



Applicant Reactions to Online Assessments

The Relationship between Reaction and Test Performance on Non-Cognitive and Job Simulation Measures

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▶ Who is EMBARQ?

- Total communication company
 - Local, long distance, wireless, high-speed internet, digital video
- 20,000 employees serving customers in 18 states
 - 4.8 million households and 500,000 businesses

▶ Online Assessment at EMBARQ

- Entry-level positions in call centers, retail stores, business sales, and other customer facing positions
- Front-line supervisors in our Consumer Division
- Screening and selection measures in both proctored and unproctored settings
- Internet-based testing is expected to exceed 10,000 applicants for calendar year 2007

Selection Process “Bulls eye” The Need for Critical Feedback



Without knowing the “whole story”, it is very difficult to score a selection “bulls eye”!

Candidate Feedback and Process Improvement



- ▶ Consistency of the process
 - Are all applicants on a level playing field?
- ▶ Uncertainty reduction
 - Are applicants understanding the process upfront?
- ▶ Interpersonal treatment
 - Do applicants perceive they are being treated fairly?
- ▶ Trust in process
 - Are applicants believing us to be fair and equitable?
- ▶ Quality of communication
 - Are applicants understanding what we are asking?

Benefits of Gathering Applicant Reaction Feedback



- ▶ Applicants are our customers
 - We want to keep our customers
 - Happy customers lead to more customers
- ▶ Understanding the recruitment and selection experience through the eyes of the candidate
 - Allows for a new level of insight to improve the process
- ▶ Decentralized process monitoring
 - Quality control throughout the country
- ▶ The data is obtainable with little or no cost
- ▶ Research indicates that applicant reaction influences a wide-range of outcomes

Applicant Reaction Impact on Recruiting



- ▶ Applicant reaction correlates with attraction to an organization (Smither et al., 1993)
- ▶ Applicant reaction correlates with willingness and intent to recommend the company to others (Smither et al., 1993; Hausknecht et.al., 2004)
- ▶ Applicant reaction correlates with intent to accept job offers (Hausknecht et.al., 2004)
- ▶ Applicant reaction may influence intent to apply for future positions with the company
- ▶ Applicant reaction may impact company image
 - This in turn may impact recruitment efforts and outcomes

Applicant Reaction Impact on Business Outcomes



- ▶ Perceptions of procedural justice predict job satisfaction, commitment, turnover, and performance (Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991)
- ▶ Procedural justice has significant correlations with:
 - job satisfaction (.62)
 - organizational commitment (.57)
 - job performance (.36)
 - turnover (-.46)

(Colquitt, et al., 2001)



Procedural Justice - perceived fairness of the selection process

EMBARQ Applicant Reaction Survey Goals



- ▶ Improve the applicant experience
 - Based on applicant feedback, can we improve the experience?

- ▶ Improve the selection process
 - What can we learn from applicants that might improve the selection process?

- ▶ Gather data on the relationship between applicant reaction and test scores
 - Interesting research question

EMBARQ Applicant Reaction Survey Content Summary



- ▶ Three content areas
 - Online assessment process
 - Overall, I was satisfied with the online assessment experience.
 - The content of the online assessment seemed appropriate.
 - I experienced no technical problems during the online assessment.
 - Interview process
 - Overall, I was satisfied with the interview experience.
 - The interview allowed me to show what my job skills are.
 - EMBARQ as an organization
 - I intend to tell others that EMBARQ is a good place to apply for a job.
 - I would apply again for this position at EMBARQ.
 - EMBARQ has a reputation as one of the best companies to work for.

EMBARQ Applicant Reaction Survey Administration



▶ Web Based

- Little cost other than development time
- Easy to administer via batch email requests

▶ Timeframe

- Requests sent 4-6 weeks after online assessment
- Applicants did not know the results of the online assessment
 - Some applicants had been interviewed, others had not

▶ Participants

- All applicants completing the online assessment were requested to participate

Survey Respondent Demographics



- ▶ Total Responses = 597
 - Consumer Solutions Representative 443 (82%)
 - Network Service Technician 14 (3%)
 - Retail Sales Representative 34 (6%)
 - Field Sales Representative 9 (2%)
 - Other Selection: 41(8%)

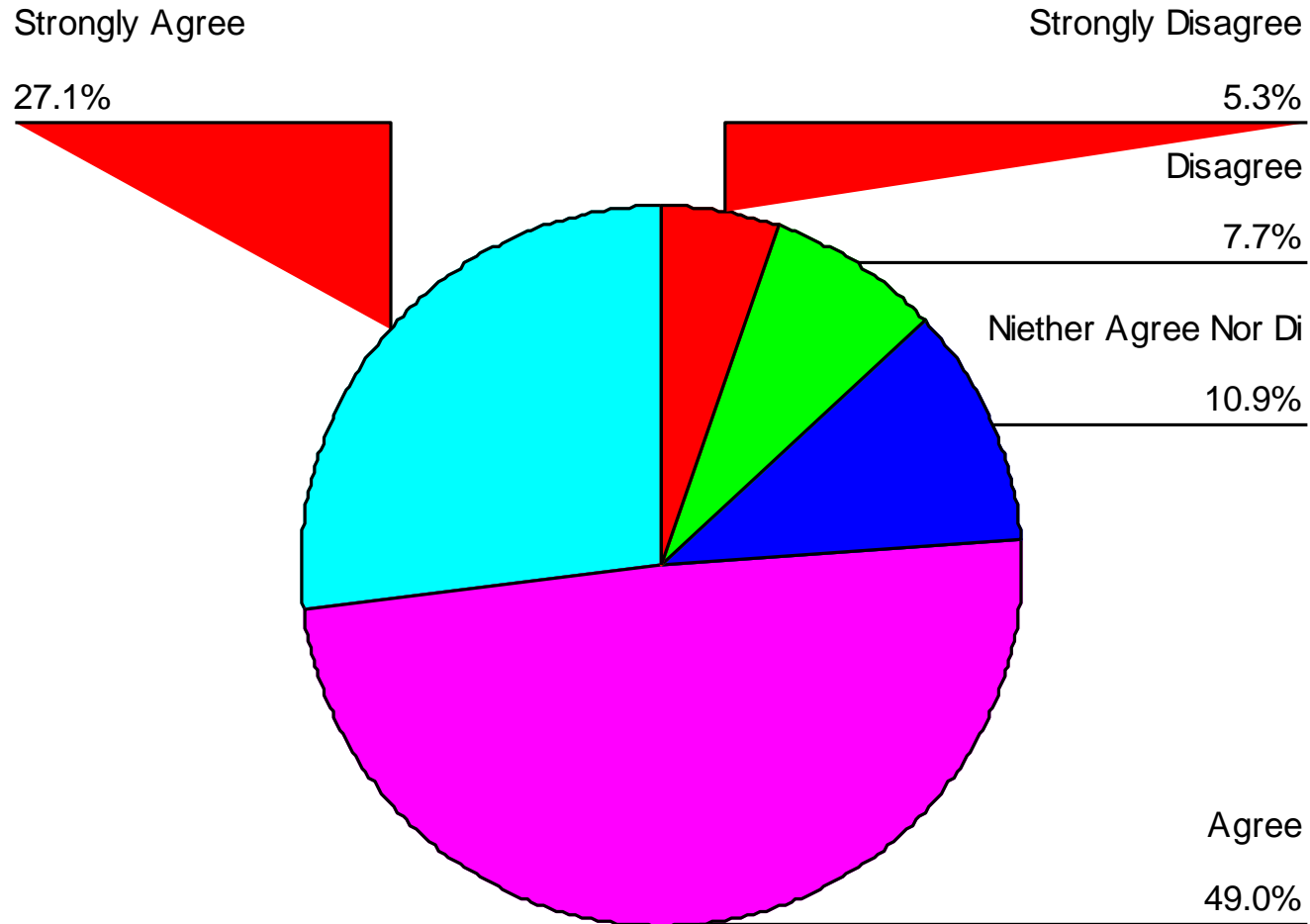
- ▶ Response rate of approximately 50%

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Gender<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 334 Females- 146 Males- 117 No response	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Ethnicity<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 214 White- 172 Black- 51 Hispanic- 9 Asian- 3 Native Amer- 148 No response
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Some Survey Results



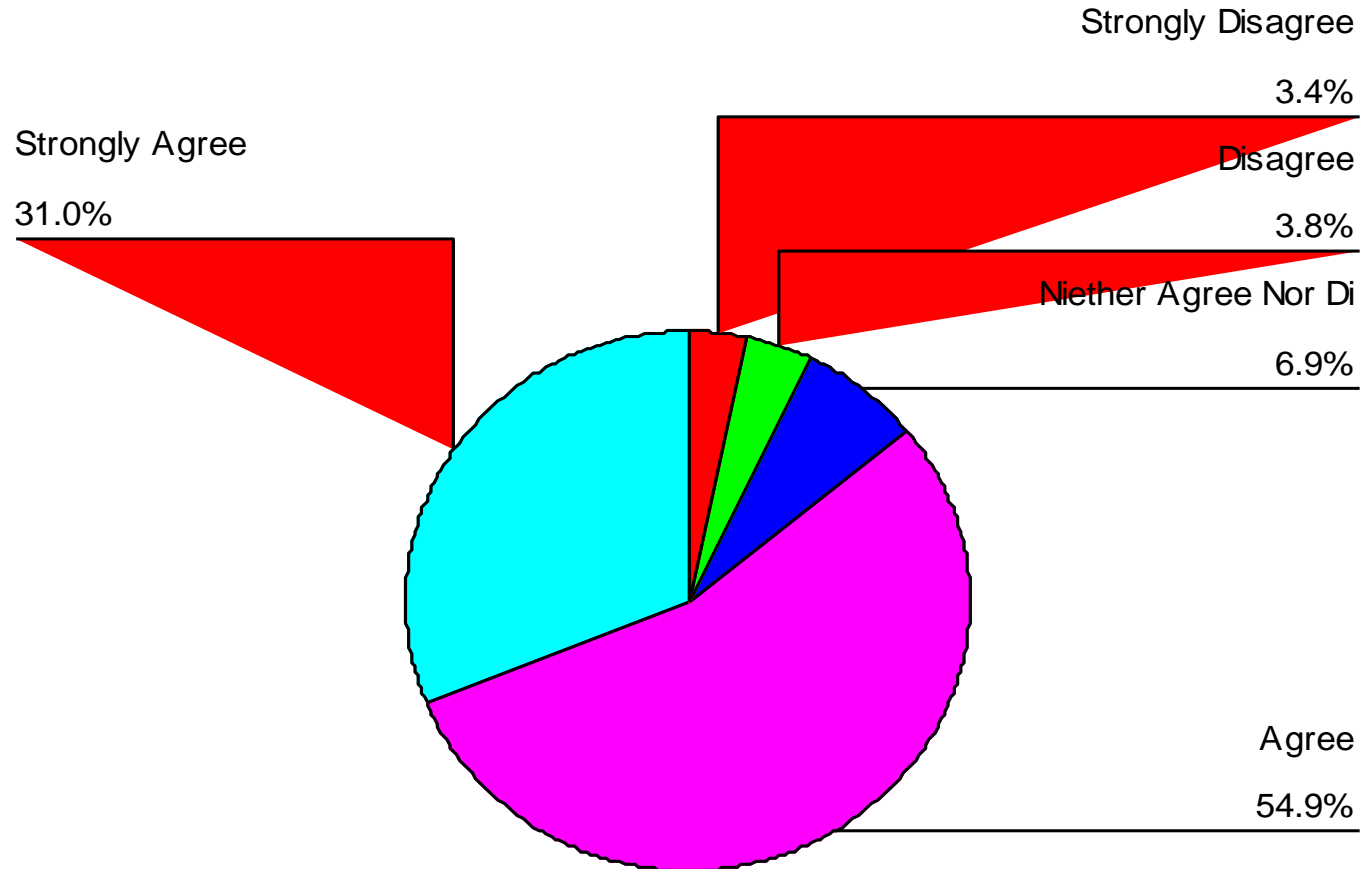
Satisfied with the online assessment



Some Survey Results



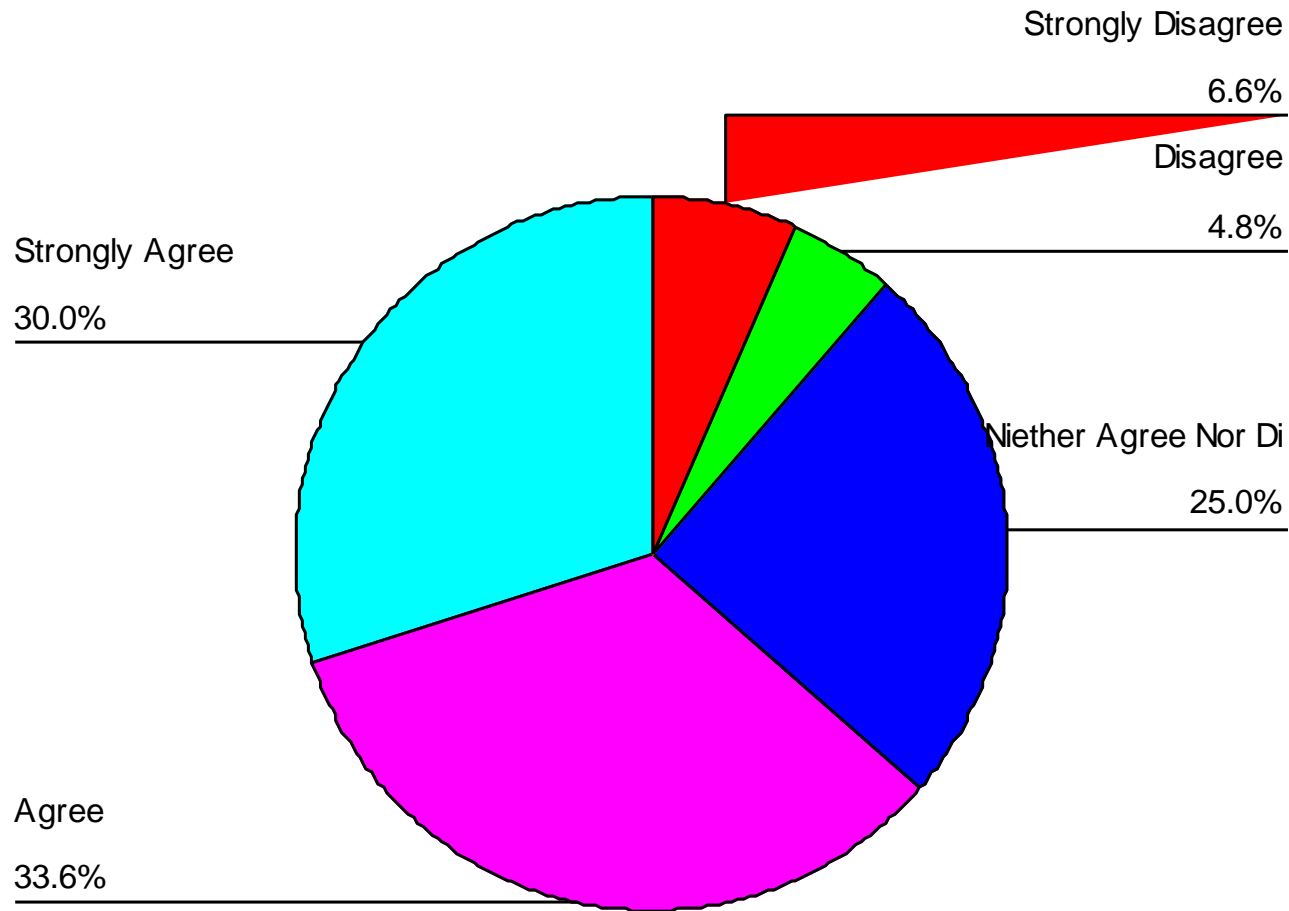
Content of the online assessment was appropriate



Some Survey Results



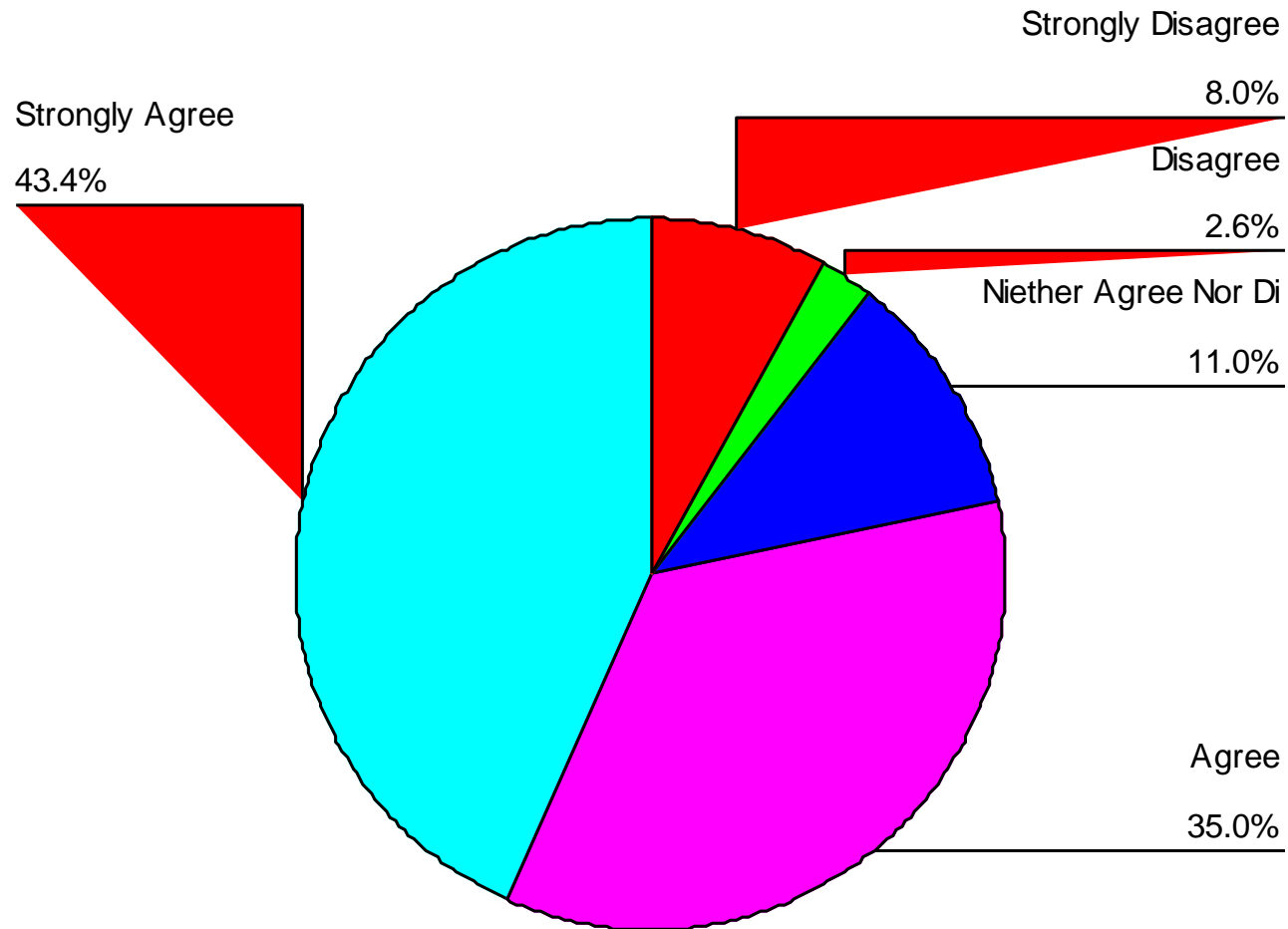
Intend to tell others Embarq is a good place to work



Some Survey Results



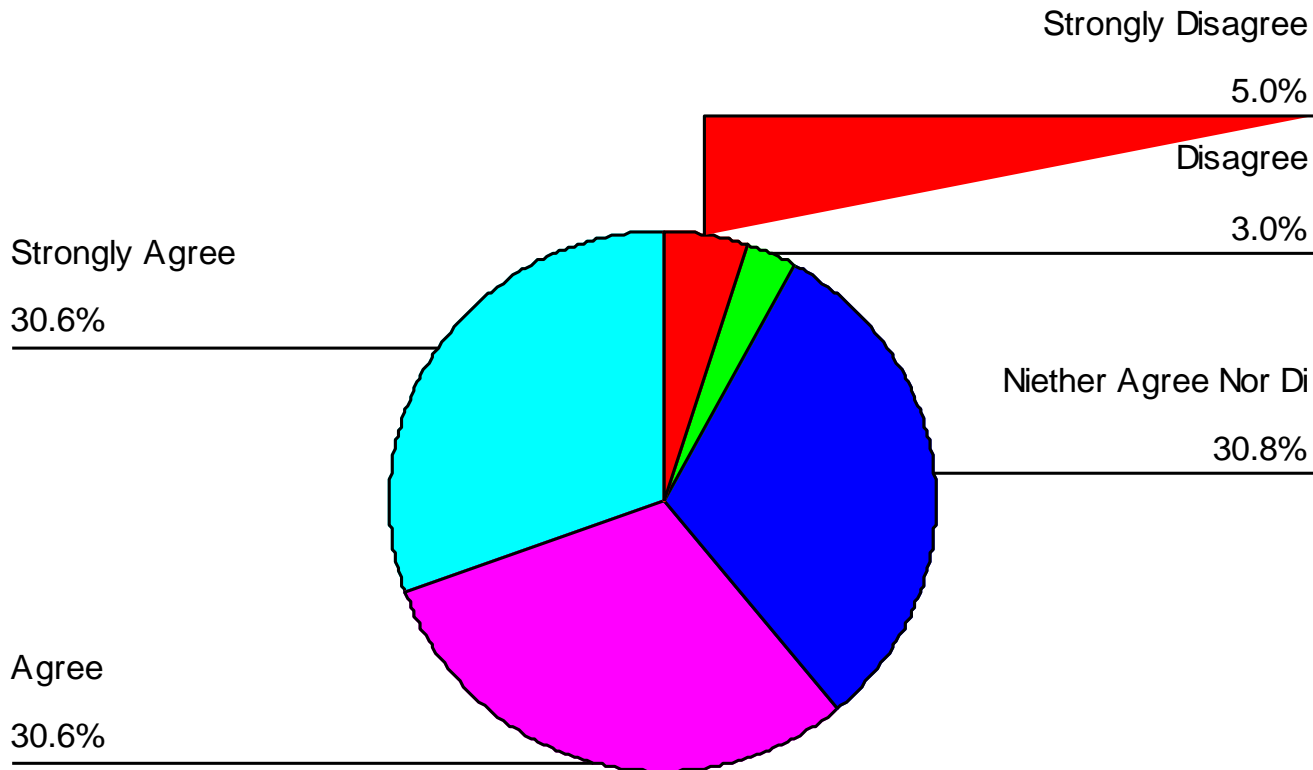
Would apply again for this position



Some Survey Results



Embarq has a reputation as one of the best



Some Survey Results



Experienced no technical problems

Strongly Agree

31.8%

Strongly Disagree

10.5%

Disagree

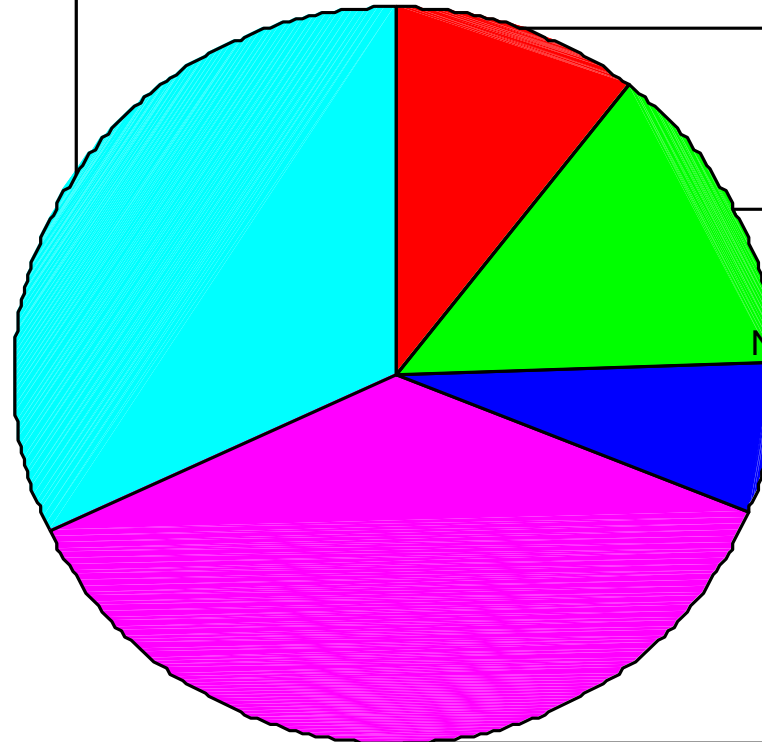
13.8%

Neither Agree Nor Di

6.7%

Agree

37.2%



Survey Results Summary



- ▶ Results indicate that applicants had a positive reaction to the online assessment process
- ▶ Results indicate that applicants had a positive reaction to the interview process
- ▶ Results indicate that applicants had a positive reaction toward EMBARQ as a company and a potential place to work

Survey Results

Opportunity for Improvement

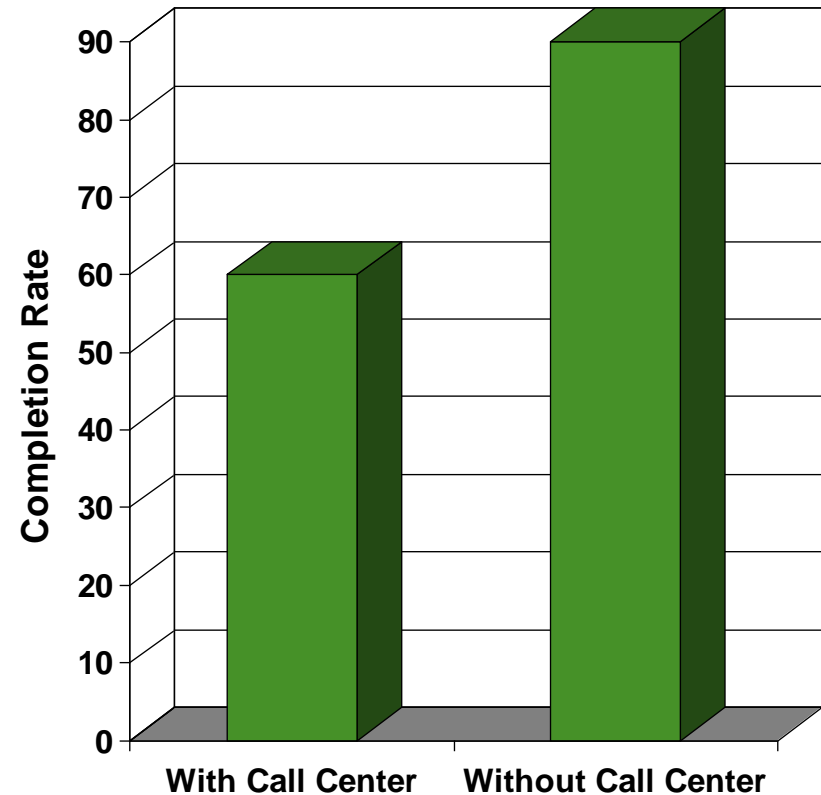


- ▶ 25% of candidates reported technical problems with the online assessment
 - Survey results indicated that almost all were applicants for Customer Service Representative (CSR)
 - Feedback from recruiters confirmed the survey results
 - 60% candidate completion rate for CSR online assessment also suggested a potential problem

Improving the CSR Assessment Process



- ▶ Customer focus, sales focus, persistence, call center simulation
- ▶ Candidate completion rate for assessment was 60%
- ▶ Candidate feedback indicated problems with the call center simulation
- ▶ Call center simulation was a “nice to have”, not a critical component
- ▶ Removed call center simulation and completion rate on the assessment increased to 90%
- ▶ Resulted in more high quality candidates available for the interview phase



Candidate Reaction & CSR Online Assessment Results



- ▶ Satisfaction with the online assessment process
 - Significant correlation with overall score ($r=0.13$)
 - Significant correlation with call center simulation ($r=0.11$)
 - Significant correlation with 1 of 3 non-cognitive measures
 - Sales Focus ($r=0.11$)

- ▶ Appropriateness of online content
 - Significant correlation with overall score ($r=0.13$)
 - Significant correlation with 2 of 3 non-cognitive measures
 - Sales Focus ($r=0.15$)
 - Persistence and Planfulness ($r=0.10$)

Candidate Reaction & CSR Online Assessment Results (cont.)



- ▶ So far, participation in the selection process has been a positive experience
 - Significant correlation with overall score ($r=0.14$)
 - Significant correlation with call center simulation ($r=0.10$)
 - Significant correlation with 2 of 3 non-cognitive measures
 - Sales Focus ($r=0.15$)
 - Persistence and Planfulness ($r=0.09$)

- ▶ Experienced no technical problems
 - Significant correlation with overall score ($r=0.09$)
 - Significant correlation with call center simulation ($r=0.12$)
 - No significant correlations with non-cognitive measure

Candidate Reaction & CSR Online Assessment Results (cont.)



- ▶ Correlations with items focusing on EMBARQ reputation and EMBARQ as a place to work
 - Significant correlation was found with non-cognitive measure of sales focus ($r=.10$)
 - No other significant relationships

- ▶ No relationship between candidate reaction and intent to apply for the position again
 - All correlations approached zero

- ▶ No relationship between candidate reaction and customer focus score
 - All correlations approached zero

Candidate Reaction When Controlling for Interview

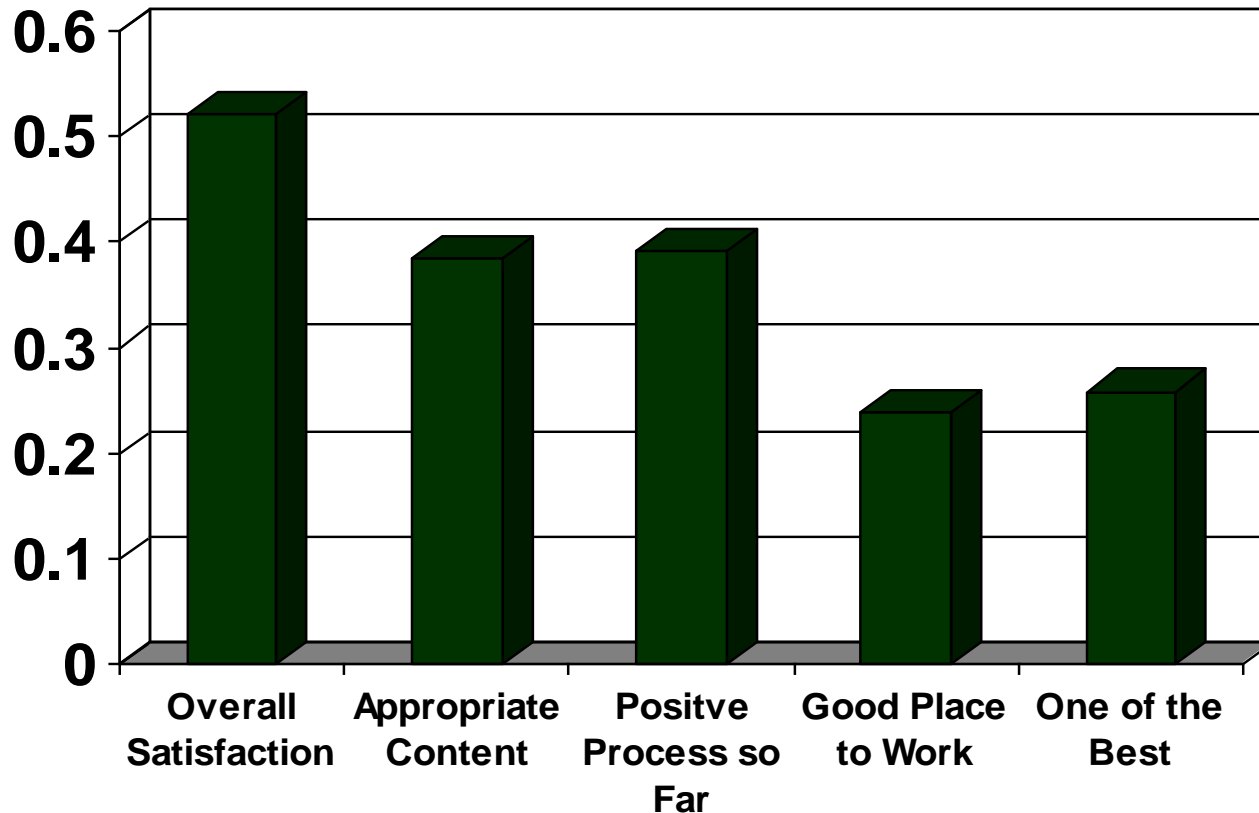


- ▶ 43% of candidates had received an interview
- ▶ Ratings for candidates who had been interviewed were significantly higher for:
 - Satisfaction with the online assessment
 - So far the process has been positive
- ▶ Ratings for candidates who had been interviewed were significantly lower for:
 - Would apply for this position again
- ▶ Correlations when controlling for interview status were similar to those discussed previously

Impact of Technical Problems on Candidate Reaction



Correlation Between Experienced No Technical Problems & Other Reaction Items



Impact of Technical Problems on Candidate Reaction



- ▶ Candidates who experienced technical difficulties had significantly lower reaction ratings for all variables of interest
 - Mean ratings were .5 to 1 point lower (5 point scale)

Implications of Applicant Reactions to Online Assessment



- ▶ Applicant reactions to online assessments influence test scores
 - Overall scores
 - Simulation scores
 - Some non-cognitive scores
- ▶ Technical difficulties in the online assessment negatively impact overall scores and simulation scores
- ▶ Technical difficulties negatively impact applicant reactions to the online process and the organization

How to Contact Us



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