

Developing an Assessment Centre and Training of Observers

Workshop

by

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the cape town international
convention centre
a new experience

Purpose of Workshop

“To provide a complete understanding of the process for the development of an Assessment Centre and Training of Observers”



Outcomes of the Workshop

- Understanding the steps in assessment centre design
- Understanding job analysis and competency identification
- Gaining knowledge of the selection and design of AC exercises
- Understanding the role and skills of an observer
- Validity of AC



Workshop Format

- *“Overview of steps in developing an Assessment Centre”* - **Deon**
- *“Identifying and developing of competencies, deciding on exercises, construction of exercises - “Practical Guidelines ”* - **Natasha**
- *“Observer Training, implementation issues, validity of Assessment Centre* - **Deon**
- *“Assessment Centre expert”* - **Herman**



What is a Assessment Centre ?

*“An assessment centre consists of a **standardized evaluation** of behaviour based on multiple inputs. Several **trained observers** and techniques are used. Judgements about **behaviour** are made, from specifically developed assessment **simulations**. These judgements are pooled in a meeting among the **assessors** or by a statistical integration process. In an **integration discussion**, comprehensive accounts of behaviour, and often ratings of it, are pooled. The discussion results in evaluation of the **performance** of the assessed on the dimensions/ competencies or other variables that the assessment centre is designed to measure.”*



Steps in developing an Assessment Centre

STEPS

- **Needs Analysis**
- **Appropriate Job Analysis**
- **Organisational/Unit Effectiveness Survey**
- **Process of Identification of Dimensions**
- **Issues in deciding on Assessment Centre Exercises**
- **Constructing Exercises**
- **Implementing the Assessment Centre**
- **Validating the Assessment Centre**



JOB ANALYSIS

- A rigorous and systematic procedure whereby an individual collects and analyses job information.
- Includes a recognised method where the procedure is clearly specified for the analyst; a detailed statement of relevant job components; and a document summarising the results.” (Levine)

METHODS

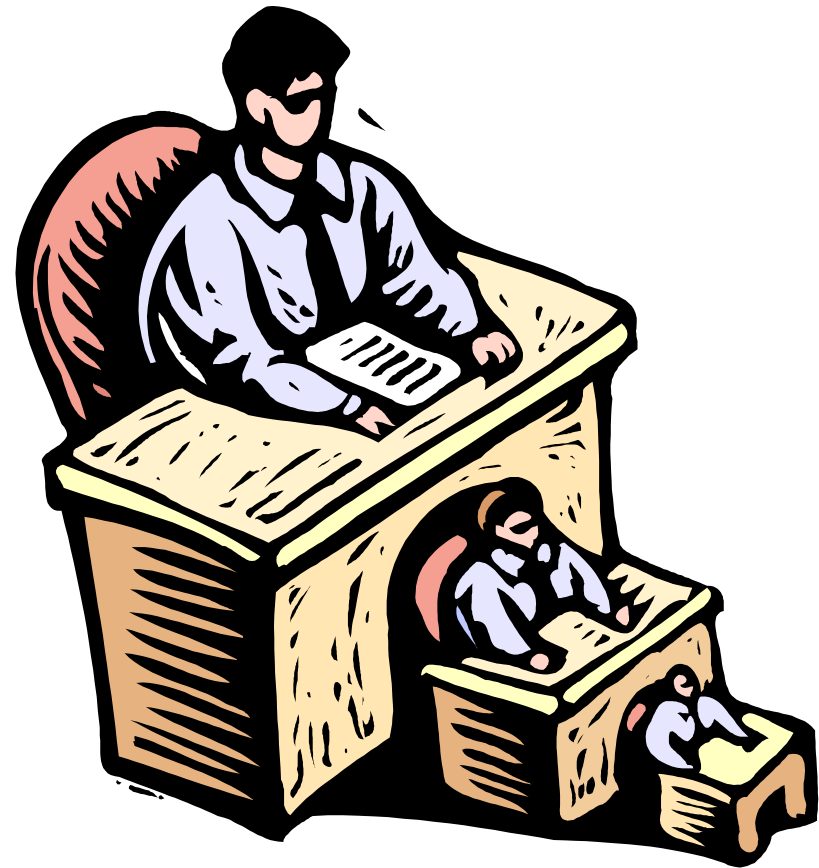
- Observing
- Asking
- Self-Report
- Doing
- Desk Study
- Expert Systems

MULTI-METHOD APPROACH

- Background Interview
- Critical Incidents (Job incumbents)
- Repertory Grid (Line Managers)
- Feedback

CRITICAL INCIDENTS

- collecting observed incidents which have proved very important or critical to job performance.
- makes the difference between success and failure.
- recorded in the form of notes or stories about how a person has handled certain situations on the job.



TELL ME ABOUT...



- “ an unusual, infrequent or one off event that has occurred in the past, the successful or unsuccessful handling of which had a significant impact upon the performance of the individual in that job”.

EXAMPLES

Job Title	Task –related e.g.	People-related e.g.
Branch Manager-Insurance	The sales team misses target	Appointing a new sales consultant
Store Controller-Retail	Appointing a new sales consultant	Disciplining an employee
Marketing Consultant	A bomb scare leads to the store being shut for 2 hrs	Interacting with team to brainstorm sales strategy

REPERTORY GRID

- Is most commonly used with managers who compare individuals working for them in order to determine criteria/ skills for success.
- To generate constructs, managers think of three or more job incumbents.
- “Describe a way in which two of these people are similar and different from the third in terms of the way they perform the job.”

EXAMPLE

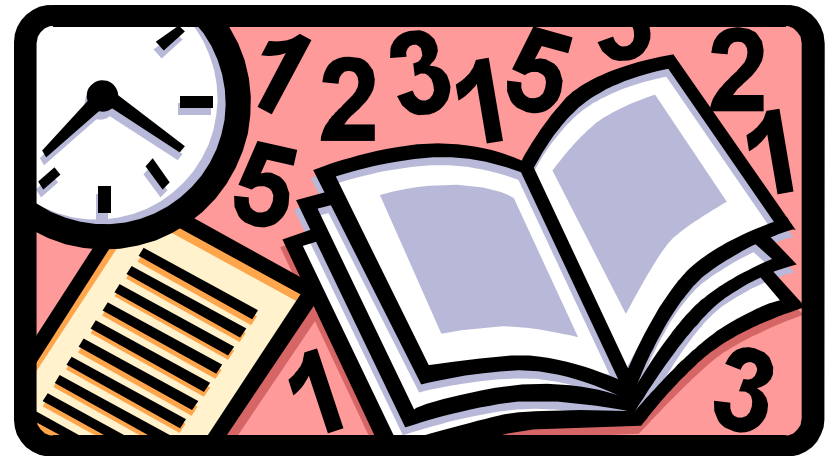
More Effective Performers	Less Effective Performers
Constructs:	Constructs:
Establishes rapport quickly	Slow to establish rapport
Attends to the details of sales administration.	Lax on details of sales administration.
Perseveres to gain a sale	Gives up easily

EXTRACTING COMPETENCIES

Using the information provided, identify the knowledge, skills and attributes required of the job incumbent.

AC DESIGN ISSUES...

- Understanding the job and job level
- What are the critical success factors/ criteria of the job?
- How to measure it?
- Resources, costs and time
- Validity, reliability, culture fairness.



SIMULATION/ EXERCISE DESIGN



- In groups
 - You have been asked to design an assessment centre for a Call Centre Operator at a Insurer.
 - Choose 1 exercise and explain how you will design it.
 - Explain why.

PRACTICAL STEPS

- Understand the job context, content, level, critical success factors
- Use real job incidents from JA
- Pilot it to see whether it measures the criteria accurately



AC DESIGN STANDARDS

1. Multiple techniques with min. 1 simulation.
2. Multiple assessors must be used.
3. Outcome based on pooled info.
4. Overall evaluation made after AC.
5. Job-related simulations to be used.
6. Based on job context.
7. Used to provide info. on predetermined dimensions, attributes, qualities.

(Byham)

Observer Training

- Profile – “Competent Observer”
- Benefits of Training Observers
- Assessment Centre
 - Behavior Observation
 - Assessment Centre Process
 - Behavior Observation Training
- Implementation of Assessment Centres
- Validity of Assessment Centres



Profile - Competent Observer

- ✓ Commitment to the assessment centre concept and process
- ✓ An astute observer of behaviour- good listener
- ✓ Analytical - seeks to understand cause and effect in behavioural interactions
- ✓ Pays good attention to detail and is people-orientated with good interpersonal skills
- ✓ Is systematic and well organised



Profile - Competent Observer (cont)

- ✓ Has good written communication skills and is well respected as a people manager
- ✓ Flexible receptive to new ways of doing things
- ✓ Good oral communication skills - can articulate viewpoints both in groups and one-on one situations
- ✓ Displays sound, objective judgement - free from bias
- ✓ Sustains high levels of energy and enthusiasm during long days
- ✓ Makes notes.



Benefits of Training Observers

- Thorough knowledge of the **organization** and the **job** being assessed
- Thorough knowledge and understanding of the assessment **techniques** used, including the kinds of behaviors elicited by each technique, relevant **dimensions** to be observed, expected or typical behaviors, examples or samples of actual behaviors, etc
- Thorough knowledge and understanding of the assessment **dimensions** including definitions of dimensions, relationship to **job performance**, examples of effective and ineffective performance, etc



Benefits of Training Observers (cont)

- Skill in **behavior observation** and recording, including knowledge of the forms used by the center
- Thorough knowledge and understanding of **evaluation** and rating **procedures**, including how data are **integrated** by the Assessment Centre staff
- Thorough knowledge and understanding of assessment **policies** and **practices** of the organization, including restrictions on how assessment data are to be used



Benefits of Training Observers (cont)

- Demonstrated knowledge and ability to **conduct role** plays for interactive exercises
- Thorough knowledge and understanding of **feedback procedures**



Assessment Centre – Behavior Observation

Behavior Observation

- *Complex process*
- *Conceptual framework*
- *Understand cause-effect relationship*
- *Good understanding behavior*



Assessment Centre Process

- **First - Data Gathering / Processing**
 - *Observing behavior*
 - *Classifying behavior*
 - *Rating of behavior*
- **Second - Data Integration**
 - *Presenting reports*
 - *Individual dimension ratings*
 - *Finalizing ratings*
 - *Final overall rating*



Behavior Assessment - Training

- Understand the process of observing behavior
- Understand the process of recording behavior
- Understand the process of categorising behavior
- Understand the process of evaluating behavior



Assessment Centre Implementation

- Top level support
- Organization climate
- Professional people – Industrial Psychologist
- Assessment Centre facilities
- Trained observers
- Research



Validity of Assessment Centres

- A/C most valid predictors – $r=0,41$
- Meta Analysis (Gaugler et. al 1987) – 50 studies $r= 0,37 > 0,53$
- SA studies – Spangenberg et al 1989 – $r=0.37$ middle managers (BARS)
- Hurst (1992) – $r=0,54$ Leadership Potential Black managers
- Kriek et. al (1994) Fairness A/C – no evidence of bias in predictive validity Black / Whites

Conclusions

- **Questions**
- **Consultation/ Training**
 - **Natasha Müller (021-4473700/ 082 853 5998)**
- **Training**
 - **Assessment Centre Design Training (5 days)**
 - **Observer Training (3 days)**
 - **Fatimah Boltman (021- 9184222)**



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