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## Selecting 'employees of the future' at O2

*cut-e has helped UK mobile operator O2 to recruit a new type of employee for its two flagship 'stores of the future'.*

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## For the O2 'stores of the future', we developed a recruitment process of the future

To combat the competitive challenge of online shopping, 'bricks-and-mortar' retailers are having to adapt, by enhancing their in-store service and providing a personalised and compelling customer experience. Recognising this trend, O2 has taken the bold step of creating two new 'stores of the future' in London and Manchester.

Roughly three times the size of a high street O2 phone shop, these two new stores feature relaxation areas and interactive 'inspire zones' where customers can try out the latest technology, including virtual reality apps, wearables, smartphones, tablets and connected home devices.

"The aim was to create a more compelling reason for customers to want to visit an O2 store," said Ross Crook, Vice President of Service Delivery at Cielo, which undertakes O2's managerial and specialist recruitment. "It's one thing to build stores that reflect the new digital future but we also had to recruit the right staff who could excite and inform customers and provide a hands-on digital experience."

*cut-e* was appointed to help select and recruit individuals who could embody and empower the O2 brand and reach out to a new generation of users.

"The team at *cut-e* are experts in assessment and they're great to work with," said Ross Crook. "Together, we developed a new selection process to engage applicants, provide a special candidate experience and identify the individuals who were exactly right for the new roles. For the stores of the future, we developed a recruitment process of the future."

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Ross Crook, Vice President  
of Service Delivery at Cielo

*cut-e* undertook a job analysis and benchmarking exercise to create a profile of the traits and skills required in the new stores.

"Typically, we'd hire people with retail experience," explained Ross Crook. "This time, we were looking for creative, gregarious, emotionally intelligent individuals who could interact with customers and bring services and products to life, rather than sell to them."

500 applicants undertook a special selection of *cut-e's* online assessments to measure their creativity, communication skills and style of interacting with customers and colleagues. The best candidates were invited to submit a short video of themselves answering strengths-based questions devised by *cut-e*.

"The videos revealed each candidate's motivations, energy level and engagement," said Ross Crook. "We assessed each candidate objectively using a scoring system that *cut-e* developed. We then invited 78 external and internal candidates to our assessment events that we held in special pop-up stores in London and Manchester."

### **A new style of face-to-face assessment**

Each assessment event featured customer-interaction role plays with live actors. The candidates undertook activities such as showing off the Google ecosystem, demonstrating a Star Wars BB-8 droid and diagnosing a customer problem via Skype. They also completed an interactive quiz to test their passion for technology, and a teamwork exercise.

"The assessment experience was radically different to the norm and it was designed to be an engaging, low-stress process in which candidates could show us their personality," said Ross Crook. "By using technology, we didn't have to worry about printing out materials for each candidate and we could also deploy interactive content to candidates via tablets. *cut-e* devised and developed the activities and they briefed and trained our team to observe and objectively assess the candidates. Senior O2 managers attended and they agreed that this was a very different and ingenious way to select people. We were able to make quick hiring decisions and the look and feel of the process was culturally aligned with the new digital age of retailing."

Following the assessment events, O2 recruited 56 people for its new stores.

"The assessment events were a huge success," said Ross Crook. "We had a 92% attendance rate, which is unusual as retail candidates often apply for multiple roles and then take the first job they get. So, you typically get a high number of people 'dropping out' on the day but that wasn't the case here. The approach worked perfectly for the type of individual that we were looking to appoint. All of the assessments had high 'face validity' and they were scientifically robust and objective. We had a 98% acceptance rate when we offered the roles and we successfully recruited a diverse mix of new employees."

*"This whole recruitment experience has had a very beneficial impact on O2's business, its brand and its culture."*

Ross Crook, Vice President of Service Delivery at Cielo

The entire recruitment process – from *cut-e's* briefing to the job offers being accepted – took just five weeks.

"*cut-e's* role was central to the success of this initiative," said Ross Crook. "Their assessment tools identified exactly the right candidates and the feedback from everyone at O2 has been very positive. The revenues, engagement levels and retention rates at the two new stores have all been remarkably high. This whole recruitment experience has had a very beneficial impact on O2's business, its brand and its culture."

## About O2

O2 is the commercial brand of Telefónica UK Limited and is a leading digital communications company with the highest customer satisfaction for any mobile provider according to Ofcom. With over 25 million customers, O2 runs 2G, 3G and 4G networks across the UK, as well as operating O2 Wi-Fi and owning half of Tesco Mobile. O2 has over 450 retail stores and sponsors The O2, O2 Academy venues and the England rugby team. Read more about O2 at [www.o2.co.uk/news](http://www.o2.co.uk/news).

*cut-e* is a world leader in the design and implementation of innovative online tests and questionnaires for recruitment, selection and development. *cut-e* helps companies identify people with the right capabilities and cultural fit to deliver optimal business results. *cut-e* carries out over 12 million assessments per year in over 70 countries and 40 languages.