

Attractive and efficient sales selection



The challenge: selecting sales staff from a large pool of applicants

Allianz is one of the world's leading financial services providers. Around 150,000 members of staff look after 83 million private and business customers in more than 70 countries, and all are committed to providing reliability and financial strength, avoiding risk and exploiting opportunities. As leading property and accident insurers and one of the largest asset managers worldwide, Allianz is committed to adopting and implementing a sales staff selection process which is consistent and effective. This will enable the Group to continue to be represented by highly capable and skilled employees and, with up to 15,000 applications made to this division each year, a robust recruitment process is needed.

The solution: designing a valid and tailored preselection process

Allianz has been using an online process to help select customer advisers and sales personnel (defined according to §84 of the German Commercial Code), as well as its general and senior representatives. But the changes in the financial sector in general, and more specifically within sales, prompted Allianz to adjust the requirements and competencies of future sales people. As well as updating its sales competency model which was to be used as the basis for selecting suitable staff, Allianz also redesigned its online preselection process. A project group comprising both human re-sources strategy experts and sales managers was involved in this online assessment redesign and *cut-e* was selected as the external project partner.

Objectives of the assessment redesign

- Create a close alignment between the post and the defined job requirements
- Enable a differentiated and tailored processing of results
- Deliver a transparent selection process
- Provide simple administration and efficient use of Allianz resources
- Support recommendations which can be made centrally, and enable decisions to be made locally
- Provide useful information with direct bearing on the subsequent selection inter-view
- Portray a modern and attractive impression of the business

To determine the logic for, and appropriateness of, the newly designed selection process, a validation study was carried out with existing Allianz staff. This meant that the factors between current sales staff could be studied and the ideal test content for the Allianz sales force target group determined. The basis for the online assessment redesign was then combined with the Allianz sales competency model.

The outcome: successful and attractive preselection via online assessment and a well-informed interview

During the project work, it quickly became clear what needed to be changed. The previous online sales questionnaire was replaced by one with a more stringent answer logic, making it harder for applicants to second-guess the desired responses. An additional situational judgement questionnaire was also introduced featuring real-life sales situations at Allianz which tested applicants for likely successful behaviour in the scenarios concerned. Lastly, a proficiency test was added to assess the effective and accurate handling of different kinds of information.

By introducing these three assessments, a tailored and significantly more robust selection process was developed. The result of this was a better quality of candidate being invited to the subsequent local interview. With the modern and appealing design of all the assessments, the firm's new recruitment process ensures that all candidates take away a positive impression of Allianz, regardless of whether or not they are appointed. To help in these interviews, *cut-e* compiled suitable interview guidelines for each candidate for Allianz based on the candidate's individual online assessment results. Using this interview guide ensures that each competency is objectively appraised at the interview stage.

It was important to look at the suitability of those candidates identified in the preselection stage who were then invited to a face-to-face interview. This exercise proved to be invaluable and highlighted the close fit between the performance in the interview and the earlier, upstream online assessment results.

"Collaboration with cut-e really has been a complete success! With the new online assessment we are achieving an even better understanding of candidates' sales aptitude and likely success in the Allianz corporation. In doing this, any frustration or bad decision by either party can be avoided."

Alexandra Thiel, Head of Recruitment at Allianz Sales Personnel Development

"The redesign of the selection process is saving a lot of resource and providing us with the perfect preparation for local interviews. This is a great help, especially for managers who aren't involved with employment processes day in, day out. We anticipate a significant improvement in the quality and professionalism of the selection process."

Frank Stelter, Head of Personnel Recruitment at Allianz Sales Directorate, Hamburg

"At last there is a genuine connection between the online assessment and the interview – a good range of tools you can go deeper with and the integration of all the components in the application management system is first class. With these new tools I'll save time as any unsuitable applications are filtered out. The new online assessment really does the business and the new interview guidelines, which are based on the online assessment results, are excellent."

Attendees at the *cut-e* online assessment implementation seminar at Allianz Sales Directorate, Stuttgart

You can do it, too! Contact us.

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