

Swiss Re boosts candidate quality and *streamlines recruitment* with SHL

The customer

Operating in more than 20 countries, and with a presence on all continents, Swiss Re is a leading and highly diversified global reinsurer. The company complements its proven reinsurance portfolio for Property & Casualty and Life & Health with insurance-based corporate finance solutions and supplementary services for comprehensive risk management.

An inclusive work culture, shaped by mutual respect, is at the heart of Swiss Re's reputation for excellence and innovation. It believes that fairly identifying and developing people with the right skills, talent and diversity will help it become the leading player in the wholesale reinsurance industry.

The challenge

Swiss Re, like many organisations today, relies on graduates as a major source of top talent. Investment in an effective graduate recruitment programme, particularly in its highly competitive market, is a key priority. If the rewards of hiring the right graduates are high, so are the costs of making the wrong choice. The US Department of Labour has estimated that 30% of business failures are due to poor hiring decisions.

Although Swiss Re had thriving local graduate recruitment initiatives, the company decided a more globalised approach would be more cost-efficient and help it recruit consistently for the key qualities the company needed for future success.

For Sara Groessbauer, Global Graduate Manager at Swiss Re, the previously fragmented approach presented the firm with a number of challenges. "We had different local programmes recruiting according to differing criteria. The lack of standardisation meant we had to allocate substantial HR resource, as well as making it difficult to ensure candidates were of the necessary quality. As a global company it was important we recruited consistently for the competencies that were most critical to our success."

For its new global graduate recruitment programme, Swiss Re chose SHL to help it define the necessary competencies and analytical skills and then test for them fairly, accurately and objectively. As a long-term partner of Swiss Re, SHL had been engaged successfully by the company on a number of previous assessment projects.

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Sara Groessbauer, Global Graduate Manager, Swiss Re

Swiss Re



Sara says SHL's global presence and wide ranging expertise were critical to the company's choice for the graduate recruitment programme. "SHL's international coverage was very important, especially when combined with its local presence. We also knew they had substantial experience in applying best practice across both online testing and face to face assessments, which was a key criterion."

The solution

Swiss Re's HR department conducted research internally and spoke to clients to help define a set of key global competencies and then worked with SHL to refine these into the most important attributes to look for in graduate applicants.

Sara comments, "We found that analytical skills were the most critical. As the sheer numbers involved can make these difficult and resource-intensive to measure in assessment centres, SHL's online testing solution made a great deal of sense. It meant candidates could apply from anywhere in the world."

Interested candidates were directed to Swiss Re's careers website where they were asked to complete Verify Numerical and Verbal Reasoning tests. "We were very pleased with the way the solution was deliverable from our own web pages, as well as its successful integration with our SAP enterprise software", says Sara.

Once complete, the candidate's scores were then made available to the recruiting manager. After interviews the best candidates were invited to attend one of Swiss Re's international assessment centres for simulation exercises.

Sara says this made the assessment centres, which were designed by SHL, much easier to manage. "It meant that many of the unsuitable candidates had already been pre-screened out of the process. Some were insufficiently motivated to complete the tests, while others simply didn't meet the skill requirement."

The benefits

The success of the SHL solution for global graduate recruitment has since led to Swiss Re extending it to include some local non-graduate recruitment. SHL also helps introduce new exercises at the assessment centres to meet the client's evolving requirements.

The programme's success is in part gauged by how hiring managers rate the performance of the new intake, where Sara says the feedback has been very positive. "We can now select according to the competencies we know are most relevant to the programme and our business. Using the SHL solution has much improved candidate quality and, by screening out up to 30% of applicants before interview, really helps our productivity."

Sara considers the company's strong relationship with SHL to be fundamental to the success of the recruiting process. "We've been very impressed with the quality of SHL's tools and consultancy. Just as important, SHL has been consistently helpful and attentive throughout the project, aligning themselves closely with our goals. We're very happy with the service they provide."

Swiss Re



Swiss Re needed a more globalised and cost-efficient approach to recruit for the key qualities it needed for future success.

SHL worked with the client to define and implement a set of key global competencies for graduate applicants.

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25 million
assessments
every year

Organisations that understand and maximize their people's potential achieve outstanding results. SHL gives you the insights to make better decisions about your people.

**We call this People Intelligence,
Business Results.**