ASSESSMENT CENTER METHODOLOGY

WITHIN THE

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

20 June 1979

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SUBJECT: Assessment Center Methodology within the
                  Central Intelligence Agency

I. Introduction

The comments which follow are in response to your request both for documentation of the recent history of Assessment Center (AC) methodology within the Central Intelligence Agency as well as for first-hand perspectives on the implications of the events cited in the chronolog. The comments encompass: a brief background on AC methodology; a synopsis of AC activities in the Agency; and perspectives on the past, present and possible future of AC methodology in the Agency.

II. Origins of AC Methodology

A. Traditional Selection Procedures

Practical applications of the scientific study of individual differences (pioneered by the French psychometrician, Binet, within his nation's educational system) were quickly seized and improved upon by the United States Military at the onset of World War I. It was American know-how which built

upon this base and developed the Army's "Alpha" and "Beta"
tests, so successfully used during World War I for screening
and placement of military volunteers and draftees. These
beginnings led to the Army General Classification Test
(AGCT), the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) and
finally, the Army Classification Battery (ACB). The tradi-
tion of measuring single traits (learning ability, mechanical
ability, etc.) was firmly engrained in the American personnel
evaluation style and particularly within the American military
tradition at the time of the outbreak of World War II.
Thus, it is not surprising that elements of this tradition
influenced the initial pre-screening activities of the
Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

B. <u>OSS Needs and Experiences</u>

In late 1943, with OSS hardly one year old, it had
become painfully clear that the organization faced relatively
unique selection problems ... the problems of selecting
individuals "best qualified" for assignments for which the
specific demands were either totally unknown or were generated
out of the fabric of arm-chair speculations. Translation of
these shakily defined job specifications into qualifications
lists was not, at that time, handled either by professionals
in the field of selection nor was there any uniform selection
processing system in existence. Later, it was to be formally
noted (OSS Assessment Staff, 1948) that during October, 1943,
in a morning executive meeting with General Donovan, the idea

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of forming a separate selection staff was proposed and was positively received by all the involved staffs (specifically, Recruiting, Planning and the Schools and Training Branch). Before the end of November 1943, the nucleus of an Assessment Staff was formed. (The lineal descendant of that Staff remains with the Agency today as the Psychological Services Staff, Office of Medical Services). Operation of the 3-day selection program began before the end of 1943 at the Schools and Training Branch site ... the former Willard family (owners of the Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C.) country estate in northern Virginia ... referred to as Station "S". ("S" was synonymous for "Secret".) By war's end, 5,391 candidates had been processed through Station "S" and Station "W" (the latter was a second selection base opened after Station "S" and which employed a 1-day selection program.)

Not the least among the catalysts which pushed OSS into action in developing a systematized selection program was a "behind-the-lines" operation which not only failed in its objectives but also resulted in considerable loss of life to the "team" dispatched on the mission. Dr. Donald W. MacKinnon, a psychologist who joined the Assessment Staff during its second month of operation (and who rose to Chief of the Station "S" Staff, remaining in that position to the end of the war), has indicated* that an adapted version of the

(* personal conversation with Dr. MacKinnon, May 1974, West Point, New York, International Congress on Assessment Center Methodology)

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unfortunate mission formed the basis of the plot for the movie "The Dirty Dozen." The selection of candidates for this particularly disastrous OSS operation singled out persons associated with Murder Incorporated. The rationale for selection was simply: "It takes a dirty man to do a dirty job"! (The operation involved behind-the lines assassinations of high-ranking military officers. With failure of the operation and General Donovan's angry discovery of the selection criteria used in structuring the assigned team, the several staffs involved were provided clear impetus to professionalize and systematize selection processing for the future. Unfortunately, the resolve forged out of the OSS experience was forgotten. Some 17 years later, the Agency found itself once more involved with the "Dirty Job--Dirty Man" equation--again with negative consequences for the Agency.*

C. Principles of OSS AC Methodology

The fact that the criterion data (the factual information about specific demands for each and every possible assignment/mission) were inaccessible coupled with the fact that, at time of evaluation, no candidate was under consideration for a pre-determined assignment combined to reshape the thinking of the Assessment Staff regarding feasible approaches. The Staff concluded that their efforts would be best spent in

(* "Alleged Assasination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders," Interim Report of the Church Committee dated 20 November 1975, pages 74-86)

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attempting: to describe the competencies of the individual

candidate in as complete a manner as possible yet in terms of

dimensions of behavior having relevance to all possible

assignments; and to place particular emphasis upon the

assets of the individual candidate as these suggested potential

for effective functioning under specified conditions.

In its effort to describe the personality of the indi-

vidual candidate as a totality, the Staff identified seven

(7) major Factors or Variables and three (3) special Factors

which were combined into the following General Qualifications

List for all OSS men and women candidates:

1. Motivation for the Assignment
2. Energy and Initiative
3. Effective Intelligence
4. Emotional Stability
5. Social Relations
6. Leadership
7. Security (caution/discretion)
8. Physical Ability
9. Observing and Reporting Skills
10. Propaganda Skills

With the Factors to be measured thus defined, the Staff

set as its next task the development of assessment procedures

designed to elicit the Factors chosen. Two constraints were

applied in developing the assessment procedures and these

represented a true breakthrough in the area of personnel

evaluations. Further, these constraints have become the

cornerstones for every successful Assessment Center Methodology

in existence today. The first constraint was that each

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factor would be measured by several distinct assessment procedures. The second constraint was that each assessment procedure would be designed to sample the Factors under conditions as similar to the real-life criterion situation as possible (i.e., the use of simulations). An average of six (6) differert simulations/tasks were used for each of the ten (10) Factors and these included individual as well as group tasks. (Psychometric test devices used along with the simulations were included in the average of six measures per Factor.)

Scoring and analysis of psychometric measures proceeded along standard lines. Performances in the simulations were evaluated by trained observers (all professionals in the behavioral sciences), usually three in number. Integration of all the data gathered took place in an evaluation session attended by all observers after close of the 3-day evaluation program. After presentation of all observers' comments, consensus among observers was reached via application of a 6-point rating scale indicating the strength of each of the ten Factors in each individual case. Finally, the same 6-point scale was applied in defining an overall Factor in each individual case which was referred to as "Job Fitness."

D. **AC Methodology Today**

After one abortive attempt to translate the OSS techniques into a practical tool for selection of sales

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personnel within the structure of Macy's in 1948, nothing
further was heard of the methodology until in 1956,
Dr. Douglas W. Bray applied the techniques, at first in an
experimental program, for identifying managerial potential
among employees within AT&T. Dr. Bray saw particular
utility in applications of the techniques to the problem of
managerial selection because: in its initial stages the
technique makes no assumptions about the "ideal" pattern of
assets among managerial candidates; and, it permits observers
to develop perspectives about the ways in which candidates
are likely to handle the problems of "new" job demands
(demands of management) by studying candidates' actual
handling of realistic simulations of these "new" demands.
It was perhaps for this latter reason that Dr. Bray saw AC
methodology as particularly appropriate for individuals on
the verge of moving into first line management positions.
The AC metholology of Dr. Bray (in fact, of all AC activities
today) has remained, point for point, true to the OSS prototype
with but one exception. Today, the observers used during
the operation of an AC are typically experienced, knowledgeable
employees who are specifically trained in the observational
techniques and operational procedures of their organization's
AC. In AC's designed for identification of managerial
potential, the observers are usually former incumbents of

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the positions against which the candidates are being

measured ... former incumbents now one or two steps above the

position under study. The chronology which follows

documents the efforts made in introducing the AT&T adapta-

tion of AC Methodology to this agency.

III. <u>Chronolog of AC Methodology in the Agency</u>

                                                   (b)(3)

<u>TIME FRAME</u>   <u>ACTIVITY</u>

A. 1968   [   ] (PSS)   (b)(3)
**attended a Seminar in which Dr. Bray (of AT&T)
reported on his then current findings of AC
results and performance of managers
approaching mid-career with AT&T.**

B. 1968   [   ]**and Mooney developed a series**   (b)(3)
**of AC tasks which were employed in the
evaluation of on-board Career Trainees.
(Findings indicated the techniques were
particularly useful in estimating
"career stability.")**

C. 1974   **The Behavioral and Social Sciences
Committee of OMS was queried by the then
DD/M&S: "What would you recommend as an
approach to improving overall efficiency
of Agency management function"? Using
elements of a paper produced by
Dr. Mooney ("Assessment Centers: Whys
and Wherefores")(Attachment A),
Dr. Tietjen (D/MS) proposed the concept
of using AC's for identification of
managerial potential.**

D. 1974   Contacts/briefings with D/OS (H. Osborn)
and D/OL (J. Blake) regarding AC metho-
dology ... no interest.

E. 1974   Contact/briefing with D/OJCS (H. Fitzwater).
Agreement reached on Management Develop-
ment Center within OJCS focussed on
potential for functioning as Branch Chief
(GS-13 level) within Office.
(DD/M&S, H. Brownman, actively supported
D/OJCS in deciding to use AC).

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F. 1974   Contact/briefing with DDI (Dr. E. Proctor)
and ADDI (P. Walsh) ... no interest.

G. 1975   Two operations of OJCS Management Develop- (b)(3)
ment Center. ____ Observer/Managers trained;
____ candidates evaluated with separate (b)(3)
developmental profiles generated for each.

H. 1975   Contact/briefing with _____ (b)(3)
Agreement reached on Assessment Center
focussed on identification of potential
for functioning within GS-12 level positions
viz., Chief of Base, Chief of Operations
and Chief of Engineering.

I. 1976   Management Development Center of ODP
(formerly OJCS) cancelled by D/ODP _____ . (b)(3)
Reason for cancellation was negative impact
on Office of drain of critical manpower
resources needed to operate Center (basically,
3 Observer/Managers per Center). Mr. _____ (b)(3)
recommends DDA consider Directorate-wide AC
for selection of managers.

J. 1976   Two operations of OC AC. ____ Observer/ (b)(3)
Managers trained; ____ candidates evaluated (b)(3)
with separate evaluation reports produced for
each.

K. 1977   Contact/briefing of R̲ Career Service Board
(S&T) on uses of AC's. Board recommends
consideration of AC applications within FBIS.

L. 1977   Contact/briefing of D/FBIS on possible use
of AC's. Paper prepared and forwarded to FBIS
detailing job analyses required before design
of Center. (No response/reply was ever
received from FBIS.)

M. 1977   Request from DD/OC _____ for design (b)(3)
of new AC focussed upon evaluation of poten-
tial for functioning at GS-14 level under
the so-called "Panel O."

N. 1977   Request for design of multi-focus, Directorate-
wide AC for use in DDA Upward Mobility Program
... Project AIM under DDA/EEOO (C. Jones).

O. 1977   Four operations of "Panel O" Center.   (b)(3)
                Observer/Managers trained; [   ] candi-   (b)(3)
                dates evaluated with separate evaluation
                reports prepared for each.   (b)(3)

P. 1977   Four operations of Project AIM Center.
                [   ] Observer/Managers trained; [   ]   (b)(3)
                candidates evaluated with separate evalua-
                tion reports prepared for each.

Q. 1978   Cancellation of GS-12 and GS-14 ("Panel O")
                level Centers by OC. Reason for cancella-
                tion was negative impact on Office of drain
                of critical manpower resources needed to
                operate Centers (basically, 3 observer/
                managers per Center). Discussion of possible
                Center for GS-09 trainees. No commitments.

R. 1978   Two operations of Project AIM Centers.
                [   ] candidates evaluated with separate   (b)(3)
                evaluation reports prepared for each.

S. 1979   One operation of Project AIM Center during
                May 1979; [   ] candidates evaluated with   (b)(3)
                separate evaluation reports for each.

Not detailed here are the regular presentations on the

topic of AC Methodology offered by the undersigned to partici-

pants in every running of the OTR sponsored "Management Seminar"

and "Senior Seminar" from late 1975 through early 1978. No

effective inquiries regarding AC Methodology ever emerged from

these didactic efforts so that they were terminated. Other

formal didactic channels employed include an article, on area

by the undersigned which was published in the April 1978 edition

of the DDA Exchange (Attachment B).

At least as critical as a chronolog of Agency AC activities

is a listing of what AC Methodology has uncovered regarding the

behavioral dimensions determined to be critical for success

across the range of positions studied and analyzed.

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These dimensions are presented below in Section IV (with detailed definition of the dimensions provided in attachment C).

IV. Listing of Dimensions Identified and Measured

	ODP (GS-13) DIMENSIONS	OC (GS-12) DIMENSIONS	OC (GS-14) DIMENSIONS	PROJECT AIM DIMENSIONS
A.	AWARENESS OF DETAIL			(A.)
B.				CAREER AMBITION
C.	CLARITY OF ORAL COMMUNICATION		(C.)	(C.)
D.	CLARITY OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION	(D.)	(D.)	(D.)
E.		CREATIVITY		
F.	DECISIVENESS		(F.)	
G.	DELEGATION	(G.)	(G.)	
H.			DEVELOPMENT OF SUBORDINATES	
I.	EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION		(I.)	
J.	ENERGY	(J.)	(J.)	(J.)
K.	FACILITATES GROUP PROCESSES		(K.)	(K.)
L.	FLEXIBILITY		(L.)	(L.)
M.	FORESIGHT*			
N.		IMPACT		
O.			INITIATIVE	
P.		LEADERSHIP	(P.)	
Q.	LISTENING ABILITY			

(*Dimension M., FORESIGHT: appears only in the ODP Center. Was later more appropriately labelled "PLANNING" ability and collapsed into X., PLANNING AND ORGANIZING.)

IV. <u>Listing of Dimensions Identified and Measured</u> (continued)

ODP (GS-13) DIMENSIONS	OC (GS-12) DIMENSIONS	OC (GS-14) DIMENSIONS	PROJECT AIM DIMENSIONS
R.	MANAGEMENT CONTROL		
S.			MOTIVATION FOR WORK
T. ORGANIZATIONAL** ABILITY (as a manager)			
U. ORGANIZATIONAL** ABILITY (as a person)			
V. ..PERCEPTIVITY AND SENSITIVITY (regarding people)	(V.)	(V.)	
W. PERSUASIVENESS			
X.	PLANNING AND ORGANIZING	(X.)	(X.)
Y.		PROBLEM ANALYSIS AND JUDGMENT	
Z.		RISK-TAKING	
AA.			SOCIAL ADAPTABILITY
BB. STRESS TOLERANCE	(BB.)		
CC. TENACITY			

(**Dimensions T. & U., ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITY "as a manager/as a person" appear only in the ODP Center. Were later collapsed into the single dimension labelled "PLANNING AND ORGANIZING" ability ... referencing only the domain of managerial behaviors and characteristics..)

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V. Commentary on Agency AC Activities to Date

Though not immediately obvious, there has been an evolution in AC design characteristics from the early ODP Center to the present. In the case of the ODP Center, the design of the Center was focussed upon behavioral dimensions identified as critical for success within one specific position title, namely the position of Branch Chief. The next Center (The OC GS-12 Center) was designed to sample behavioral dimensions identified as critical for success within three distinct but related positions (Chief of Base, Chief of Operations, Chief of Engineering). Next came the Project AIM Center designed to sample behavioral dimensions which, in varying combinations, were identified as critical for success across some eight or nine distinct and unrelated positions. Finally, the OC GS-14 Center was designed to sample behavioral dimensions identified as critical to success at senior managerial levels within the Office, regardless of position title.

Common to all Centers has been the painstaking Job Analysis phase with subsequent identification and definition of behavior dimensions regarded as critical for success. In addition, every Center has retained the goal of presenting management with a reliable "profile" for each individual, describing each person's assets and deficiencies in terms which are relevant to the job(s) under consideration. Thus, no individual is presented as having "Passed" or "Failed"

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the Center. Each person is presented according to his/her unique pattern of capabilities apart from any real or implied "cutoff score" system. In this fashion, AC's do not provide decision-makers with a cut-and-dried decision regarding the person. Rather AC's supply job relevant data organized in such a fashion as to permit better understanding of the employee in question as well as to permit comparisons among several employees on behavioral dimensions critical to success in the position under consideration.

The evolution in the design of Agency Centers reflects the impact of growing experience with the Methodology. In other words, the range of positions included within a Center increased both in scope as well as level following the principle of: "...proceeding from the better known to the less well known...." Each successive Center Design Phase used the behavioral dimension data of previous Centers for purifying and refining definitions of new dimensions. Proceeding in this fashion, Agency AC's avoided the pitfalls which have beset other Centers namely, developing definitions of behavioral dimensions so broad in nature that any number of performance tasks in a Center might be argued as suitable measurement techniques. For example, with a dimension called LEADERSHIP defined as: "effectively directs others," what is an adequate behavior sample? It may be sufficient to infer LEADERSHIP from the manner in which a person responds to

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paper-and-pencil exercises such as the classic In-Basket
Task or it may be sufficient to study the person's behavior
in a group situation where he/she has the opportunity to
influence the group. Perhaps both samples of behavior are
necessary...and one type of behavior should be given greater
weight than the other in arriving at an overall estimate of
LEADERSHIP. A detailed job-analysis during the Center
Design Phase can lead to a more precise definition of LEADERSHIP
such as: "is effective in getting his/her ideas accepted by
others; is effective in guiding a group or an individual
toward accomplishment of required tasks." (This is the
actual definition of the dimension of LEADERSHIP which
emerged from the OC Center Design Phase.) In this instance,
it is clear that the behaviors to be evaluated must be
sampled in both a group as well as a one-to-one situation
and must involve a focus upon a task assigned to the person
which he/she accepts as a task to be accomplished.

The behavioral dimensions thus far identified through
the several Center job analysis phases, exhibit interesting
communalities. For example, two of the dimensions
(D., CLARITY OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION and J., ENERGY) surface
as critical across all positions analyzed. (If one combines
dimensions M., T. and U. of the ODP Center into dimension X.,
PLANNING and ORGANIZING, there are actually three dimensions
common to all positions analyzed.)

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Considering only the managerial positions studied, two

dimensions emerge as common viz., G., DELEGATION and V.,

PERCEPTIVITY and SENSITIVITY.

At the same time, behavioral dimensions unique to each

Center have been identified. For the ODP Center: AWARENESS

OF DETAIL, LISTENING ABILITY, PERSUASIVENESS AND TENACITY.

For the OC (GS-12) Center: CREATIVITY, IMPACT and MANAGEMENT

CONTROL. For the OC (GS-14) Center: DEVELOPMENT OF SUBORDINATES,

INITIATIVE, PROBLEM ANALYSIS AND JUDGMENT and RISKTAKING.

For the Project AIM Center: CAREER AMBITION, MOTIVATION FOR

WORK and SOCIAL ADAPTABILITY.

Do the present 26 dimensions "capture" the essence of

the behavioral dimenions underlying most Agency positions?

Probably not! Job analysis data gathered in support of the

OC (GS-14) Center suggested that several unique behavioral

dimensions are associated with successful functioning

within OC (GS-14) positions in the Overseas environment as

opposed to the Headquarters environment. (Unfortunately,

the small numbers of respondents vis-a-vis the Overseas

environment did not permit reliable definition of relevant

dimensions.)

Thus, even with positions considered near-identical,

distinctions between overseas and headquarters were accom-

panied by variations in behavioral demands. Furthermore,

there exist critical contextual variations even within

identically labelled dimensions when these dimensions are

applied to positions at different levels within an organization. For example, dimension D., CLARITY OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION was both measured and evaluated for Project AIM candidates in a context considerably different from that for OC Center candidates or ODP candidates. In other words, even a "common" dimension may require AC methodologies unique to the job behavior context within which the dimension is being studied. Progress has been made toward the goal of developing a "catalog" of behavioral dimensions underlying Agency position titles but obviously much remains to be done.

VI. <u>Criticality of Job Analysis to AC Validity</u>.

The foregoing Agency AC experience underlines the fact that identically named position titles cannot be assumed to represent identical behavioral demands upon incumbents unless and until behavioral job analyses actually establish similarity. Also, identically named behavioral dimensions cannot be assumed to be validly measured by one and the same AC performance task unless and until behavioral job analyses establish the similarity of job demands.

Is it then impossible to design an effective AC to measure potential for successful functioning in positions generically and simply defined as, for example, first line management or middle-management or executive level management? The answer is that it is not impossible provided only that one is committed to carry out the time-consuming, laborious

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but necessary behavioral analysis of the demands of all positions to be included within the AC.

"Arm-chair" analyses do not suffice. Beginning in 1973, the Civil Service Commission in collaboration with the Office of Management and Budget commissioned the design of an AC to identify "executive-generalist potential"(within the Federal Service) as an element for selection into the Federal Executive Development Program (FEDP) ... a program intended to foster development of executive potential among highly-promising Federal Employees at the GS-15 level. Dimensions of behavior to be measured were identified via "arm-chair" rather than empirical methodology. In all, 12 dimensions of behavior were determined to be critical for successful executive-level functioning within the Federal bureaucracy. Early published research findings underlined the fact that the FEDP AC findings did significantly influence the final decisions regarding acceptance into the program.* Recently published follow on research, however, reveals that only <u>one</u> of the "arm-chair" dimensions correlates significantly with on-the-job ratings of performance assigned to the selectees. In addition, it has been determined that 7 of the 12 dimensions originally measured in the FEDP Center actually represent two distinct types of on-the-job behaviors each for a total of 14 job-related behaviors. It is not

(*"An Overview of the Federal Executive Development Program II Assessment Center," Civil Service Commission, August 1976 (PB 261-705))

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surprising that none of these 7 FEDP Center measures have proved predictive of any of the 14 on-the-job performance ratings. Few, if any, of the FEDP Center tasks actually bore any similarity to the real-life, on-the-job performance tasks which the FEDP selectees now face.

More will be added later (Section 9.) about the Job Analysis Phase of AC development. For now, it should be pointed out that job analysis is not a unique characteristic of the AC methodology. In point of fact, it should be a prelude to any attempt to employ behavioral measures (whether these be AC performance tasks or psychometric devices) to predict on-the-job performance. The job analysis data which do exist within the Agency are of the type generated by Position Management and Compensation Division (PMCD) of the Office of Personnel. While PMCD data are of important use in projecting pay-scales against job responsibilities, the data are couched in such generalities that they cannot be used to support efforts such as AC task design. Thus, the overall perspective regarding adequate job analysis data (adequate for behavioral science use) within the Agency is hardly promising. A potential side-benefit of the year-long DCI Fellowship Project of the undersigned may be the opportunity to establish a base-line of behavioral data regarding managerial functions at the executive level within the Agency. Such a side-benefit would represent an important advance not just for AC methodology

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but for all behavioral science efforts directed toward.,

early identification of employee potential for operating

effectively in positions beyond present incumbency levels.

VII. AC Activities of Other Federal Agencies

TIME FRAME	ORGANIZATION	TYPE(S) OF CENTER(S)
A. 1969*.	Internal Revenue Service	Identification of potential for first-level Supervisor.
B. 1973*	Civil Service Commission & Office of Management and Budget	Identification of executive-generalist potential for selection into the Federal Executive Development Program.
C. 1973*	Federal Aviation Administration	Three separate Centers for identification of supervisory, middle-management and senior management potential.
D. 1973*	Social Security Administration	Center to select candidates for 2-year Management Intern Program; Center to identify developmental needs of upper-middle managers who are enrolled in SSA's Executive Fellow Program.
E. 1974*	Housing and Urban Development	Identification of potential for first-level supervisory positions.
F. (?)*	Department of Army	A succession of Center designs to identify leadership potential among commissioned officers.
G. 1977*	Federal Bureau of Investigation	By regulation, all candidates for first-line supervisor are evaluated in an AC designed to assess supervisory potential. Plans are underway for a second Center to identify potential for functioning at executive levels.

(* Centers for identification of supervisory/managerial/execu-
tive potential.)

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VII. AC Activities of Other Federal Agencies (continued)

TIME FRAME	ORGANIZATION	TYPE(S) OF CENTER(S)
H. (?)**	Department of Air Force	Center to identify scientist potential for contributing to the mission of an R&D Command.
I. 1973**	Law Enforcement Assistance Administration	A series of Centers funded by LEAA for use by regional and local agencies in selection of sergeants, captains and detectives.
J. 1975**	Bureau of Engraving and Printing	Center for the selection of candidates in the Bureau's Upward Mobility Program.
K. 1977**	Equal Employment Opportunity. Commission	Center for selection of candidates for specialized staff assignments.
L. 1979**	Department of State	Center (under development) for selection of candidates for Foreign Service Officer.

The foregoing list is not to be considered inclusive of all AC activities of other Federal agencies. The list has been derived from a review of printed materials regarding AC's made available by the named agencies as well as from personal information obtained by the undersigned in contacts with private and federal groups.

VIII. Extensions of AC Methodology

Inasmuch as the core element of AC's is behavior known to be associated with successful performance within a defined realm of work activities, the extended applications of AC's

(** Centers for identification of potential for specialist positions.)

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have found great acceptance among certifying and licensing
agencies. Today, there exist AC's for certifying competencies
within the field of Education. (The State of Wisconsin will
accept AC findings in lieu of grade transcripts for accrediting
teachers within the State.) Within the State of New York,
the State Psychological Association requires AC findings for
purposes of licensing Psychologists for practice within the
state. The American Psychological Association is presently
evaluating the design of an AC which the Association hopes
to use in awarding the "Diplomate" in Psychology ... a
certification of professional excellence at the National
level. Exploratory efforts are underway by several medical
and medical-related organizations regarding the utility of
Centers for evaluating candidates for licensing within
certain medical specialties and within the general fields of
pharmacology and nursing.

IX. Bases for the Growth of AC Applications

With the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
proscriptions regarding the necessary characteristics of selec-
tion techniques, the simplicity of AC methodology is its v
appeal. Current EEOC criteria require "Content Validity" of
the selection methodology. In other words, the behaviors
measured by the selection processing techniques must be
demonstrably similar in content to the behaviors demanded by
the position for which the person is being considered. Since

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all Centers are preceded by a job analysis phase and since Center performance tasks include elements of actual job behaviors, AC's are, "de facto," in compliance with the EEOC defined criteria. An incidental benefit of the close relationship between actual job behaviors and AC performance demands is the aspect of "Face Validity." In other words, AC candidates, perceiving the obvious relationship between Center and job behaviors, tend to be both less resistant to as well as to be more positively oriented towards evaluation via AC methodology.

Of great importance are the EEOC criteria regarding possibilities of "adverse impact" associated with selection procedures. An exhaustive research effort conducted within the Michigan Bell Telephone System of AT&T* has established that, when the <u>Standards for Assessment Center Operations</u>** are followed, there exists no evidence to support the contention that AC results exhibit adverse impact vis-a-vis Black or Female Minority Group members. While presumption (grounded in past differential validity research) supports AC methodology as free of adverse impact, nevertheless, as the <u>Standards</u> indicate, it is incumbent upon each Center user to maintain adequate documentation of the Center process.

A unique characteristic of AC methodology, enjoyed by no other selection procedure is its inclusion in a consent

(* "Determinants of Assessment Center Ratings for White and Black Females and the Relationship of these Dimensions to Subsequent Performance Effectiveness," Ph.D. Dissertation, Huck, James R., Wayne State University, 1974.)

(** "Applying the Assessment Center Method," Moses, J. L. and Byham, Wm. C., Pergamon Press, New York, 1977. Appendix p. 303 ff.)

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agreement arrived at through the courts between the IIOC and
AT&T in the early 1970s. As the result of a class action
suit brought against AT&T in behalf of 1700 women employees,
claiming discriminatory exclusion from managerial positions,
AT&T was directed by the courts to design and operate Assess-
ment Centers for these complainants in evaluating their
potential for advancement to managerial level positions.
While many other selection procedures struggle to establish
evidence of "fairness", Assessment Center methodology stands
alone as the only court-ordered/EEOC approved selection
procedure in the United States today. The EEOC has itself
used AC Methodology in the selection of candidates for
placement in its 22 District Director positions.

X.   **The Agency and Assessment Centers; An Overview**

   A.   **Potential Uses**

   The original promise of AC Methodology still holds.
Introduced to the Agency as a technique particularly well-
suited (though not limited) to the task of identifying
managerial potential, AC's expand the range of activities of
behavioral scientists to include focus upon the functions
and structure of management within the Agency. Expanding
the role of behavioral scientists in the Agency at a time
when human resources to support such expansion are limited
is made feasible by the key operating characteristics of Centers.

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In other words, while Center Methodology permits expansion
of the behavioral scientists' roles in the Agency, it also
promises to accomplish their current requirements in a more
cost-effective manner. As one example, a well-designed Center
staffed by Observers drawn from either or both the Career
Training Staff and the D Career Service/Career Management
Staff (under the monitorship of one Psychologist) when
operating on a once a week basis, could essentially meet the
annual DDO-applicant evaluation processing requirements for
the Career Training Program. (A fully operational Center can
be anticipated to extend the Psychologist's assessment ser-
vices by a factor of 3 to 4.)

Note the critical phrase "fully operational Center" in
the last sentence above. Only the Project AIM Center has
provided the opportunity to document the behavioral science man-
power savings of Centers. In the May 1979 AIM Center operation,
a well-trained non-psychologist selected and combined the task
elements which constituted the Center, designed the center schedule,
made all the necessary administrative arrangements for the Center,
conducted a "refresher training" course for the Observers,
directed the operation of the Center and conducted the post-
Center Evaluation Session. Only because no specific training
has been provided in the areas of Center Report Writing and
Center Feedback to participants, these two tasks are currently
handled by Psychologists. Given the opportunity to provide

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training in these two task areas, it is anticipated the
Project AIM Center may eventually operate under the direc-
tion of the non-psychologist Center Administrator with a
Psychologist available to the Administrator on an as-needed,
standby basis. The Psychologist, of course, retains the
responsibility regarding continuing validation of the Center
(as detailed in Attachment A., Page 9). AC Methodology is
capable of both meeting (and perhaps even exceeding) current
evaluation requirements while, simultaneously conserving
behavioral science resources for investment/involvement in
developing and offering new services in new areas within the
Agency. (For actual Center "costs," see Appendix D).

B. **Present Situation**

In the instances of the Centers designed to identify
Office-specific managerial potential, it has been Center-
related manpower requirements which have formed the bases
for Center cancellations. Both ODP and OC stated that the
manpower drain (resulting from the use of high-level Office
managers as Center Observers) seriously hampered the operating
efficiency of the respective Offices thus requiring cancellation
of their Centers. (This has not proved a critical problem
with the Project AIM Center since each Observer required is
drawn from a separate DDA Office.) A direct solution in
reducing the manpower drain was proposed to and rejected by

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both ODP and OC during Summer, 1976 namely, Observer Teams.
It was proposed that managers from both Offices be cross-
trained in the two Centers and assigned in Teams to a given
Center so that no single Office would have to "bear the brunt"
of the Center manpower demands.   (Though it was then too
early in the OC Center design phase to consider, it later
became apparent that some melding of the ODP and OC Centers
might have proved feasible ... providing a single Center
staffed by Observers from both Offices and dedicated to
processing candidates from both Offices as co-participants.)
Rejection of the Observer Teams idea rested upon the manage-
ment conviction that Observers drawn from one Career Sub-
group were not sufficiently knowledgeable to be able to produce
valid and useful evaluations of candidates from another Career
Subgroup. In addition, there was important concern over the
implications of permitting Careerists from one Career Sub-
group (as Center Observers) to make input to decisions
affecting the treatment/handling of members of another Career
Subgroup.

The foregoing examples of inter-Career Subgroup stereo-
typing as "not sufficiently knowledgeable about us and our
operations" draws attention to a pragmatic basis for insisting
that Observer manpower be derived from the 'consumer' components
rather than from a behavioral scientist resource pool.

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Career Subgroups look to behavioral scientists for "screening" individuals and perceive themselves as sole resource for "assessing" individuals. Evaluations conducted by trained local managers are more likely to be accepted and acted upon by the Office. However, when the attempt is made (through AC Methodology) to systematize and formalize the Subgroups' assessment activities and to give Subgroups direct control over and responsibility for assessment and its consequences, the responses of Subgroups are not characteristically enthusiastic.

These seemingly conflicted tendencies of Subgroups to endorse sole control of their Centers and yet to insist that they cannot supply the requisite manpower can be better appreciated through considering the operating characteristics of Centers (specifically those Centers designed to foster career development and/or to assess potential for advancement to or within managerial ranks.)

Unlike standard assessment activities and psychometric testing, Assessment Centers are not a "one shot affair" representing a data source coming from somewhere out side the chain-of-command. A Center is very carefully implanted within the very heart of an organization's personnel management policies and practices. In order to merit continuance,

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the Center must not only "feed into" the local personnel system ... it must also be "fed by" the same system. It is typically during the 'implantation' phase that the consumer Office comes face-to-face with short-falls in its local personnel management system. Concrete examples of such "short-falls" have surfaced repeatedly even during the short history of Centers in the Agency.

Faced with the decision whether to permit employees to "volunteer" for a Center or to require employees to be "nominated" by supervisors, one consumer Office opted for supervisor nomination. It was quickly determined that supervisors had never been asked to evaluate employees in terms of their management potential and hence there existed no standardized system for nominating candidates. In another instance, a consumer Office concluded that it would be highly desirable to "track"the progress of employees in their efforts to correct deficiencies surfaced by the Center evaluation. It was felt that important data regarding the individual's career ambition could be gathered by documenting what efforts the individual put forth to increase his/her overall readiness for advancement. However, no formal mechanism existed to accomplish this purpose. (It was proposed that specific goals regarding self-improvement could be included in the person's Letter-of-Instruction ... but the proposal was

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rejected since management felt the LOI should be limited to
"job-related activities".)

Even more critical than the instances cited above was
the situation where a consumer Office found itself unable to
come to grips with the reality implications of the substandard
performer in its Center ... the Center participant whose Center
evaluation reveals major deficiences in all areas deemed cri-
tical for advarcement. While the consumer Office agreed that
such a participant was destined to advance no further in the
Office, it quickly became apparent that the Office possessed
no mechanism for dealing with the participant, for designing
a program to maximize use of the participant's skills at
his/her then current level or, if necessary, for assisting
the participant to transfer to another area of the Agency
where his/her present skills would be in demand.

In essence then, while operation of the Centers themselves
do place important demands upon the manpower resources of the
consumer Office, the total manpower impact of Centers in the
Agency has been to point up additional needs in local
personnel management systems. While it may be regrettable
that ODP and OC chose to cancel their Centers, yet at the
same time, these were prudent decisions. Granted these Offices
found it impossible to support a personnel management system
at their "local" levels which would fully utilize the benefits

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of a Center, far better that the Office cancel the Center than to maintain it as only a screening tool in promotion decisions.

Though the ODP and OC Centers no longer are in operation, residual benefits remain for the consumer Offices. Each now possesses a small cadre of managers whose capacities for evaluating subordinates have (according to the testimony of the managers themselves) been altered and improved. Most importantly, the Offices now possess behaviorally-anchored descriptions/definitions of performance characteristics of successful managers (at given levels within their organizations) which represent the consensus of Office-wide management. Such definitions, if regarded as criteria for advancement into or through managerial levels, can contribute much to the Offices in systematizing and expanding their perspectives in regard to the career potential of their employees.

XI. The Future of Assessment Centers in the Agency

Of the three Centers (one in ODP and two in OC) designed within the Agency as career management/development tools, none are in operation today. The explanations offered at time of cancellation by each of the Offices are identical " ... operation of the Centers places a manpower requirement upon the Office which the Office cannot support while simultaneously maintaining its efficiency in accomplishing its stated missions and goals ...." It is quite accurate to say that

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had the Offices restructured and expanded their respective personnel management systems so as to offer a "full service" system to their employees (while using Center results to the optimum), the Offices would indeed have been incapacitated by the manpower requirements of so doing. Though Offices strive to perpetuate their local practices and controls over employees in their human resource management systems, Offices are not adequately staffed to accomplish this effectively.

In essence, the experience with AC Methodology in the Agency has brought into clear focus the cost of the "trade-offs" involved in the decentralized personnel management system. Only a strong, centralized system integrated with the style, needs and realities of line management is capable of supporting and fully utilizing AC Methodology to the greatest benefits of management, the employee and the Agency. While the term "personnel management system" has been used, the system referenced must not be defined in the restrictive sense of Office of Personnel functions alone. The centralized system described must also include resources for employee training and development (also reaching into the domain of Office of Training functions.) A system of the type described has been proposed ("The CIA Personnel Management System," NAPA Report dated 13 March 1979, pp. 91 ff.) which, at least conceptually, holds promise of avoiding the "shortfalls" of local personnel management systems (particularly the shortfalls in manpower resources.)

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The foregoing reference to the NAPA Team Recommendations is not intended as a self-serving proposal to accomplish "implantation" of AC Methodology in the Agency at any cost. It is, first, an observation that the type of system recommended by the NAPA Team regarding executive development answers the very problems which have proved the bane of existence/continuance of Centers in the Agency thus far. Second, it is an observation (based on experience of the undersigned) that AC Methodology provides a central focus for and a systematic approach to defining the essential elements of any effective personnel management/development program.

Every Center consumer has come away from the experience with a clearer appreciation for: what types of behaviors are demanded by specific managerial positions; what the assets and deficiencies of the present pool of candidates for appointment to those positions are; what steps can be taken now (in a training/development mode) to bring the pool of candidates up to a level more compatible with present (and even future) behavioral demands of specific managerial positions. These same benefits can certainly stand on their own merits in the type of executive development program proposed by the NAPA Team.

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Over and above this fact, since the executive development

program would be starting "de novo", the data collection

mechanisms of AC Methodology represent an invaluable

resource for continual monitoring and evaluation of the

program.

Bernard L. Mooney, Ph.D
20 June 1979

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APPENDICES

A. "Assessment Centers: Whys and Wherefores"
   (paper dated May, 1974).

B. "More About Assessment Centers"
   (DDA Exchange article dated April, 1978).

C. Behavioral Definitions of Agency Assessment
   Center Dimensions

D. Recorded Costs for Office of Communication
   Panel "O" Assessment Center (Fall, 1977).

APPENDIX A

Paper Entitled:

"Assessment Centers: Whys and Wherefores"

May 1974

What is an Assessment Center?

It is a set of procedures, rather than a place...a set of procedures developed jointly by management and behavioral science which are applied by management in identifying managerial potential among employees. Originating within OSS for evaluation of intelligence operations potential, the original concept has been expanded and developed for industrial/business applications, largely through the efforts of psychologists (Drs. Bray and Grant) employed by American Telephone and Telegraph within the Bell System subdivision. Beginning as early as 1956, Bray and Grant, working alongside Bell managers, devised a series of situational, job-related problems which were presented to candidates for advancement into or within the Bell managerial structure. Systematic observations of the candidates' behaviors in the face of these job-related problems were recorded and evaluated as to their efficiency, originality and utility. These behavioral evaluations or ratings have since been studied against the criterion of the given candidates progress through the pro- motional structure of the Bell System.

Reports of the initial findings regarding the success of Assessment Center procedures in predicting future managerial success did not appear in professional literature until Bray and Grant had followed the first Assessment Center candidates

for about 10 years (first formal report of findings appeared

in 1966). The exchange of ideas among behavioral scientists

engaged in industrial/business psychology, of course, far

antedated the Bell System Management Progress report of 1966.

At the present time, for example, organizations such as

Sohio, Sears, Penneys and IBM, all have developed and operate

their own "custom-tailored" Assessment Centers. Conservative

estimates suggest that since 1956, over 100,000 persons have

been processed through Assessment Centers designed specifically

for identification of managerial ability. (These numbers do

not include persons processed through Centers designed to:

(a) identify creative abilities; (b) identify sales potential;

(c) identify candidates for advanced ("war college") military

training by foreign governments. Likewise, these figures do

not include the numbers of "on-board" and "applicant" Career

Trainees processed through the Psychological Services Staff's

(PSS's) assessment center designed to point up: (a) career

directions; (b) long range potential.

How does the Assessment Center work?

It may be helpful to comment first on a comparison of

Assessment Center procedures with traditional behavioral

science (psychological) assessment procedures.

First, the Assessment Center approach places the candidate

into a problem situation in which he must act (behave) so as to

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handle same. Unlike traditional procedures, Assessment Center
procedures are of exceptionally wide bandwidth i.e., the range
of behaviors possible far outstrip the more narrow bandwidth
procedures demanding either solely speed or general intelligence
or verbal facility or eye-hand coordination, etc. The candidate
is placed in a position which demands he display more global
samples of his behavior than do traditional techniques.

Next, the Assessment Center procedures are developed by
behavioral scientists so as to simulate job-situations defined
as "stumbling blocks" or "stepping-stones" to managerial success
by successful managers within the organization concerned. In
other words, after close consultation with management, behavioral
scientists design situational tasks which parallel those both
"par for the course" and guaranteed to "test the mettle" of
managers in the organization. In essence, the Assessment Center
tasks are miniature life situations faced by the organization's
managers in their day-to-day operations. In this sense, the
Assessment Center procedures are akin to the training techniques
for commercial airlines pilots...you put the candidate pilot
in a realistic but simulated situation (where his worst per-
formance costs neither lives nor a multimillion-dollar aircraft)
in order to determine the reasonableness of advancing him to
the real-life situation.

Finally, many of the traditional evaluation techniques are
constrained by the need to identify THE RIGHT ANSWER from among
THE WRONG ANSWERS in order to generate a quantifiable score.

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In the Assessment center approach, attempts to resolve the problem situation are not matched against a "school solution" ...the candidate's attempts may be judged to range from highly successful to highly unsuccessful...providing a clearly more detailed description of the candidate's performance than the simple "Right" vs "Wrong" dichotomy.

In this same vein, it should be noted that descriptions of Assessment Center candidates expand rather than constrict the range of possible dispositions of the candidates. Given a representative number of job-related tasks, it is the rare candidate who comes through the Center as either 100% or 0%. Candidates come through identified as to specific strengths and deficiencies. Thus it is that the Assessment Center, properly used by an organization, does not proceed to replace or convert to "rubber stamps", the organization's ongoing mechanisms for advancement of employees. Instead, the Assessment Center provides such mechanisms (viz. promotion panels) with an additional, vital source of data to assist in decision-making.

Why use an Assessment Center?

The most obvious reason is that the Assessment Center works! The less obvious reason is that, given the research support necessary to document the validity and utility of the Center in any given organization, the highest levels of management are constantly up-to-date vis-a-vis the make-up of the managerial

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character of the group; are alerted to sources for new input; and are in a position to input new elements to the managerial structure in the face of projected requirements and demands for the future. In essence, the Center offers highest levels of management, the capability for prediction and direction of the character and style of the organization.

Lest the foregoing sound overly optimistic, let's look at the "box-score" for the Assessment Center approach.

One way of checking the box-score is to ask whether the Center offers advantages over previous procedures. The answer is YES in the range of magnitude from 10% to 30% improvement in successful prediction of who will "make it" and "how far" in the organization.

Next, in a unique sort of arrangement set up by Drs. Bray and Grant in the Bell System, conclusions from the Center can be held back from management. Later, Center predicted success can be compared with actual success in the organization. The time elapsed in the Bell System study (from Assessment Center to roughly ten years performance in the organization) draws focus on Center predictions regarding capacity to reach "middle-management" positions. Here, the box-score shows that of candidates described by the Center as having middle-management potential, 2 out of 3 did realize their potential. Of all those described by the Center as deficient in such potential, only 1 out of 3 were actually advanced to middle-management positions.

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What of those studies wherein Assessment Center results are directly communicated to management? One of the better, more recent and representative studies in this area has come out of IBM. Using 1086 employees considered reasonable candidates for advancement into managerial positions in the time period 1965 to 1970, IBM used the following summary rating of managerial potential to describe Assessment Center findings:

Rated Level	Description
1	Executive Potential
2	High Level Potential
3	Second Line Potential
4	First Line Potential
5	Remain Non-Management

Of all candidates (1086) processed by the IBM Center, the following Rated Levels were assigned:

Rated Level	Percentage (of 1086)
1	4%
2	16%
3	24%
4	28%*
5	28%*

(*Over 50% of all candidates were rated as incapable of pro-
gressing beyond first line management...a fact having impli-
cations for preselection of Center candidates to be discussed
under the "When" section.)

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Granted that the foregoing ratings were available to management, it should not be surprising that the decisions about promotion to First-Line (First-Level) management were the following

Rated Level	Percentage Promoted to First-Line
1	87%
2	48%
3	42%
4	29%
5	24%

There is a suggestion in the above data of the "Crown Prince Effect' i.e., if you are rated high by the Center, your future in the organization is guaranteed. Further data regarding promotions after this initial promotion into management has been secured and looks like this:

Rated Level	Percentage Promoted Beyond First-Line Management
1	34%
2	32%
3	27%
4	13%
5	7%

Thus, after First Line promotion, later promotions tend to "level off' for the three highest Assessment Center ratings. It would appear that while later promotions are less influenced by the "halo effect" of earlier Center ratings and more determined by factors such as actual on-the-job performance, nonetheless,

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those identified by the Center as having higher potential actually do perform at higher levels than lower rated candidates.

What about the "kiss-of-death" effect i.e., if a person receives a low Assessment Center rating, is he doomed? The following figures on separations among the Center candidates by IBM seems to answer this question:

Rated Level	Percentage of Separations Among Candidates
1	0%
2	2%
3	3%
4	3%
5	2%

Obviously, separations are evenly spread across all categories. (Note that given the small number of candidates rated at Level 1, the loss of even one person would be equal to 2% of the group!) Thus low ratings do not unreasonably prejudice the candidates career. Remember that Bray and Grant found that, after about 10 years, management had promoted to given levels 33% of those people rated by the Center as incapable of advancing to those given levels. (Note that Bray and Grant used only the first Center prediction of ten years earlier, unrefined by data regarding training received and skills required.)

The suggestion in the last two tables combined is somewhat intriguing i.e., the Assessment Center appears more appropriate in identifying the "comers" as opposed to branding the "losers".

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Other findings of Bray and Grant further support this possibility in that Center predictions of success in sales activities matched independently obtained field ratings 100%. Center predictions of failure in sales matched field ratings only 10%.

Who operates the Assessment Center?

Since the Assessment Center is a set of procedures designed conjointly by behavioral scientists and managers, applied by managers in evaluating...etc., the Center clearly is operated by the management of the organization for whom the Center is designed. In other words, after the job-related situational tasks are designed, experienced managers in the given organization are selected for training as assessors (observers, raters) in the Center. The preferred training technique is to permit the managers to deal with the same situational tasks the future candidates are to face. In this fashion, assessors both are made aware of the special demands of the tasks and also assist in "debugging" the design of the tasks selected.

The behavioral scientist continues to contribute to the Center in three basic areas: (1) he contributes psychometric data responsive to highly specific questions about candidates; (2) he is available for consultation regarding unusual problems of behavior observed or observation of behavior; (3) he maintains current validity data regarding Center findings and "on-the-job" performance.

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When is the Assessment Center used?

This is a critical question bearing on the overall utility (cost-effectiveness) of the Center. Obviously the Center cannot accept all employees in the organization. Some career-development critical point should be identified e.g. the level in the organization regarded as First Line/Level management. Having identified this critical point, the next question is whether inclusion in the Center processing is to be automatic or at the individual's option.

Where conduct the Assessment Center?

This last point, while seemingly simple-minded, is hardly so. Candidates tend to be more spontaneous and less inclined to pursue rigid, "school solution" behaviors when they are removed from institutional surroundings. Most importantly, managers operating as assessors, tend to set aside assessor tasks when "day-to-day" office concerns are pushed upon them i.e., in institutional surroundings, they are too easily distracted from Center activities by phone-calls, "urgent" memos, and the like. Consequently, "isolated" and/or "protected" surroundings are both desirable and necessary for efficient operation of the Center.

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Psychologist

May , 1974

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APPENDIX B

Paper Entitled:

"More About Assessment Centers"

DDA EXCHANGE   April 1978

medical services

MORE ABOUT ASSESSMENT CENTERS

Bernard L. Mooney, Ph D., OMS

In the October issue of DDA Exchange, reference was made to Assessment Centers and Assessment Center methodology in two separate articles One article described the use of the Assessment Center technique as one specifically designed to study an individual's potential for responding to the demands of managerial positions, while the other described the technique as one designed to study an individual's potential for responding to the demands of Project AIM positions, none of which directly involved managerial responsibilities This article may help to clarify for some readers these seemingly contradictory descriptions of Assessment Center methodology.

The germinal notion of the Center, pioneered by the Assessment Staff of OSS (the progenitor of today's Psychological Services Staff-OMS) placed the primary emphasis upon the design of simulations of real-life tasks .. simulations reflecting the key aspects of performance situations that OSS candidates might eventually be required to handle in the field Through observation of candidates as they faced these simulations, Assessors-Observers attempted to generate dynamic descriptions of the candidates in an effort to support accurate prediction of "most likely" individual behaviors in future real-life performance situations. Very early in the development of Center methodology, it became clear that unless there actually are observable behaviors rather consistently associated with both successful as well as unsuccessful performance in real-life situations, then design of a Center is an impossible task. Granted valid behavioral criteria of success vs failure performance (typically defined by means of consensus among "experts" regarding the performance studied), the Center methodology can be extended to practically any area of performance-work.

Curren'ly, Centers are being used to evaluate potential for performance in sales, in technical a eas and in entrepreneurial activities, the progress of AB degree candidates (including the award of bona fide undergraduate credits for successful performance in the Center), the qualifications of applicants for licensure as Psychologist, the potential of uniformed police for advancement to he position of Detective .. and so the list goes Recently, the American Psychological Association has funded a feasibility study to explore the utility of Centers in evaluating Psychologists for award of nationally accepted certification of excellence (the so-called Diplomate) across 4-5 professional specialties.

The validity of Centers is a matter no longer open to critical debate The utility of Centers (the overall cost effectiveness) is, however, a matter which must be carefully considered by potential consumers Unfortunately, most consumers seldom possess data accequate to the task of evaluating Center utilities While a small number of consumers do have information regarding the dollars and cent, co t of operating their standard evaluation selection systems, almost none are able to cite data regarding the predictive validity of their present systems (how accurately they can predict most likely future real life performance), the cos to the consumer of making a 'bad' selection decision, the value to the consumer of making a "good" decision, and, most importantly, adequate and pragmatic definitions c "bad" and "good" decisions, i e, "success and "failure" in the real-life situation

While the question of Center utility i problematic, this much is clear . Center enjoy their greatest utility when they ar used as a complement to the consumer extant selection mechanisms The mo effective Centers are those designed t measure solely those elements of pe formance potential which are not a dressed-measured by the consumer's pre ent evaluation-selection system Commen' In the article in the October issue also, using the Center to replace a system whit

APPENDIX C

Behavioral Definitions of

Agency Assessment Center Dimensions

BEHAVIORAL DEFINITIONS OF AGENCY ASSESSMENT CENTER DIMENSIONS

DIMENSION	BEHAVIORAL DEFINITION
A. AWARENESS OF DETAIL	in problem situations, carefully considers all relevant facts; does not overlook important though often minute details of the problem.
B. CAREER AMBITION	clearly expresses desire to move to higher job levels; demonstrates active efforts towards self-development and self-improvement.
C. CLARITY OF ORAL COMMUNICATION	oral communication is concise and "to the point"; style is characterized by proper grammar, pronunciation and articulation; body language emphasizes rather than distracts from communication.
D. CLARITY OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION	expresses written ideas clearly; shows a mastery of the mechanics of English, e.g., grammar, syntax, spelling and punctuation.
E. CREATIVITY	shows the capacity to generate as well as to recognize and accept imaginative solutions and innovative courses of actions in approaches to problem situations.
F. DECISIVENESS	shows the readiness to make decisions, to render judgments, to take action or to commit self; is able to recognize those situations where decision delays will be damaging vs. those where no urgency exists.
G. DELEGATION	assigns responsibilities effectively to subordinates; clearly understands the levels (organizational) at which given decisions are most effectively made; gives adequate directions to others and provides sufficient guidance when delegating.

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DIMENSION	BEHAVIORAL DEFINITION
H. DEVELOPMENT OF SUBORDINATES	exerts effort to maximize human potential of subordinates through training and development assignments related to both current as well as future jobs.
I. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION	keeps peers and subordinates and superiors informed of plans and activities; avoid conflicts, "snafu's" and needless duplication of effort by both sharing and seeking out information.
J. ENERGY	achieves and maintains a high level of involvement in work activities; level of involvement is matched by level of output on a continuing rather than sporadic basis.
K. FACILITATES GROUP PROCESSES	in problem-solving situations when working with a group, deals with others in such a way that group efforts remain directed upon the problem rather against each other.
L. FLEXIBILITY	in problem situations, when given management approaches or behavioral styles prove ineffective, is able to modify and vary approach and/or style in order to attain stated goals.
M. FORESIGHT	characteristically thinks several steps beyond present problems; tries to anticipate impact both of problem resolution and side-effects of problem-solving techniques to be used; tends to include the future in addressing problems of the present. (This Dimension later melded with PLANNING under Dimension X, PLANNING AND ORGANIZING ... see below.)

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DIMENSION	BEHAVIORAL DEFINITION
N. IMPACT	is able to create a good "first impression" which endures; shows an air of confidence through basic interpersonal style; almost automatically and apparently effortlessly, commands attention and respect.
O. INITIATIVE	actively influences situations and events rather than passively accepting them; takes actions beyond those obviously and necessarily called for; is proactive rather than merely reactive.
P. LEADERSHIP	is effective in winning acceptance for plans and ideas from individuals and groups; is effective in guiding and directing individuals and groups towards efficient accomplishment of goals; is able to stimulate others to greater efforts and higher levels of attainment.
Q. LISTENING ABILITY	is able to grasp and retain key elements of ideas presented by others; conveys a sincere interest so that others make special efforts to present their ideas; on occasion, is able to perceive new relationships or concepts "buried" among ideas presented by others.
R. MANAGEMENT CONTROL	understands the principles of control mechanisms over tasks, processes, products and people; institutes and maintains effective control mechanisms; makes provisions for follow-up of actions decided upon.

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DIMENSION	BEHAVIORAL DEFINITION
S. MOTIVATION FOR WORK	expresses strong desires to achieve in the area of work responsibilities; personal satisfactions involve primarily accomplishments attained in the area of work.
T. ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITY (as a Manager)	is knowledgeable about availability of resources; is knowledgeable about the capabilities of resources; brings together optimum combination of resources for effectively attacking problems or accomplishing assigned tasks. (This Dimension later melded with Dimension X., PLANNING AND ORGANIZING ... see below.)
U. ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITY (as an Employee)	shows a clear understanding of work-unit demands of tasks assigned; tends to restructure tasks so as to use personal assets most effectively; estimates time requirements of tasks with accuracy; personal scheduling of activities makes optimum use of time. (This Dimension later melded with Dimension X., PLANNING AND ORGANIZING ... see below.)
V. PERCEPTIVITY AND SENSITIVITY	accurately perceives the needs which motivate others; reactions to others reflects awareness of and respect for needs of others; shows understanding of the impact oneself has on others.
W. PERSUASIVENESS	is able to present own ideas and proposals in such a manner that most other persons react to them in a positive, accepting fashion.
X. PLANNING AND ORGANIZING	effectively identifies key elements in problems or tasks to be accomplished; quickly establishes meaningful priorities among these key elements; effectively establishes course of action for oneself and for others; makes reality-based assignments of personnel and committment of resources in accomplishing specific goals within time constraints.

DIMENSION	BEHAVIORAL DEFINITION
Y. PROBLEM ANALYSIS AND JUDGMENT	shows skills in identifying and defining problems; secures problem-relevant information and logically isolates probable problem sources; is able to evaluate direct and indirect effects of courses of action; is able to generate several alternative approaches to problems.
Z. RISK TAKING	shows awareness of both positive and negative consequences of alternative courses of action; to maximize gain, may take actions where losses can be sustained but has carefully calculated likelihood of loss beforehand; does not require 100% guarantee of success before taking action.
AA. SOCIAL ADAPTABILITY	is able to maintain effectiveness across a wide range of social situations and work-group combinations; responds to differing social styles by altering personal style.
BB. STRESS TOLERANCE	whether operating under time, personal, social or situational pressures, maintains a stable, effective level of performance.
CC. TENACITY	shows the capability to stay with a problem, pursue a line of reasoning or remain focussed on a task (which is within the reasonable capabilities of the person) until the matter is settled.

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