

Going mobile

Siemens supports career planning
for school leavers

Siemens launches smartphone Job Navigator

SIEMENS

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With approximately 343,000 employees across the world working in areas such as electrification, automation and digitalisation, Siemens manages a wide range of training programmes for its school leaver/apprentice population worldwide. In Germany, Siemens offers approximately 120 different programmes. This can be overwhelming for applicants who may have little knowledge of their strengths. To help, Siemens developed a Job Navigator tool. With changes in the use of mobile technology, this project is now an ideal testing ground for developing assessments that can be accessed via mobile technology.

The challenge: 'going mobile' to keep pace with changes in applicants' technology behaviour

Siemens Professional Education concerns itself with specifying, designing and developing vocational training programmes for school leavers. Ulrike Bittcher in Human Resources for Siemens explains: "We see our training programmes as a solid foundation from which Siemens develops its employees of the future. Our programmes are characterised by a high share of practical training in combination with theoretical learning at vocational schools and/or universities. Participants are awarded a certificate upon successful completion of the programme. These certificates are recognised across Germany and by other companies. This makes our programme attendance highly desirable."

In 2015, Siemens recruited nearly 2,000 school leavers for the company. It extended this programme to other small- and medium-sized external companies which lacked the infrastructure, resource or capability to train young people in-house. There are currently 7,000 young people on vocational training programmes within Siemens and an additional 3,000 supported by Siemens in other companies.

Those applying to become apprentices at Siemens complete an online assessment which is based on the popular ability and aptitude tests from cut-e – scales. However, given the array of training programmes and the fact that many school leavers have little knowledge about the opportunities or careers available in today's fast-changing world, how does a potential applicant realise which programme he or she is best suited to?



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About Siemens

Siemens operates in over 200 countries with around 377,000 employees. As one of the largest producers of energy-efficient, resource-saving technologies, Siemens focusses on the areas electrification, digitalisation and automation. IN 2017, Siemens offered 1,600 apprenticeships for commercial and technical jobs in the fields electronics, IT and metal.

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The solution: the Job Navigator tool

To help in this choice, cut-e developed a Job Navigator tool for Siemens (Jona™ – <https://jona.cut-e.com/>). Jona™ helps school leavers find out which of the education programmes at Siemens is best suited to them, based on their strengths. It allows potential applicants to complete a number of tests and assessments and suggests which training programme programme suits them the best.

Initial questions on the Job Navigator tool are quite broad (Do you like working with computers? Are you creative?), before progressing to more competency-based questions. Following this, *scales* tests assess logical thinking, spatial ability, dealing with numbers and dealing with text. Ulrike Bittcher explains: “The Job Navigator tool is basically assessing the strengths of the potential applicants and highlighting these to the individuals to help them make their application choice. The tests are completed anonymously and we don’t collect any personal information and it does not form part of the selection process.”

When the Job Navigator tool was first launched in 2008, it was innovative, state-of-the-art and attractively designed. However, the Internet looks different today. Technology has moved on and people’s habits have changed, especially with regards searching for jobs and the application process. Understanding the impact of mobile access and use is very important to Siemens as a whole. It is important for its apprentice programmes which help it remain cutting edge in its assessment. Also, the company retains the reliability and validity of its selection process.

Ulrike Bittcher continues: “We know that our applicant pool is changing in terms of its use of technology and we can see that online assessment adds real value to our selection. We wanted to explore the impact of deploying the same sort of tests on smartphones. At this time, cut-e was exploring how such tools could be adapted fairly and reliably and so we worked on this together.”



Job Navigator tool

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Online assessment to go

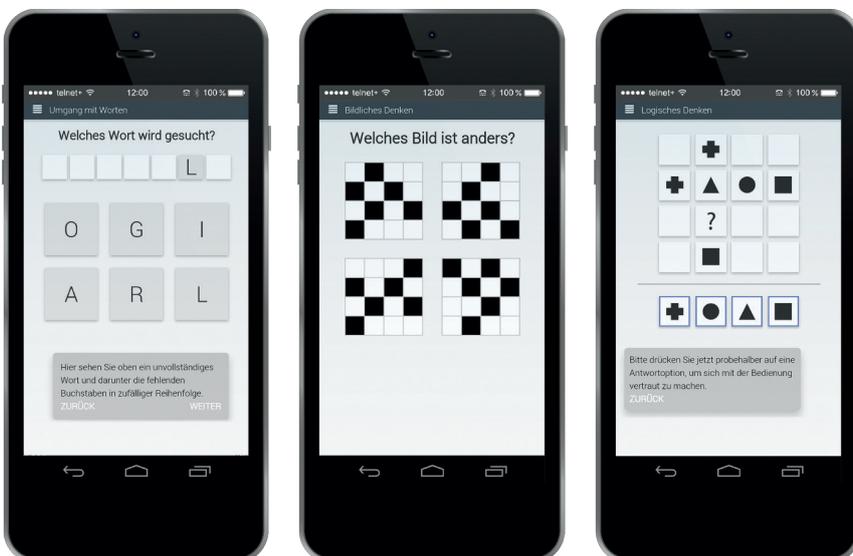
One challenge facing the team concerned the number of devices on the market on which an assessment needs to work, as well as the speed of innovation within smartphone development. This means that constant compatibility checks are required: can an assessment work on an old iPhone as well as the latest Android? Mobile devices are changing user habits. No longer are potential applicants sitting at a desk in a well-lit area, they are now on the train, waiting for a friend, and so on. As this is a standard objective assessment, users need to be sure that the device on which the assessment is used has no influence on the test result.

Ulrike Bittcher knew that Siemens wanted to move forward with mobile assessment. She was also aware of the risks of doing this with 'high stakes' assessment where a decision is made at the end on whether to invite a candidate to an interview or not. Therefore, the low risk option of the Job Navigator tool – where the results are for the test taker only – was explored.



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Screenshots of the Job Navigator™-Test Centre

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The outcome: creating 'mobile-friendly' solutions

Adapting and developing the assessments to make them suitable for mobile access was a staged process. The first step saw the roll-out of the professional interests and preferences assessments, as well as the tests looking at an applicant's approach to numbers and logical thinking. cut-e then moved on to the more complex tests – assessing the candidate's approach to text and tests that considered visual thinking and colours assessment.

For this project, the team needed to look at every aspect of the test item and user interface: the orientation of the test items, the graphic design elements, the use of 'swiping', the quantity of text on the screen as well as the responsive technology.

Ulrike Bittcher comments: "One cannot underestimate the amount of work needed to move from a desktop version to a mobile version. cut-e's strong expertise, not only in the psychometric aspects of the assessment and what is – and is not – feasible but, also in the rapid changes in technology, is invaluable."



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A test bed for the future

By using the Job Navigator assessments as the trial for how assessments can be moved to a more mobile platform, Siemens has identified and met the challenges without impacting the selection process.

“We don’t collect personal data about Jona™ users. We do ask for some basic demographic data for statistical purposes but we are not concerned with who is completing it, whether they go on to apply and, if they do, whether they are offered a position with us. And that’s an important point for us,” says Ulrike Bittcher. “We see the value of the tests in helping the potential applicant with their career or programme choice and application, not as part of the selection assessment. In the future, we may look at moving our selection assessments which are capable of being used on, say, tablets. However, at the moment, we know we need to learn and gain experience in the challenges these technologies are bringing.”

Siemens first launched the Job Navigator tool in 2008. The fact that it is mainly used by males is not surprising, given that around 70% of Siemens’ applicants are male. However, as Ulrike Bittcher explains, it is exciting for the professional education team because, by promoting the Job Navigator tool, more women can work through the assessments, apply and enter the technical training programmes. Siemens sees its Job Navigator tool as a great way to support its employer brand – emphasising its commitment to encouraging more women to explore the industry, helping guide school leavers and supporting other, smaller organisations.

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*Ulrike Bittcher,
Human resources, Siemens*



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cut-e and Siemens won the European HR Excellence Award

Human Resources Manager magazine awarded the prizes for the first time in 2017. Out of 400 applications, cut-e was nominated alongside Siemens and went on to win the European HR Excellence Award 2017 for the category of Best Use of Technology with their Job Navigator tool project.

Every year, employers and HR teams are rewarded with the European HR Excellence Award for innovative and forward-thinking strategies and projects.

Dr Achim Preuss, founder and CTO of cut-e Group, sees the award as an additional benefit in helping more companies recruit future employees this way.

Dr Achim Preuss commented: "We are very happy about this award. The Siemens project has been a particular challenge. An innovative project idea has grown into a technologically demanding and highly functional solution. What our team has realised underlines our special competence in the area of mobile assessment."



European HR Excellence Award
2017 winner of the category
Best Use of Technology
was Siemens, proudly
supported by cut-e.

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.