

Osborne Thomas has a wealth of experience in providing assessment services, not just for immediate recruitment projects but also in planning and executing future recruitment projects, such as graduate recruitment, and in the development of the existing workforce. We work by reviewing current and previous stratagems, and in then on in the formulation and implementation of future strategies.

Ensuring the highest quality assessment is our ethos, managing projects on time and to budget. We enforce a rigorous review and implementation process to make certain our team delivers assessment which is relevant, engaging and targets the requirements of the project, be it recruitment or development – or a mixture of both. Our assessment has challenged and steered organisations’ strategies and policies; and makes sure that our clients receive the assistance they need to be at the forefront in accomplishing recruitment and/or development projects.

We have recently been chosen as a finalist for the 2015 PPMA Private Sector Partner/Supplier of the Year for our assessment work with Kent County Council, and give excerpts below from Kent’s entry submission.

**Case Study: Kent County Council:
Sole Supplier of Assessment Services**

Osborne Thomas (OT) was appointed via tender to provide executive assessment for Kent County Council (KCC). Part of the tender, indeed the pivotal issue, was using KCC’s values framework as criteria that can be objectively measured.

From the outset, OT’s approach challenged KCC. As opposed to the conventional responses, OT sought to challenge the norm to truly ascertain an objective mechanism to look at an individual’s values and drives; also to consider other ways in which these dimensions could be objectively assessed at an executive level. OT utilised the concept of leadership profiling using psychometric tools to form the basis of the assessment process, and proposed moving away from the current process, instead using a mix of personality tools that would map effectively onto KCC’s values framework – *“...a significant enhancement of what Members were used to and...providing more valuable selection data...save resources during the process”*. Both parties shared the same common goal - to improve the way that values are assessed in the selection process.

KCC feel an outcome has been achieved that works for candidates and Members alike. The technical and skills components of the role are separated out from the values element, with the former assessed through technical interview; OT carries out a mini job analysis to explore the needs of internal stakeholders as well as to provide a deeper understanding of how the Kent values might be evidenced within the context of the role. OT identify tools available that most effectively assess KCC’s values as well provide a deeper understanding of how an individual might apply these to their work; tools agreed on are mapped onto KCC’s values framework so that there is a transparent link with the exercises.

Each appointment is viewed with fresh eyes - alert to opportunities for innovation and improvement whilst remaining open to what is best in the assessment field.

OT has brought in on-line psychometric questionnaires, including detailed telephone validation calls. By making use of technology and the profiling process, candidates attendance time has been dramatically reduced, but the feedback they are given has hugely increased.

OT provide reports for use by the HR team and summary reports for use by Members, and work with KCC to shape interview questions, usually in the form of scenarios. KCC says *“Getting to understand the mind-set of the individual, what drives them and the factors they consider in their decision-making, tells us more about their fit for the Council than even the best designed assessment centre can.”*

The new process *“...has provided a level of reassurance in our selection decisions that has not been possible before”*. With OT assessment, KCC has achieved the following:

- Reduced assessment costs by around half.
- Excellent feedback from candidates who gain a useful insight to their own personal strengths and weaknesses and can use the feedback as part of their personal development plan.
- Reduced time – testing/validation completed at a time convenient for candidates.
- The candidate reports identify specific areas for probing and suggest follow up questions enabling greater clarification of candidate’s abilities.
- Improved Members involvement in, and understanding of, the assessment beyond the traditional assessment centre.

