



Assessment Centre Feedback

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> The Importance of Feedback

- A lot of information is gathered at an AC.
- Participants are anxious /eager to get feedback.
- Shedule feedback soon after the AC.
- Feedback may influence participants' lives.
- They may remember it forever.
- Never underestimate the impact of feedback.
- Never postpone feedback for months.
- Never delegate feedback to less experienced colleagues.

> Feedback Objectives

For example:

- To inform participants about performance.
- To gain information on the participant's perception of his/her performance.
- To help participants come to terms with strengths and development needs.
- To start development planning.
- To maintain the participant's motivation.

> Preparation for Feedback

- It is your duty to prepare thoroughly.
- Gather evidence throughout the AC and at the integration session.
- Integrate information from exercises and tests.
- Develop insight in all the information.
- Anticipate reactions.
- Prepare a summary of strongest points and most important development areas.
- Could suggest alternative behaviours.
- Could propose some development actions.

> Feedback Structure

Introduction

Purpose
What was participant's experience
Reminder of assessment methods

Results

By competency or exercise?
Greatest strength
Remaining evidence
Try to finish on a positive note

Conclusion

Patterns, links, summary
Next steps
Development planning

> Selfawareness

- Be aware of own biases and stereotypes.
- Be aware of own strengths, weaknesses and needs.
- Show respect, despite of others' differences.
- Be willing to state own point of view.

> Understanding Ourselves

- It is difficult to see ourselves realistically
- We spend a whole life trying to know ourselves.
- Nobody can do this for us.
- Other people can merely help us.

– Brill & Levine (2005) *Working with People: The Helping Process*

> Respect for the Participant

Display respect by:

- Eliminating distractions.
- Creating structure.
- Stating agenda and time available.
- Assuring confidentiality.
- Displaying dedication and interest.
- Listening and being supportive.
- Giving time to reflect.
- Being frank and specific.
- Asking for comments and suggestions.

> Useful Suggestions

- Emphasise the positive.
- Focus on behaviour, rather than on the person.
- Refer to behaviour that can be changed.
- Be descriptive, rather than evaluative.
- Own the feedback (use “I” statements).
- Notice the use of “all”, “never”, “always’, etc.
- Be careful with advice.

Mc Gill & Beatty (1994) *Action Learning: A practitioner’s guide*. London, Kogan Page

> An Uncomfortable Situation

- Most people feel anxious before their feedback.
- They might feel awkward in the situation.
- They assume it will be about their shortcomings.
- Therefore they listen only to the negatives and ... react on that.
- Feedback may influence the recipient's self-image.
- Refer or arrange follow-up if required.

> Dealing with emotions

- Reactions could range between acceptance, agreement, denial, aggression, resistance, boredom, etc.
- Refusal to attend a feedback session.
- Displaying empathy.
- Handling own reactions.
- Acknowledging emotions.
- Making follow-up arrangements.

> Selfdisclosure

- A contentious issue.
- Should the feedback provider ...
 - refer to own feelings in similar situations?
 - give personal examples?
 - suggest alternative behaviours?
 - give tips for development?
 - assist with the development plan?

> Key Issues and Policy

- Who should be involved?
Roles
Responsibilities
Nature of relationship
Confidentiality
- What should be covered?
How much data?
Structure/Format
- When should feedback take place?

> Get Feedback on your Feedback

- Obtain insight on your feedback skills.
- Design a questionnaire.
- Ask a colleague to contact the recipient.
- Take into account that people who performed well, usually give higher ratings for the feedback.
- Reflect on the feedback and adjust style.

> Debriefing for Assessors

- Assessors have to discuss their experiences.
- Feedback is emotionally taxing.
- Debriefing is required to unwind and prevent burnout.
- Listen for remarks like “Feedback is a waste of time.”
- Get support and advice from colleagues.
- If assessors are exhausted consider rescheduling.
- Strictly control the number of sessions per day.

> Feedback Rating Questionnaire

- How would you describe the competence of the assessor that facilitated your feedback session?
- To what extent was the assessor able to build trust and create an atmosphere for an open discussion?
- To what extent did the assessor assist you in understanding the content and layout of the reports?
- To what extent did the assessor listen to your input and questions and respond in a meaningful manner?
- Have you received enough information to decide on a development plan?

> The Influence of Culture

- Feedback may be complicated by individual customs, beliefs, practices and preferences.
- To accommodate different influences, obtain information about these factors.
- Yet be realistic in terms of available time and cost.

> Cultural Considerations

- We learn the behaviour that our cultures require at an early age.
- Without knowing why, we follow what our cultures prescribe.
- Deviation from the norm is punished.
- We become intollerant of the behaviour of other cultures.

> Cultural Differences: Hofstede

- Gert Hofstede's IBM study of differences between cultures as manifested in dominant value systems.
- The relative positions of countries on four dimensions are expressed in scores between 0 and (approximately) 100.*

*Hofstede, G. & McCrae, R. R. (2004). Personality and Culture Revisited: Linking Traits and Dimensions of Culture. *Cross Cultural Research*. 38 (1)

> Individualism-Collectivism

The degree to which individuals are integrated in groups.*

- Individualist Cultures:
 - Everyone looks after himself.
 - People take responsibility for own development.
 - People decide on own development goals. **

* Hofstede, G. & McCrae, R. R. (2004). Personality and Culture Revisited: Linking Traits and Dimensions of Culture. *Cross Cultural Research*. 38 (1)

** Hofstede, G. (1984). *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*. Sage.

> Individualism-Collectivism

- Collectivist Cultures:
 - Personal goals are secondary to those of the group.
 - People are integrated into cohesive groups, often extended families.
 - The goals of the group are more important than the goals of the individual.
 - Collectivism prevails in African countries.*
 - South Africa has a low individualism score.**

* Hofstede, G. & McCrae, R. R. (2004). Personality and Culture Revisited: Linking Traits and Dimensions of Culture. *Cross Cultural Research*. 38 (1)

**Sousa-Poza, A., Nystrom, H. & Wiebe, H. (2001). A cross-cultural study of the differing effects of corporate culture on TQM in three countries. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*. 18 (7)

> The Philosophy of *Ubuntu*

- Political changes in South Africa introduced the concept of Ubuntu.
- Ubuntu means the person is a person through other persons.
- Mbigi lists the principles of Ubuntu:
 - The spirit of collective contribution
 - Solidarity
 - Acceptance
 - Dignity
 - Stewardship
 - Compassion and care
 - Hospitality
 - Legitimacy

Mbigi, L. (1997) *Ubuntu: The African Dream in Management*. Knowledge Resources. Randburg.

> Power Distance

- The extent to which the less powerful members of society accept that power is distributed unequally. *
- In countries with a high power distance children are taught to accept their position and be obedient.
- Power distance scores are high for African countries.
 - People expect to be told in feedback what to do.
 - People assume that the organisation will take responsibility for development interventions.

* Hofstede, G. & McCrae, R. R. (2004). Personality and Culture Revisited: Linking Traits and Dimensions of Culture. *Cross Cultural Research*. 38 (1)

> Power Distance

- In countries with a low power distance children are taught to use initiative. *
- People might aspire to another position in society.
 - In feedback, people want to discuss what they can do to move to the next level in the organisation.
 - They may want to consider how they can forward their careers.

*Hofstede, G. & McCrae, R. R. (2004). Personality and Culture Revisited: Linking Traits and Dimensions of Culture. *Cross Cultural Research*. 38 (1)

> Uncertainty Avoidance

- The extent to which a culture programs its members to feel comfortable in unstructured situations. *
- Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimise unstructured situations by strict laws and rules.
 - People expect the feedback session to be structured.
 - They want to know about the policy for development.

* Hofstede, G. & McCrae, R. R. (2004). Personality and Culture Revisited: Linking Traits and Dimensions of Culture. *Cross Cultural Research*. 38 (1)

> Uncertainty Avoidance

- Uncertainty accepting cultures are more tolerant of different opinions. *
 - People are comfortable with a less structured feedback session.
 - They are open to different views and various options for development.

*Hofstede, G. & McCrae, R. R. (2004). Personality and Culture Revisited: Linking Traits and Dimensions of Culture. *Cross Cultural Research*. 38 (1)

> Masculinity-Femininity

- The distribution of emotional roles between the genders.
- Masculine roles are more assertive and competitive.*
- People might state their opinions during feedback.
- They might indicate when they don't agree.

* Hofstede, G. & McCrae, R. R. (2004). Personality and Culture Revisited: Linking Traits and Dimensions of Culture. *Cross Cultural Research*. 38 (1)

> Masculinity-Femininity

- Feminine roles are more modest and caring.*
- People might accept their development needs.
- They might downplay or deny their strengths.

* Hofstede, G. & McCrae, R. R. (2004). Personality and Culture Revisited: Linking Traits and Dimensions of Culture. *Cross Cultural Research*. 38 (1)

> Differences within Cultures

- There might be exceptions to the rule.
- Countries have different cultural mixes.
- People tend to be “hybrids” who simultaneously belong to different cultural groups.**
- South Africa presents an anomaly because the ethnological culture of most managers differ from that of the general population.*
- Fewer differences among managers in South Africa.***

* Sousa-Poza, A., Nystrom, H. & Wiebe, H. (2001). A cross-cultural study of the differing effects of corporate culture on TQM in three countries. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*. 18 (7)

** Jacob, N. (2005). Cross-cultural investigations: emerging concepts. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*. 18 (5).

*** Thomas, A. & Bendixen, M. (2000). Management implications of ethnicity in South Africa. *Journal of International Business Studies*. 31 (3).

> Determining Corporate Culture

- The Corporate Culture Questionnaire:
 - Measures the prevailing culture of an organisation
 - (The dominant system of beliefs and practices.)
 - Helps to guide the development of corporate strategy.
 - Used to evaluate change programs.
 - Identifies different cultural perceptions of the organisation across time and geographical locations.

> Corporate Culture Questionnaire

- **The Performance Domain**

- Concern for Quantity
- Concern for Quality
- Use of new Equipment
- Encouragement of Creativity
- Customer Orientation
- Commercial Orientation

- **The Human Resource Domain**

- Concern for Employees
- Job Involvement
- Concern for Career Development
- Emphasis on Performance-Related Rewards
- Concern for Equal Opportunities

> Corporate Culture Questionnaire

- **The Decision-Making Domain**

- Degree of Formalisation
- Employee Influence on Decisions.
- Decision-making Effectiveness
- Concern for the Longer Term
- Rate of Change
- Environmental Concern

- **The Relationship Domain**

- Vertical Relations Between Groups
- Lateral Relations Between Groups
- Interpersonal Cooperation
- Communication Effectiveness
- Awareness of organisational Goals

> Using Personality Information

Some OPQ32 Dimensions:

Relationships with People

- Persuasive
- Controlling
- Outspoken
- Independent Minded
- Outgoing
- Affiliative
- Socially Confident
- Modest
- Democratic
- Caring

> Recommendations

- Understand the organisational culture.
- Find out how the individual views the culture.
- Learn about the culture of people in the area.
- Use personality questionnaire information.
- Get information about the individual from the HR manager and the line manager.
- Ask the individual about personal values, preferences and customs.

> Conclusion

- If participant and feedback provider belong to different cultural or ethnic groups:
 - Probability that their customs and beliefs may differ.
 - Influence on feedback and development planning.
 - Be sensitive to these issues.
 - Ask participants' about their customs.
 - Negotiate about expectations.



Thank You