

Implementing Remote Assessments

Transitioning to a hybrid delivery modality, while balancing candidate satisfaction and stringent security measures



Background

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is a global professional human resources membership organization. Its mission is to promote the role of human resources and provide education, certification, and networking opportunities to its members. SHRM is also involved in advocacy by working with government policymakers on labor management issues in the US.

SHRM has been partnering with Prometric since 2009. This partnership started with the administration of the SHRM student capstone exam until its retirement in 2017, and has since shifted focus to the global delivery of the SHRM certification program. SHRM has leveraged Prometric's extensive experience in both paper-based (PBT) and computer-based (CBT) testing modalities to provide access to aspiring HR professionals in countries around the world.

The Situation

The COVID-19 global pandemic had an immediate and dramatic impact on the SHRM testing program. Soon after the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, Prometric made the difficult, but necessary decision to close its global test center network to limit the transmission of the coronavirus and to preserve the health and well-being of staff and test takers. This action followed regional mandates and then-current advice of leading international public health organizations. As centers incrementally resumed testing, as allowed by local regulations, in many cases, center occupancy remained constrained—impacting appointment availability for SHRM candidates.

Overview

Location

U.S., global, and remote

Challenge

To fulfill its mission and support working professionals in advancing their careers during the COVID-19 pandemic, SHRM recognized the urgency to add a remote testing modality for their certification program.

Outcome

Worked together to successfully implement a remote testing solution via the ProProctor platform—creating greater exam access to test takers across the globe, as well as a flexible, secure solution or candidates choosing not to test in-center.

To fulfill its mission and support working professionals in advancing their careers through this difficult period, SHRM recognized the urgency to add a remote testing modality for their certification program. To be successful, the remote assessment option would have to provide a comparable experience and outcome to the in-center delivery model—ensuring the security and integrity of the testing experience, as well as making sure that exam content would not be compromised. Additionally, the pandemic simultaneously forced the rapid evolution of Prometric’s remote assessment platform, ProProctor —creating the need for additional strategic solutions to help launch SHRM’s remote exam program quickly and successfully.

Strategy

At the start of the implementation process, Prometric and SHRM established a cadence of regular meetings to work through the transition process from in-center testing to the ProProctor remote assessment platform. Based on the ideas shared during meetings Prometric team implemented an extended chat feature that allows candidates to chat with the proctor if they face any issues during their exam. This feature, which provides candidates with in-platform support as security measures prohibit them from using their phones during the exam, was utilized for 140,000 chats in the first 11 months of its implementation on the ProProctor platform.

Additionally, SHRM requested a digital scratchpad feature that provides content security, while allowing candidates to take notes digitally. With the launch of the digital scratchpad, new security measures were implemented to ensure that candidates could not take any notes on paper — keeping exam content uncompromised.

Further, Prometric transitioned the ProProctor platform to a cloudnative platform, which helped increase stability and lower down-time and disconnect rates — further protecting SHRM’s content while enhancing candidate satisfaction.



140k Chats

were initiated by candidates via in-platform chat feature.

Of the thousands of examinees who have taken their exams on the ProProctor platform, 95 percent now have uneventful experiences, with only 2.6 percent of candidates experiencing technical setbacks that stopped them from completing their exams without restarting.

One other factor that widely contributed to SHRM's success in implementing the ProProctor remote assessment solution was its communication strategy. SHRM and Prometric worked together to ensure candidates were prepared ahead of time for the high-security standards of remote modality, and that they understood that the security measures would be upheld. The communication strategy also prepared candidates to learn how to convert their homes to a space suitable for remote exams, and clear guidelines provided by Prometric were the key in helping the candidates in their preparation for the exam.

Outcome

SHRM and Prometric were able to successfully complete the implementation and manage any issues that arose, thanks to an established long-term positive relationship and collaborative partnership. Prometric's team listened to SHRM's individual needs and constantly worked on improving its platform to meet the needs of both SHRM and its candidates.

As a result, candidate satisfaction metrics started to improve gradually. By the end of 2020, satisfaction, and endorsement of the exam to other candidates' metrics both returned to pre-pandemic levels. Through transitioning to a hybrid modality, SHRM was able to ensure business continuity during the global pandemic and deliver on its mission of promoting the role of HR professionals globally. SHRM was able to grow its business in 2020 by 8 percent over 2019, thanks to adding a remote certification exam delivery option to its program.



95% of Candidates

who took their exams via ProProctor platform had uneventful testing experience.



8% SHRM's business growth

through adding remote assessment to their certification program.

By enabling its candidates to choose between taking their certification assessments examination at home or in-person at Prometric's test centers, SHRM was able to meet the needs of various candidate audiences worldwide. Today, 55 percent of SHRM's candidates still refer to take their certifications via ProProctor. In 2020, ProProctor was the modality of choice, 80 to 90 percent of candidate appointments when the pandemic was at its peak. Additionally, for candidates in remote locations, such as the Bahamas, South America, and Africa, implementing a remote assessment solution created an opportunity to take their exams without having long travel times and expenses associated with travel. In addition to improved candidate satisfaction, program growth, and exam access, ensuring security and validity were also of utmost importance.



As the security of remote assessments has been widely debated in the assessment industry, SHRM analyzed pass rates and scores of those candidates who took the exam via remote modality versus those, who took the exam in-test centers, and this analysis showed that there were no significant differences in those metrics. Hence, SHRM concluded that its content was not exposed, confirming high security standards of remote assessments via ProProctor.

As the leading competency-based professional certification organization, SHRM has long been focused on providing both global access to its testing program and responsive service to the individuals and stakeholders we serve. The addition of Prometric's ProProctor remote proctoring offering is an extension of the consistent, secure experience our test takers have had at in-center proctored locations around the world. We are proud to be the first such organization to offer this convenience to the HR profession on every continent. One year into the program, ProProctor continues to be the testing option of choice for more than half our candidates.

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Learn More

Learn more about our Test Development and Delivery Solutions by visiting www.prometric.com or by calling toll-free **1-877-725-3708**.

About Prometric

Prometric enables test owners worldwide to advance their credentialing programs through test development and delivery solutions that set the standard in quality and service excellence. Our unwavering commitment to service is evident in every encounter— through a remarkable track record of delivering consistently reliable assessments, accurate results, candidate convenience, testing flexibility, stringent security, and service innovation on a global scale.