



SOUTH AFRICA

Perspectives of AC's in the Public Sector

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- The South African Landscape
- The South African AC Context
- Legislation
- Public Sector Context
- AC Language / Terminology
- Movements within Government

THE SOUTH AFRICAN LANDSCAPE

- Republic of South Africa = parliamentary republic [since 31 May 1961]
- 11 official languages
- About 48 million people
- 3 capitals: Pretoria = administrative; Bloemfontein = judicial; Cape Town = legislative
- 9 provinces
- First democratic elections = 1994



THE SOUTH AFRICAN LANDSCAPE

- Current social issues: HIV/AIDS; crime; skills migration
- Current economic issues: technical skills shortage in some areas but over supply in other areas; high unemployment rate; low education; culture of corruption

THE SOUTH AFRICAN AC CONTEXT

- Post 1994
- Views of assessments & AC's are cyclical and seasonal
- Vast differences between private & public sector use
- Varying levels of skills and sophistication

LEGISLATION

- Legislation introduced – Employment Equity Act, 1998

“Psychometric testing and other similar assessments of an employee are prohibited unless the test or assessment being used-

- (a) has been scientifically shown to be valid and reliable;
- (b) can be applied fairly to employees; and
- (c) is not biased against any employee or group.”

PUBLIC SECTOR CONTEXT

- According to law government departments must have a strategic document in place.
- However, it would appear as if it is not always easy to translate this into action plans for implementation.
- In the past, and currently, AC's have been used for the wrong reasons. In some instances this has led to victimization.
- As a result, assessments in general are viewed with skepticism.

AC LANGUAGE / TERMINOLOGY

- There is also confusion about AC terminology.
- Candidates are sent to an Assessment Centre building but actually only complete psychometrics.
- Thus, candidates and line managers do not understand the AC methodology.
- Education needs to take place.

MOVEMENTS WITHIN GOVERNMENT

- Department of Public Service & Administration (DPSA) = HR for government.
- The DPSA is trying to align assessment practices for government.
- Standard AC on senior level mandatory since April 2008 across all government departments for development purposes.
- Candidates measured on generic government competencies and must meet competent level

MOVEMENTS WITHIN GOVERNMENT

- 11 generic senior management competencies.
- AC to become annual event in order to determine senior management strengths and development areas.
- Combined with training interventions.
- Also looking at AC's on middle management level.
- 15 generic middle management competencies.

MOVEMENTS WITHIN GOVERNMENT

- Various service providers appointed to conduct AC's on senior level.
- Set training programme for AC practitioners regarding AC battery.
- AC battery = combination of simulation exercises and psychometrics.

MOVEMENTS WITHIN GOVERNMENT

- New appointments must now undergo competency-based assessment prior to appointment (April 2008).
- Followed up with compulsory induction on working in the public sector & possible relevant training.
- However, each department can use their own service provider for this. Slowly moving towards standardisation.

MOVEMENTS WITHIN GOVERNMENT

- Move towards standardisation in terms of Employment Equity & Skills Development.
- Training focus with emphasis on leadership = big drive currently.
- Public Administration Leadership & Management Academy (PHALAMA) established.

MOVEMENTS WITHIN GOVERNMENT

- Available on national level with aim to drive this down to provincial level.
- PHALAMA responsible for all public service training.
- Realisation that SA needs strong leaders to tackle the challenges facing the country.
- Thus, implementation of initiatives right at recruitment & selection level.