Playbook

Hiring Live Chat Agents at Scale: A Playbook

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Introduction

With online sales growing to historic levels and consumer behavior shifting from physical to digital, the nature of customer service is undergoing a radical transformation as well. As on-demand services are exploding, customers are settling into new patterns of behavior and expecting businesses to adapt to their newly formed habits.

And it's not just their shopping behavior that's becoming more digital: the way customers communicate with brands and seek support is changing as well, chat messaging being the fastest growing segment in many contact centers around the globe.

Despite phone calls rising in popularity as a way to stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic, chat messaging is seeing more significant growth year over year – which means that the chat support capability of contact centers and BPOs must grow too. Not only has communication changed, hiring has too. To cope with the drastic changes to consumer preferences, contact centers around the world are seeking out new ways to optimize their hiring process to scale their live chat function quickly, while finding the right talent.

And this is no easy feat. TA leaders have acted quickly to patch together talent solutions to meet client demand for live chat agents during the pandemic. Because chat has grown so quickly, the market lacked both the talent pool and technology solutions to enable them to build their optimal hiring process.

This presented TA teams with a massive challenge – the market required you to scale your chat function, and you may have. But, now that chat has become the preferred method of support for consumers and clients, organizations need to make a sustainable investment in being able to assess, select and hire top notch live chat agents at scale.

Thankfully, the talent and the technology are beginning to catch up to the demand in the customer experience industry. The growth of the chat industry as well as remote work has caught the attention of talent, and of recruitment technology providers.

Introduction

At Harver, we've been on the leading edge of contact center volume hiring for the past 6 years. Our solutions are tailor made to turn manual, laborious contact center hiring processes into cost effective, candidate friendly digital experiences.

In the last year alone, amidst the staggering rise of both live chat and remote work, we've helped organizations like Alorica, Sitel, Wayfair, and Zalando future-proof their high volume recruitment process through digital transformation. The relationships we've built with our customers have helped us optimize our approach, to create sophisticated solutions that meet the demands of market leaders – like selecting top notch agents for the growing live chat segment.

In this playbook, we'll dive into the rise of live chat, the skills and characteristics of top performing agents, and how to best assess them to reduce attrition and guarantee top notch customer service. After reading this playbook, you'll be fully prepared to hire live chat agents and grow your business amidst the changing market landscape.

Thanks for reading,

Linn Hadenius
*Senior Consultant,
People Science Team at
Harver*

The Live Chat Business Opportunity

Let's start with the "why": why are consumers moving away from phone support, and what does this mean for customer service providers?

Simple: it's fast, easy, and mimics how we communicate in our day-to-day life. We text to keep in touch with friends, use tools like Slack to facilitate communication at work, and even make appointments online. Especially for younger people: Millennials and Gen Z are used to, and comfortable with, doing everything online.

Phone-based support had long been the norm before the rise of cell phones led to increases in text and chat use. Since text messaging took over the world, growing by more than 55% year over year, Americans send twice as many texts as they do phone calls. Today, instant messaging services like Whatsapp have more than twice the volume of text messages. Even with the resurgence of making phone calls during the pandemic, phone traffic is being outpaced by apps like iMessage and WhatsApp, because they're fast, reliable, and convenient.

Consumers have become accustomed to doing things online – from talking to friends, to shopping and taking out loans. However, human interaction is still demanded and valued:

There's 61% higher customer satisfaction for companies that combine AI with human interaction. A study by PWC found that 78% of UK customers want more, not less, human interaction with companies in the future.

As remote-first everything has become the norm for virtually all aspects of life and business, customers now expect high quality, online experiences from every organization they interact with. But, they want those interactions to be convenient and fit the way they live their lives.

That's why live chat support is now the fastest growing business segment for contact centers, up to 150% YOY. And the good news is that live chat presents a strong business case for contact centers and BPOs. This support channel benefits customers who like getting their questions answered immediately, and with 90% of consumers rating immediate answers as important or very important, live chat directly addresses the requirements of most consumers.

24%

of consumers say long wait times are their biggest frustration when receiving customer support

Not only do customers expect live support - they enjoy it. 79% of users prefer live chat over other channels, and chat support has the highest satisfaction rate of all service channels - between 73-82% - compared to email (61%) and phone (44%).
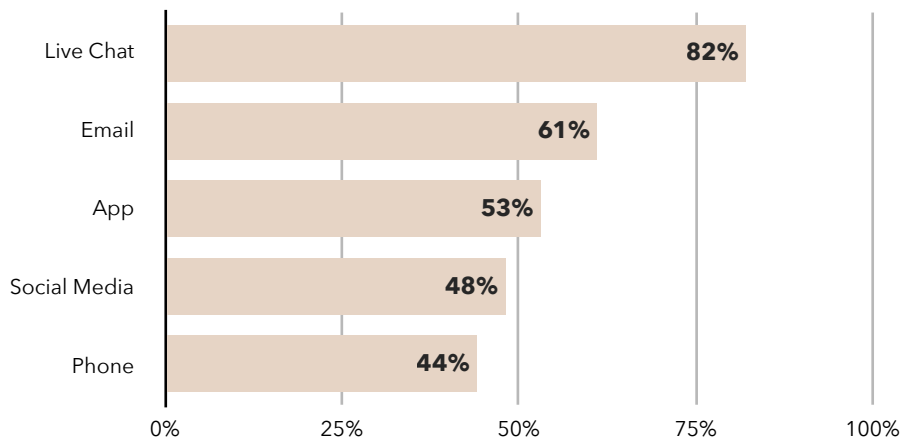
With 95.7% of contact center professionals rating customer satisfaction as the most important metric, it is only natural that business priorities will follow customer preferences. But, chat doesn't only benefit consumers, it's good for the bottom line too: because multiple requests can be handled by agents at once, it's an extremely productive and lucrative segment for customer experience providers.

According to Sharpen CX, Americans waste a collective 900 million hours waiting on hold every year, and the average person will spend 43 days on hold over the course of their life. However, we see the tolerance for waiting on phone support declining, as both the market and channels available evolve.

Given the changing customer expectations and their preference for online communication channels, the rate of growth for live chat support can only be expected to quicken more. And as the chat segment grows, BPOs and contact centers will need to hire and staff more efficiently in order to compete for client projects.

So on the one hand, employers need to hire more chat agents fast, and on the other hand, customers expect to receive the same, if not better, treatment than before. As we approach the next section, we'll look at the unique challenges of hiring live chat agents, and then dive into how you can assess, select, and hire the right talent, at scale.

Why consumers prefer live chat

79%
instant responses

51%
they can multitask

46%
live chat is more efficient

29%
information received is better

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The Challenges of Hiring Live Chat Agents

Although live chat feels quick and easy on the end of a consumer, from a recruitment standpoint, navigating the growing market and the shift from phone support has its challenges.

Firstly, for a new, high-growth market, it's likely there will be more open roles than candidates with relevant experience, which means most talent teams won't be able to rely on resumes to select candidates.

Secondly, it's important to acknowledge that the skill set required for live chat agents varies from the skill set needed for phone support. This means many organizations will mis-hire if they don't adjust their selection process, or if they rely on internal mobility alone, as the latter can prove to be a hit-or-miss tactic.

And thirdly, businesses need to be able to find top performing agents fast, in a candidate-friendly way that is cost-effective for the organization.

Let's take a closer look at each of these challenges.

Understanding the chat agent role

When you select candidates for any role, you won't be able to assess and hire accurately if you haven't determined what characteristics predict success. And with chat agents, the skills that were predictive of top performance in the past are no longer the same skills required in today's work environment.

The role of the live chat agent is changing, from an employee who needed to handle one customer at a time and offer support via phone, to an agent who needs to multi-task, solve multiple customer cases at once, and do it gracefully in a stressful environment.

It's therefore clear that to meet new customer demands you need candidates with different profiles and skill sets than traditional support requires. But what exactly should you look for when recruiting live chat agents? What are the unique skills you should assess candidates for, to make sure you're hiring top performing chat employees?

Let's dive into what the role of a live chat agent entails, so you know exactly what you'll need to assess, and then we'll dive into how to do it efficiently.

Identifying the core skill set and competencies, also known as a job analysis, is typically done by an IO-psychologist who researches the competencies, dispositions and abilities that a job requires. However, if you don't have an IO to rely on, there are three practices you can adopt when building selection criteria for a role - we've compiled them below.

Benefits of live chat

79%

of businesses reported that implementing live chat led to an increase in customer loyalty, sales and revenue.

1. Identify critical tasks

These are the skills candidates will need to be able to handle or learn to handle quickly. Key tasks of the role, typically what's included in the job description, should accurately reflect the activities regularly performed in the role, especially those which are critical to success.

2. Understand what differentiates high performers

It's important to know what specific characteristics or behaviors separate your highest and lowest performers. That way, when hiring, you'll be able to identify qualities in candidates that reflect the employees on the team who are performing the best.

3. Consider readiness vs. potential

Readiness for the role refers to qualities someone needs from Day 1 for success (personality, specific knowledge, certifications, etc.), whereas potential are those characteristics that help someone quickly ramp (such as cognitive ability, personality, learning agility). In many cases, for entry-level positions, it's more important to consider potential if you'll provide ample training.

A job analysis takes into account the core tasks of a role, critical situations that differentiate high and low performers, and considers the impact of experience versus potential. Our People Science team broke down the live chat job to extract the critical skills and competencies needed for performing in this role below.

Critical tasks	Qualities of high performers	Readiness vs. potential
• Reading and easily understanding queries	• Excellent communication	• Personality and competencies outweigh past experience
• Handling multiple customer issues simultaneously	• Problem solving skills	• If training is provided, potential is more important
• Prioritizing time sensitive requests	• Memorization and priorization	
• Following procedures	• Stress control	
• Proper escalation	• Quick customer adaption	

While it might seem that the easiest way to fill your chat agent seats is to simply move your phone support agents to these new roles, this doesn't work in practice, because the two roles are actually very different - and this is the next challenge we'll explore below.

Role difference - chat agents VS. voice (call) agents

The nature of phone support is different from that of chat support. One requires listening and speaking, the other involves reading and writing. Where phone support has just one customer at a time, a live chat agent may handle 4-5 tickets or more at once. Thus, the skills required for the role are vastly different, and your recruitment process needs to reflect that.

Someone who's a high performer in the voice role isn't necessarily going to perform in a chat role, because the core job tasks and critical situations differ. A successful phone agent might be great at interpreting tone of voice, picking up verbal cues or easing an angry customer, but if they lack written communication or reading comprehension skills they will struggle to meet the demands of a chat agent role.

As with any role, the selection criteria for live chat agents should closely reflect the demands of the job.

Phone key tasks	Chat key tasks
• Interpreting spoken information	• Reading comprehension
• Spoken language fluency or proficiency	• Typing and writing
• Emotional control	• Summarizing and prioritising
	• Multitasking

And this brings us to challenge number two.

Skills matter more than resumes

The live chat segment is growing by over 100-150% annually depending on the industry. As we mentioned earlier, this means that for the time being there will always be more roles available than candidates with direct experience.

However, this shouldn't worry you – because for entry-level positions, past experience is rarely a strong predictor of performance. More important are the skills and characteristics necessary to do the work. From analyzing every aspect of the job and traits of high performers, our team was able to identify the essential traits of live chat agents:

1. Typing skills - the ability to quickly and accurately type coherent responses is also essential for live chat agents, as customers expect timely responses.

2. Reading comprehension - customer support agents who communicate with clients in writing need to be able to process customer messages, understand their request, and identify additional needed information. This is called reading comprehension and it's particularly important in live chat roles, where clients don't get to see the agent, so there's no body language or tone of voice involved in the communication.

3. Customer orientation - a live chat agent needs to possess the propensity to prioritize customer needs and find the best solution for them. And they need to do this repeatedly, regardless of how their day goes, so putting the customer first is a must in such roles.

4. Problem solving - customer support teams need to be able to find solutions that satisfy the customer request while abiding by protocols. Solving the problem for a client should not harm the organization or brand.

5. Prioritization - customers expect timely and accurate responses, therefore it's critical for live chat agents to be able to extract the most relevant information and summarize it quickly, in a way that addresses the key parts of the customer request.

6. Multitasking - live chat agents handle multiple requests at once, therefore they need to have the ability to switch between multiple conversations without compromising quality.

7. Clear communication - a chat support agent needs to have a clear, easy to understand, grammatically correct communication style.

8. Stress tolerance - last but not least, live chat agents need to be able to read emotions from text alone, and to regulate their own emotions to remain appropriate with customers. Given the stressful environment they work in, handling difficult conversations and building rapport with customers without getting too involved emotionally is essential for performing well. Thus, stress tolerance is a must-have skill in this role.

On top of these, contact centers and BPOs also deal with high attrition rates and with the challenges that come with hiring at scale, these being the next points on our list.

High attrition rates due to misaligned expectations

The biggest recruitment challenge for contact centers and BPOs generally is attrition – most organizations experience attrition rates between 30-45%, which is often 3X or more the average for other industries. Many call centers and BPOs have accepted this as a characteristic of the industry, rather than a problem to be tackled.
With high numbers of entry level and remote employees, tasks that involve angry customers, and often low pay, it's easy to assume that attrition is an inherent outcome.

However, the main reason for high attrition in the contact center industry is the misaligned expectations of job applicants. Customer service roles can be demanding. Between handling frustrated customers, routine work tasks, difficulties working remotely, or even a lack of development opportunities – applicants who are searching for the first job they can find may not understand exactly what they've signed on for.

Rarely do candidates get a full, realistic picture of the day-to-day realities defining the role they're applying for. And with good reason: when hiring hundreds or thousands of applicants it is a monumental task to inform each and every applicant about the realities of the job. However, it remains necessary and the live chat role is no exception – especially if selection and training aren't up to par.

Yet, as important as it is to sell the job and staff client projects quickly, you don't want to risk glossing over the more difficult parts of the job. Doing so harms both parties: the company invests in an employee that will end up leaving the organization within the first 90 days, and the new hires miss better opportunities when they accept a job that they don't enjoy.

This issue can be avoided by dedicating more time to each candidate during the recruitment process, but the leading contact centers deal with one more challenge that makes this almost impossible without the aid of the right technology: hiring at scale.

2021 HR statistics

After finding a job offer

64%

of candidates research a company online and

37%

will move on if they can't find information about the company.

How Arvato reduced employee turnover by 63%
Arvato, a global provider of customer support services, reduced unwanted turnover by providing a realistic job preview to candidates. They achieved:

| 63% decrease in 30-day attrition | Interview time from 75 to 20 min | 85% selection rate |

Read the case study

Challenges specific to hiring at scale

Not only do you need to tackle all of previously mentioned problems, but you have to do it on a substantial scale. Volume hiring has its own set of demands in addition to the demands of the live chat role.

The normal rigors of hiring are increased exponentially when you're trying to fill multiple positions at once, especially when staffing quickly to meet client demand. Typically, contact centers have a large number of applicants for a few entry level roles that always need to be continuously filled. When accounting both for growth and attrition, the recruiting machine is always on.

Here are a few ways volume hiring differs from traditional hiring:

It's a numbers game - You need to be able to process hundreds, or even hundreds of thousands of applicants, and you need to be able to do it fast, efficiently and without bias. From our client data, we see the largest contact centers fielding thousands to tens of thousands of applicants weekly.

What do you do when you have to fill in a number of openings on a monthly basis, and you receive no less than 80,000 applicants? As we know from our partners, your team doesn't have the time to sift through those resumes one by one, nor can you realistically expect to conduct phone interviews with every single applicant, especially if you need to staff a client quickly. Even if a resume review and phone screen amount to just 10 minutes, over the course of a year you could be staring down thousands of hours lost.

It's about scale, and scalability - When conducting high volume recruitment, everything is bigger - including time, and especially cost. It's no secret that one of the most pressing issues in contact centers and BPOs is attrition.

Even for a call center with around 10,000 employees, at an average loss of $2,500 for each instance of employee turnover, the number topples a loss of over a million dollars if turnover is similar to the industry average. Cost should also be considered in terms of time. If the average time to hire is 38 days, you're losing more than pure cash when consistently mis-hiring.

Must be data-driven - When everything is done at scale, no matter how strong your talent pool or selection methods are, continuous insight into the metrics of your hiring process is a must have, not a nice-to-have. After all, if you don't have control over a small process with just a few applicants, you might be able to rescue the situation, but when you lose control over a process with thousands or even tens of thousands of applicants, it's incredibly difficult to get it back, conduct analysis or make any improvements.

As you can see, volume hiring is vastly different from regular recruiting. So, how can you improve your selection process to accommodate high volumes of applicants and the specific chat skill set, while reducing voluntary attrition?

After all, being able to find one great candidate isn't enough. You'll need to be able to systematically identify hundreds or even thousands of live chat agents annually, from high volumes of applicants.

How to Assess Live Chat Skills

The best way to ensure your process is effective, is to make sure your selection criteria accurately measures the key traits you've identified for your roles. As we've discussed, the way you assess candidates needs to accurately predict job performance. Different traits may require different assessments, and there are a variety of tools available on the market today that can help you identify and select the candidates who best fit your company's needs and culture.

Let's quickly break down the pre-employment assessments most commonly used for screening live chat agents, and see which traits they measure.

Personality questionnaire

A personality questionnaire assists in identifying basic customer support skills, as well as stress tolerance, empathy and customer adaptation. It helps you get to know candidates on a much deeper level than a CV and cover letter can provide, and represent a great starting point for interviews. Furthermore, a personality questionnaire will better enable you to determine if a candidate's personality will be a good fit for your company and if they will be a top performer.

At Harver, we use a HEXACO personality questionnaire based on the Big Five model, updated to include an extra dimension: honesty-humility. We offer two formats for this pre-employment assessment solution: 60 and 100 questions, based on your recruitment needs.

You can choose to share the results of the personality questionnaire with candidates after the hiring process, giving them valuable insights into their own personality, ensuring the process is beneficial to both you and the candidates.

> *Candidates are much more likely to align with our values and way of working. I can see that my team leaders are hiring better qualified people.*
>
> *- Tom Custers - Customer Service Manager, Arvato*
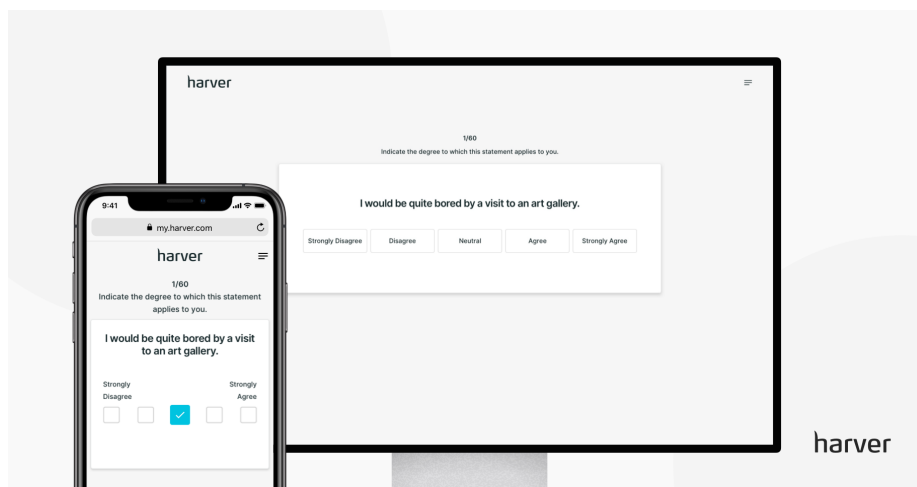
Typing test

A typing test helps measure the ability to quickly and clearly communicate while writing with correct grammar and punctuation. This type of assessment is widely used in customer support roles, the typing speed being an accurate indicator of on-the-job performance. In any environment where employees are required to address several requests at a time, especially for customers, it is key that they have the typing ability to do this efficiently and coherently.

Harver's typing assessment integrates seamlessly into your application process, allowing you to collect all the information needed up-front to eliminate time consuming follow-ups. Candidates are assessed on speed and accuracy, and their scores are automatically calculated and stored in their candidate profile. If paired with another assessment, the typing scores will be weighted in their overall score according to your companies' unique matching benchmark to help you make data-driven hiring decisions at scale.
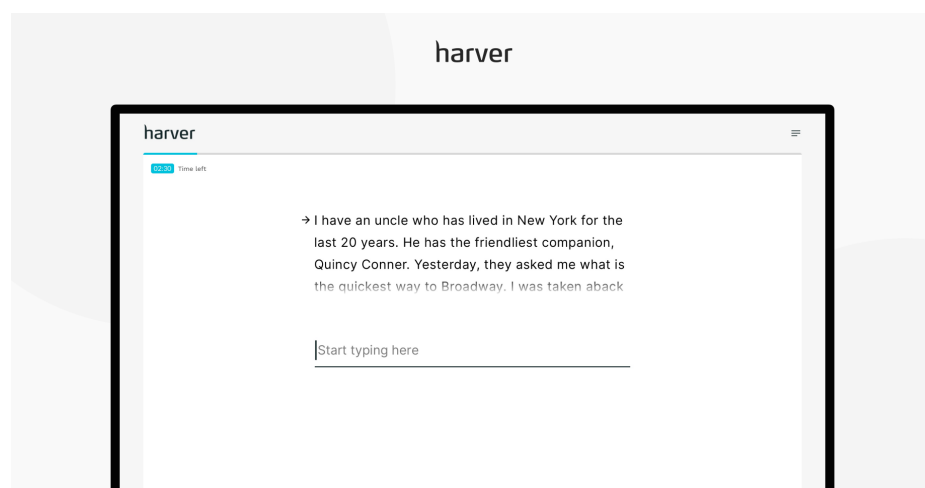
Multitasking test

Multitasking tests measure short term memory as well as the ability to switch tasks rapidly – needed for fielding multiple customer requests. People with strong multitasking skills can take on multiple responsibilities at once and complete them all efficiently without compromising quality.

Yet, this ability shouldn't be confused with being distracted. When someone is juggling multiple things at once and barely hitting the mark on any of them, this isn't multitasking–this is just taking on more than that individual can handle. A true multitasker can successfully handle multiple tasks without dropping the ball. These are the kinds of candidates recruiters should be looking for when selecting live chat agents.

The Harver multitasking test includes two skill games that assess candidates both in a visual and alphanumerical manner. The experience is gamified and engaging, and provides recruiters with skill data that's not available when scanning CVs.
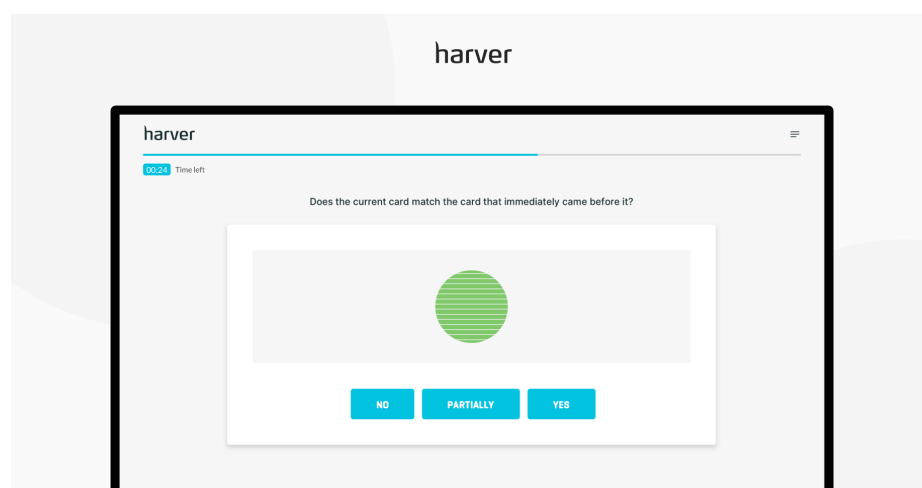
Situational judgement test (SJT)

Situational judgement tests show you how a candidate behaves in a critical situation, rather than on just routine tasks, which can help identify potential top performers.

This popular behavioral assessment tool recreates realistic scenarios related to the day-to-day challenges and activities of the job in question. Candidates then have to choose what the best and worst response to these scenarios are in their opinion, and their answers are rated against industry- or company-specific benchmarks.

This allows you to gauge if their natural reactions suit the ideal behavior for the specific role and company overall. At the same time, your applicants can get a virtual preview of a day on the job—meaning you'll both get a sense of the fit to your organization.

Harver SJTs are designed by industrial organizational (IO) psychologists and verified among actual employees. The top performer analysis identifies what responses are predictive for success in the role, and ensures that you can quickly pinpoint which applicants are most suitable for the role and company culture. Clients can choose between out-of-the-box situational judgment tests that assess the most common situations a chat agent has to deal with, and custom SJTs, which are designed to reflect the nuances of a specific company or role.

> "
> *We really liked the fact that we can upload Arvato-specific videos and implement situational judgment tests (SJTs). We can now give candidates an idea of what working at a contact center is like.*
>
> *- Tom Custers - Customer Service Manager, Arvato*
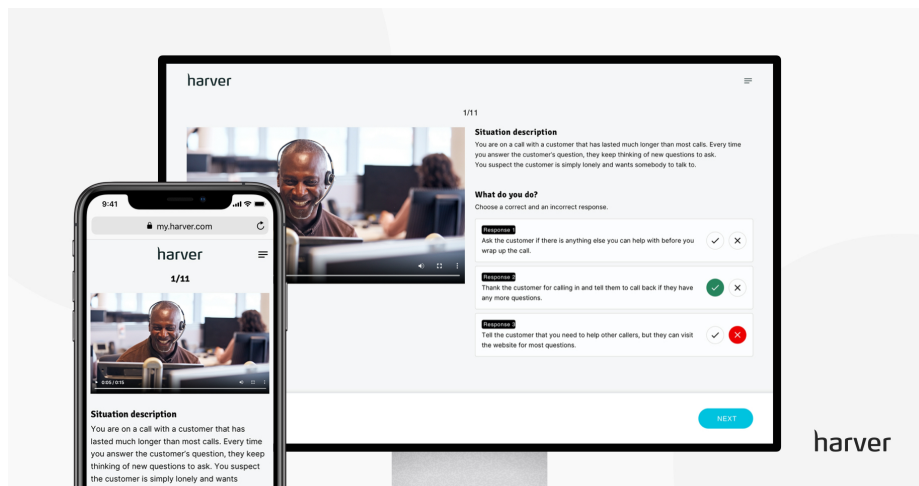
Learning agility assessment

Testing learning agility can show you which candidates may be able to easily bridge a skill gap or grow into a leadership role via training or upskilling. This skill is particularly important in roles where change is constant, and where employees need to be flexible, adaptable, and to react to uncertain situations in a creative and efficient manner.

In big lines, learning agility measures an applicant's ability to learn, adapt, unlearn, and relearn to keep up with constantly changing conditions. Learning agility dictates how an individual can figure out a way through a new situation without actually knowing what to do, by using past and present experiences to make sense of them. It's also being open to new ideas and innovating rather than relying on outdated information.

When you're an agile learner, you're comfortable being uncomfortable; agile learners seek out new challenges, ask for feedback from others to learn and grow, and are reflective.

An agile learner has the mindset that allows them to continually develop their understanding, to grow, and use new strategies that they've learned along the way, in order to ready themselves to successfully navigate any future problems.

At Harver, we've developed a learning agility module that uses the 9 dimensions of the Burke Learning Agility Inventory: Speed, Flexibility, Experimenting, Performance risk taking, Interpersonal risk taking, Collaborating, Information gathering, Feedback seeking, Reflecting.

Why assess learning agility

Companies with the greatest rates of highly learning agile executives produced

## 25%

higher profit margins compared with peer companies.
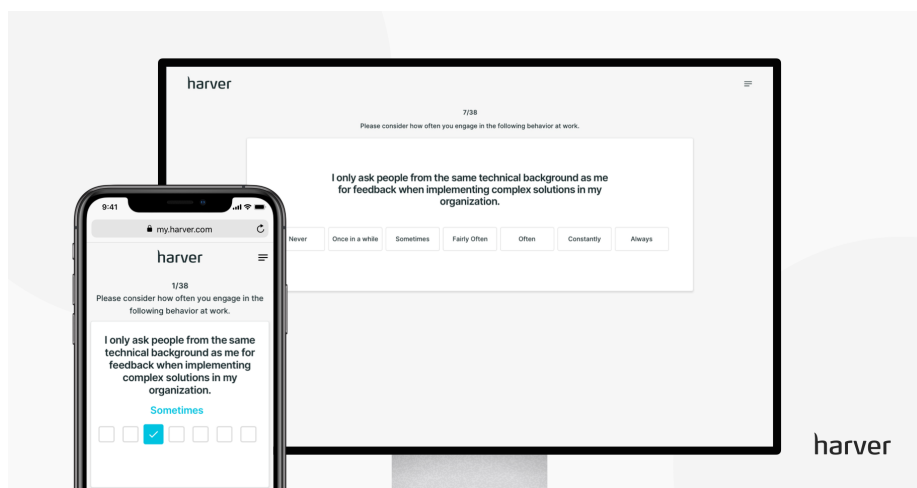
Realistic job preview (virtual job tryout)

A realistic job preview or virtual job tryout, such as a live chat support simulation, allows you to measure a variety of skills in a realistic setting, helping you to get the most accurate picture of how a candidate applies their existing skill set to your roles.

At the same time, it shows the candidate what the day-to-day work is like, helping him or her decide whether they want to continue with the job application process. This helps in managing their expectations and contributes to lower attrition rates in the long run, as applicants can self-select out of the job if they don't like what they're seeing.

With recruiters trying to put their best foot forward when building career pages and job descriptions, it can be quite tricky to showcase the realistic nature of a job before a new hire starts. This is especially true in customer support roles where the positive side is usually highlighted, while the less nice aspects of the role are minimized during the candidate selection process.

To prevent this, we've built a Live Chat Support Simulation module that can be used as a standalone assessment or in combination with other pre-employment tests to get the full picture of a candidate's skills and job fit.
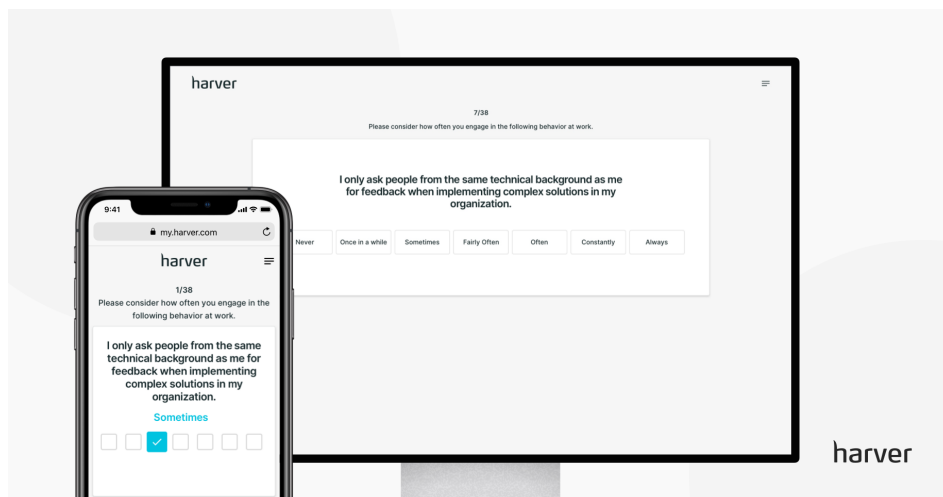
While it may be tempting to use every single assessment when screening and selecting applicants, what we see in practice is that too many different tests can frustrate candidates and cause confusion for recruiters and hiring managers when making selection decisions. That's why we recommend looking for a holistic assessment - such as a virtual job tryout - that fits within your technology ecosystem.

By putting candidates in an environment that closely mimics the role, you're testing their traits directly with the situations they'll encounter, instead of estimating them with a swath of different assessments.

For live chat agents, a virtual job tryout or realistic job preview assesses their qualities by presenting them with simultaneous, written support requests that need to be addressed in real-time. As requests pop up, the assessment tools measure the quality of their response, along with timeliness and how many responses they need to reach a solution.

A strong simulation will test all the soft skills listed previously, as well as software navigation abilities, in just a few minutes. If you want to incorporate their potential to learn via training, a simulation can easily be paired with a learning agility test or personality test to gain additional insight.

Using Harver's Live Chat Support Simulation Module

Harver's Live Chat Support Simulation is a realistic fully automated support environment that measures a candidate's ability to effectively handle multiple chat conversations in real time. Candidates are presented with incoming support requests, and choose the response they think fits best.

Providing them with multiple, staggered customer queries, this pre-employment assessment module allows you to gauge their natural ability to provide an appropriate response in a timely manner. At the same time, Harver gives the applicant a realistic preview of what it would be like to be a chat support agent - which helps you both decide if there's a fit.

While the Live Chat Support simulation could be used to assess competencies for a variety of customer support roles, it is most applicable to roles where the support is primarily text, chat or web-based. The simulation is most beneficial for high volume support roles that typically have high attrition rates, because it helps to manage candidate expectations of the day-to-day, allowing candidates to filter themselves out if it isn't a good fit, on top of the regular skills based matching.

Harver's algorithm scores candidates based on your company's specific benchmarks, and allows you to use the matching score to make a data driven hiring decision or job placement. The module is built to measure the efficiency and quality of support, and it does so by looking at four different constructs: customer orientation, problem solving, clear communication and time to respond. The first three are linked to quality, while the last construct is linked to efficiency.

Now that you understand the logic behind the simulation, let's see how the assessment module looks in practice.

How the live chat simulation tool works

Here's the step by step process of testing a candidate with a live chat support simulation.
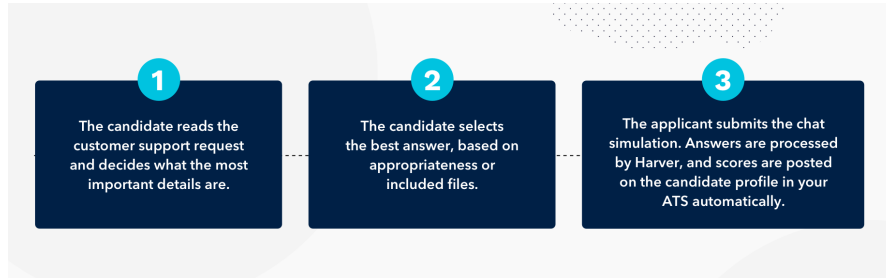
Throughout the timed test, applicants receive questions from customers related to different support issues. Their job is to select the best response to support the customer, from three different available options. Each question can measure multiple constructs of the efficiency and quality metrics. Together the answers will add up to an overall quality score on each construct.

For some questions, the candidates will have to look up information that's available on the right sidebar of the chat simulation application. Here's what it looks like when an applicant has to look up some order confirmation information to give an accurate answer to the customer.
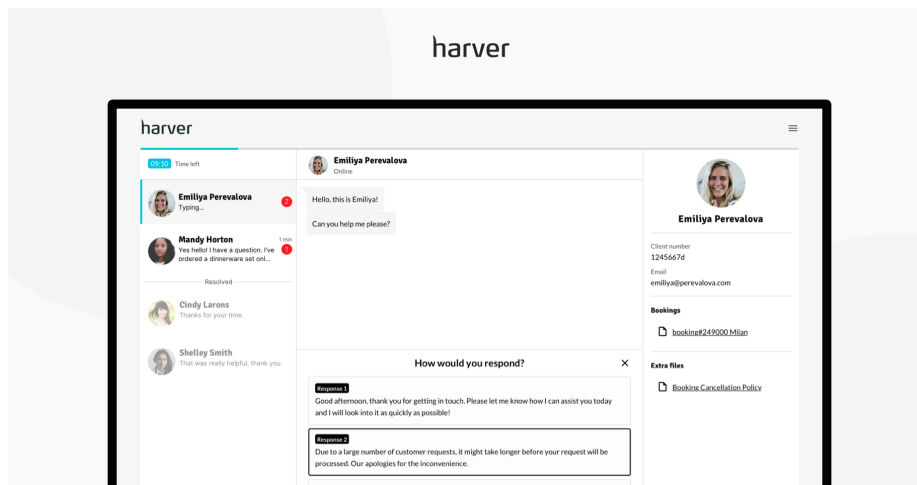

Applicants need to take in information and use their reading comprehension skills to give an accurate answer. They need to support the customers and reply in a timely manner while getting questions from multiple other customers.

Candidates are aware of the time limit and see the numbers of questions increasing on the left side, so this assesses their multitasking skills and the ability to work under pressure. Applicants must have the ability to keep the quality high even in this stressful environment, as this is what it's like to work as a chat agent.

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The output: assessment results and matching scores

A great assessment is only as good as it's output. Meaning, if you have an assessment that is time consuming or difficult for recruiters to interpret, it won't be as effective. That's why we've developed our assessment to be as user-friendly as possible — so that even our clients processing thousands or tens of thousands of candidates can hire accurately and quickly.

You'll need to be able to quickly read and interpret candidate results, such as with a matching score (ranking 1-100) which reliably predicts performance. Some of our clients use match scores by beginning their hiring process with the candidate closed to 100, and then moves down from there until their hiring demands are met. Others set a benchmark, or even different benchmarks per client, and then progress candidates above a certain score (for example, 75).
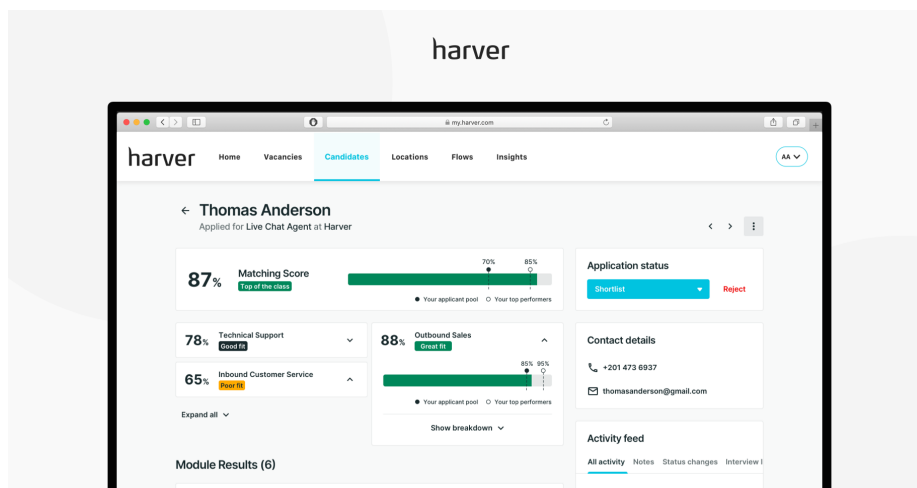
However, for organizations with evergreen requisitions and a consistent need for entry level agents across phone, web, and chat, scores can also be determined on the role level to show you where a candidate's best fit is. For example, in a process that combines the live chat support simulation with spoken language and personality, you can compare scores for a single candidate between chat support and phone support to route them to the most appropriate role.

By using a life-like simulation, candidates get to experience the job and demonstrate their skill set. This provides data to your recruiters, enabling them to make data-driven, bias-free hiring decisions. Our simulation is built to seamlessly integrate with a wide range of ATSs. This means that hiring data can also be used to enable workflow automation: such as triggering stage progression of top performing candidates, or allowing for interview self-scheduling.

This all adds up to a process that is fast, more accurate, more efficient, and ultimately more cost effective than traditional screening methods.

How this benefits TA and HR leaders

While this is an engaging experience for the candidate, implementing such an assessment needs to make sense from a business perspective too, meaning that it should provide enough benefits to talent acquisition teams to justify the investment.

So let's see how recruiters benefit from implementing a live chat support simulation. To recap, the main reasons for choosing this type of pre-employment assessment are:

- Identifying candidates with the right skills
- Funnelling applicants to the right support type (phone or chat, or even between job types like sales, tech support, etc.)
- Aligning candidate expectations to avoid attrition
- Assessing and select applicants efficiently, at scale

By integrating the live chat support simulation module with your ATS and HRMS, as a standalone assessment or in combination with other pre-employment tests, you'll be able to:

- Rank candidates in order of success across one or multiple job families.
- Remove bias from your selection process, by removing subjective hiring criteria from the first or all phases of the hiring decision process.
- Feed performance data back into the system, to help the matching benchmark improve over time.
- Onboard quickly, in as little as 72 hours from applying to hiring.
- Scale up and down client projects more quickly, potential to win more business.
- Free up recruiter work hours, so they can focus on high impact priorities.

How this benefits candidates

As mentioned above, the main benefit for candidates is getting a realistic preview of the role, before accepting a job offer. They get to experience a day on the job and are well informed, so they can decide whether they want to continue with the job application process or not. This helps in setting clear expectations and contributes to lower attrition rates, as candidates know what they're signing up for when accepting the role.

Along with this, applicants benefit from a fast, accurate and efficient recruitment process, which is much more engaging than traditional screening methods. Overall, the candidate journey described in this playbook leads to higher applicant satisfaction scores.

Read how Arvato reduced employee turnover by 63%

> *If we wanted to be just as productive without Harver, we would need 205 people to handle the selection process. Now we're working with a team of 35.*
>
> *- Teddy Liaws - CEO, NexRep*

Next Steps

With the expectations for customer support changing, the way you hire contact center and BPO agents has to change, too. As the industry navigates the transition from phone support to live chat, TA leaders will need to navigate the challenges of volume hiring for this role. As more and more of contact center business moves into live chat, the challenges of recruitment will only continue to mount and become more important for business.

By investing in a future-proof, reliable recruitment solution like a live chat support simulation, you gain a sustainable competitive advantage while winning back valuable time and money. Not only that, but you help ensure that your business is able to win and deliver on client opportunities in the live chat space.

Over the past 7 years, we've helped contact centers and BPOs around the world - such as Sitel, Alorica, and Startek - navigate the changes in the market and transform their hiring process across all support types, geographies, and industries, to meet changing customer demands.

We'd be happy to partner with you too!

Ready to digitise your recruitment process?
See how Harver can help you hire better chat agents and reduce employee attrition

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