

Assessment centres: advantages and disadvantages



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Assessment centres were introduced at the middle of the 20th century. It also gives the idea and use of assessment centre. It uses to check the ability and skills of the employees. History of assessment centres explore, how and why assessment centres help us to appreciate, what the original user were trying to get and how can be assessed the skills, attitudes, personal skills and abilities as well as knowledge of the participants with the help of interview, exercises and leading practice.

Basically, the origin of assessment centres started for the selection of the soldier in the Germany. That time there was a great frustration between the boundaries of the countries due to the atmosphere of the war, and every country wanted to get

Prestige on the other countries. So, assessment centres used to check the ability and quality of the employees, and referred the position according to his knowledge and capabilities. We can be seen certain example throughout the history. Germany used to check the ability and performance to select the officers. In the book ' Spies and Saboteurs', by Dr W. J. Morgan (1955, London - Victor Gollancz Ltd), the author describe how a German psychologist, Dr Simoneit watched officer performing a variety of tasks.

The duties of assessment centres were to check the abilities thorough different implications of test and exercises. It also checked the rate and standard of the officers and according to this, the promotions have been announced by the army. This process had been started because; it showed the performance and their promotions. It also explored the certain reasons,

why certain offices did not reveal or proceed in the way. They would have been promoted once.

After this, the assessment centres emerged from Germany to USA. USA was one of the fast growing economies and USA used to judge the ability of the spy. It also used select the officers for intelligence. For checking of mental ability of officers they used further research of psychological and scientific method had been to add the work by assessment centres. The concept of assessment centres populated in different economy from one side of the world to another part of the world. British Government checks the qualities of on board selection committee and testing method. British government added more tests and exercises analysing the capability, British were pioneers to add the physical and psychological tests during an interviews and selections for employees.

Dr WJ Morgan illustrates that it is how you performed your tasks, whether as an individual or within a group, that matters not how quickly an exercise was done.

With the passage of the time, it growth and, different business have been adopted by different countries. Then most businesses used the assessment centres to assessing the hold jobs to employees. But sometimes man has more ability but at the position sometimes, it can be showed by an organisation. In this matter the assessment centres help the organisation as well as to emerged the capabilities of the employees and the employees have better opportunities to do best.

It is right that an assessment centres started for militaries bias to check the abilities but now it very common in between every aspect of the life such as businesses and other public service as well. Now in this era, there is a great competition in the world, so, it is not easy task to check the capabilities of any employees. So in this matter assessment centres is helpful to check the abilities and capabilities through the interviews and exercises the personality of the employees.

(<http://www.psychometric-success.com/faq/faq-assessment-centre-origin.htm>)

INTRODUCTION OF ASSESSMENT CENTERS:

An ' Assessment Centres does not refer to a location,

DEFINE ASSESSMENT CENTERS :

It can be usefully defined as ' A method for assessing aptitude and performance; applied to a group of participants by trained assessors using various aptitude diagnostic processes in order to obtain information about applicants' abilities or development potential.'

Assessment Centres are mostly utilized in the initial stages of the selection process; this is due large amount of time and expenditure involved in it. This is followed by initial job interview. Assessment centres involve assembling in one place several candidates who applying for the same position and putting them through a variety of different tests. They can be operated over one day, but usually involve an overnight stay.

Assessment Centres are seen as one of the most effective ways of identifying top candidates who'll get on well with others and fit in with the organizations culture. According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's ' Recruitment, Retention and Turnover 2009 Survey, 34% of employers now use assessment Centres when recruiting managers, professionals and graduates.

(<http://www.psychometric-success.com/psychometric-tests/psychometric-tests-assessment-centers.htm>)

IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSESSMENT CENTERS:

- Implementation of assessment centres should be carried out properly. When the structure and content of the assessment centre have been established, the issues involved are organising, managing and giving proper direction.
- The assessment centres should have a range of activities that allow candidates to demonstrate teach competency more than once during the course of the centre.
- The range of activities should considered exercises that sample job content and mirror real-life situations.
- The assessment centres should have different department heads which can manage too many candidates or too many exercises and maintain a sensible ratio of assessors to candidates.
- The assessment centres should have proper clear goal in mind so that they achieve the success.
- Adopt a competency-based approach with assessment criteria appropriate to the target role.

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- Training is necessary for assessors in technical areas, such as observation and interview techniques, and raises their awareness of diversity issues.
- Feedback should be given to both the successful as well as unsuccessful candidates.
- The assessment centres activities should regularly refresh to avoid over-familiarity on the part of candidates and assessors.

DESIGN OF A SUCCESSFUL ASSESSMENT CENTER:

The successful assessment centre is well defined on how well it has been designed. Before designing its best to review the nature and purpose of an assessment centre. The important feature is to consider the skills and abilities assessed are actually relevant to the job in question. An assessment centre is a step further in selection procedure, it is held either on employer's premises or in a hotel, which normally lasts one or two days. The process which usually involves in designing is as follows:

While designing the assessment centre the time duration of the centre is taken into consideration. For instance, for senior most people, one day might not be sufficient.

The second most important criteria is the location of the assessment centre, which deals with the proper surroundings and accessibility for candidates.

Create a Task list and match with roles and goals given by the company.

Create a questionnaire related to the task list.

Use the competencies well through knowledge and skills.

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DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMPETENCIES:

Different competencies generally are developed as framework to be used as a reference or resource. The purpose of the resources database is to assist users to identify the many existing competency-based resources currently in use. The database is not exhaustive, but contains numerous examples of the resources that were tapped to identify competencies in the development of the high growth industries. A competency is demonstrated or mastered in a job and can be easily transferred to another job. These resources generally contain descriptive information about the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for success in the field.

Managerial Competencies:

The competencies which are considered to be important for staff with managerial or supervisory responsibility with sizeable budget to manage, which includes directors and senior posts.

Some managerial competencies could be more relevant for specific fields; however they are applied in the organization. These competencies include:

- 1) Team leadership
- 2) Change management
- 3) Analysis and decision-making.
- 4) Interpersonal sensitivity.

Technical/ Functional Competencies:

Some specific competencies which are taken into consideration to perform any job in the organisation within a defined technical or functional area of work. Those competencies are as follows:

- 1) Industrial process sectors.
- 2) Finance and administration
- 3) Human resource management and environmental management.

Generic Competencies:

Competencies which are considered essential for all staff, regardless of their function or level include:

- 1) Communication programme execution.
- 2) Processing tools.
- 3) Business awareness.
- 4) Achievement and motivation.

STEPS INVOLVED FOR SUCCESSFUL ASSESSMENT CENTRE:

The assessment centre should be very clear about the objectives. They should have a proper planning and organising of all the departments which are involved with them for two or three days.

The assessor should look for different competencies which are being evaluated in the assessment centre.

When the assessor is assessing the candidates working environment is taken into consideration.

The assessment centres should be well known for their good and different variety of exercise so that the candidates feel motivated.

The vital step involved for successful assessment centre is giving feedback to everybody. Successful as well as those candidates who did not get selected.

MAIN ELEMENTS OF ASSEMENTS CENTERS:

Elements of assessment centres are used in anglicising and zeroing in on relevant behaviours to be assessed and evaluated. The assessment centre use different exercises and techniques to select or assess the candidates. The assessor carefully examines the candidates while the candidates are doing exercises, on the bases of performance the candidate which has potential or capable for the job they got selected. The assessors who are selected for conducting interview they are trained, the assessor must be external of the organisation or the organisation needs to hire them or it should be from organisation itself like the HR managers. The assessor observes the candidates and records the observed behaviour of the participants. The assessment centre does job analyses before conducting interviews. There are seven important element of the assessment centre:

PRESENTATION:

In the interview process this is the most important exercise because the assessor or the management team will assess the candidates, in this

exercise the candidate gets a topic and they have to prepare that topic in specific time and that topics are highly job specific. The candidate's shows their communication skills, problem solving skills, and confidence level, how they interact with the assessor.

GROUP INTERVIEWS:

The purpose of the group interview in the assessment centre exercises is to observe candidate's interpersonal skills and personality when he or she is working with other people in a group. After the group interview, the assessors reduced the number of candidates and one-on-one interview is set up. The important employers working in organisation can check the candidate's interactions with other people. In the group interview the employees give the candidate's a task to solve hypothetical problems in order to work in a group.

3) IN-TRAY EXERCISES:

In this kind of exercises the employers involves the candidates in some paperwork from the role in question and asking them to deal with it. The in-tray exercise items will be specifically designed to measure job skills such as: ability to organise and prioritize work; analytically skills, written communication skills, and their delegation. In-tray exercise are the most vital components of assessment centres, not only because of variety of skills, attitudes and knowledge can be judged but because this exercise also has considerable 'face validity'. In this way the candidate can see how it relates to the job they are applying for and therefore they tend to take it seriously.

4) ROLE-PLAYS:

Role play is a type of assessment centre exercise which offers a chance to place candidates in the kind of situation. In role play the candidates get the role of employee who has to resolve the problems of the customer. In this exercise the management team assess the candidates who have problem solving skills and see that how they communicate in that situation and how they can handle. The assessor usually plays the role of the customer and the candidates play the role of the employee.

5) PSYCHOMETRIC EXERCISE:

Psychometric test assess the ability and personality test, the assessment centre hire the professional assessor it is expensive. The external assessor are qualified, they can manage the recruitment process, interpret results and give feedback to the candidates so they can know about their strength and their weakness. The two types of psychometric tests:

ABILITY TEST:

The rough ability test, it can be checked that and purified the ability of the employees by assessment centres. It is also helpful to check the skills and ability for the vacancy. Ability testing is a very common and effective selection tool, particularly for identifying unsuitable candidates.

PERSONALITY TEST:

The personality assessment provides the evidences and direct selection process. It also highlights the area where candidate can work. Personality assessment also provides the opportunity to glimpse in the candidates personality during the interview. Personal questionnaire is important to

provide feedback for candidates as well as it also helps to understand the personal profile of the candidate. The feedback session is the best idea for decision making process for any position. Personality test remains contentious but is widely used in United Kingdom.

GROUP EXERCISE:

Interpersonal competency is usually tested by means of variety of group exercises that a group of four or five candidates carry out together. The aim in group exercise is to allow assessors to observe how each candidate behaves in relation to the others. Here the leadership qualities are anglicised and the negotiating skills of the candidates. Some assessment centres give groups some task to complete, which include management games more commonly used for developmental purposes.

EVALUATIONS OF ASSESSMENT CENTRES:

The selection and decision for hiring and promotion of the employees can be made by evaluation of assessment centre. Assessment centres also identify the training and development according to requirements and needs of vacancies or positions. The most essential characteristic of assessment centre is to evaluate participants potential and management skills. The emphasis is to identity the selection and promotion decisions of participants are on the basis of essential job performance dimensions. Deficiencies on critical job dimensions of participants can be anglicised by using training and development purposes. The feedback and employee development suggestions that result from an assessment form the basis for training programs that are designed to correct performance problems. In an

organisation assessment centers can serve as needs assessment programs that identify employee development and hiring needs.

ASSESSORS:

In the assessment centers the role of an assessor is very vital. The assessors are given their own briefing packs. These packs contain description of the exercise and a list of the behaviors or answers that they should be looking for. Organisation usually recruit trained additional assessors if required for selection process, however trained internal assessors are used from the centre. This comprises a combination of HR specialists with experience in assessment techniques and line managers.

CANDIDATES:

Here the candidates are also presented with the briefing pack which contains the objectives of task and any information required to complete it. In each exercise, candidates are rated independently by two or more assessors, using behavioral scales for each competency being assessed.

TEST VALIDITY:

ADVANTAGES OF ASSESSMENT CENTERS:

The most important advantage of an assessment is their flexibility. They are not time-restricted as interviews.

The data which is collected by the assessment center helps them to recruit the right candidates for the right position; by this process the reliability and validity of the selection decision is improved. The assessment centers which

are designed well provide evidence of the most valid method of predicting a candidate's performance in a job. The way in which the assessment center collects data is the most fair and objective to make recruitment decision.

Assessment center improves planning and administration. Now a day's many organisation choose assessment center for recruiting large number of candidates because to avoid juggling interviews and managing the recruitment process.

Assessment centers apply these for recruitment such as graduate recruitment, training scheme intakes.

The nature of the assessment centre also allows organizations to get closer to the selection process by observing how candidates perform the sort of tasks actually found in the role for which they are being assessed. These sorts of 'real life' exercises can provide a good indicator of a candidate's probable future performance.

LIMITATIONS OF ASSESSMENT CENTERS:

An effective centre requires a considerable investment in time and resources-the design process alone can take many months.

Many organizations already have detailed job descriptions and competency frameworks in place, simplifying this part of the design process.

Assessment centers are expensive to run but appear to be rated highly by employers and candidates alike. Aside from psychometrics test and

interviews, candidates can expect to undertake in-tray exercises, role-plays and group activities, as well as being required to make presentations.

Care should be taken when using high-validity selection methods to ensure that they operate fairly and are free of bias against any particular group of candidates.

CONCLUSION:

<http://www.howto.co>.

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