

# Making the 'right choice'

How Mercer | Mettl's expertise enabled  
a global F&B giant to identify the HiPo  
sales workforce across the country

# About the company

The company, headquartered in New York, has a country-wide, larger-than-life presence in India. It entered the Indian market thirty years ago and, since then, has become the undisputed leader in the food and beverage segment. The company has produced some of the most loved brands globally in the packaged snacks and aerated drinks category.

The company is known for continually innovating and improving its products. With a future-forward approach and Mercer | Mettl's expertise, it was able to lead a successful global student challenge to discover the next big disruption in the food and beverage market.

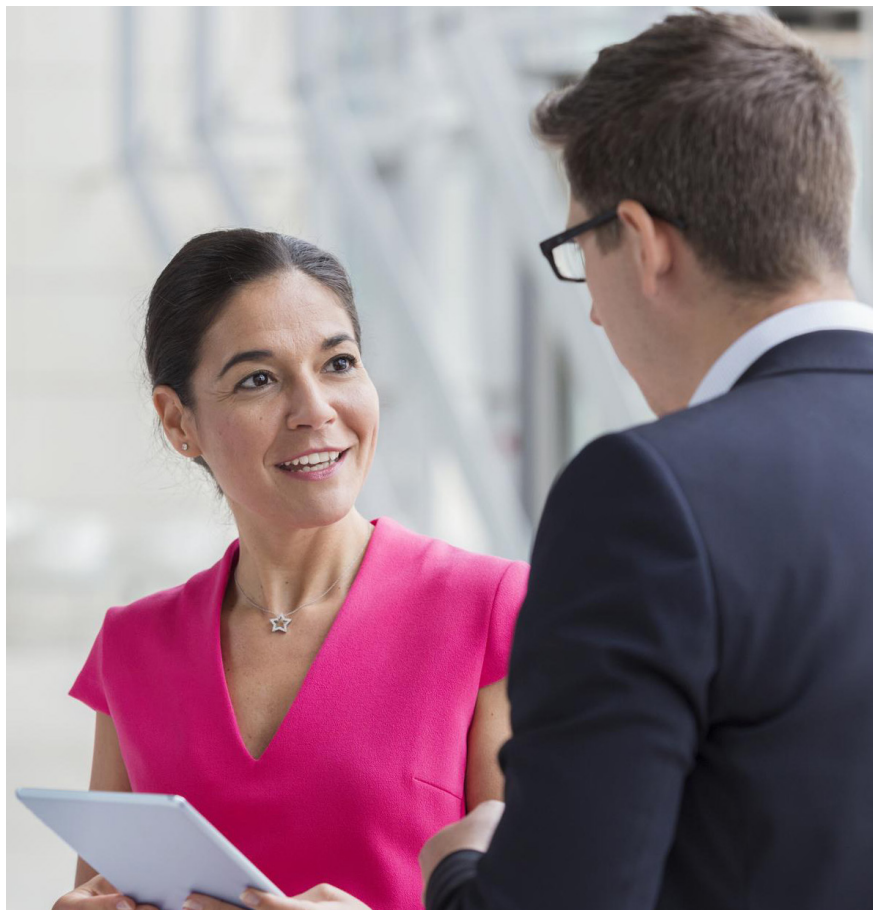


# Business challenges and requirements

The client's sales function, consisting of more than 5000 frontline associates, is its largest vertical and the most significant revenue generator. While most organizations undertake high-potential identification only for senior roles, the global F&B giant follows a more inclusive approach for all employee levels. Hence, it has a well-defined [high-potential identification process for the frontline](#) and executive and upward leadership teams.

While the company has a global presence, each geography has peculiar market dynamics and challenges. Thus, talent management initiatives are customized, considering the market, the talent's background and the organizational role.

The need for efficiency at scale is a significant challenge in executing a high-potential identification initiative for a team size of over 5000. Scalability was imperative for such a considerably large frontline salesforce, operating in the country's remote areas. The exercise needed to be simultaneous, quick and effective. An on-the-ground intervention was not feasible, considering the present circumstances and the enormous scale of the undertaking. Thus, the high-potential identification process was critical, and efficiently administering it was equally important.



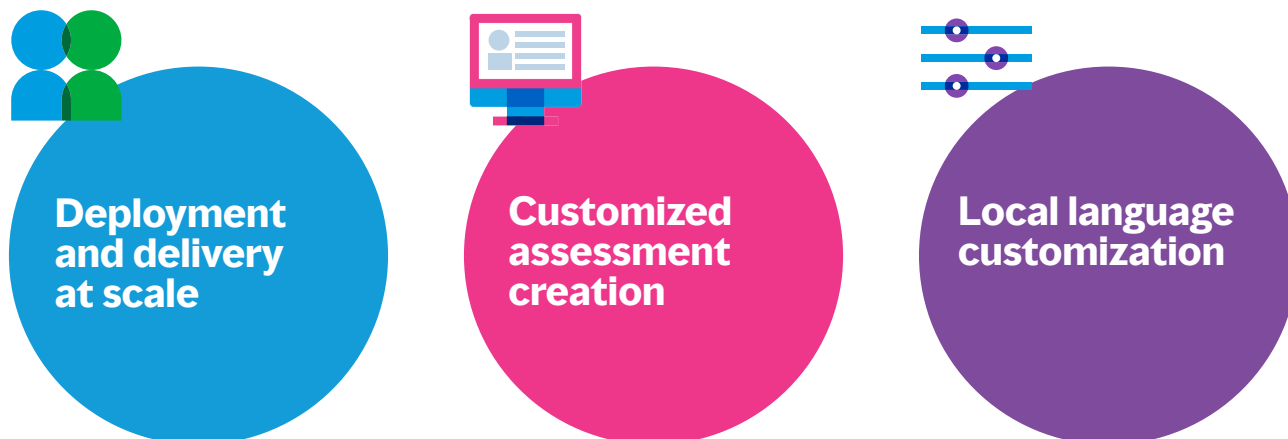
The frontline teams were always on the ground. Therefore, the designed solution needed to consider time constraints while effectively assessing the teams' core competencies required for advanced roles.



F&B is an extremely competitive industry segment. Thus, the client's fundamental challenge was to assess the country-wide sales force at an individual level to build a competitive advantage, drive customer loyalty and understand skill gaps to create a befitting training program. The initiative's goal was to build a high-caliber sales team, ready to take on future challenges. These objectives were to be achieved considering the scale, credibility and a tight timeline.

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The client's problems required a three-pronged approach:



## Deployment and delivery at scale

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The company has a nation-wide footprint in India and its frontline employees work in several far-flung locations. The organization wanted to ensure assessments' accessibility to its frontline employees, irrespective of their location.

## Customized assessment creation

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The company also needed a comprehensive suite of assessments to move away from performance competencies and embrace forward-looking competencies for future job roles. The tests needed to be uniform, yet customized and relevant to the F&B sector, for a holistic assessment of all the competencies. The initiative also intended to identify the employees' developmental needs for their progressive future within the organization. The company wanted to move away from performance as a metric and view potential as a separate entity.

## Local language customization

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The language barrier was another major challenge in targeting frontline employees through the high-potential identification initiative. Most tests available on the market were in English. However, frontline employees were not well-versed in the language. The company required assessments in vernacular languages to objectively evaluate its frontline employees.

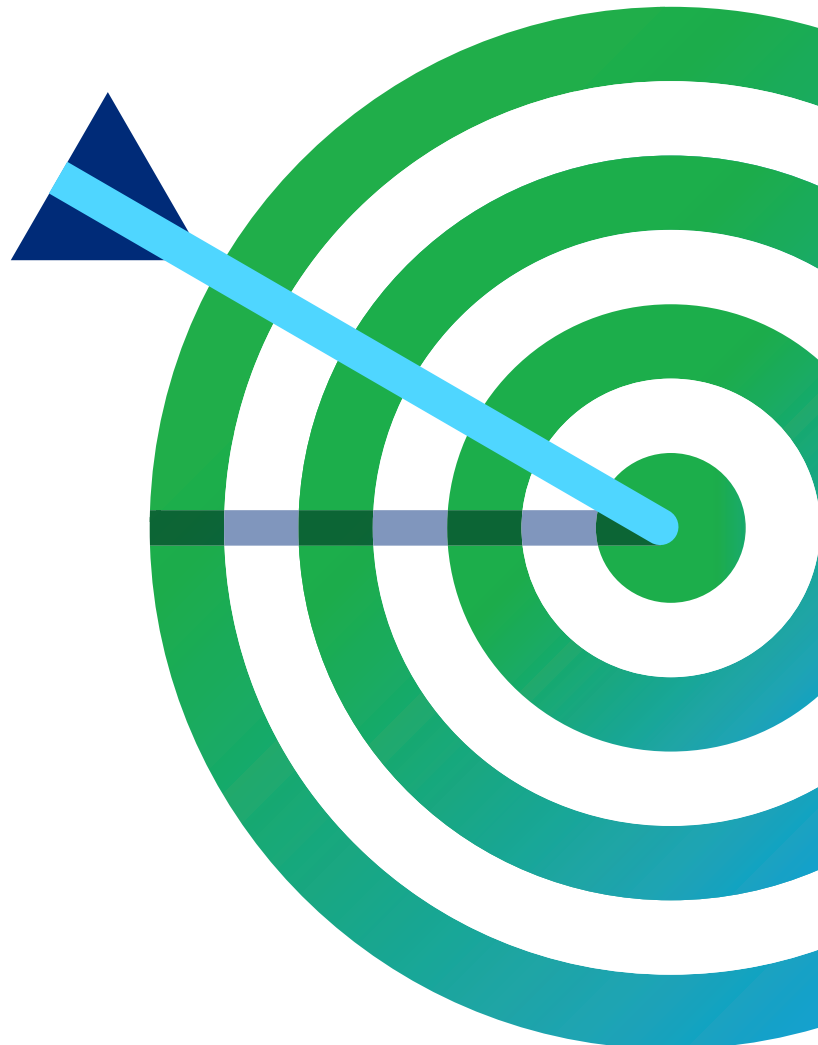
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# Mercer | Mettl's solutions

Mercer | Mettl proposed a fully online solution. Its goal for the high-potential identification initiative was to continually stay ahead of the curve.

The client wanted a future perspective on the career journey of its frontline employees. It wanted to identify advanced competencies that could empower its employees to establish themselves in the organization and deal with a VUCA world.

Earlier, the company had a blended assessment and development approach for its programs. However, considering the ongoing pandemic and technological advancements, Mercer | Mettl proposed shifting the process online with a virtual assessment center.



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# Sales enablement through the virtual assessment center

The virtual assessment center was the chosen tool to address the client's needs and challenges. Mercer | Mettl's virtual assessment center consisted of a standardized evaluation of behavior, based on multiple inputs. Multiple trained observers, techniques and simulations were used to assess each competency. The assessors observed, reported and graded as per pre-defined behaviorally-anchored rating scales, collated using a statistical integration process.

The virtual assessment center was customized to its competency framework and included cognitive and aptitude assessments, caselets and situational judgment tests to assess core competencies. They included a successful execution of a sales plan, sales skills, extensive knowledge of the company, communication, trust and integrity and tech adaptability, to name a few.

A virtual assessment center was an ideal solution for the company, in the following ways:

## 1. Comprehensive evaluations

- Two or more tools were combined to assess core competencies.

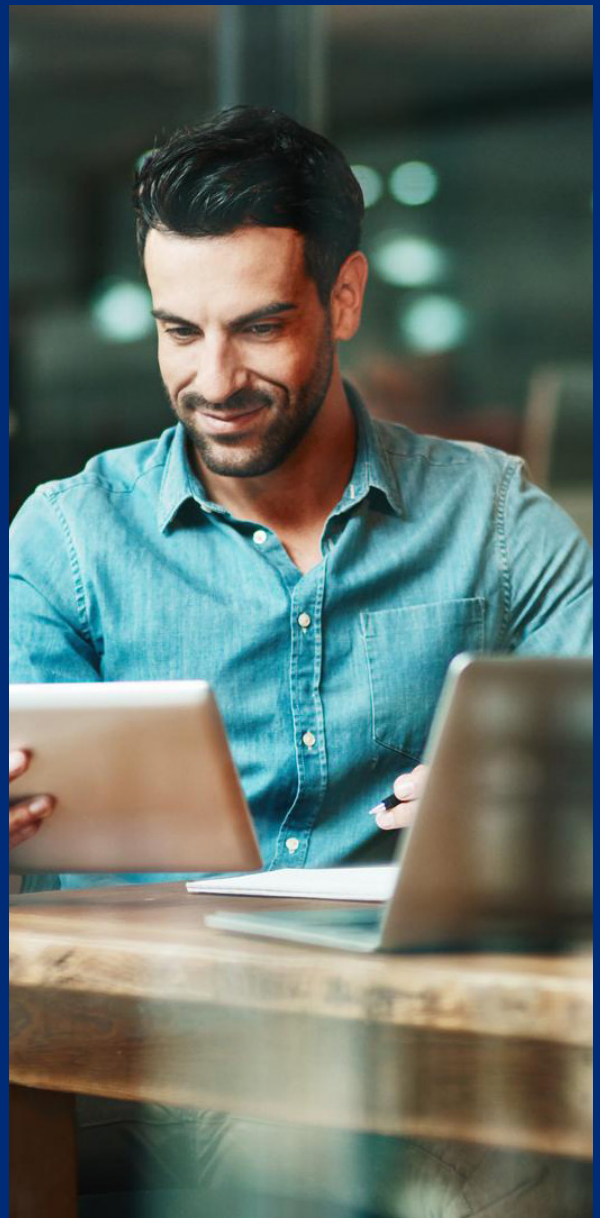
## 2. Speed and scale

- The assessments' virtual nature ensured that the employees didn't have to travel to a common center, thereby saving time. Also, many employees, even in the country's farthest corners, could participate in the process.

## 3. Objective assessment

- The use of multiple tools, pre-defined competencies and proficiency levels safeguarded the process from assessors' bias.

A wide range of relevant and scientifically-validated tools and assessments aside, Mercer | Mettl's robust platform facilitated easy access for frontline sales associates to take the test from their respective locations.



Mercer | Mettl's support team enabled multi-lingual support for employees who didn't prefer English as their test language. The questions were simplified and translated to attune to the employee target group. Mercer | Mettl's subject matter experts ensured that the client had the best tools to streamline its processes.

Mercer | Mettl's tools and platform features were customized to give confidence to the assessors and the test-takers. Flexible reporting and analytics allowed the client to present a more development-oriented output to the test-takers than a more critical one. The reports helped the organization to easily identify employees with potential while recognizing training needs and creating individual development plans to meet business objectives.







**Mercer | Mettl's team assured us of their solution. They could understand the business challenges and recommended ways to improve our solutions. Their hands-on approach and in-depth knowledge, with the right inputs at appropriate times, reflects their intellectual ability. The team's quick turnaround time, unparalleled quality of work, agility and client-centric approach has helped us immensely.**



# Impact

Mercer | Mettl's all-virtual solution positively impacted the client in several ways. It was able to redefine its talent management initiatives and achieve its goals, using Mercer | Mettl's suite of tools, customized to the F&B industry's unique requirements. The team of subject matter experts went above and beyond to understand the client's requirements and delivered a successful solution in record time.

The partnership between the F&B giant & Mercer | Mettl resulted in phenomenal outcomes:

## 1. Assessment and onboarding

- Frontline employees who performed exceptionally in the virtual assessment center were onboarded by the client, based on the high-potential identification exercise. They were previously on a third-party payroll.
- 95% of the onboarded candidates performed outstandingly well in their new roles at the company.
- Mercer | Mettl enabled the client to look beyond performance and embrace potential as an achievable metric by assessing future competencies.

## 2. Process

- Mercer | Mettl empowered the client to reach out to its vast frontline workforce through customized assessments and language support, increasing employee satisfaction and engagement.
- Mercer | Mettl made high-potential identification and sales force enablement possible through an easily accessible, time and cost-effective, all-virtual solution.
- Mercer | Mettl successfully implemented a virtual assessment center that catered to the client's sizable sales force.

## 3. Development

- Mercer | Mettl's virtual assessment center offered the client a glimpse into its frontline employees' developmental needs and skill gaps.
- Mercer | Mettl also assisted the client in creating individual development plans for each employee.

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# The way forward

Based on the success of the high-potential identification exercise for frontline sales employees, the client is now partnering with Mercer | Mettl to extend this initiative to its frontline managerial roles. Additional tools, such as competency-based interviews and other customized assessments, are being added to the gambit. Mercer | Mettl will also be assisting the company in undertaking a sector-wise capability assessment and extending its initiatives to the Middle East, Africa and other South Asian teams.



# About us

At Mercer | Mettl, our mission is to enable organizations to make better people decisions across two key areas: acquisition and development. Since our inception in 2010, we have partnered with more than 4,000 corporates, 31 sector skills councils/government departments and 15+ educational institutions across more than 90 countries.

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