

## Software takes the stress out of recruitment for Drakes Supermarkets

A new cloud-based software service is solving the challenge of retail staff selection by benchmarking applicants against the attributes and attitudes of high-performing employees.

The high-growth South Australian-owned family business has more than 5,700 employees and owns and operates 57 stores throughout Queensland and South Australia. It recently hit the \$1 billion sales mark less than a year after successfully rolling out eight Queensland acquisitions in 24 days.

Finding and hiring the right people is key to the retailer's continued growth and success. Drakes Supermarkets has significantly improved its staff retention and quality since it began leveraging Expr3ss! in 2009.

The network of stores has Expr3ss! software embedded in its website and internal reporting programs. A focus on staff training and development, customer service, innovation and an expanded social media presence has also helped contribute to the network's growth.

"We continue to punch well above our weight in South Australia and Queensland as customers look for a greater service experience when shopping," CEO Roger Drake said.

"Our stores compete directly with the biggest names in the industry, Woolworths and Coles. This means we have to be the best across a range of areas.

"One key to success is finding the right staff. The manager-employee relationship in our 57 stores is critical, and identifying the right people to build successful teams is essential. Each of the talented and motivated people who share our values of customer service are an asset to our business."



Expr3ss! Managing Director Dr Glyn Brokensha.



Drakes Supermarkets staff.



Drakes Supermarkets CEO Roger Drake.

Dealing with hiring of new employees could be a major challenge for Drakes' managers. Expr3ss! staff selection software has helped cut the time and cost of hiring new people and improved the accuracy of the process, allowing store managers to meet the demands of rapid growth.

The web-based recruitment and selection management tool works by tracking and analysing applicants from all advertising sources, and all other channels online.

The software then benchmarks applicants against high-performing employees using specially customised screening questions tailored to a specific business and its staffing needs.

Rather than just sorting candidates based on experience and qualifications, Expr3ss! allows managers to sort out candidates based on their values and attitudes using a proven embedded psychometric system.

Drakes Supermarkets Human Resources Advisor Felicity Brevi said the system has significantly lifted productivity in every area of the business by having motivated and focused staff.

"Many new employees tell us how much they enjoy working here and how keen they are to take on more responsibilities," she said.

"We have found with Expr3ss! we are more accurately able to identify applicants who display the behaviours of our existing best-performing staff. Because we have a single solution for all of our staff processes, the consistency of our operations has improved dramatically and communication across our locations is also better.

"Expr3ss! has helped us become more efficient in our human resources function and reduce the cost of finding people. We're able to do our work better and not have to worry when we need to look for someone to fill an important role. It makes it easier to

align individual and team goals with company goals."

Expr3ss! was founded by entrepreneur Carlyne Burns and Dr Glyn Brokensha. Together with a team of leading software developers they have created a web-based productivity tool engineered to harness the power of cloud-based computing and data.

Dr Brokensha said the software uses a unique algorithm that looks at dozens of multi-dimensional aspects of a potential employee to help predict their suitability for a particular role.

"With more insight into the values and attitudes of its best employees, employers are able to make more informed decisions," he said.

"Isolated pieces of information about employees – like how often they have changed jobs, where they have lived or what they did before – can't always tell an employer everything about a person or predict their behaviour, but when you take into account a whole range of factors based on core beliefs and attitudes, you get a much more accurate and better picture of how that person will potentially perform in a specific role."

Drakes will continue to add more new stores and employees in 2014 and the Expr3ss! technology platforms will be used to support its growth.

Other national retailers using Expr3ss! software include Nick Scali Furniture, Kennards Hire, Harris Farm Markets, Beaumont Tiles, Marcs, David Lawrence, Spend-Less Shoes and sports shoe retailer Authentics Australia.

They estimate Expr3ss! staff selection software has helped reduce annual staff turnover from more than 20 per cent to as low as two per cent and eliminated the need to use external recruiters and pay their fees. ♦