

MCQ Helps a Ready-To-Eat Food Manufacturer to Hire a Food Safety-Minded Workforce

Acme Smoked Fish Corporation has been in business since the early 1950s and is known from coast to coast for its top-quality products. When the company opened a facility in North Carolina in early 2015, it was faced with hiring a new workforce. In making hiring decisions, the company also needed to meet requirements tied to hiring incentives.

The company found the hiring tool it needed with the Manufacturing Compatibility Questionnaire, or MCQ™, from E·A·S·I·Consult®.

Client: Acme Smoked Fish Corporation is headquartered in Brooklyn, New York. The company built its facility in Pender County, N.C., to expand its capacity to produce cold smoked salmon.

The plant currently produces about 140,000 pounds of product per week.

Challenge: To entice Acme to open a plant in Pender County, state, federal and local incentives were offered to the company. One such incentive was from the federal New Market Tax Credit Program, which was tied to hiring low-income individuals.

Acme was willing to hire employees who did not hold a high school diploma or have manufacturing experience as long as they demonstrated the qualities necessary to work in an environment where food safety is the top priority, said Jean Duncan, the human resources director at the Pender County facility.

“Many people aren’t used to the rigors that are required in a good food manufacturing facility,” Duncan noted. “Having a test that assessed the aptitude toward manufacturing, and safety in particular, was a really good fit for what we wanted to do. Really, all four of the MCQ categories are important for us.”

Solution: *Dave Hoff, E·A·S·I·Consult’s chief operation officer and executive vice president for leadership development, read about Acme’s commitment to Pender County and contacted the company about using the MCQ. The MCQ is a validated pre-employment test that assesses potential employees on four traits essential in manufacturing environments:*

- Dependability: Will the person show up? Is he/she focused on the job at work? Do they feel entitled?

- Team orientation: Can the employee get along with other people? Does he/she work well within a team?
- Learning and problem-solving ability: How quickly does the employee learn new information? How well does the employee solve problems? Does he/she see problem solving as part of their role?
- Safety focus: Does the employee bring a safety mindset to the job?

These “soft skills,” as they are sometimes called, can be harder to test and assess than someone’s ability to perform specific technical tasks on the job.

Rebekah Cardenas, Ph.D., E•A•S•I-Consult’s vice president of business development and assessment solutions, worked closely with Duncan from the beginning to explain the options available with the MCQ and how it could be **used to achieve the company’s hiring goals. Discussions also touched on the organization’s key values, such as food safety, which is Acme’s primary concern.**

“The MCQ is more than an off-the-shelf hiring tool,” Cardenas said. “In the case of this client, their unique need was to have a solution that achieved the goals based on the funding they received.”

Cardenas also helped the company determine appropriate “cut scores” for assessing job candidates with the MCQ. Cut scores impact how many applicants score in the following categories: green (recommend), yellow (recommend with caution), or red (not recommended). “They wanted to have a lot of people to choose from initially and planned to narrow the applicant pool down further at other hurdles in their hiring process, so we had to keep this in mind when setting the cut scores,” Cardenas said.

Duncan said that the hiring process began with a review of prospective employees’ job histories. From that review, candidates were invited to take the MCQ at Cape Fear Community College. Those who scored at acceptable levels were asked to attend a pre-employment class before being interviewed, Duncan said.

She used structured interview questions generated by the MCQ, with some modifications, in the interview process.

Result: Acme used the MCQ to hire almost all of its Pender County employees, with the exception of the management team and some administrative personnel.

“I think it’s a really good tool and I’ve mentioned it to others,” Duncan said. “E•A•S•I-Consult was flexible and responsive to our needs. They were good about setting up the process and answering any questions we had that were ongoing.”

About the Author

E•A•S•I-Consult® works with Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, and mid-sized corporations to provide customized Talent Management solutions. E•A•S•I-Consult specialties include individual assessment, online employment testing, survey research, competency modeling, leadership development, executive coaching, 360-degree feedback, online structured interviews, and EEO hiring compliance. The company is a leader in the field of providing accurate information about people through professional assessment. To learn more about E•A•S•I-Consult, visit <https://easiconsult.com> or email ContactUs@easiconsult.com or call 800.922.EASI.