

ACSG CONFERENCE PROGRAM 2004: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

11 March 2003

08:30 Registration and coffee on Arrival

09:00 Welcome Address

09:15 **Paul Sacket: Balancing Performance and Diversity Concerns in Personnel Selection**

The tension between designing selection systems to maximize job performance vs. to maximize ethnic, racial, and gender diversity is a dominant issue in personnel selection. The current controversies over the future of affirmative action attest to the prominence of this concern. In this presentation, I will consider research findings from the domains of personnel selection, educational admissions, and occupational licensing on proposed methods for reducing adverse impact and increasing diversity that do not involve preferential treatment. These methods include adding additional predictors to selection systems, altering the sequence in which different aspects of the selection system are used (e.g., "test, then interview" can have different consequences from "interview, then test"), and altering the format for obtaining information from candidates (e.g., oral vs. written). The goal is to separate reality from rhetoric and to obtain a clear picture of the prospects for balancing performance maximization and diversity maximization.

10:15 **Magda du Preez: Applying Assessment Centres Across Cultures.**

South African organizations are increasing their global operations more and more. This leaves the assessment professional with the challenge of applying assessment tools effectively across many more cultures. Overall assessment centre methodologies are similar in the United States and South Africa, however the practitioner needs to grasp the impact of cultural nuances and market place differences to devise appropriate assessment tools and interpret assessment results effectively. This discussion will focus on issues to consider and provide the assessment professional with practical tools.

11:15 Tea

11:45 Open Space Technology

Fairness Perceptions of the Assessment Centre- An SAPS Case Study

One important yet often overlooked aspect of the Assessment Centre is the reaction of applicants to the fairness of the process. It can be argued that just as the establishment of a fair and sound Assessment Centre (business, ethical and legal perspectives) the applicants perceptions of the fairness of processes is important. The perceived fairness of the Assessment Centre's procedures may influence the applicant decision to pursue a discrimination case against the organization. In this case study the organizational justice theories will be investigated in the South African Police Services Senior Management Assessment Centre. The focus will be on the perceptions of procedural justice or fairness of procedures that are currently being used. Procedural justice theories suggest a number of rules that influence perceptions of procedural justice, the most commonly studied of which is process control. Additional procedural rules include consistency, bias suppression, representativeness and two way communication. A fairness perception questionnaire was developed and administered on 450 senior managers who participated in the SAPS senior management Assessment Centre over a period of two years. The findings of senior manager's fairness perception will be presented and discussed. Recommendations to increase the fairness perception of participants in Assessment Centres will be provided.

The use of Assessment Centres to select personnel to start operations in South Africa – a case study

A good example of best practice with regard to using assessment centre methodology to screen personnel at various levels of the corporate hierarchy. Mainly marketing and sales roles were targeted for the start-up of operations in South Africa. * Philip Morris International, based in Lausanne, Switzerland, is one of the largest tobacco companies in the world, and:
* Produces many of the world's best-selling cigarette brands, including the most popular brand worldwide,
* Have an interest in, operate or own more than 50 factories around the world and sell our products in over 160 markets,
* Founded in the 19th century, Philip Morris has grown into a worldwide organization; today Philip Morris International alone employs over 40,000 people

Apart from their successful economic performance, it is not the only measure of their success. Honesty, integrity and social responsibility are just as important to the way they measure themselves.

This presentation will share the process of how assessment centers were arranged and implemented across South Africa by a group of international assessors. 24 Candidates were assessed per venue per day, and some careful planning had to go into preparations and the management of results. This presentation shares the experience and learnings of this large scale project with you.

How Business Strategy Informs Development Centres and Vice Versa: A Case Study at Amway South Africa

In most businesses, developing a strategic plan for the business requires planning, projections, time and brainpower from the leaders and shapers of the organization's future. Very often a tremendous amount of time and effort is applied to this part of the process and the outcome is a comprehensive one, two, three or so year plan that will chart the course for the organization in the future. This plan is communicated to the organization's employees, and then further segmented/ dissected into departmental operational plans. Often, feedback loops are built into the process to ascertain and measure the companies overall achievement of and progress towards the strategic plan. And the organization proceeds. However, this is only a portion of the requirements needed to achieve a successful outcome of the strategic plan. The execution of the plan often does not attract as much, time, effort and emphasis as the planning stages did. The communication takes place and the individuals or groups are expected to make it happen. Too much reliance is placed on the individuals and the groups level of technical competence, the managers' ability to communicate the plan clearly and the individuals ability to comprehend the intentions of the plan. However, there are behavioural competencies that are also required in order to collectively assist the employees in successfully achieving the organisations objectives. How do we ascertain what these behavioural competencies are for each function? How do we assess each individual's level of competence around the

- technical and these behavioural competencies? This presentation will explain in a practical way, the process that Amway South Africa employed to answer the above-mentioned questions. It will indicate how competency modelling techniques and Development Centres were used as tools to identify job competencies and employee development needs. The business strategy helped the assessors determine which psychometric tests and other assessment techniques would be incorporated in the development centre. It also helped shape the focus of some of the exercises. In turn, the outcomes of the development centre for each individual helped to shape their personal development plan and also provide insight into shaping business succession plans, hence informing and shaping business strategy.
- 12:15 Daleen Visser:
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:00 **Antony Wilson: Towards the Bulletproof AC: perfectionist vision or attainable feat?**
 This experiential, two hour workshop goes over the “Golden Rules” of assessment centre design and practice together with some of the latest research findings and legal decisions to ensure your AC is professionally, ethically and legally as good as you can make it.
 On the principle of “better safe than sorry” this workshop will show you how to greatly decrease the chances of successful litigation against an employment decision based on your AC. It will help your organization manage the risks inherent in relying on AC data. It will increase your confidence in your AC.
 Participants will receive handouts, copies of PowerPoint slides, bibliographies, readings and digests of research and legal cases, together with an extensive checklist which will help you increase the validity and reliability of your AC.
 The interactive workshop will use court decisions, academic research and the practical experience of both the facilitator and the participants to share and evaluate knowledge. Much of this emanating from the US, Europe and Japan although examined with South African eyeglasses. The workshop will disseminate best practice from around the globe.
 Against this background of excellence and thorough professionalism, the workshop will consider sensible ways to contain costs. It will show participants how to perform the necessary cost/benefit and utility analyses to help you justify your decisions from a business perspective. It will include post assessment feedback, monitoring and evaluation.
 This is an opportunity to share and get to grips with uncertainties and nagging doubts, to learn more about good AC design and practice. For experienced practitioners it is a time to share knowledge and experiences and gain from the workshop and each other.
 It will consist of inputs from the presenter, and facilitated case studies, experiential exercises, individual and small group tasks and discussions and other activities. This is a fast moving workshop covering Assessment Centres from A to Z. To quickly bring you “up to speed” and help you stay “one jump ahead”, it will include a “Stop Press” section of the very latest academic research and court decisions. Content of this section will be revised and updated just before the event to ensure that the freshest, state-of-the-art knowledge is passed on to the participants.
- Herman Spangenberg, Deon Meiring, Natasha Muller: Developing an assessment centre and training of observers**
 The purpose of the workshop is to provide a complete understanding of the process for developing an assessment centre and the training of observers. An eight-step development process will be reviewed. The review will be followed by a discussion and demonstration of the issues such as identification of competencies, development of the In-Basket exercise, and demonstration of observer training.
- 16:00 Tea
- 16:30 **Wendy Anyster: Using traditional and new assessment methods to identify and retain your talent pool and develop a Future Leader strategy**
 This will focus on leadership development centres, career assessments and a self-efficacy questionnaire to identify the talent pool and integrate the information in such a way that it informs the business strategy for talent development and retention.
- 17:15 Open top Bus Tour

12 March 2003

- 08:00 Coffee on Arrival
- 08:30 **Loyisu Mbabane: Black Economic Empowerment, Employment Equity and Skills Development: An integrated approach**
- 09:30 Open Space Technology
Validation of instruments (for selection process) proved to be an invaluable tool for predicting work success when assessing new candidates.
 The aim of the study was to predict performance of Business Development Managers and Financial Advisers. The sample for this study consisted of a convenience sample of 92 managers who participated in an assessment centre evaluation of managerial competencies during 2000. The assessment centre ratings were measured against two other variables: the latest Score indicators and performance ratings by the immediate superior (Provincial Manager).
 The immediate supervisor assessed the performance of each manager in terms of behavioural competencies. Data on the organisational performance outcomes (Score) for each individual were also included in this study. Biographical and company-related information was collected for each individual. The data were screened and analyzed using descriptive statistics, factor analysis, correlation coefficients and regression analysis.
 Data for all advisers appointed between January 2001 and December 2002 were included in the research. Observers assessed the performance of each applicant in terms of the behavioural competencies demonstrated in an assessment centre. In the study it was found that the validity of the assessment centre to predict managerial performance varied between low to moderate and high. This finding was based on the correlation between assessed competencies and performance, both for

managers and financial advisors. Based on the above-mentioned scientific research, it was concluded that the assessment centre has significant predictive validity.

Utilising Assessment Centre Technology in identifying potential Black Economic Empowerment Partners – A Case Study

The Financial Services Charter constitutes a framework for and establishes the principles upon which Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) will be implemented in the financial services in South Africa. It is aimed at addressing inequalities and actively seeks a positive and proactive response from the financial sector. Various white owned SME's or financial institutions face the challenge of partnering with potential Black SME's or Black companies. Although several databases and matchmaking services have been created, many owners are still unsure on how to select the right kind of business as their BEE partner. Assessment Centre Technology was utilized in determining an effective fit between a white-owned SME and a black SME. It is imperative that there is a good fit between potential partners and that before venturing into a partnership, there is awareness with regards to strengths and development areas so that the businesses and the individuals themselves can optimally leverage the strengths and be proactive in terms of development areas. Information regarding values, ethics and the way in which the organisations conduct business was also useful in determining a good partner fit. Different personality and emotional intelligence instruments were utilised during the process as well as a comprehensive business case study. The latter played an important role in determining the match between SME's and also facilitating insight into the core business. It is hypothesized that Assessment Centre Technology utilised for the purpose of identifying potential BEE partners will add much value to many organisations and individuals who are entering into partnerships as stipulated by the Financial Services Charter.

Using assessment centre methodology to retain sales staff: A Case Study at Standard Bank

Previously, Standard Bank relied on one tool to give them additional information to enhance their selection of sales staff. This did not give them sufficient information to select staff, however. They developed a leaderless group exercise and combined it with other assessment tools to gain more comprehensive information during the selection process. The results show a 25% increase in the retention of sales staff.

10:00 Brunch

11:00 Paul Sacket: Measuring and Predicting Counter productivity at work

The presentation addresses two key issues. The first deals with understanding counterproductive workplace behaviors. Are various counterproductive work behaviors (such as theft, absence, doing personal business on company time, and aggression toward co-workers or customers) independent of each other, or are they highly interrelated, stemming from common personal and organizational causes? The second deals with assessment and prediction: can individuals prone to counterproductive work behaviour be identified prior to hire? Various testing and assessment methods for the prediction of counterproductive work behaviour are summarized and evaluated. The session will aim to stimulate your thinking on how to integrate these potential tools into existing assessment centre methodology and invite debate on possible issues that may result.

11:30 Panel Discussion

Paul Sacket; Magda du Preez; Loyisu Mbabane

12:00 Magda du Preez: Adapting Assessment Centre Technology to Develop Entrepreneurs into Professional Managers

Companies often outgrow the very people who founded them, causing organizational disarray and personal conflict. This session will discuss a case where assessment technology techniques were applied in designing a leadership development program that enabled successful entrepreneurs into becoming professional enterprise managers.

12:45 Closure / Feedback

13:00 Day end