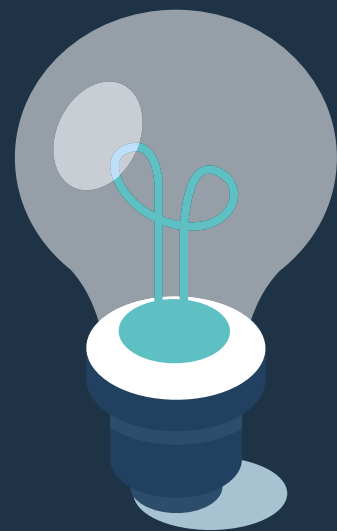# question mark

Exelon®

Reimagining Recruitment Decisions

Hiring decisions matter. How can Exelon make better employee/recruitment decisions

Questionmark

The enterprise-grade assessment platform

How can Exelon make better hiring and recruitment decisions?

Dara,

Thanks for taking the time to read this viewpoint white paper about how Exelon can use assessments, training and certification to improve hiring in a changing business world.

We all understand that the global pandemic caused major challenges for business. For you as a HR leader, I know that staff engagement, retention and satisfaction all had to be rethought for a hybrid or remote working world. And that's where we think this white paper can help. It shows how digital processes will help recruitment thrive wherever you work, and boost your chances of getting the best candidates for important roles. Read it to find out:

- **How testing and assessment can remove your reliance on interviews and avoid recruiting the wrong candidate**

- **What solutions you'll need on side to take advantage of the opportunities provided by remote recruitment**

- **Why future-ready assessments and testing can address unconscious bias, focus job descriptions and identify the best cultural fit for your business**

I hope you find this viewpoint white paper on the next era of training, assessment and certification useful. When you're done I'd love to hear your thoughts and talk to you about how Questionmark could work with Exelon.

Kind regards

Josh Gavin
Business Development Executive at Questionmark

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1. Introduction

"To win in the marketplace you must first win in the workplace" - Doug Conant, CEO of Campbell's Soup

The workforce is more than just a group of employees. It is the team that will determine the success or failure of their employer. Team members are the face and voice of the customer experience. They are the ambassadors for the brand.

The decisions employers make about who they recruit into that team really matter. The right decisions will boost productivity and build engagement. Mistakes will demotivate workers, damage culture, and risk profits.

Yet, despite its importance, the recruitment process is too often riddled with errors. Eight out of ten hirers admit to making a recruitment mistake. Thirty-nine percent of them notice the error within weeks of the new recruit beginning.[1]

Even if 2020 had not been a crisis year, this report would still be needed. Technology is constantly evolving to provide potential solutions to recruitment problems. So is our understanding of unconscious factors that influence our decision making when hiring. These advances can inform and transform hiring decisions. They can be used to tackle common problems with decision making across sectors and industries.

With widespread remote working and the emergence of 'remote recruitment', the questions explored in this report have become more urgent than could ever have been imagined a year ago. Social distancing has forced employers to rethink how they make decisions. Remote *recruitment* is happening even in sectors where remote *working* is not an option.

Some businesses have closed their doors forever. At the same time, others are experiencing unusual demand. Employers must urgently bring in new skills and experiences to the workforce that drive innovation. Tried and tested recruitment techniques may no longer be sufficient.

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[1] https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/long-reads/articles/how-stop-getting-hiring-wrong

Testing and assessing staff pre-hire can give employers the fair, valid and reliable information they need to make better recruitment decisions. After implementing assessment technology, 76% of corporations have seen an increase in the quality of hire.[2] This report will:

- Explore the constant challenges with recruitment, and look at common mistakes
- Examine the 'recruitment revolution' made possible by technology and necessary by social distancing measures
- Explain how assessing staff pre-hire can improve the quality of recruitment

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[2] Brandon Hall Group, Assessing Assessments: Value and Impact

2. Why recruitment is failing to deliver

Each employer faces a unique set of challenges with finding and recruiting the best staff. Some challenges, however, are common across sectors and industries.

Common recruitment errors

1. **Relying too much on the interview** – a growing body of evidence is revealing the problems of 'unconscious bias' in job interviews. Without realizing it, interviewers could make decisions based on factors other than who is best for the job. This will create problems in a world where intellectual diversity is required to drive innovation.

2. **Not creating an accurate job description** – many employers know that job descriptions evolve and that crafting a rigid one can create problems as the team grows. However, if recruiters fail to be clear about the skills and qualities they need, they won't be able to accurately access the caliber of candidates.

3. **Recruiting the second-best candidate** – are some hirers worried that the best candidate might be a threat? Do certain employers fear that a top-rate hire might not stick around? Whatever the reason, not recruiting the best candidate can be detrimental.

4. **Rushing recruitment** – employers may have an urgent need to fill a vacancy. Surely the candidate in front of them is 'good enough' for now? But is this a false economy? Finding a long-term solution to a short-term problem can damage culture and hinder performance.

5. **Looking to replace like for like** – even when acknowledging that it's time for a change, it's tempting to judge a potential recruit on their similarity to the previous post holder. This misses an opportunity for growth and innovation.

6. **Neglecting character and culture** – too narrow a focus on previous experiences and skills can mean missing how likely a candidate is to contribute to the culture, good or bad. Not only can this create problems with turnover, but it can also damage morale and team dynamics.

7. ***Recruiting by instinct*** – it might sound dynamic to 'trust your gut'. But this leads employers to make decisions without sufficient data. While first impressions are difficult to shift, they can be an unreliable indicator of a candidate's future contribution.

8. ***Focusing on strengths and neglecting weaknesses*** – it's natural to identify which strengths a role needs and to make an assessment of each candidate on that basis. However, certain weaknesses can be detrimental in a job role. It's important to identify them and to assess candidates against them.

9. ***Poor screening of CVs*** – a well-written CV often emerges at the top of the sift. But are employers looking for a candidate that knows how to write a good CV or one that has the skills to do the job? Recruiters must make sure they are scanning with the right skills in mind.

10. ***Searching for perfection*** – do employers really need to ensure that every role is filled by a 'strategic operator' with 'outstanding communication skills'. Yes, these things sound good on a job advert. But could they be putting the right candidates off from applying? The more specific the job description, the easier it will be to attract the right applicants and judge them against the correct criteria.

The limits of classic recruitment tactics

Despite the importance of recruitment and the time and money invested in getting it right, the margin for error remains stubbornly wide.

According to a study by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the average cost of hiring an employee is $7,645.[3] The figure will vary between sectors and is substantially higher for senior positions.

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[3] https://toggl.com/blog/cost-of-hiring-an-employee#:~:text=Another%20study%20by%20the%20Society,days%20to%20fill%20a%20position

Yet, despite the sums involved, eight out of 10 hirers admit to making poor recruitment decisions. [4] Even successful recruiters expect an error rate of 40%.[5]
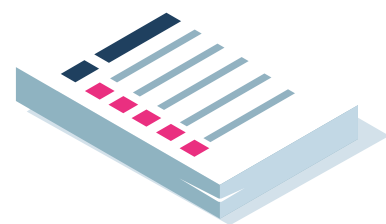
When reviewing the standard recruitment techniques available, perhaps this should come as no great surprise. Eighty-five percent of job applicants confess to lying on their CVs.[6]

In many sectors, interviews have long been the chosen method for sense checking CVs. They are an opportunity for interviewers and candidates to build a rapport, testing chemistry and culture. However, a growing body of research is revealing the problems with this approach.

Since 2006, behavioral scientists have become increasingly aware of how we make decisions. While conscious thought processes play a role, the human brain is influenced by a range of subconscious beliefs that people may not even know exist. Each of these can influence an interviewer's judgment.[7]

The most obvious professional problem with 'unconscious bias' is that interviewers make a decision based on factors that are not relevant to job performance. As a result, they fail to appoint the best candidate.

To combat these challenges, employers must make good decisions around employment and team culture. Section four of the report will explore how assessments can help give recruiters the information they need to make the best possible decision.

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[4] https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/long-reads/articles/how-stop-getting-hiring-wrong
[5] https://www.forbes.com/sites/stephaniedenning/2019/04/27/the-new-hiring-practices-at-mckinsey-and-goldman-sachs/#47c832c0c93e
[6] https://www.inc.com/jt-odonnell/staggering-85-of-job-applicants-lying-on-resumes-.html
[7] https://www.forbes.com/sites/pragyaagarwaleurope/2019/02/20/how-to-minimize-unconscious-bias-during-recruitment/#7816f16f5fd9

3. Making decisions differently: two emerging drivers

With the outbreak of Covid-19, the world changed overnight. As workforces moved to remote working, recruitment was initially deprioritized in most sectors. Recruitment firms reported that significant numbers of their customers suspended hiring initiatives. Others were hesitant about pressing forward.[8] Analysts report that many employers have canceled graduate schemes and other recruitment initiatives.[9]

When it appeared as if social distancing measures might only last a few weeks, this response was understandable. However, with restrictions lingering across the world, employers cannot put off recruiting indefinitely.

Recruitment typically slows in a time of economic uncertainty. However, with the business environment constantly shifting, many sectors have an urgent need to increase capacity. Others must diversify their skill by bringing in new talent.

As recruitment has resumed, two discernible trends can be detected.

1. *The emergency of 'remote recruitment'*

Once it became clear that lockdown measures were going to last, innovative employers quickly looked for new ways of keeping the recruitment process going.

Some have started holding telephone interviews with candidates. Many, however, have found that a video conversation creates a more conventional interview environment, enabling participants to read facial expressions and visual cues.[10]

While these new arrangements have been introduced to respond to the Covid-19 crisis, many are likely to continue. Employers have noted the efficiency of video interviews and are likely to carry on using them, at least as part of an early or pre-screening process. Others have noted that remote recruitment practices create an

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[8] http://www.newsontheblock.com/news-opinion/recruiting-during-the-covid-19-outbreak
[9] https://www.theguardian.com/money/2020/may/18/firms-slash-entry-level-jobs-by-almost-quarter-owing-to-coronavirus-pandemic-young-people
[10] http://www.newsontheblock.com/news-opinion/recruiting-during-the-covid-19-outbreak

automatic audit trail of everything that happens during the process. This creates additional data to analyze and to review if things don't go according to plan.[11]

'Remote recruitment' brings a series of challenges. Some interviewers may find it harder to judge personality and attitude without meeting a candidate face-to-face. This can make it harder to determine whether a potential recruit will be a good fit for the team culture.

In some recruitment processes, candidates are required to sit a pen and paper assessments, occasionally under exam conditions. This is almost impossible to deliver in this way during a time of social distancing.

2. The search for new skills

As the world adjusts to new working and social patterns, some sectors and industries will change forever. Employers are beginning to recognize that they need new skills to adapt, survive, compete, and thrive.

In financial services, the trend toward fintech solutions is accelerating. Some predict that the way people in professional services work, travel and communicate will change forever. While experts believe the traditional retail experience will survive, employers that seek to thrive will have to embrace innovation.[12]

Meeting these challenges may mean bringing in workers with new skills. Relying on tried and tested recruitment techniques may not be enough.

When employers are going through times of great change, the aptitude and attitude of a candidate can be more important than their previous skills and experiences. Aptitude is almost impossible to measure from CVs and application forms.

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[11] https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/long-reads/articles/how-coronavirus-driven-innovation-recruitment
[12] https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewbusby/2020/05/10/how-can-retail-survive-in-the-post-coronavirus-era-five-practical-steps/#62c2ee245938

4. Navigating a new world with assessments

Assessing staff pre-hire can give employers the information they need to make good decisions about recruitment. After implementing assessment technology, 76% of corporations have seen an increase in the quality of hire.[13]

Assessments provide decision-makers with the data they need to make the right call. They drive the decisions that will ensure recruits hit the ground running, boost productivity and build culture.

By introducing assessments with an appropriate assessment platform, employers can address the common, widespread problems with recruitment.

- ***Cutting through unconscious bias*** – by creating an empirical measure of whether a candidate has the skills to do the job. Interviewers can use this data to weigh against their first impressions. They can consider whether any unconscious beliefs are influencing their judgment.

- ***Sharpens focus on job descriptions and*** adverts – when deciding what skills and qualities candidates will be assessed on, employers will have intentionally honed a list of essential skills for the role. These can be incorporated into job adverts and used to attract the most appropriate candidates.

- ***Empirically identifies the best candidates*** – be it in terms of skills, aptitude, or cultural fit, assessments can reveal which candidate best makes the grade. Assessments can even measure a candidate's attitude to loyalty, longevity, and being a team player.

- ***Ensures recruitment process is fully considered*** – integrating assessments into the hiring process guards against rushed recruitment. When hard data suggests someone does not make the grade, employers will think twice about hiring them, even if there is a need for immediate support.

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[13] Brandon Hall Group, Assessing Assessments: Value and Impact

- ***Encourages hiring for today and tomorrow, not for yesterday*** – assessments sense check the tendency to replace a vacating staff member with a candidate who is cut from the same cloth. They focus minds on the skills needed for the role, not those that have come to be associated with it.

- ***Identifies potential cultural fits*** – assessments don't just measure skills. Employers can test character attributes and attitudes. They help shine a light on which candidates will seamlessly integrate into the team's culture.

- ***Encourages intellectual diversity*** – when people recruit by instinct, they are likely to hire Encourages intellectual diversity people who remind them of themselves and their existing workforce. Assessments help employers proactively seek and identify the skills and qualities which are missing from the existing team.

- ***Pre-screen for detrimental weaknesses*** – job interviews, applications and CVs encourage people to list their strengths. But every job role has weaknesses that can either not be accommodated or need to be flagged in advance. Assessments can reveal where these lie among those applying for positions.

- ***Removes reliance on CVs*** – given widespread errors on CVs, their reliability is increasingly questioned. Assessments remove any doubt over whether a candidate has the required skill or the aptitude to develop it. This is especially important when employees are transitioning between industries and it is not immediately clear which skills are transferable.

Remote assessments with Questionmark

As the world moves toward 'remote recruitment' it is vital that the assessing of candidates pre-hire can be managed effectively online.

Even in a world where social distancing was not a reality, pen and paper assessments, or using a basic assessment platform can create as many problems as they solve. Marking assessments is time-consuming and laborious. Results are hard to analyze. It is hard to compare the results of an individual candidate against the cohort.

Changing questions to modify the assessment for different job roles can be complicated.

An effective online assessment platform must:

- Ensure an unlimited number of test-takers can participate, often from anywhere in the world. When dealing with a high volume of applicants, remote testing can help pre-screen candidates and identify which are worth calling for interview.
- Instantly mark and analyze results. It must be easy to spot trends and patterns. A candidate's performance against the rest of the cohort must be quickly judged.
- Guard against cheating with features such as randomized questions feature. In higher stakes assessments, such as graduate recruitment schemes, the platform must provide some form of proctoring or invigilation.
- Provide a variety of question types and formats so that a wide range of skills and attitudes can be tested.
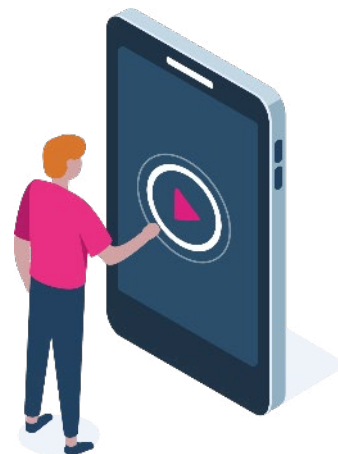
5. Conclusion

"Culture eats strategy for breakfast" – Peter Ducker

As the world moved to widespread remote working, employers have been forced to reimagine recruitment. Previous tactics have proved difficult to execute. Employers need to seek a greater range of skills to meet the demands of a changing business environment.

However, many of the common challenges with recruitment are long-term and widespread across sectors and industries. Too many employers are failing to make the best possible decisions about who they bring into their team. As a result, culture and productivity suffer.

Assessments can help employers identify which candidates have the skills to thrive. They can cut through unconscious bias and help recruiters select the employees that will drive innovation. In a world where people are expected to change sectors and industries, assessments can reveal which candidates have the relevant skills and the aptitude to adapt.

We are the world's leading provider of online assessments. We have helped employers across the world transform their recruitment and hire the best team. We would love to begin a conversation with other employers about how we can help them do the same.

Can we help?

I hope this white paper has been useful and given you some valuable insight about how Exelon can improve hiring in a hybrid working world. Please do get in touch with me by phone or email to find out more about how we can work together.

Josh Gavin

Business Development Executive at Questionmark

+44 (0)207 561 5307

josh.gavin@questionmark.com

About Questionmark

Questionmark provides a secure enterprise-grade assessment platform and professional services to leading organizations around the world, delivered with care and unequalled expertise.

Our full-service online assessment tool and professional services help customers to improve their performance and meet their compliance requirements. Questionmark enables organizations to unlock their potential by delivering assessments which are valid, reliable, fair and defensible.

Questionmark offers secure powerful integration with other Learning Management System, Learning Record Service and proctoring services making it easy to bring everything together in one place.

Our cloud-based assessment management platform offers rapid deployment, scalability for high-volume test delivery, 24/7 support, and the peace-of-mind of secure, audited U.S., Australian and European-based data centers.

Working with Questionmark

To further explore how Questionmark could work for your organization, or to book a demo, please see:

https://www.questionmark.com/request-demo/

question mark

Questionmark Corporation

 35 Nutmeg Drive

Suite 330

Trumbull, CT 06611

United States

Tel: +1 (800) 863 3944

info@questionmark.com

Questionmark Computing Ltd.

Moor Place

1 Fore Street

London, EC2Y 9 CT

United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)20 7263 7575

info@questionmark.com