

Graduate recruitment

Is it all a game?

Instead of focusing on games, think about how to best provide an engaging experience for your candidates, says Matti Jaakkola



Graduate recruitment: Is it all a game?

Instead of focusing on games, think about how to best provide an engaging experience for your candidates

You've graduated from a four-year degree and decide to apply for a role in a graduate programme. You're excited to showcase the skills you have learned and apply them in a real-life business context. You're asked to complete an online assessment as part of the application process. The assessment is a game in which you must control a robot to shoot numerous flying objects. Your fate in landing your first professional job lies in the result of this game and you wonder: Is this the right way to test your abilities for the role?

This scenario is not uncommon amongst graduates today. In the world of graduate recruitment, using games as a means of assessment is becoming an increasingly popular choice. In fact, in a poll of multinational HR and talent practitioners¹ in Australia, 75% said they would use game-based assessment as part of their screening and selection strategy.

To be fair, it may all be for good reason. Organisations want to attract today's graduates and for many, incorporating games into recruitment is all part of their strategy. However, it's critical that organisations strike a balance between providing an engaging, positive user experience, while also ensuring that graduate candidates believe in the validity of the assessment. That is, that the assessment is fairly and objectively measuring their abilities.

What's more, organisations need to ensure they are not downplaying the skills of their graduate candidates. Millennials are on track to becoming the most educated generation to date, yet they seem to be consistently underestimated when discussing graduate recruitment campaigns. Even when discussing business marketing strategies, a recent blog stated "Millennials – it's tough to get their attention and even harder to keep it".

The fact is, millennials have managed to stay committed to their studies during university (where they certainly do not play games for their exams) and have grown up through the global financial crisis, facing some of the hardest competition for entry-level jobs. Millennials have a lot to offer and want to work in an engaging workplace, but more importantly, they want to be taken seriously. Organisations likely wouldn't use games as part of the recruitment process for any other positions, so why use them for graduates?

How can you engage graduates in the recruitment process?

It's important to provide candidates with a positive and engaging user experience, as for most companies, candidates are potential customers. However, organisations need to be careful when using game-based assessments, to ensure that their game is sending candidates the right message – that you also take them seriously as a future employee.

While game-based assessments can be useful attraction tools, care needs to be taken in the design of such tools to ensure that the game accurately assesses the correct abilities, and that the candidates believe in the validity of their result. This is particularly important for candidates who do not progress to the next stage, as they need to feel like they have been fairly and accurately assessed.

One way of doing this is to introduce *gamified* assessments. This is a solution that strikes a balance between game-based assessments and traditional psychometric assessments. While keeping the psychometric assessments in principle, gamified solutions are customised to include subtle game-like elements, such as a cover story, chat bots, instant feedback, and so on, to help provide a more engaging experience than a traditional psychometric assessment. Gamified assessments allow for a differentiated and highly engaging experience, while maintaining validity to the candidates. In other words, it's clear that they are measuring what they claim to be measuring.

The research shows that millennials enjoy games, but it's important to remember that playing games does not equal engagement. There's a stark difference between playing a game in a high-stakes situation and playing a game in your own free time. Instead of focusing on games, think about how to best provide an engaging experience for your candidates while keeping strong psychometrics in the assessments. Your graduates will thank you for it.

¹ Australian Association of Graduate Employers conference, 'Engaging, measuring and growing digital competence' audience poll, 2017

Graduate recruitment: Is it all a game?

The relative merits of games, gamified assessments and game-based assessments

Type	Use	Ease of development	Quality of the result	Key benefit
Games	Attracting applicants, as it provides an engaging and often unique view of the organisation	Tend to be purpose-build	Tend not to be assessed	You are differentiating your hiring process
Gamified assessments	Assessing job-relevant skills, knowledge, and abilities via proven assessments that layer in game elements	Easily customisable	Combine assessment data and 'paradata' to provide in-depth insights into each candidate	You are using proven psychometric assessments – but you are making them more appealing
Game-based assessments	Assessing job-relevant skills, knowledge, and abilities by monitoring and collecting data on how the candidate 'plays' the game	Tend to be purpose-built but customisable options are available	Tend to be purpose-built but customisable options are available	You are providing a highly distinct and engaging experience for candidates



About the author

Matti Jaakkola is a senior consultant for Aon's Assessment Solutions, specialising in optimising volume graduate recruitment processes. Aon's Assessment Solutions group, which includes the cut-e and Cocubes brands, undertakes 30 million assessments each year in 90 countries and 40 languages.



Published by Insights at Work

This article was first published by Insights at Work on 9th April 2018, UK

More about gamification in recruitment:

www.cut-e.com/online-assessment/gamification-in-recruitment



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.