000 members, is the leading awarding body for the retail motor industry. The organisation has a portfolio of national qualifications, both technical and non-technical and is the only awarding body which is totally focused on the skills requirements of the automotive sector.

With thousands of tests being administered each year, paper-based testing was proving expensive and time consuming for the IMI, and in 2001 the organisation began investigating whether it would be possible to administer the required assessments online. SumTotal was chosen to help manage this process but with over 20 different qualification areas, each with 4 different levels, the IMI had thousands of items and needed an assessment management system that provided ease of use, flexibility and interoperability with their existing LMS.

Solution

In 2005, the organisation chose Questionmark Perception to handle all of their online assessments because of its flexibility and ability to handle such a large project. Eleanor Rose, Qualifications Service Manager at IMI comments, “If we amend a question, or withdraw it, we can do it very easily, whereas previously we needed to involve a third party. This is very important to the IMI as we have huge numbers of items to manage. Perception’s item banking capabilities make this very easy.”

Staff’s hands on control was also greatly increased, making it very easy to manage the 18 000 candidates sitting 5 – 6 examinations each year. The flexibility with Perception made it easy for Subject Matter Experts (SME’s) to provide content without having Perception knowledge. Technical experts can write the questions which are then converted to an ASCII import and passed on to a Perception employee to add graphics. The IMI has found this process very quick and convenient, enabling it to produce good looking questions very efficiently.

Questions are mostly multiple choice, and a successful pilot of Drag and Drop, Text Match and Hot Spot question types has resulted in plans to integrate these into high-stakes exams. The use of online assessments has allowed the IMI to easily administer diagnostic assessments, asking candidates questions about their situation, as well as some knowledge questions. The IMI can then provide instant feedback and recommend an appropriate learning plan for the individual’s situation. High-stakes tests can then be completed using Perception in a local college with an invigilator present.

The IMI’s approved centre network use coaching reports to identify areas and topics that students may still need help with and can quickly pass this information onto students. Eleanor Rose adds “This system has enabled us to achieve much better completion rates.” Item analysis and question statistic reports are also used internally to help the IMI understand if the questions and assessments are valid and reliable – a critical issue for certification tests.

Conclusion

Questionmark Perception has enabled the IMI to significantly increase its market share, by providing a more cost effective and efficient way of delivering its tests to students. Most importantly Perception has provided much greater control over the item bank, giving the IMI the flexibility it needs to deliver thousands of certification tests each year, surpassing original expectations.

More information

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