

# ZAPPOS: A Culture of Success Through Customer Service

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Topic: RETAIL

## Customer overview

Founder Nick Swinmurn started Zappos in 1999 after his frustration with mall shopping convinced him that there had to be a better way to find the shoes you want in the color you want and in the right size. Tony Hsieh came on board and made Nick's vision a reality, and propelled the company to over \$1 billion in annual gross merchandise sales. Hsieh's commitment to maintaining the energy, innovation, and community feeling of a start-up earned the company a place on Fortune magazine's annual list of Best Companies to Work For in both 2009 and 2010.

## Zappos list of awards:

- **J.D. POWER CUSTOMER SERVICE CHAMPION, 2011;**
- **WGSN GLOBAL FASHION AWARDS – OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE (AND OUTSTANDING ETAILER), 2010;**
- **CMG VISION AWARD, 2010;**
- **INNOVATION ALL-STARS, FAST COMPANY, 2010;**
- **NRF INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR, 2009 AND 2010.**

## Business challenge

- 1. Fast and accurate pre-employment screening.**
- 2. Keep turnover rates low in customer service.**

Zappos needs to quickly and effectively screen a high volume of potential candidates in several different competencies. To maintain their high level of customer service, they must also strive for low turnover rates. They need to find people with the right skills without spending valuable time and manpower.

## Solution

**Zappos found eSkill.**

It started with just a typing test, but eSkill's wide range of testing products, ease of use, and compelling price point, as well as the ability to customize content, made a longer-term partnership a natural choice.

Zappos now uses eSkill tests to screen for two of their most critical positions: **content managers and customer service representatives.**

Zappos at a glance:

- **ESKILL CUSTOMER SINCE 2005.**
- **UNLIMITED USAGE SUBSCRIPTION, MULTI-USER LICENSE.**
- **USE OF ESKILL EDITOR TO DEVELOP OWN, PROPRIETARY TEST QUESTIONS.**
- **SUBJECTS USED INCLUDE: MS OFFICE SUITE, BASIC ARITHMETIC, ATTENTION TO DETAIL, GENERAL TYPING, E-MAIL ETIQUETTE, BASIC COMPUTER KNOWLEDGE, AND OTHERS.**

Their content managers need to be well versed in Zappos products, and able to write concise, accurate, and grammatically correct product descriptions that inspire customers to buy. Zappos uses eSkill's grammar, typing, and product review tests to sift through the volume of applicants remotely, instead of bringing each one into the office.

With all of the awards and attention, the stakes and expectations for Zappos customer service representatives are incredibly high. Their interaction with clients on the phone and on instant chat requires proficiency in grammar, typing, and the company's intranet. eSkill's remote testing in these competencies helps recruiters quickly identify the best possible candidates in an efficient way.

## **Results and benefits**

eSkill's suite of online testing programs makes it easy for Zappos to evolve their hiring process as they evolve as a company. After partnering with eSkill, Zappos has experienced:

- **LESS TURNOVER, WHICH MEANS LESS MONEY SPENT ON RECRUITING.**
- **LESS TRAINING TIME FOR NEW HIRES – DOWN FROM 4 WEEKS TO 1 WEEK.**

- **POSITIVE FEEDBACK FROM TRAINERS.**
- **THE ABILITY TO EASILY AND QUICKLY IDENTIFY STAR RECRUITS FOR DEDICATED TEAMS.**

*“The wide variety and customizability of eSkill’s online testing allows us to pre-screen many of our candidates before they even get in the door. And this is key, because once a potential hire shows he/she possesses the skills necessary to do the job, our recruiters can concentrate on the second – and equally important – part of the screening process: the cultural fit.*

*eSkill helps us assess a high volume of candidates in a fast, easy and efficient way.”*

**Christa Foley**, Recruiting Manager, Zappos