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New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority Meets English Language Assessment Needs with Language Testing International

—————————————————— **Case Study**

New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority Meets English
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1

Summary

The New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has been administering English language assessments for safety-sensitive job roles for many years. However, with an increasingly diverse workforce and a growing need for effective communication, the MTA required a new language testing mechanism with a minimum proficiency level specified for each role. Furthermore, the language assessment vendor needed to be able to administer and rate the assessments and provide the organization with candidates' results within 24 hours. Language Testing International (LTI) provided a solution by offering the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview – Computer® (OPIc) in English.

Challenges

- Need for assessment with customized language levels for each job title.
- Ability for the assessment vendor to administer and rate the tests with a quick turnaround time.
- Need to administer multiple assessments per day.

Solution

- ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview – Computer (OPIc).
- Task Analysis to determine cut scores for specific roles.

Results

- Multiple assessments performed in a single day.
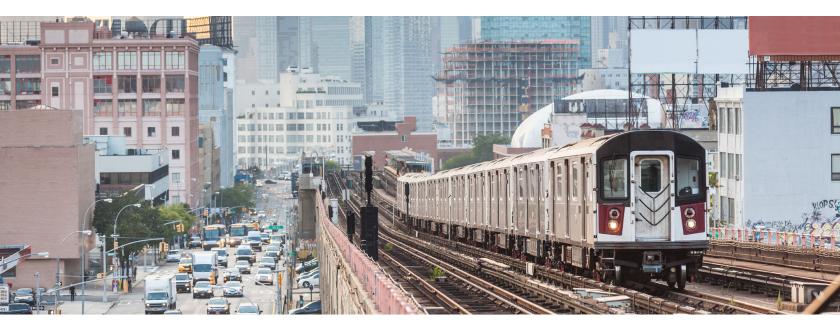- Accurate measure of employees' English language proficiency.

Introduction

The New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) faced a need to verify the English proficiency of its employees reliably and accurately. As one of the largest public transportation networks in the world, the MTA serves millions of passengers every day, and effective communication is essential for ensuring their safety and security. This case study explores the challenges faced by the MTA in verifying English proficiency among its employees and the assessment solution the agency implemented with ACTFL OPIc to address these challenges.

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2

Identifying the Challenges

The New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has been administering English language assessments for safety-sensitive job titles for many years. However, as the organization continued to grow, the agency identified the need for a new testing instrument that could be customized for each role. Additionally, the agency needed an assessment vendor that had the capability to administer and rate the assessments and provide the organization with candidates' results that were valid and reliable within 24 hours. Finally, the vendor had to demonstrate the ability to administer a large volume of tests in a single day.

Solution: ACTFL OPIc

Through an extensive RFP process, the MTA selected Language Testing International (LTI) as their new language assessment vendor. LTI proposed using the ACTFL OPIc in English. This test is a computer-based assessment that evaluates an individual's speaking ability in a specific language. The ACTFL OPIc is an on-demand, internet-delivered test that provides valid and reliable oral proficiency testing on a large scale. The test is recorded and assessed by ACTFL-trained and certified raters, and a score is assigned against either the ACTFL or the ILR scale. The test is cost-effective and easy to schedule to be taken at the candidate's convenience.

Through a process called Task Analysis, LTI was also able to determine a minimum proficiency level for each identified job. The Task Analysis was performed with a group of the MTA's subject matter experts (SMEs), each of whom represented a particular role within the agency. They participated in a language-needs analysis to identify the proficiency level required to perform job-related communication tasks, establish clear language training goals, and identify specific "training gaps." Based on the data gathered during the Task Analysis, LTI offered specific recommendations for the minimum scores required for individuals to qualify for a specific role.

Results

The MTA has been able to successfully meet its English language assessment needs with LTI's assistance. The customized language levels created by LTI have enabled the MTA to determine the minimum levels of proficiency required for each role, and the OPIc test has provided a reliable and effective way to assess the English language skills of candidates.

Furthermore, LTI's ability to administer and rate the assessments and provide the results within 24 hours has been a significant advantage for the MTA. It has allowed the organization to quickly verify the English skills of its employees and manage its workforce efficiently and effectively.

Conclusion

Language Testing International has provided an effective solution for the MTA's English language assessment needs. LTI's assistance in determining the minimum levels of proficiency for each role has helped the MTA ensure that its employees have the necessary English language skills to perform their job duties safely and effectively while the OPIc has provided a reliable way to verify the English language skills of employees. Overall, LTI's assistance has enabled the MTA to better communicate with its diverse workforce and ensure the safety and efficiency of its operations.