



# Selection vs Development Assessment Centers: An International Survey

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# ACs are used for different purposes:

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- Adult development
- Early identification of management potential
- Promotion of supervisors
- Diagnosis of development needs
- Heighten learning and development
- Premise: ACs used for different purposes should be designed in different ways



# Different instantiations of basic requirements of all ACs

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- Different dimensions
- Different exercises
- Different observation/rating methods
- Different methods of intergration
- Different feedback
- etc



# Purpose of current study:

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- International bench marking survey of ACs used for:
  - Prediction: selection, promotion
  - Development: diagnosis, learning



# Previous surveys

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- Spylchalski et al (1997): US organizations
- Kudisch et al (2001): international sample
- Krause & Gebert (2003): German speaking countries vs US



# Method

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- On-line survey with 76 items
- Americas, Europe, Asia
- Usable responses
  - 70 ACs for selection or promotion
  - 74 ACs for diagnosis or learning



# Results:

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- Comparison of usage in prediction vs development ACs



# Organization characteristics

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- Prediction programs
  - Smaller orgs
  - Services, transportation, retail, gov
  - ACs started before 2004
- Development programs
  - Larger orgs
  - Electronics, manufacturing, communication
  - ACs started in 2004 or later



# Uses of AC information

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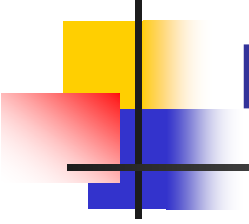
- Prediction programs
  - Advancing person's career
- Development programs
  - Diagnosis of training needs
  - Stabilization of leadership culture



# Job Analysis: done in virtually all programs

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- Prediction programs
  - Questionnaires
  - Observations
  - New competency models
- Development programs
  - Existing competency models



# Role of the *Guidelines*: used in majority of ACs

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- Prediction programs
  - More frequently used
- Development programs



# Design and execution of AC

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- Prediction programs
  - Shorter (1 day)
- Development programs
  - Longer (2 days)



# Dimensions

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- The vast majority assess some dimension related to communication, consideration, drive, influencing others, organization and planning, problem solving



# Dimensions

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- Prediction programs
  - More assess planning and organizing
  - Smaller number of dimensions (25% assess 6+)
- Development programs
  - Larger number of dimensions (65% assess 6 +)
  - More assess consideration, drive, influencing others



# Participants

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- Prediction programs
  - Host all levels of personnel
  - Selected by personnel ratings
- Development programs
  - Tend to host first level managers
  - Nominated by supervisor

# Assessors

Most typically HR reps and managers



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- Prediction programs
  - Executives/higher level managers
  - Serve as evaluators
- Development programs
  - Internal HR reps
  - Serve as moderators or developers



# Assessor Training: Many *Guidelines* followed

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- Prediction programs
  - Knowledge of organization, target job, and dimensions; consistency in roles; relation of dimensions to job performance
  - Methods include video demos, practice
- Development programs
  - How to observe independently, methods of observation and feedback



# Exercises

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- Common stable: in basket, presentation, group discussion, case
- Prediction programs
  - Role play, background I, situational I, planning
- Development programs
  - In basket, presentation, case, discussion



# Preparation of Participants: All programs do this

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- Prediction programs
  - Dimensions to be assessed, expected behaviors
- Development programs
  - Objective of program, information on assessors, use of results, how feedback will be given, what recommendations will come



# Integration of Assessment Information

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Equal numbers of both type programs use either a consensus discussion OR a combination of statistical integration and discussion



# Feedback: All programs provide feedback to participant

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- Prediction programs
  - Feedback to Dept head
- Development programs
  - Feedback to immediate supervisor
  - Provide feedback on behaviors observed in each exercise on each dimension



# Evaluation of AC program: did not differ across type of AC

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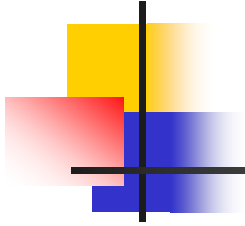
- Prediction programs
- Development programs
  - Ask about usefulness, transparency



# Differences: Features more prevalent in Selection ACs

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- Questionnaires used in job analysis
- Guidelines used more frequently
- Dimensions emphasize cognitive abilities
- Assessors are evaluators
- Assessors come from internal HR
- Pool of assessors are ethnically balanced



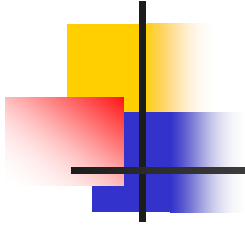
- Assessors are trained on org and job
- Tailor made exercises for each AC



# Developmental ACs

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- Use existing competency models
- ACs are longer
- Larger number of dimensions
- Dimensions include interpersonal and intra personal characteristics
- Assessors are moderator and developer
- External psychologists are used



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- Assessors are trained to observe independently
  - Personality tests are used



# Areas where *Selection* programs SHOULD differ but did NOT

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- Computers should be used to enhance standardization
- Participants should be given more information to ensure fairness
- Information should be integrated statistically to be objective



# Areas where *Development ACs* SHOULD differ but did NOT

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- Assess fewer dimensions to ensure actual development/learning
- Train assessors to distinguish among dimensions to ensure discrimination
- Use more self- and peer-ratings to broaden perspective and acceptance
- Provide assessment/feedback/  
assessment/feedback
- Provide feedback to managers to ensure follow-up



# Conclusions

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- ACs are used for different purposes
- For different purposes, ACs should logically be designed differently
- In many features, ACs ARE being designed differently
- In other features, ACs ARE NOT being designed optimally to meet stated purposes



# Theme of the presentation

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- There is both continuity and change in ACs over the years
- ACs are plastic: they ARE being run differently and they SHOULD be run differently