Assessment Tools Overview

Presented by the
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Hiring Reform

• In the Presidential Memorandum (Section 1: Directions to Agencies), the second item talks about assessing applicants using valid, reliable tools

Presentation Overview

- Assessment: Defining the terms
- The importance of effective assessment
- Assessment considerations
- Examples of assessments
- Assessment strategy
Assessment: Defining the Terms

- **Personnel Assessment**: a systematic approach to gathering information about individuals; this information is used to make employment or career-related decisions about applicants and employees

- **Personnel Assessment Tool**: any test or procedure (for example, ability test, structured interview, work sample) used to measure an individual’s employment or career-related qualifications and interests

The Importance of Effective Assessment

- Employees who possess the right competencies are more likely to contribute to an agency’s success
- Increases our ability to accurately predict the relative success of each applicant on the job
- Results in hiring, placing, and promoting greater numbers of superior performers
- Results in reduced turnover
The Importance of Effective Assessment

- Decreases the likelihood of a bad hire
- Results in enhanced job satisfaction for new hires and a more cohesive and effective work group
- Results in cost savings to the organization
The Importance of Effective Assessment

Costs of Hiring the Wrong Person

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of employee</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry-level full time employee (FTE)</td>
<td>$5,000-$7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000/FTE</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000/FTE</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Costs include wasted salary, benefits, severance pay, headhunter fees, training costs, and hiring time

Assessment Considerations

Reliability and Validity

- **Reliability**: the extent to which an assessment tool is consistent or free from random error in measurement
- **Validity**: the extent to which an assessment tool measures what it is intended to measure

Reliability and Validity: An Example

High reliability is a necessary condition for high validity, but high reliability does not ensure validity.
Validity of Various Assessment Tools

Validity coefficients quantify the relationship between scores on a selection device and job performance. The higher the coefficient, the better we can predict job performance.

- Work Sample Tests: .54
- Structured Interviews: .51
- Job Knowledge Tests: .48
- Assessment Centers: .37
- Biodata Instruments: .35
- Reference Checks: .26
- Training & Experience Point Method: .11

Examples of Assessment Tools

- **Accomplishment Record**
  
  Applicants provide a written description of a situation to illustrate their proficiency in critical job competencies

  Evaluated by a panel of trained raters against competency-based benchmarks

- **Biographical Data Questionnaire (Biodata)**
  
  Items about past events and behaviors reflect attributes that predict overall performance for a given occupation
Examples of Assessment Tools

• **Cognitive Ability Test**
  Applicants are asked to solve questions to estimate their potential to use mental processes to solve job-related problems or acquire job knowledge

• **Personality Test**
  Used to generate a profile of traits which can predict job performance or satisfaction with certain aspects of work
Examples of Assessment Tools

- **Rating Schedule (Training & Experience)**
  
  Standardized system that ranks applicants on their education, experience, training information provided by applicants

- **Situational Judgment Test (SJT)**
  
  Presents applicants with a description of a work problem or critical situation, and asks them to identify how they would deal with it (can be paper, computerized, or video-based format)
Examples of Assessment Tools

• **Assessment Center**

  Consists of multiple assessments to evaluate small groups of applicants on a variety of job-related competencies

  Designed to resemble actual challenges that will be found in the job

  Applicant performance is observed and evaluated by multiple trained assessors

• **Job Knowledge Test**

  Comprised of specific questions developed to determine how much the candidate knows about particular job tasks or responsibilities
Examples of Assessment Tools

- **Work Sample**
  Requires applicants to perform tasks/activities that are identical or highly similar to tasks/activities performed on the job
  Scores are assigned by trained raters

- **Writing Assessment**
  Presents applicants with exercises similar to the writing that they would be required to perform on the job
  Rated by teams of two assessors and scored using professionally-developed benchmarks
Assessment Strategy

Good Assessment: How Do I Get There?

Step 1: Identify job-relevant competencies

Step 2: Design the assessment strategy

Step 3: Identify assessment methods
Assessment Considerations

- Technology
- Face Validity/Applicant Reactions
- Subgroup Differences
- Development Costs
- Administration Costs
Assessment Strategy

Step 1: Identify Job-Relevant Competencies

• What is the occupation?

• Do you have job analysis data or other information that identifies the work performed and the job-relevant competencies?
Assessment Strategy

Step 2: Design the Assessment Strategy

The appropriate assessment methods for a given situation will depend on a number of factors, such as:

- Competencies being measured
- Reliability (consistency) of assessment tool
- Validity (accuracy) of assessment tool
Step 2: Design the Assessment Strategy

Also consider the assessment situation, factors such as:

- Number of applicants
- Available resources for development and implementation (e.g., budget, time, and people)
Assessment Strategy

Step 3: Identify Assessment Methods

OPM’s Assessment Decision Tool (ADT)

- An interactive system for developing customized assessment strategies
- The ADT presents assessment methods based on:
  - Competencies targeted for assessment
  - Situational factors relevant to the hiring situation (e.g., volume of applicants, level of available resources)
Step 3: Identify Assessment Methods

How does the ADT work?

- A user will identify his or her particular hiring situation, for example:
  - Projected number of applicants
  - Resources available (time, money, staff)
  - Competencies targeted for assessment
  - The ADT will present the assessment methods most appropriate for the hiring situation
## Assessment Strategy

### Sample Table from ADT Report

#### Competency by Method Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPETENCIES</th>
<th>Accomplishment Records</th>
<th>Assessment Centers</th>
<th>Biographical Data (Biodata) Tests</th>
<th>Job Knowledge Tests</th>
<th>Reference Checking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Capital Management</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
<td>Potential</td>
<td>Potential</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Communication</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
<td>Potential</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnering</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Thinking</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Competency by Method Matrix (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPETENCIES</th>
<th>Situational Judgment Tests</th>
<th>Structured Interviews</th>
<th>Training and Experience (T &amp; E) Evaluations</th>
<th>Work Samples and Simulations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Capital Management</td>
<td>Potential</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
<td>Potential</td>
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View description of Accomplishment Records
Examples of Assessments

More information on Assessment Methods can be found in OPM’s *Assessment Decision Guide* available on the Personnel Assessment and Selection Resource Center located at:

https://apps.opm.gov/adt
To identify the best assessment methods, it is important to be aware of all the factors that influence the assessment strategy.

Some assessment methods can be developed and administered independently. However, some of the options require a high level of technical expertise to develop and implement.