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CASE STUDY:

Public Works and Government Services Canada

Inspira Case Study, January 2022

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About Public Works and Government Services Canada Resources Districts

Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) is the Government of Canada's common service organisation. PWGSC in the Western Region employs builders, buyers, architects, engineers, auditors, management consultants, environmental scientists, and real estate professionals. They supply office space and manage the day-to-day operations of Government buildings in the region.

Motivation & planning

As part of the hiring process, PWGSC conducts pre-employment assessments. Prior to the Coronavirus pandemic, these exams had taken place in-person using pen and paper. However, COVID restrictions meant that the organisation needed to find a digital solution.

The team at PWGSC were looking for a platform that gave them maximum control over their assessments and flexibility in the following areas:

- » **Planning, in particular being able to set windows of time in which exams are live**
- » **Exam creation and editing**
- » **Delivery**
- » **Grading, particularly collaborative and blind grading where candidates names were not provided until grading was complete**

It was also important that there was some provision for minimising misconduct, such as looking up answers or downloading question papers.

The HR department began looking for suitable solutions in Spring 2021 and gathered a list of providers which they presented to Maria Dumitrescu, Regional Director. After attending demonstrations, the department decided to work with Inspera based on the flexibility that Inspera Assessment offered for the categories above. The process from beginning consultations to making a final decision took about two months.

Implementation

In April 2021, PWGSC began implementing Inspera Assessment. During the implementation phase, the PWGSC team participated in training sessions with Inspera to learn about planning, authoring, delivering and grading online assessments. The department spent a lot of time experimenting with the platform and its features so that they could learn as much as possible about its capabilities. They found the training sessions held by Inspera implementation specialists to be extremely helpful, saying that “*your client service is above and beyond.*”



Your client service is above and beyond

In September 2021, after training was complete, Maria Dumitrescu and her team began to create and deliver exams within Inspera Assessment. The format of the exams varies but usually comprise a question per topic for which the candidate needs to give their response to a scenario. Usually, the questions are text-based and don't include images or diagrams. One person in the team is responsible for authoring the exam and Maria oversees quality control.

There are also two people on the team in charge of planning who select the correct exam, organise candidate numbers and send out invitations to the candidates. In addition, there are between 10 and 15 people who can grade the exams, with Maria being responsible for verifying the grading. After the exam, the results are sent back to the HR department who continue with the interview process for the candidate.

PWGSC made use of the Safe Exam Browser (SEB) functionality in Inspera Assessment. This feature prevents candidates from navigating away from the test window during the assessment and was used to protect the integrity of the exams delivered by PWGSC. Maria noted that this method alone isn't infallible since candidates could use their phones to look up answers. However, for the most part, the questions were designed in such a way that it would be difficult to find the answers online.

Outcomes & reflections

At the time of writing, PWGSC has delivered approximately 400 exams using Inspera Assessment and the feedback from stakeholders has been positive. The vast majority of candidates have enjoyed using Inspera Assessment because it's easy to use and has a straightforward user interface. Similarly, internal staff have had positive feedback about the system. Maria says, *“Whatever role they've had, whether it's planners or graders, have found [Inspera Assessment] very easy to use.”*



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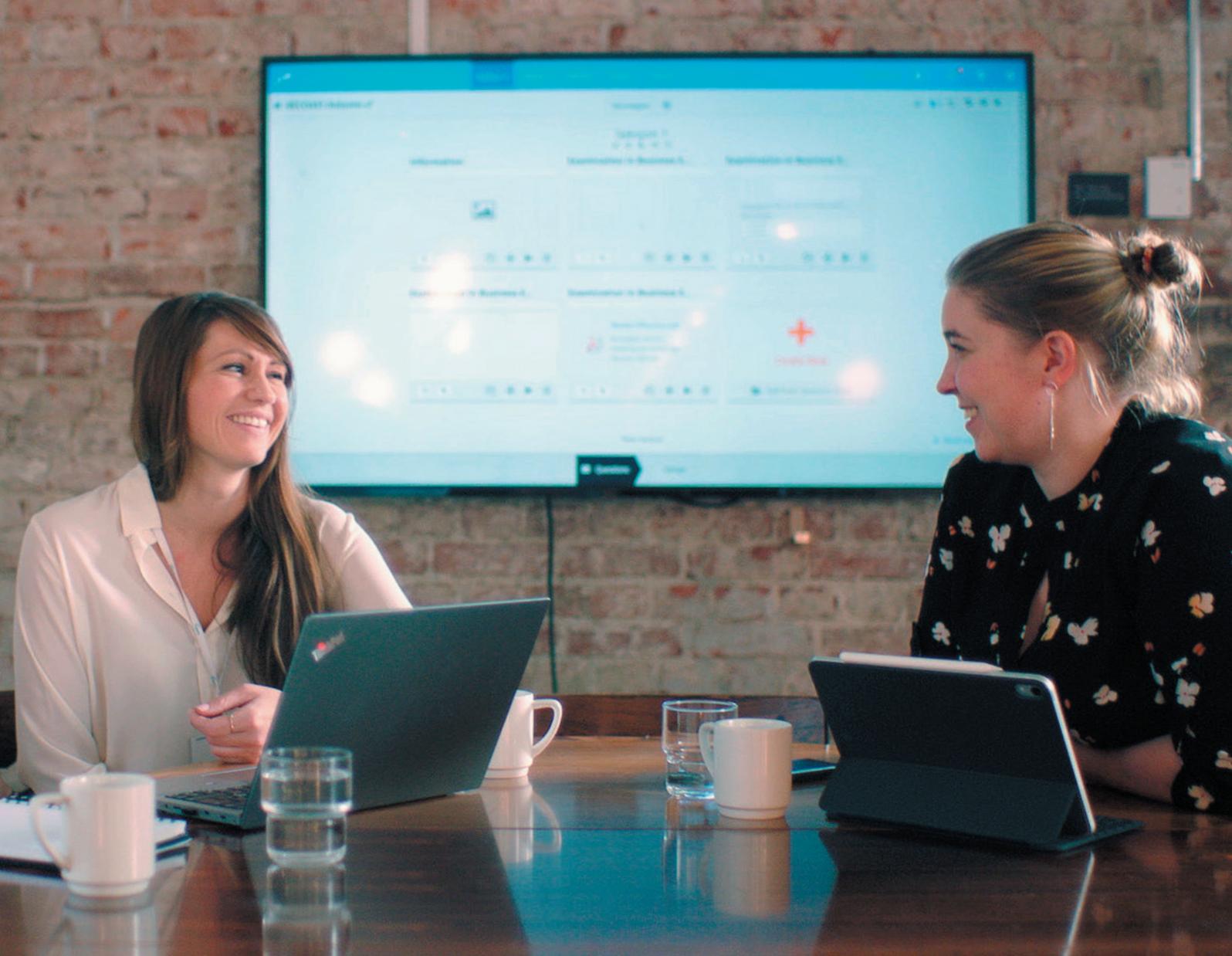
Maria Dumitrescu
Regional Director

In particular, graders have been satisfied with the ease of marking because the question, answer and mark scheme are all on one screen. Beforehand, each of these parts was separate and so grading took a significant amount of time and effort.

The authors have also found the exam creation and quality control process to be very efficient in comparison with some other digital assessment services. This is because Inspera Assessment gives them complete control over the exam, meaning that it's not necessary to contact the platform supplier to make changes. Therefore, small updates can be made in a matter of minutes.

However, Maria would like to emphasize that implementing digital assessment doesn't happen overnight. She advises other organisations considering Inspera Assessment to ensure that they attend as much training as possible and to have a super-user group who can dedicate time to testing the platform.

Going forwards, they are planning more training to get better acquainted with Inspera Assessment's Marking 2.0 module which has more features than the marking module that they are currently using. Overall, PWGSC plans to continue using Inspera Assessment in the future because their experience has been positive and straightforward.



Do you want to know how digital assessment can be implemented at your institution?

Get in touch to find out how we can help:

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