

Are you **switching on** or **switching off** your applicants?

Applicant and Recruiter Perceptions of Online Recruitment

2018 Survey



Are you switching on or switching off your applicants?

In a competitive market, recruiters' understanding of what **switches on** and what **switches off** applicants is a critical factor in ensuring those of the highest caliber continue through the recruitment process to the final selection stages.

Decisions about what the online screening process should include are made by recruitment professionals based on the management information they receive and their perceptions of their applicant pool. But are they collecting the right information and are these perceptions accurate?



Understanding what is really important to applicants will help switch them on to your selection process.

To help recruiters **get these vital decisions right**, we carried out two representative UK surveys via an external independent online sampling and data collection specialist. Recent job applicants (N=1029) and organizational recruiters (N=200) were asked a number of key questions relating to the online screening process to help us ascertain:

1. What is really important to applicants?

2. What impact does the applicants' recruitment experiences have on their decisions to subsequently buy an organization's products or services?

3. What is the maximum time applicants are willing to invest in a recruitment process?

4. What technology is important to applicants?

5. What are the factors that will switch applicants on or switch them off?

Mind the gap

What is really important to applicants?
And do recruiters know?

To answer these questions, we surveyed applicants to find out what is really important to them. Their answers were reviewed against recruiters' responses to corresponding questions.

91%
of applicants

want the online recruitment screening process to result in a job they want to stay in.

What's important?



The factor rated as most important by applicants was that the online screening process "**Results in a job that I want to stay in.**" Fewer recruiters rated this as being of high importance.



The second most important factor to applicants was a process that "**Ensures I will be selected for a role to which I am well suited.**" Fewer recruiters placed importance on this factor.



The most important factor to recruiters was having an online process which **motivates candidates to want to work for the organization.** Applicants rated this as fourth most important overall.



A process that "**Is fair to all candidates**" was one of the top-rated importance factors for applicants and recruiters, though applicants did rate this a little higher overall.



Another top-rated area by both applicants and recruiters was a process that "**Gives a positive impression of the organization's brand.**"

What's less important?



Overall applicants and recruiters both gave their lowest importance ratings to **“Assessing candidates with computer-like games.”**



Similar low importance ratings were given by applicants and recruiters to **“Uses multimedia video/computer-generated graphics and audio.”**



“Is quick to complete” was rated as less important by both recruiters and applicants.

The biggest differences between applicant and recruiter perceptions of what is important were on the two factors rated as most important by applicants.

- Applicants want the process to **result in a job that they want to stay in.**
- Applicants want to be ensured that they **are selected for a role to which they are well suited.**

These two factors relate to the single most important aspect of any selection procedure - **validity.**

Validity, validity, validity!

It is important that the assessment procedure correctly identifies the individuals who are most likely to be effective in the role and are therefore likely to stay the longest.

- Use well-researched and valid assessments.
- Always ask the assessment provider for validity data on any test that is being considered as part of the overall online selection process.
- Drive return on investment by focusing on finding better people who stay longer (this will also drive stronger organizational performance).

Retention matters to applicants as much, if not more than, it matters to recruiters!

91% of applicants want the online screening process to result in a job that they want to stay in. This may appear counter-intuitive to much of the current press regarding millennial career planning suggesting this age cohort are more likely to job hop. Across the board there is a general perception that people in work today will not stay in a job for life and may have several employers (potentially including being self-employed). Our data suggests that applicants are very much looking for a job that is a positive destination in which they will want to stay for some time.

Recruiters rated the corresponding item regarding retention lower than the majority of other factors in our survey. However, despite this, it was still seen as important by 87% of our sample. This may well be a reflection of the cost and time involved in the recruitment process.

When recruiters were asked to rate how effective they thought their process is at identifying new employees who will stay for a long time, 72% of them believed their organization's process was effective at this. But this indicates that over a quarter of recruiters think their organization's recruitment process is not as effective as it could be when it comes to retaining new employees for a long time.



91% of recruiters

felt it was important that the process motivates applicants to want to work for the organization.

Recruit to retain

Better retention will improve the return on investment from the recruitment process and has strong links to better engagement which in turn drives better performance. Retention is important to applicants. This presents an opportunity for recruiters to demonstrate retention at the selection stage and ask themselves:

- Are they communicating positive talent retention metrics as part of their talent attraction strategy?
- Are they measuring retention and monitoring which aspects of the assessment are most predictive of retention?

Reflecting on organizational brand

The online screening process is a great opportunity for applicants to see an organization in action. Get this wrong and recruiters risk turning away high-potential future employees.

Recruiters are clearly recognizing the important role that the online screening process can have in motivating applicants and helping to sell the organizational and employer brand. Likewise, 86% of applicants feel that it is important that the online process helps motivate and encourage them to want to work for the organization.

The online screening process not only represents the job role to which applicants are applying to but also reflects the whole organization. 90% of recruiters want a process that gives a positive impression of their brand and 86% of applicants want to come away from the process feeling positive about the organizational brand they are applying to.

Give your online screening process a quick health check.

Consider the following:

- Is it clear what the online recruitment process entails from the start?
- Is a Realistic Job Preview being used?
- Does the process demonstrate that you use up-to-date technology?
- Is the recruitment process rated as high-quality by your applicants?
- Are applicants assessed in areas which they can see are relevant to the job?
- Is timely feedback given?
- Is there someone who can answer queries in a friendly and efficient way?
- What does the process say about the organization as a whole?

Always think about the process from the applicant's perspective and make the organization feel like somewhere they would want to work.

Repercussions of a negative recruitment experience

Do applicants' recruitment experiences influence their decisions to subsequently buy an organization's products or services?

The potential repercussions of a negative experience can multiply. Not only can you lose great applicants; news travels fast and future applicants can be deterred from applying. Applicants demonstrate their dissatisfaction by taking action. They and their network may simply switch products or services, which if you are a consumer business, can prove very expensive.

One leading telecommunications company found that over an 18-month period, **7,500 unsuccessful applicants** terminated their subscription, equating to a **loss of \$6.2 million.**

Our survey data showed that just under half of our applicant sample have at one time or another switched product or services from an organization as a result of a negative experience during an online recruitment process.

Applicants invest significant time in the screening process. Organizations need to ensure even rejected applicants leave the process with a positive impression. A poor process reflects negatively. Being an applicant in the digital age means bad experiences can be quickly shared – Twitter, Wikijobs and Glassdoor are just a click away.

Recruiters can and should check their online reputation in relevant chatrooms thereby obtaining qualitative data to complement the quantitative data from surveys. It is good to know how positively or negatively the recruitment process is perceived.



Sweeten the rejection!

Good feedback can help make rejected applicants more positive about the recruitment process and the organization. For example, Jaguar Land Rover provided rejected candidates with a specially-commissioned feedback report. This summarized candidate strengths along with suggestions as to how they could improve themselves to increase their chances of success for future applications, whether that be with Jaguar Land Rover or another organization. This was very well received and ensured that all participants obtained useful feedback on the time and effort they had invested in their application.

The importance of time

What is the maximum time applicants are prepared to invest in the recruitment process?

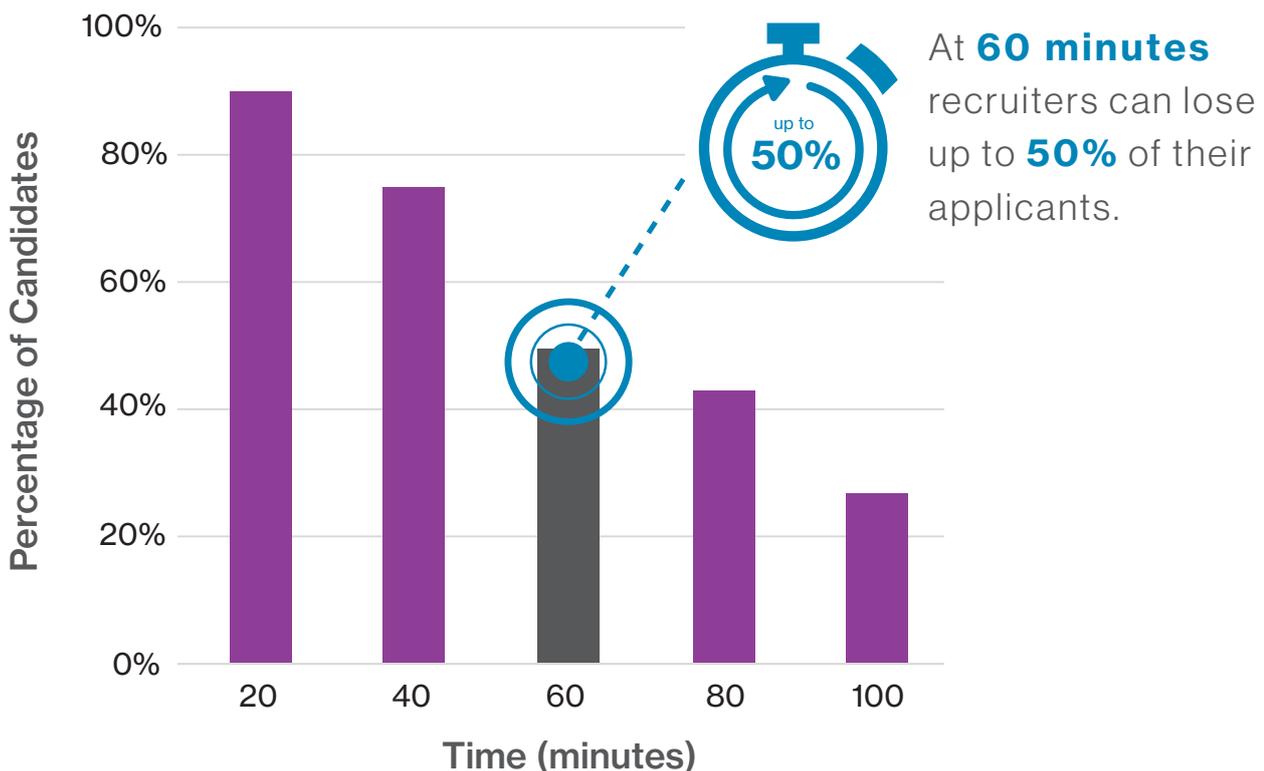
Whilst it was not rated as one of the most important factors for applicants in the survey, 71% still felt it was important that the online process was quick to complete. The question of 'how long is too long?' is useful for recruiters to know when it comes to online screening.

Applicants increasingly demand clarity about how long things will take. The digital generation expect things to be more immediate than their predecessors. Many applicants will apply to numerous organizations simultaneously and the time it takes to complete each application has a considerable impact on whether the applicant will switch off.



Two thirds
of applicants rated having an online process which is quick to complete as important to them.

How much time are candidates willing to spend on the online recruitment screening process?

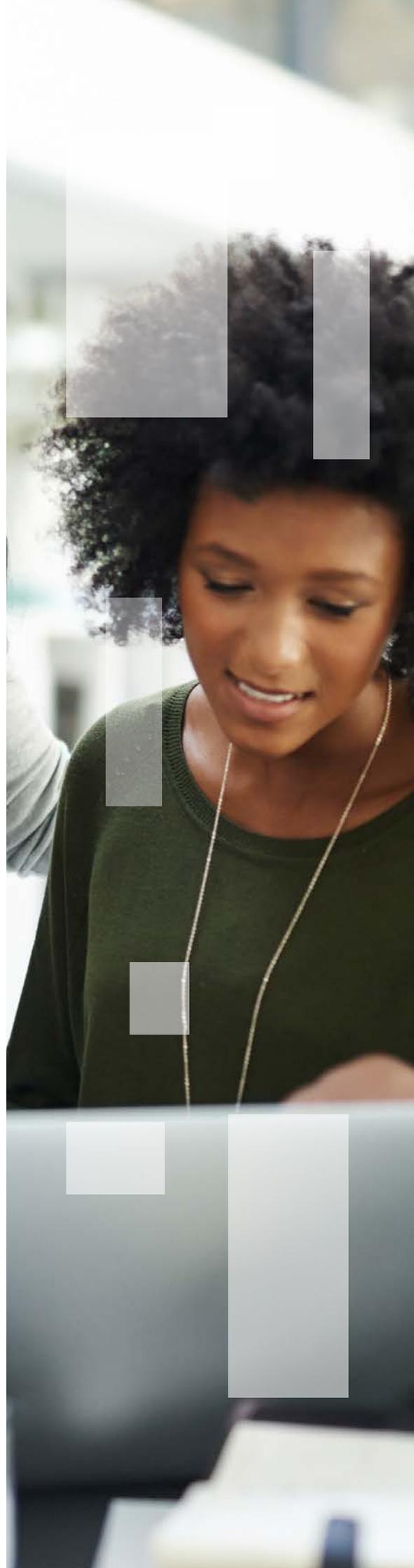


The data demonstrates that if an online screening process takes longer than 60 minutes, organizations can potentially lose over half of their applicants.

Drop-out candidates result in the wasted cost of upfront assessments, additional time and the increased likelihood of losing the best applicants, potentially to competitors. Drop-outs are also more likely to be negative about both the process and your organization, e.g. "It was boring", "It took far too long".

Top tips to accelerate the process and ensure the quality of applicants.

- Focus on the most time-effective methods which give you the best data to make decisions.
- Use screening tools which have demonstrated high validity.
- Avoid candidate drop-out by ensuring testing time takes no more than 30-40 minutes.
- Use assessments which give you the most valid data in short assessment times.
 - Swift aptitude assessments allow for multiple aptitude areas to be assessed within one single time-efficient test.
 - Strengths behavioral screening and / or short bespoke situational judgment tests allow recruiters to obtain more information that can help make decisions in shorter time-frames.

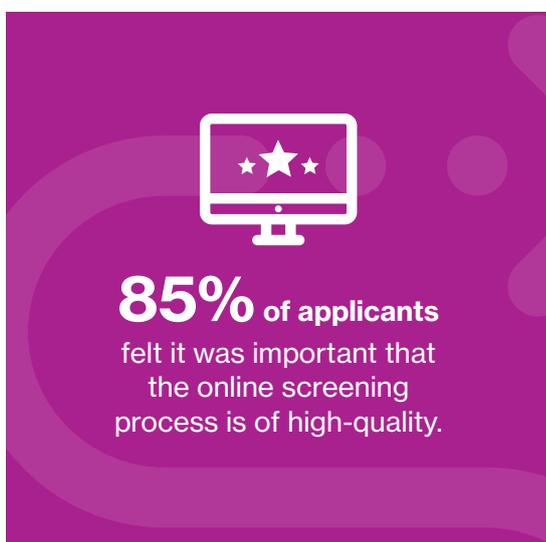
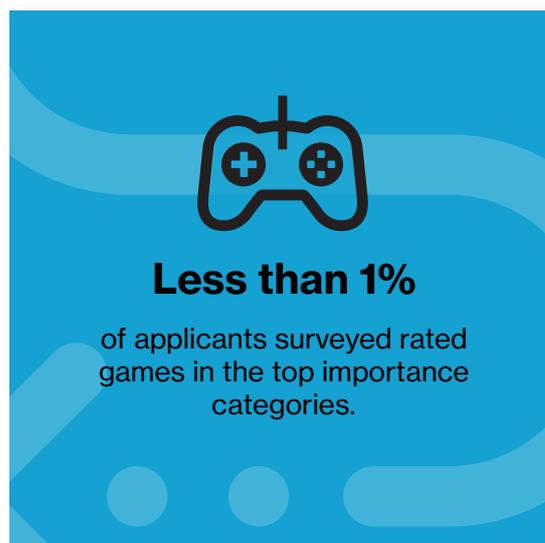


The role of technology

What technology is important to applicants?

There has been a lot of hype around the use of games and multimedia solutions in the recruitment market, particularly in the early-careers market. Much of the reported attraction is linked to the assumption that games and multimedia solutions particularly appeal to modern digital applicants.

The use of games and multimedia/computer-generated graphics were rated as the two least important elements for both applicants and recruiters in the survey. The data showed that recruiters are marginally over-estimating the importance of these types of solutions – i.e. they think they are more important to applicants than the data suggests they are. Recruiters tend to favor multimedia and game solutions more than applicants do.



Despite the market interest in gaming/multimedia recruitment solutions, our data is suggesting that this trend may not be as pronounced as some recruiters think it is. Applicants are looking to find a job that they will want to stay in and be assured that they are being selected for a role to which they are well suited. They want to have a fair chance to showcase their skills and be selected for a job that is right for them.

The answer to getting it right is perhaps a more focused approach to assessment. An approach that allows recruiters to screen out on the areas demonstrated to have the most impact on performance in the role. In doing this, the focus is on the areas rated as most important to applicants and recruiters.

Both recruiters and applicants can be drawn to a screening process that is high-tech, whizzy and fun for the applicant to complete. However, it is important not to lose sight of the fundamentals. Ultimately, good selection has to be about getting the right person in the right role. This is not to say that there is no place for high-tech/great technology in the online screening process.

When Jaguar Land Rover wanted to overhaul their existing apprentice and graduate recruitment processes they invested in a high-tech solution featuring a bespoke situational judgment test. This validly selected in the best applicants and kept them engaged throughout the process. It showcased their brand with 3D car engineering graphics. This allowed applicants to see and feel that they were applying to an organization at the front-end of the automotive industry.

The use of impressive technology and graphics is of course not going to be suitable for every organization and budget. However, all organizations should be taking some time to consider what the user experience will be like and what the design of the assessment will say about the organization's brand and values.

Five questions to ask to ensure the process is high quality from end-to-end:

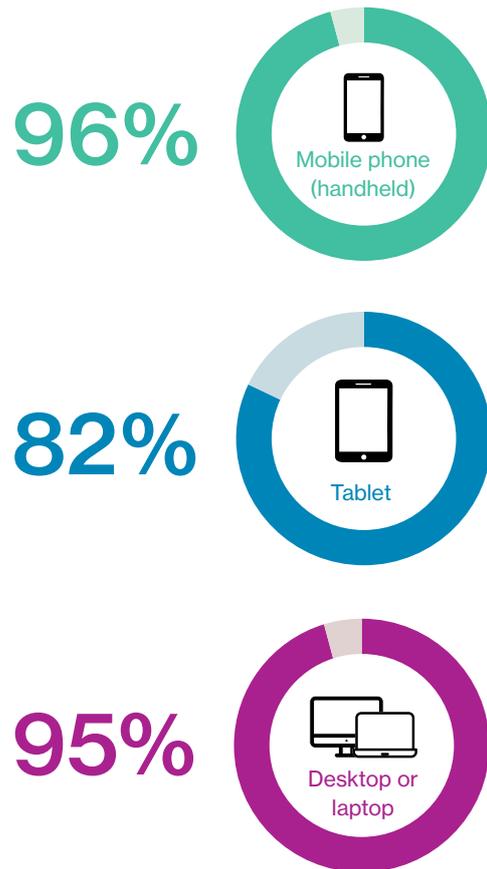
1. Is it a good user experience and does the design reflect the brand?
2. Do applicants know what they can expect from each stage of the process?
3. Do applicants receive timely feedback?
4. Does it measure the areas predictive of success in the role?
5. Does it add real value to selection decisions?

The importance of being mobile enabled

Recent data released by Deloitte found that 85% of UK respondents (41 million people) now own or have access to a smartphone device - an increase of 33 percentage points since 2012. For 18-24 year olds the market penetration is at a record 96%. Smartphone ownership is not limited to younger generations. Among 55-75 year olds in the UK, smartphone ownership has now reached 10.3 million or 71%. This older age group are the fastest-growing adopters of smartphone use over the last five years. It is easy to see why many recruiters are sold on ensuring that their online screening processes can be accessed fully via a smartphone device.

However, is it a misconception that applicants will only give their attention to tests that can be done on a mobile device? We asked our applicant sample to tell us whether they can access the internet using a mobile phone, tablet and/or desktop/laptop computer.

How are applicants able to access the internet?



Interestingly, despite 96% of applicants stating that they can access the internet on a mobile phone, only 1% of candidates said that their mobile phone was the only way they could access the internet.

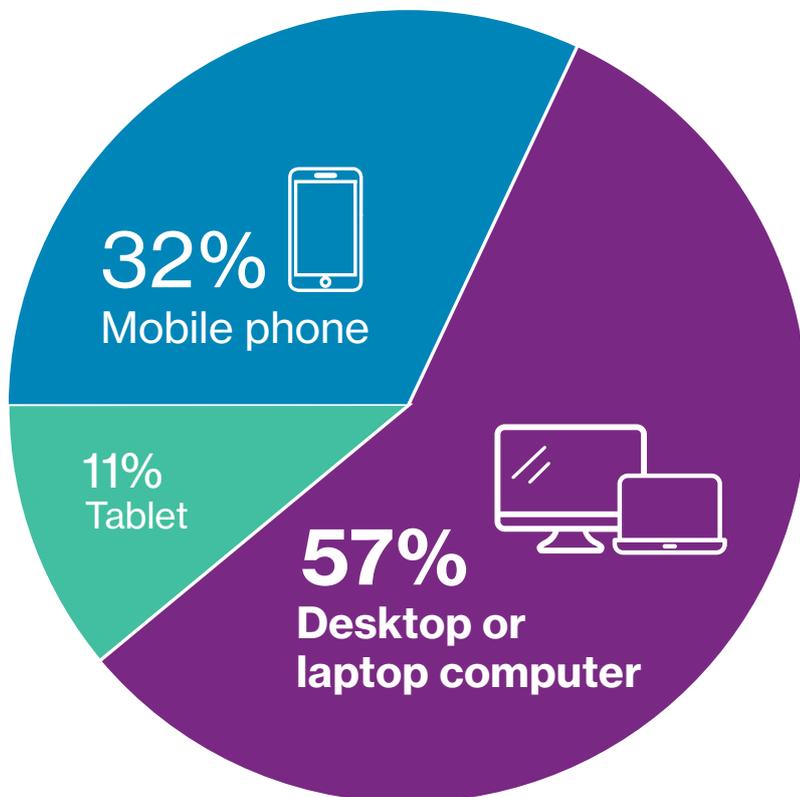
74% of recruiters *underestimate* how many applicants have **access to the internet** on a mobile phone.

Completing online assessments

When recruiters were asked how they thought applicants would choose to complete their assessments, **the majority of recruiters (66%) over-estimated how many applicants would want to complete their online assessment on a mobile phone.**

The data shows that applicants have good accessibility to both mobiles and desktop or laptop computers. However, it is important to recognize that while the majority of applicants want to complete their online screening on desktop or laptop, a sizable minority prefers to complete on a mobile phone.

There are some types of assessment such as high-level aptitude involving analysis of complex text and graphs which really work only on desktop, laptop or tablet device. However, where assessment can be responsive to a mobile device this is clearly desirable.



What are the goals to aim for when considering assessment on different devices?

1. Applicants should be given choices as to how they want to complete assessments (where suitable).
2. Ensure that the assessment being taken has a responsive design to optimize its display on the chosen device.

Having a positive effect on your applicants

What are the factors that will switch on your applicants?

The survey evaluated the factors that would be most likely to have a positive effect on whether an applicant chooses to apply to an organization via their online screening process.

The five key things that applicants rated as most likely to have a positive effect on whether they would apply to an organization were contrasted with recruiters' responses to aligned questions (1 being most likely).

Generally, recruiters appear to have a good understanding around the aspects of their process that will make an applicant more likely to apply.

What switches on applicants	Order of importance	
	Applicants	Recruiters
Information that allows you to prepare for the assessment	1	1
Online assessments that work properly when you try to access them	2	3
Online assessments which look good	3	2
Online assessments which clearly reflect the organizational brand	4	4
Short online assessments that are completed in less than 30 minutes	5	5

Preparation proves popular!

Help your applicants to prepare

Applicants want information that helps them to prepare. It is best practice for recruiters to ensure that preparation guides and practice tests are available to applicants. Preparation material should be sent out well ahead of when the test needs to be completed. Good preparation advice will combat anxiety that applicants may be feeling about taking tests and enables candidates to see the types of questions they will be required to answer.

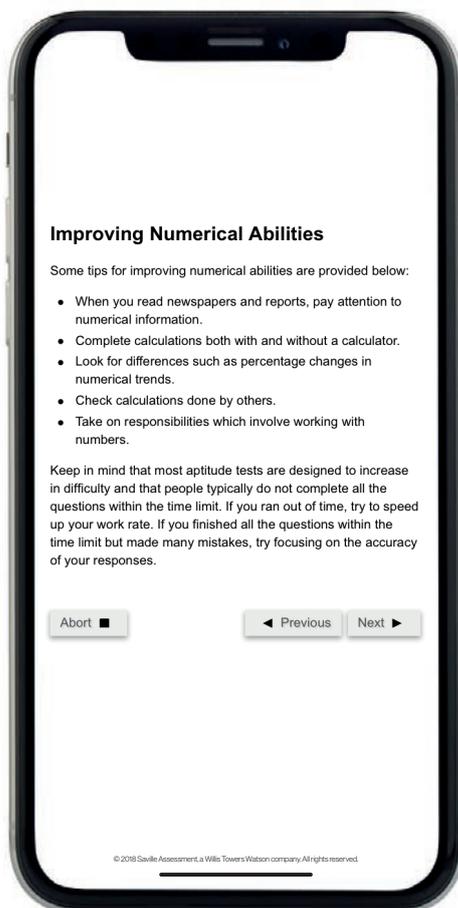
The survey suggests that aptitude tests are the most popular type of assessment used in the online process. 49% of recruiters reported using aptitude tests for over half of their online applications.

For aptitude, preparation and practice is particularly critical. Preparation materials for aptitude should include practice tests that offer feedback on correct and incorrect answers to the questions. Practice tests must be available in the same languages that the test can be taken in.

Find a test supplier who has a comprehensive range of practice tests available for your applicants in the language they need to complete the test in.

While recruiters understand the importance of this, we often come across examples of where high-quality practice tests are not available at all or at least not in the appropriate languages required. Our aptitude practice tests are available in 29 languages.

Make sure your applicants can complete relevant practice tests prior to completing the screening process.



Make sure the process works

Applicants want online assessments that work properly when they need to access them. Recruiters therefore need to be certain that the assessments will work as they are intended. Few things can be more frustrating when applying for a job than sitting down ready to take a test for a job you want, logging on and being faced with an assessment which fails to load or doesn't appear to have saved your results or loses connection in the middle. Not only does this cause the applicant unnecessary angst, it reflects badly on the technology employed by your organization and ultimately the organization as a whole. There is a greater risk of technological problems associated with using assessments which run off technologies that require plugins. Ask to see statistics on your assessment provider's uptime.

Use online assessments that look professional

The online assessments chosen as part of the selection process should be of high quality. They should look professional and reflect well on the organization. The data suggests that the overall look and feel is far more important than games or multimedia solutions. Assessment tasks that appear like computer games were rated as less likely than other factors to have a positive impact on whether people apply.

Be clear on how the organizational brand is reflected

Online assessments which clearly reflect the organizational brand were rated as having a positive impact on the likelihood of applying by both applicants and recruiters.

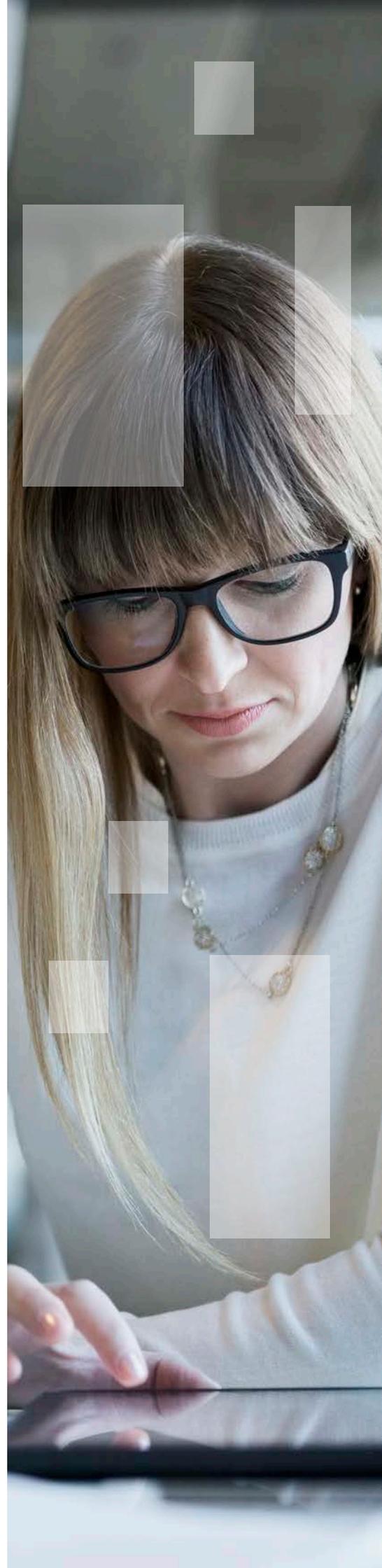
In volume recruitment, there is typically an opportunity to reflect organizational branding and corporate colors in all candidate communication. In addition, ensure that applicants have clear signposting of what each step entails and then promptly send out helpful feedback reports for candidates who are rejected. Remember to always treat your applicants well and ensure that, regardless of outcome, each and every applicant has a good experience.

The online recruitment process presents an opportunity to showcase your brand. Getting this right can pay dividends.

Use short online assessments

Think about how much time you are asking candidates to invest in the process and consider which parts of your process are most crucial. Do you really need to spend time sifting through 500 words on why this job is important to them? Where possible, look to use assessments that give you valid data in a condensed timeframe.

Consider what you really need to include in your online process to get the best data to base decisions on.



In summary: Getting it right

What's interesting and indeed reassuring about this survey data is that recruiters are largely on the right track. In general, they have a good understanding of the factors that will switch applicants on in the online recruitment process i.e. availability of preparation material, efficient technology, a professional look and feel with organizational branding and focused completion times.

Where there is some difference of perception between recruiters and candidates, it is in the overall importance of the objectives of the recruitment process. The key thing for applicants is getting the right job and being motivated to stay. Recruiters rated these areas as much lower and projected more of an organizational view than the candidates.

There are also differing views concerning how applicants want to complete their online assessments. Approximately a third of candidates would choose to complete on a mobile phone. 66% of recruiters over-estimated how many applicants would, given free choice, choose to complete their online assessment on a mobile phone. The goal should be to allow applicants the choice as to how they want to complete assessments.

Recruiters can utilize the findings in this data and ask the following questions about their online screening process:



Does your online recruitment process focus on the fundamentals?

Validly selecting the best person for the role who will stay in the job for a long time.



Do you have preparation guides and/or practice tests?

Candidates want to be able to prepare adequately.



Is your online screening process less than 60 minutes?

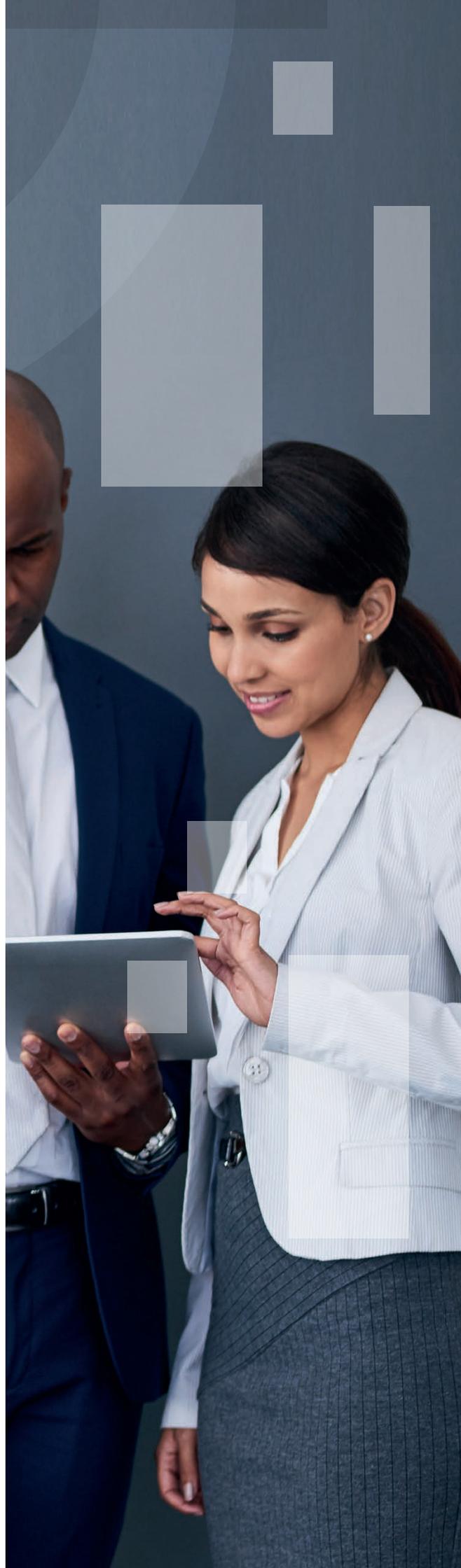
Applicants will quickly switch off if the process is too long.



Does your process include checkpoints to see if all applicants have had a positive experience?

Avoid applicants switching off from your products or services by ensuring that even those candidates you reject receive valuable feedback.

Taking the time to understand applicants' views and where they are aligned with your recruiter perceptions is a major step to ensuring applicants stay switched on.



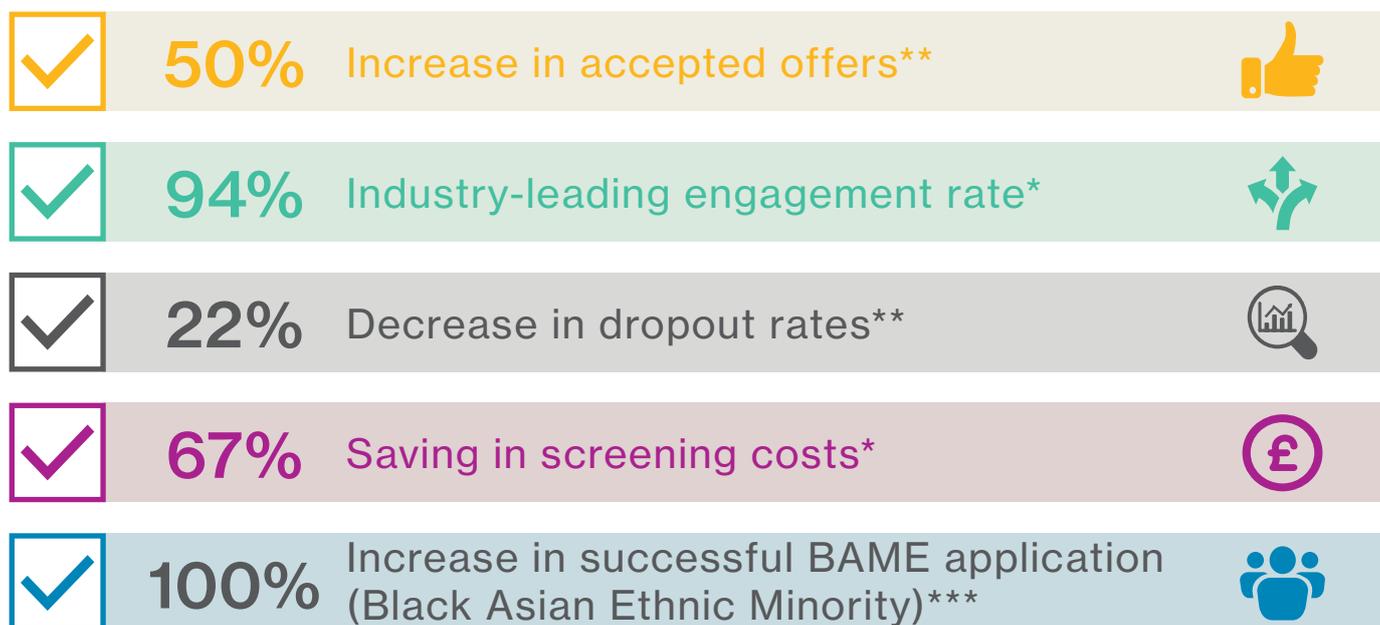
Engage Candidates, Empower Recruiters

Saville Assessment embrace innovation without compromising quality, offering clients a smarter approach to assessment which delivers results.

At the core of every assessment process is the responsibility to fairly and objectively identify the right people for the right roles.

We strike the crucial balance between technology, gamification, validity and fairness, ensuring an immersive solution which adds real value to both the candidate and the employer.

Our suite of aptitude tests, behavioral screeners and situational judgment tests (SJTs) deliver impactful results for our clients across the key hiring metrics of quality, engagement, efficiency, cost and diversity & inclusion.



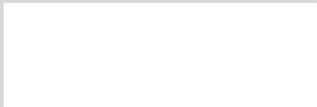
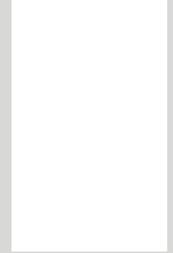
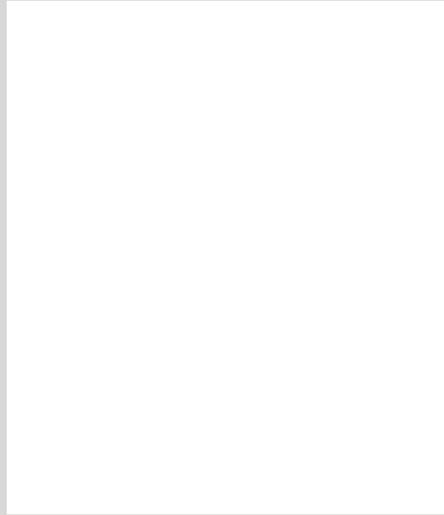
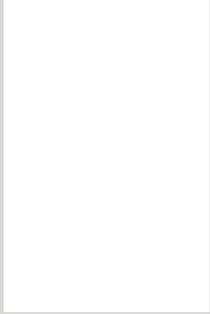
*Leading automotive early-careers recruitment campaign

**Leading aerospace graduate recruitment campaign

***Leading technology graduate recruitment campaign

For more information on how Saville Assessment can help guide your decisions regarding assessments in the online screening process, please contact us on

020 8619 9000 or email info@savilleassessment.com



About Saville Assessment, a Willis Towers Watson Company

Our mission is to transform assessment around the world. We enable organizations to identify potential, accelerate performance, and achieve outstanding results. Our portfolio of leading-edge assessments are designed based on extensive research into successful workplace performance and the critical relationship between motive, talent and workplace culture. With representatives in over 80 countries we are transforming how organizations Hire, Build and Lead talent globally. Learn more at www.savilleassessment.com