

Recruitment and selection for a business transformation project at Tesco PLC

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- **Module Code:** LCLM5002
- **Module Title:** Developing and Managing Individuals and Teams
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Company Introduction – Tesco PLC

- A brief company overview
- Location: Head office North of London
- The UK's largest store, founded in 1919
- Headquarters: Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire (North of London).
- operates 4,000+ outlets internationally.
- employs almost 300,000 people.
- Current business transformation focus
- Digital transformation initiatives
- omnichannel retail strategy
- Long-term commitments
- Industry: Retail
- Transformation focus: innovation and automation .
- HR need: Recruit knowledgeable and adaptable executives.

(MarketLine, 2024).

The Recruitment Process Overview

- Job analysis
- Job Description
- Person Specification
- Advertising
- Shortlisting
- Interviewing and Selection
- Onboarding

(Armstrong, 2014)

Job Analysis

- **Definition:** A systematic investigation of job content, context, and requirements.

The purpose of Tesco's transformation project is

- Identifies the abilities required for change management
- determines competencies for digital transformation. (Armstrong, 2014)."

Sets performance standards.

- **Methods used:**

- Observation
- Interviews with current position holders.
- Questionnaires
- Work diaries and logs

(Torrington et al., 2020)

- **Job Description (for Project Manager, Business Transformation)**
- Job title: Business Transformation Project Manager, Department:
- Strategic Change
- Reports to Director of Transformation
- Key responsibilities:
 - Manage digital transformation projects
 - Manage cross-functional teams
 - Implement innovative retail technologies
 - Monitor project timeframes and budgets
- **Person Specification**
 - Required qualifications include a degree and project management certification
 - Experience: 5+ years of retail transformation
 - Skills include leadership, communication, and change management
 - Competencies: Strategic thinking and stakeholder management

(Mullins and McLean, 2019)

Interview Type 1 Structured Interview

- Definition: Standardised interview with prepared questions asked of all candidates.
- Advantages for Tesco
 - ensures justice and consistency
 - Reduces interviewer prejudice
 - It is easier to compare candidates objectively
 - Legally defensible
- Disadvantages:
 - Less freedom to investigate unique candidate qualities
 - May feel rigid or impersonal
 - Limited spontaneity

(Levashina et al., 2014)

Interview Type 2 Behavioural Interview

- Definition: Questions about past behaviour as a predictor of future performance.
- "Past behaviour predicts future performance" is the key idea
- Example questions for the transformation role:
 - "Describe a time when you led a major organisational change"
 - "Tell me about a situation where you had to manage resistance to change"
- Advantages:
 - Evidence-based evaluation
 - reveals true competencies
 - Reduces speculative answers
- STAR method: Situation, Task, Action, Result

(Armstrong, 2014).

Interview Type 3 Panel Interview

- Tesco's panel for the transformation post consists of 3-5 interviewers assessing candidates simultaneously.
- HR Manager, Director of Transformation
- Senior Project Manager IT Director (technical aspects)
- Advantages:
 - Having multiple perspectives reduces bias
 - Comprehensive evaluation
 - demonstrates decision-making to the candidate
- Disadvantages:
 - Can be scary to candidates
 - Coordination is necessary, and it takes more time

(Mullins and McLean, 2019).

Questioning Techniques: Justification

- Techniques for Transformation Role

1. Ask probing questions.

- Purpose: Gaining deeper understanding.
- Like this one: "Can you elaborate on how you handled stakeholder resistance?"
- Justification: Essential for judging the depth of change management.

2. Open-ended questions.

- Purpose: Encourage detailed responses.
- Exemplary question: "How would you approach Tesco's digital transformation?"
- Justification: Demonstrates thinking and communication skills.

3. Competency-based Questions

- Purpose: Assessing specific abilities required.
- Like this one: "Demonstrate your experience with agile project management"
- Justification: Directly linked to job requirements.

4. Socratic Questioning.

- Purpose: Test critical thinking.
- For example, "Why do you believe that method worked? What are the alternatives?"
- Justification: Assesses analytical talents required for change.

(CIPD, 2023)."

(Leatherbarrow and Fletcher, 2019)."

Face-to-Face vs Online Interviews: Overview

- Context: After the pandemic, Tesco changed its interview practice
- Both models are utilised for business transformation recruitment
- Selection depends on:
 - Candidate Location
 - Interview stage
 - Role requirements
 - Resource availability

(Blacksmith et al., 2016; Lobe et al., 2022)

Detailed Comparative Analysis

Criteria	Face-to-Face Interview	Online Interview (Video)
Body Language	Full assessment possible; examine gestures, posture, and confidence	Limited to upper body: technical difficulties may obscure cues
Developing rapport	Easy through natural engagement; informal discussion flows	Requires intentional effort; time lag can interrupt flow
Cost	Higher (travel, venue hire, and refreshments)	Lower (no travel or venue charges)
Geographic Reach	Limited to candidates who are local or ready to travel	Access to the national/international talent
Technical issues	Minimal (room booking only)	Connectivity issues, audio/video delays, platform familiarity.
Professionalism	Punctuality, attire, and handshake	various indicators: setting, backdrop, and technological preparedness.
Time Efficiency	Requires scheduling around travel	More flexible scheduling: back-to-back interviews easier.
Candidate Experience	Traditional and formal; demonstrates firm investment	Modern and convenient; may feel less personal

recommendations for Tesco

- **Optimal approach: a blended interview method.**
- Stage 1: An online structured interview (screening).
- Stage 2: Face-to-face behavioural and panel interviews (final selection)
- **Rationale:**
- Optimises efficiency and candidate reach.
- Ensures thorough assessment for important transformation roles.
- balances cost-effectiveness and quality evaluation.
- **Implementation Considerations:**
- Train interviewers for both forms.
- Standardise the evaluation criteria.
- Ensure equal opportunities throughout the process.

(Armstrong, 2014)

Conclusion

- Summary of Key Points:
 - A systematic recruitment strategy ensures the correct candidate selection
 - Multiple interview types serve various goals
 - Appropriate questions disclose genuine competencies
 - Both face-to-face and online interviews offer significant advantages
 - The hybrid method optimises Tesco's transformation recruitment
- Impact: Effective recruitment leads to successful business change

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