



# Case study

## Collingwood Search and Selection Ltd

Collingwood Search and Selection Ltd is a client-led recruitment consultancy based in Northwich, Cheshire. They work with organisations across a broad range of industries including the services, engineering and manufacturing sectors. They also have in-depth knowledge of healthcare, consumer products, CATV/telecoms and distribution. Their mission is to partner with organisations to deliver high calibre candidate shortlists that exceed expectations, within pre-defined timescales and in an ethical manner.

Doug Mackay, MD of Collingwood, comments “We are experts in recruitment and our goal is to develop long term partnerships with our clients to minimise the time and cost that their management team invest in a recruitment assignment. We provide a bespoke service that is achieved by spending time with a client, understanding their culture and values, so that we provide a ‘candidate perfect match’ behaviourally and culturally with the right skills and experience.”

“An integral part of our search and selection services is a range of employee assessment and development tools that complement our competency based interviewing process. In this way we can benchmark the best performing employee’s behavioural traits and develop ways to bring the rest of the team in line. Our use of Thomas’ tools in the recruitment process takes the pressure away from ‘gut feel’ allowing clients to recruit objectively.”

Collingwood use PPA and TST as an integral part of their client’s recruitment process as well as part of ongoing consultancy to other clients. “We were recently pitching for business for a potential client. Thomas got us through the door. The clients were looking for something more than the traditional interview approach, they wanted to dig deeper and draw out more information. Our use of PPA differentiated Collingwood from the other consultancies, we were able to give them more detailed information about prospective candidates.”



PPA assesses an individual’s behaviour in the work environment. It can answer questions such as – What are their strengths and limitations? Are they self starters? How do they communicate? What motivates them? The PPA enables people to become more self aware, which in turn gives them the means to consolidate their working strengths and compensate

***“Our use of PPA has differentiated Collingwood from other consultancies”***

for their limitations. The PPA is a series of 24 questions on a forced choice “first impressions” basis, taking no longer than seven minutes to complete. The answers are charted on a graph under the four headings of Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Compliance (DISC).

“In this particular example we went on to profile three short listed candidates and then assessed them with Thomas’ Tests for Selection and Training (TST).

TST provides a means to measure the fluid intelligence or ‘mental horsepower’. Fluid intelligence is the ability to reason on the spot and solve unfamiliar problems



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where there is no prior experience to call upon. The tests provide a reliable, accurate and valid means of identifying if a person can quickly learn and retain new skills and procedures.

“Two candidates really stood out. However, both had very different TST scores. One was in the 35th percentile and the other was 85th. When you looked at the raw scores of the candidate in the 35th percentile, he had completed all the tests taken correctly. He was also a High C (precise, careful and systematic). In this way my client was able to place the candidate in a role that would suit his preferred style, one that was more procedurally based as well as tailoring an induction programme that was best suited to him. The candidate in the 85th percentile was more suited to a commercially based role and was placed accordingly.”

Collingwood have also used PPA and TST when consulting with existing clients. “One of our clients, Sola Optical, was involved in a merger with two other optical companies Zeiss and American Optical. Each company was very different. American Optical had quite an aggressive culture and was very numbers oriented. On the other hand Sola was Australian and took a much more entrepreneurial approach to business and Zeiss, a German company, was more cautious in its approach.”

“Each company also had very different products which required a different sales approach. American Optical sells high volumes of product at very competitive prices. Zeiss’ core business was premium products and Sola took a mid line – good quality combined with a good

price structure. Each company had a very different culture and the new management wanted to see exactly what they had, in terms of people, within each of the sales forces. The newly merged organisation had tough targets to hit and needed the right people in the right roles. The best way to do this was assess behaviours within teams.” “We profiled everyone in the three sales teams and people thought it was extremely accurate and ‘spot on’. Being able to profile these individuals made a huge difference, Collingwood was able to add an enormous amount of value to the process. We identified some fantastic performers who went on to be promoted. We are able to audit the business from a people perspective to see what they had and who was going to be able to drive it forward. By understanding their people’s behaviour they were also able to tailor their management approach accordingly.”

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“The key strength to PPA is its speed and accuracy. You are able to find out a huge amount about someone in such a short space of time. The ability to offer this profiling and assessment to clients as part of the service has won us business we would not have otherwise had. It allows us to firmly differentiate ourselves in a crowded market.”