

ASSESSMENT CENTER

Definition

An Assessment Center (AC) is a comprehensive, systematic procedure in which

- the efforts of several candidates
- are observed and evaluated
- at the same time
- by several experts
- with the help of multiple assessment techniques
- according to specific criteria
- for various purposes

By Mag. Brigitte Heffeter, AC

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The candidates

- get to know about their strengths and weaknesses
- get information about possibilities how to improve their personality

The assessors

- observe
- judge the candidates

The moderator

- designs the AC
- trains the assessors
- organizes and presents

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Purposes

- AC as a *selection and evaluation* instrument for future management positions
- AC as a *training* instrument for the candidates and their assessors
- AC as an instrument to assist and achieve the development of a specific *organizational identity*

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Selection and evaluation

4 information for personnel management and personnel development

4 selection of potential managers

4 building a cadre of top managers

4 basic information for various decisions such as selection, training, rotation...

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Development

ê for candidates:
promotion and development of staff

ê for line managers:
awareness of personnel management tasks
transparency of appraisal criteria
development of ability in giving feedback

ê for assessors:
awareness of personal qualifications and abilities

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Organizational development

→increasing social competences of managers who have been assessors

→change in managers' attitudes towards staff and organizational influence on staff

→knowledge about training needs

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Methods for finding profile criteria

- interviews, expert opinions
- observations
- CIT (Critical Incident Technique)
- Rep-Test (Role Construct Repertory Test)

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Quality/ personality profile

! definition of position/ job

! main tasks

! hierarchical position

! demands

- physically

- mentally

- socially

! key qualifications

- competences as an expert

- in social affairs

- self-competence

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Exercises and simulations (examples)

- self-presentation
- presentation
- group discussion
- case study
- conceptual tasks
- appraisal interview
- dispute
- role play
- in-basket task
- tests
- ...

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Observation sheet

↳ purpose: helps the assessor to structure and record his observations, opinions, ideas, ...

↳ structure:

- one observation sheet for each exercise
- name of exercise
- name of candidate
- 5-7 dimensions
- explanation text and examples of behavior for each dimension
- space for rating
- space for additional observations

By Mag. Brigitte Heffeter, AC

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Observing vs. judging

Observations *during* exercises,
judgment *after* exercises!

An observation is each perception that can be
a seen
a smelled
a heard
a touched

Judgments are interpretations based on the assessor's observations.

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Errors of observation

- First impression
- Stereotypes (“logical” mistakes)
- Tendency (towards the middle, strictness, extremes,...)
- Self-fulfilling prophecy
- Similarity
- “Halo” effect
- Primacy and recency effect
- Bias (because of hierarchy, attractiveness, closeness,...)
- ...

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Report of AC results

(given by the assessors)

- immediately after each exercise (= *consensus meeting!*)
- comprehensive report after the AC is completed

Feedback

(given by the moderator)

- information about strengths and weaknesses
- recommendations regarding the management potential and development needs

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“Problem zones”

- expensive
- time consuming
- involvement of many people
- often not accepted
- no extern assessors
- exercises do not mirror reality
- assessors are future line managers
- ...

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An AC will be successful and effective if it is:

- specific
- with a well known purpose
- accepted
- transparent
- following rules
- with well trained assessors
- differing observation from judgment
- simulating the reality in various exercises
- ...

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Characteristics

- face validity
- job relatedness
- multiple assessment techniques
- group of assessors

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Persons involved in an AC:

- candidates
- assessors
- moderator

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