Case Study

The **Right** Approach for IIM Test Delivery

Background

The Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) are a network of India's most prestigious business schools. In April 2009, the IIMs announced a decision to collaborate with Prometric to migrate the largest, most competitive and most influential of India's exams, the Common Admission Test (CAT), from paper and pencil to a computerized format. The CAT is the premiere admissions test used in the selection process for admission to the IIMs, as well as over a hundred business schools in India.

Challenge

The groundbreaking goal in the first year of computer-based administration was to deliver more than 200,000 exams on 17,000 computers in 361 temporary testing labs at 104 centers in 32 cities throughout India. Never would so many candidates complete a computer-based test (CBT) in so short a period of time. As only a narrow window of time was available before the test had to be offered, program planning and design had to be careful, detailed and speedily implemented. Since this program was newly transitioning to computer, there was no existing testing infrastructure in place to make this an easy task. The team would need to consider every detail, from registration and scheduling to test center recruitment, site readiness and security.

Strategy

The team needed to ensure a number of things in setting forth on the path to a successful delivery. It would require an "all hands on deck" approach at Prometric and full engagement from its partners.

+ The exam would need to be available to everyone who wished to take it, regardless of logistical challenges.

+ The exam would no longer be offered on one day across the whole country, but would span 10 days, with multiple sessions per day, making the test more accessible and flexible than ever before.

+ A chain of events would need to be created to identify candidates throughout their exam lifecycle.

+ Management of candidate applications online would maintain the integrity of the exam by electronically capturing all necessary demographic and candidate profile data. With online scheduling, candidates would use a unique identification number to specify not only a convenient testing location, but also a preferred date and time.

+ The introduction of identity management technologies such as digital photographs of each candidate and biometric check-in would prevent individuals from testing multiple times and/or under an assumed name.

Solution

Candidates were required to have a voucher, with a unique identifier, in order to register for the exam. By early September, nearly 350,000 specially prepared vouchers, each featuring a serial number and

IIM Fast Facts:

Location: Throughout India

Challenge: To deliver more than 200,000 exams on 17,000 computers in 361 temporary testing labs at 104 centers in 32 cities throughout India for the first time ever. Never would so many candidates complete a computer-based test in such a short period of time.

Outcome: By the end of the testing window, well more than 200,000 candidates successfully tested on this groundbreaking administration.

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a secure voucher number, were available at over 170 bank locations throughout India.

At the request of the IIMs, 32 cities were identified to offer one or more testing locations. This led to the establishment of 361 sites, or test centers, all located within university training classrooms with nearly 17,000 computer workstations. In addition to the normal ID verification and sign-in procedures, each candidate would have a digital image captured and be required to provide a biometric fingerprint.

Prometric designed a physical candidate flow and check-in procedure that was tested extensively in computer labs prior to the first day of testing. The exam was also load-tested to ensure that the system could support more than 250,000 tests in a 10-day period. These simulated testing flows and conditions were used to produce all final training materials and procedure manuals for the test center staff that that would be on site during the exams.

Together with a local partner, Prometric trained over 1,000 proctors, technical support and test center staff over a matter of weeks. These trained technicians set up the 104 venues in which the 361 sites were located and staff was trained on installing and managing the test delivery software, requirements for proper site set up and proper hardware and software configuration. In addition, a proctor training and certification program was designed around two key areas: 1) policy, security and managing the test center flow of candidates with a strong emphasis on protecting the test and keeping the test environment secure; and 2) using Prometric's site administration software and the other components of the technology infrastructure, including the biometric fingerprint device.

Some of the security measures employed by Prometric for the CAT were designed to protect content while others were designed to validate student identities. To ensure that content exposure was minimized, Prometric established a series of unique exam launch codes and provided these to test center staff just prior to each testing session. Without these session-specific codes, the exam could not be launched on any computer. For physical security, each test lab had two security check points manned by guards, each candidate was physically examined for materials prohibited from the testing labs, candidates' IDs were checked, and their fingerprints and images captured. Prometric also digitally video recorded each session and conducted secret audits of sites to ensure all testing protocols were being followed.

Outcome

On November 28, 2009, CAT testing opened at 361 test labs in 104 venues across 32 cities throughout India. By the end of the testing window, well more than 200,000 candidates successfully tested. The successful conclusion of the CAT administration was an important accomplishment for the IIMs and ushered in a new era that will serve the IIMs, candidates and the Indian business community well.

Find Out More

Learn more about our *Test Development and Delivery Solutions* by visiting www.prometric.com or by calling toll-free 1-855-855-2241.