

## Case Study // Aviva - Strengths-based Graduate Recruitment



Aviva is the world's sixth largest insurance group and the largest in the UK. It has 45,000 employees in 28 countries around the world who serve over 53.4m customers. Aviva Group Centre, the head office operations situated in London, was listed as one of the Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For in 2011.

### The Challenge

Aviva's brand promise is 'No one recognises you like Aviva'. To demonstrate this brand promise in their graduate recruitment, Aviva took the decision to move to strengths-based graduate recruitment in 2009. Capp were commissioned to develop a strengths-based methodology for the graduate scheme for the 2010 intake period. The challenges were:

- Dealing with large candidate numbers as a result of the economic recession - ultimately there were more than 1,900 applicants for 20 positions available, in 5 areas of the business - Actuarial, Chartered Accountancy, Business Change & IT, Business Management, and Human Resources
- Candidates were well-rehearsed in answering competency questions, making it difficult to differentiate between them
- Candidates were drawn from cultures and locations around the world, meaning that cross-cultural sensitivity and validity of the approach was important
- The graduate recruitment methodology had to identify reliably the most exceptional graduates who would be best suited to the roles, doing so against a significant cost challenge to the process.

### Capp's Approach

- Capp ran thorough interviews with key stakeholders across the organisation to identify the strategy required for Aviva
- Strengths of highly performing graduates were identified through interviews and focus groups, and used to inform the interview development
- Capp designed and managed the candidate sifting process - including an online application, psychometric testing and strengths-based telephone interview
- The highest quality candidates were selected on the basis of their experience, numerical and verbal abilities, and strengths
- Successful candidates progressed through to the strengths-based assessment centre
- Capp supported the assessment centre design, and supported the Aviva team with quality assurance and best practice in running the assessment centre
- The project was subject to a full evaluation and review, provided by Capp, to support Aviva with embedding the graduate recruitment process and enabling future learning.

: Rachel Russell, HR  
 : Business Consultant,  
 : Aviva said *"Using  
 : strengths as an integral  
 : part of our graduate  
 : selection enabled us to  
 : show candidates how  
 : Aviva focuses on the  
 : individual in everything  
 : we do. Strengths  
 : bring an entirely new  
 : perspective to this  
 : challenging recruitment  
 : market, and allowed us  
 : to gain real commercial  
 : benefit, in an innovative  
 : way."*

### Outcomes

- The strengths-based recruitment process significantly reduced the number of delegates invited to assessment centre, reducing costs and requiring less assessor time
- Analysis showed no adverse impact from the process, whether by gender or ethnicity
- Aviva's focus on individual recognition and strengths appealed to candidates - increasing positive candidate perceptions of the Aviva brand
- 98% of candidates (typically a Generation Y group) felt that their employer recognising their strengths was important.

