

# Hyatt Improves Retention and Customer Service With Help From Assess Systems

One of the leading hotel corporations worldwide, Hyatt Hotels & Resorts emphasizes authentic hospitality and personalized service across more than 365 hotels and resort locations spanning 45 countries. These hotels and resorts include the Park Hyatt™, Grand Hyatt™, Hyatt Regency™, Hyatt Resorts™, Hyatt Place™, Hyatt Summerfield Suites® brands and more.



Hyatt knows that customer service is paramount for success in the hospitality business. In 2004, the company began a powerful initiative to revitalize and upgrade its customer service with the goal of establishing a reputation for a distinctive brand of superior service across its North America locations.

## Difficulty Prioritizing Candidates and Inconsistent Interviewing

To achieve exemplary customer service, Hyatt sought key individuals to serve as front-office agents, food servers, attendants, guest-services personnel and other guest-interfacing positions. Hyatt was already tracking job applicants within its Taleo® system. However, the large volume of candidates for front-of-house positions meant there could be as many as 200 online applicants for a single opening. With so many applications, hiring managers had difficulty knowing where to start. Due to the high application flow, hiring efficiency and accuracy needed improvement. Hyatt's interview process was somewhat simplistic, and it varied widely from interviewer to interviewer and from location to location.

"We didn't always know if we were hiring someone who had that 'Hyatt DNA,'" said Randy Goldberg, vice president of Recruiting for Hyatt Hotels & Resorts, North America Operations. "It was a very inconsistent process, and we didn't have a good way of easily filtering out those people we should not be considering."

## Solution: Predictable, Customized Assessments

Randy and his team evaluated assessment vendors who could integrate with Taleo. **Assess Systems** was chosen because it was clear that its assessments would establish consistency in the candidate-selection process. **Assess Systems** provided pre-scored reports for each applicant. "We also receive a very nice, detailed, bullet-proof interview guide tailored to each interviewee based on how various questions were answered," Randy indicated.

Another factor that made **Assess Systems** the right fit was its reputation and suitability for a long-term business relationship with Hyatt. **Assess Systems** was willing to work collaboratively with Hyatt and customize processes to help Hyatt achieve its goals, which was critical for an ongoing partnership. **Assess Systems'** experience and broad range of offerings enabled Hyatt to expand as needed.

The first step for **Assess Systems** was conducting extensive investigations to determine fundamentals and key characteristics for success in a number of critical guest-interfacing positions Hyatt identified. The research included multi-site job observations and interviews with supervisors and top performers to define the requirements for best-in-class, Hyatt-brand service for the North America locations. After designing the assessments, **Assess Systems** tested current employees at all performance levels to ensure that performance data matched the assessments' predictions and that candidates with service-oriented personalities would rise to the top. The scoring was then customized for Hyatt. By completing its thorough criterion-related validation process, **Assess Systems** ensured that the assessments were tailored specifically to Hyatt before integration with the Taleo solution began.

## Proven System for Identifying Great Hires

When Hyatt first started using the assessments, the employment managers occasionally hired individuals whom the assessments recommended avoiding. The decisions were often based on factors revealed in interviews. However, **Assess Systems** performed a follow-up validation study a year and a half after the implementation that tested for assessment effectiveness and quality of hire. A full 80 percent of those who had received an “Avoid” score on their assessments were rated poorly by their supervisors.

“Candidates receiving an Avoid score are automatically rejected from our system as a result of the validation **Assess Systems** had done,” said Randy. “For those that are recommended by the assessment, 73 percent were rated by their supervisors as ‘great hires.’ It was very, very clear.”

## Consistency, Time Savings, Retention—and Better Customer Service

Today, as the numerous applications come in, candidates take assessments online, scoring is automated, and results are automatically stored in Taleo’s applicant-tracking system. Employment managers use the assessment results to decide who to interview first and the individualized interview questions to investigate an applicant’s weak areas. “It’s enabled us to make quicker and better hiring decisions,” Randy stated. “It’s easy for us to report off of it to see what’s happening.”

**Assess Systems** fully revised and customized the entire report and the interview guide to reflect Hyatt language and branding. Such custom tailoring made a strong positive impact on Hyatt.

According to Randy, the assessments have contributed to a measurable reduction in employee turnover and higher customer service scores. “Studies say, for positions like this, it’s usually a \$4,000 to \$5,000 cost for turnover per person. Very high turnover in these key service positions means constantly training new people who aren’t as equipped to take care of guest needs—so productivity because of retention is huge,” Randy said. “The first business result we’re always trying to achieve is customer satisfaction. We’ve seen that increase year over year.”

## Plans to Add Manager-Level Assessments and Leadership Development

Having realized such dramatic success with its assessments, Hyatt asked **Assess Systems** to develop customized assessments for managers. **Assess Systems** is including a matching development guide to improve managerial skills for the new hires. Hyatt anticipates that choosing and developing quality team leaders will further its investment in top-performing customer service associates.

Hyatt is pleased with **Assess Systems**’ flexibility and responsiveness. “Selecting the right talent for your individual business is the most important thing you can do. There’s nothing more important. That’s what has made working with **Assess Systems** a very good relationship for Hyatt,” said Randy.



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