

# Driving change

in recruitment

Ensuring a robust and efficient recruitment system at Octapharma

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## The challenge: introducing an objective, informed and timely recruitment process – accepted by the managers

Ms Kristina Jakobsson, HR strategist at Octapharma Stockholm, comments: “Our organisation is diverse with very varied skill sets, professions, backgrounds and nationalities working together. With such a specialised business, the attrition rate is low with people choosing to stay with us. This means that there needs to be a strong emphasis on making sure we select and recruit the right people in the first place. With regard to recruitment, we want our line managers to be as self-sufficient as possible and capable of managing the applications, and deciding who – and who not – to employ.”

However, as the company had grown so rapidly, its recruitment process remained undeveloped and was not geared up to supporting the talent acquisition programme needed. There were no recruitment or assessment tools in place and the process itself meant that there was little applicant engagement. Recruitment was often devolved. While managers and shift leaders were already self-sufficient to some extent, they worked independently, often choosing to advertise, shortlist and interview for their own teams without consulting other parts of the business. CVs were often reviewed by different managers but, acting in silos, there was no shared record or flow of this information.

Furthermore, with approximately 200 job titles and profiles, some positions attracted many applicants, while others had none apply. This led to managers either appointing someone they already knew or them waiting for applicants as they had limited possibilities to determine the potential for development across functions of current staff.

Interviews were mixed and the key characteristics of all employees – those of diligence, exactness and meticulousness and the ability to follow instructions – could not be assessed during selection. Recruitment was often ineffective and this led to a feeling of being constantly under-resourced.

## The solution: making effective use of online screening tests and interviewing

Ms Jakobsson knew what Octapharma Stockholm needed: a new CV screening process and recruitment system integrated with a series of online assessments for use in the early stages of selection which could also accommodate video interviewing. The company began to work with cut-e and, in particular, its *shapes* personality assessments.

Ms Jakobsson explains the need for a new screening process, saying: “Our managers had been reading thoroughly all CVs sent to them. In our company, there are many experts in the fields of chemistry, microbiology and process engineering but, naturally, we are not all experts at selecting people from CVs. Putting a lot of effort into reading every word in a CV does not provide great candidates!

We decided to rethink our process. We are now better at matching jobs to candidates and the opportunity to introduce profile matching with other roles in the business. Therefore, even if there are no direct applicants for a job role, other applicants with profiles which may have a suitable degree can now be considered.”



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The key areas for assessment were to measure meticulousness, the ability to follow instructions, the Swedish language and cognitive capacity - as well as measuring the Octapharma characteristics of a flexible, 'can do' attitude, emotional stability and the ability to manage stress.

Octapharma has also introduced video interviewing which is particularly useful when interviewing shift and night workers. It means that candidates are able to record and share online videos of themselves responding to a small set of interview questions asked by the recruiters. This improves the standardisation of interviews, as exactly the same question is asked. Also, it allows the recruiting manager to review and compare the responses alongside each other. Face-to-face interviews are the next part of the selection process and, for some positions, assessment days have also been designed.



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## **The outcome: reliable and relevant information allowing managers to make good decisions with high ownership of the process and outcome**

A total of 1,000 applicants go through this selection process each year. Despite the thorough and comprehensive online assessment, which combines information from a number of tests, the results are understandable, valuable and accessible. They also support the regional directors effectively in their selection processes.

Ms Jakobsson summarises what Octapharma has achieved during this shift to a new recruitment process, saying: "We aimed for self-sufficiency in critical areas by the line managers and we have realised this. They are now able to screen the applications using objective tests. Measuring the skills and attributes candidates need to be successful within our organisation – now and in the future. Line managers watch the video interviews, share them with relevant colleagues, select candidates and reject others quite easily."

"It was important for us to train and skill-up all those involved in the recruitment process so that there is ownership by the line managers of the process and the people they select. In fact, they were keen to manage relevant parts of it themselves."

Some managers were sceptical of the value that screening tests could bring. However, Ms Jakobsson has demonstrated their use by explaining the profiles of unseen candidates from test results and summarising how they are likely to behave – as well as comparing between candidate profiles and highlighting points of difference – with very good accuracy.

Octapharma has a robust and efficient recruitment system that highlights candidates with the right skills for the company.

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### **About Octapharma**

Octapharma is the world's largest privately-owned manufacturer of protein-based pharmaceuticals. The company produces blood plasma-based and recombinant medicines to support haematology, immunotherapy and trauma use. With plans to more than double its output in production in Stockholm within two years, it has been recruiting intensively to add to its current 700-strong workforce. Its challenge has been to introduce a more objective, informed and timely process that is owned by its recruiting managers.

## About cut-e

Founded in 2002, cut-e (pronounced 'cute') provides online tests, questionnaires and gamified assessments for attraction, selection, talent management and development. The company's smart, valid and innovative psychometrics have made it the preferred partner of multinational organisations.

In May 2017, cut-e was acquired by Aon plc, a leading global professional services firm providing a broad range of risk, retirement and health solutions. cut-e now operates as part of Aon's global offering in talent solutions, helping clients achieve sustainable growth by driving business performance through people performance. cut-e and Aon, as Aon's Assessment Solutions, undertake 30 million assessments each year in 90 countries and 40 languages.