

EMEA Assessment centre delivered against tight timescales

The Client need

Our client, a leading global commercial real estate services firm, operates in 60 countries with revenues in excess of \$5 billion. In EMEA it sought to integrate and transform its infrastructure support functions including the finance function. It had embarked on an outsourcing partnership to deliver value and increased global competitiveness.

This outsourced relationship meant the EMEA finance function would reduce from 180 roles to just 21 roles in a retained corporate finance function (across Europe). Our client needed an experienced organisation to develop and run a selection assessment centre to assess internal applicants against the new role profile criteria. EMEA leadership roles included Finance Contract Manager, Reporting Controller, FP&A Reporting Lead and Senior Financial Analysts.

Due to an ambitious project plan, the deadlines and timeframes were very tight and the brief required all design, development, assessor briefing and the assessment centre process to be completed within three weeks.

What we did

Following detailed client discussions, our consultants reviewed the competencies for the roles and developed a set of behaviours to assess all candidates irrespective of the specific skill requirements of the role. It was agreed that the expert knowledge required for each specific role would be assessed through a separate “technical interview”.

We developed a robust assessment framework to give all candidates equal opportunity to demonstrate the required behaviours. A variety of exercises were developed, including a mix of observed assessments, case study work, competency based interview, situational interview, technical interview and on-line psychometrics. In addition we ensured that:

- Each candidate was assessed by multiple assessors
- Each competency should be measured at least 3 times
- Each exercise should measure a maximum of 4-5 competencies

Building in a range of activities ensured a fair and consistent approach where every candidate had the same opportunity to demonstrate their ability and was less likely to be open to challenge.

The client brief also required that the process utilised the internal Finance Leadership team and some of the HR team as assessors, to work in conjunction with the Asesoria team on the assessment day. We therefore produced and developed a detailed timetable to ensure that the Finance Leadership team were able to assess their potential hires as well as assessing other individuals during the day. This involved detailed modelling and frequent changes.

Also, we provided support for candidate and assessor joining instructions, training of assessors, development of exercises and the assessor & candidate materials to be used on the day. The materials were jointly branded with detailed instructions covering every process during the day, addressing the separate needs of both candidates and the assessors.

We worked in partnership with our client throughout to ensure the project brief was met, within the specified timescales.

We were responsible for delivering the following processes during the three week project:

- Development of competencies/behaviour cues and scoring scale
- Designing a range of exercises – competency based interview, case study exercise, situational interview and technical interviews
- Development of marking frames for each activity
- Structuring a detailed timetable for the assessors and candidates for the day
- Develop instructions for every exercise for use by the candidates
- Creation of detailed assessor binders containing all materials for use by assessors
- Development of scoring criteria and definitions
- Design of marking frames for each individual exercise
- Development of a master scoring framework
- Development of training presentation pack
- Training & guidance on how to assess, what behaviours to look for and detail on each exercise for the Finance Leadership Team
- Briefing the HR team on the exercises to be used
- Centre management and providing an experienced assessment centre manager
- Provision of administration support for the assessment centre
- Provision of experienced and qualified assessors for the centre
- Facilitation support during the wash up process
- Design of a feedback mechanism to be used with all participants

Outcome

The client had achieved the aim of assessing anyone who had applied for a new role in the EMEA corporate finance function. They were happy that the assessment process was objective and Asesoria's independent perspective (our assessors) was highly valued. The results of the assessment day were the main sources of evidence on which appointment decisions were made, enabling our client to have evidence of the best possible match of individual talent with the demands of each role. Approximately 40% of the candidates were successful but the process was sufficiently flexible to enable the client to assess people for different roles. The candidates felt the process was fair and transparent with no appeals, complaints or grievances raised.

What our client said

“We found the Asesoria Group consultants to be extremely professional, very knowledgeable and willing to work closely with us to a tight deadline. They were well qualified and experienced in assessment design & development, and we found them flexible and straightforward to work with. It was a pleasure to work with them and I would not hesitate to get them involved in a similar project in the future”.

What the assessed candidates said (exact quotes from feedback given):

“I felt well informed. Process was fair and transparent”.

“The briefing was very complete – and the entire process was well organised. We knew exactly what to do and when”

“Everything was organised in a professional way”

“Entirely appropriate” (Were the activities appropriate for the role you are applying for?)

“Challenging day, but very well run”