



A great move for ZPG PLC

McQuaig Psychometric System



Lorraine Metcalf
Chief Talent Officer

There are many key issues facing modern companies. Lorraine Metcalf, Chief Talent Director, says ZPG's key HR issue is particularly difficult:

"Growth and how to retain the strong culture and values that supported our initial success while we grow even more".

"Start-ups get on with the job of surviving and flourishing; they don't have the time or desire to define culture or decide what their own culture is or ought to be. But as you bring more people into an organisation, you're in danger of diluting whatever values and culture you've created. You have to make more conscious decisions and effort about how you preserve them."

Lorraine raised another issue critical to a lot of newer companies. "We are a technology based company – our route to market is the web. But we shouldn't forget that our business is about people. It's essential we have ZPG staff that are right for the job and have the ability to relate to our customers.

"A tool like McQuaig is critical even in very technically focused companies. That's why I talk about it to other tech companies".





What do you like about McQuaig?

"I joined in January 2014 from notonthehighstreet.com. McQuaig was already being used by a part of the company involved in training sales teams and it had "reduced their hiring mistakes" as they put it.

"We picked it up in HR and tried to centralise and improve use. I'd used many other tools to address the same business issues but there were some specific things I liked about McQuaig."

Lorraine mentioned:

Using it for more than one purpose: "I hate systems that can only be used for one thing. If you use an assessment for recruitment you get all this rich data which can be used for succession planning, development and day-to-day management. And using tools in that way makes budgetary sense".

It encourages useful discussion: "McQuaig gives you the approval and the vocabulary to talk about things that otherwise people might find it embarrassing or difficult to talk about".

It plays to peoples' strengths: "McQuaig provides pictures of the real you and the situational you. This gives the basis for really useful dialogues about strengths, especially for people transitioning due to growth. Right at the beginning we didn't impose the system on existing members of staff. We offered it as self-development. One long standing staff member from a very analytic background filled it in and started the feedback session by saying, "You're going to tell me I'm no good at my job now". The fact that we talked about strengths was a surprise – and a motivating one."

Creating role Profiles: "You can create a job profile with the system. People very often have different views of what a role requires and you can create a conversation to integrate these and get real role clarity before you start the recruitment process."

It's simple and straightforward: "You don't need a PhD in advanced statistics to use McQuaig. So many assessments are over-engineered which makes it difficult to spread the benefits throughout a busy company."

Free update training: "No-one can use it unless they're trained and we've tried to improve the quality of its use by centering that in HR. McQuaig offer free update training which is essential to keep your skills sharp and stay ahead of the curve in HR thinking."

Can you give me a flavour of how it's used at ZPG?

"Let me give an example from my own team. We were a small HR group and we were facing constant transition, change and growth. We needed to be flexible and achieve a huge amount, but with limited resources.

So, I hired a new person with a very different profile from the two of us who were already in the team. As most managers know, diversity in teams is critical to excellent performance but can cause interpersonal tensions.

We sat down and talked through our McQuaig profiles and I explained why I'd recruited someone who was so transparently different. It was like a lightbulb going off in her head. The next day she was a different person. The dynamics of our team changed in the right way.

McQuaig helped us talk, and that talk helped us change and be ready to react flexibly to more change.

Increasingly managers come to me when they have a decision to make about someone and ask if we have a McQuaig Profile on that person. It's a basic piece of information that managers need".

Is there anything else you'd like to add about McQuaig?



"Yes. Some of the most well known assessments pigeonhole people: some are quite judgmental. McQuaig doesn't and isn't. It integrates people into the company from Day One, then provides a basis for really good conversations as a job or career develops".