

ACN

Assessment Council News

Newsletter of the IPMA-HR Assessment Council

June 2005

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Presidential News and Views

David Hamill

As I am writing this column, I am flying back to Washington, DC after attending the Spring WRIPAC conference held in beautiful Yosemite, CA. I was officially there to present a method for extracting competency-rich information from SMEs. Unofficially, I was there to fly-fish, hike, and take in some of the spectacular scenes of this National treasure. I must confess, attending a WRIPAC meeting in Yosemite is like fly-fishing. For those of you who enjoy fly-fishing as I do, you know that fly-fishing is 20% about catching a fish and 80% about the experience. When participating in a WRIPAC meeting in Yosemite, 80% is about the experience and meeting with colleagues, and 20% is about the presentations (I am only qualified to downplay my own presentation, however). Although I thoroughly enjoyed the WRIPAC meeting and sharing ideas with colleagues, I was a bit disappointed that I did not see one black bear, which are supposed to be ubiquitous in the park. It looks like WRIPAC will have to put Yosemite on the 2006 circuit.

In keeping with the fly-fishing analogies, I would like to offer another one as it relates to this year's IPMAAC conference in Orlando. I have spent countless hours stumbling in rivers and

streams wearing the ever-so-stylish chest waders and brandishing the outlandish accoutrements of people who fly-fish. In this time, I have learned that it is simply not sufficient to know where the fish are and what they are "biting on" to be successful in fishing a stream. You must also know how to read the stream effectively, be skillful enough to present the fly in a way that looks realistic, be flexible enough to adapt your strategy to meet current water and weather conditions, and be quick enough to set the hook when the fly is taken. In other words, it is the nuances or the tricks of the trade that can make a good fishing trip into a fantastic fish-catching frenzy. This concept holds true for personnel assessment. While it is essential to have a sound methodology for developing personnel assessments (e.g., starting with a thorough job analysis, using a diverse and knowledgeable panel of SMEs, having an appropriate sampling plan, etc.), it may not be adequate for a superior assessment, or one developed more efficiently. Often, it is the subtle, but effective, nuances in the development process that can improve on an assessment's quality or efficiency. For example, placing multiple-choice distractors in order (numerical, chrono-

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logical, or logical) may reduce the cognitive demand of the assessment, or linking job competencies to tasks may help SMEs to better understand and evaluate the importance of competencies by providing a behavioral example. So what does this have to do with the conference in Orlando? IPMAAC's annual conference is the place where many assessment practitioners share these tricks of the trade that help to make the test development process more efficient and advance the profession. Industrial/Organizational psychology and statistics courses provide the foundation for test construction and personnel selection, but job experience and professional networking enhance practitioners' techniques. Improving our techniques and methodologies for test development enables us to use our time much more effectively and to focus our efforts on the quality of the content and not on issues like formatting and data entry tasks. The best avenues to gain knowledge of these techniques are from direct experience and from colleagues'

experiences. The IPMAAC annual conference is one of the best resources for assessment and selection professionals to learn from each other and improve the profession.

This year's conference in Orlando is no exception. Program Chairs **Chris Parker** and **Inés Fraenkel** have assembled an outstanding series of presentations, and Host Chair, **Déonda Scott** will ensure that conference attendees will have fun in the process. If you are one of the unlucky ones who will not be able to attend the conference, you will still be able to participate in three outstanding presentations via a Webinar. For the first time, IPMAAC will broadcast selected presentations over the web and telephone lines. This will enable you to hear the presenter, see the overheads, and ask questions. For more information on this exciting opportunity, please visit the IPMAAC web site (www.ipmaac.org) and click on "2005 Conference."

I look forward to seeing you all in Orlando.—ACN

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Practice Exchange

by **Bridget Styers and Kathryn Singh, Associate Editors**

This month, the ACN features an article from Dr. Melinda Blackman, a social psychologist at California State University in Fullerton. Many thanks to Dr. Blackman for sharing her research and information on interview practices and predicting counterproductive traits. If you are interested in discussing this article or other research on interviewing practices, please contact Dr. Blackman at mblackman@Exchange.fullerton.edu.

If you are conducting a project that would interest the ACN readers, or if you know someone who is, please contact one of us. Bridget can be reached by e-mail at bstyers@hr.sbcounty.gov or by phone at (909) 387- 5575. Kathryn can be reached by e-mail at ksingh@hr.sbcounty.gov or by phone at (909) 387-5583.

Note from the Editor: It should be noted that the research described in the following article is based on laboratory studies. Therefore, the results should be construed as preliminary until further research is conducted in applied settings.

Effective Interview Practices for Accurately Predicting Job Candidates' Counterproductive Traits

by **Melinda C. Blackman, California State University, Fullerton**

“Will she be consistently tardy to work?”

“Will he pilfer money out of petty cash?”

“Will she use controlled substances while at work?”

These are some important questions that all interviewers want to find out about their job candidates, in addition to how well they will perform their jobs. Accurately predicting a job candidate's personality during the interview process is one preventative measure organizations can take in reducing counterproductive behavior in the workplace such as employee theft, volatile behavior, workplace violence, and absenteeism. There are a variety of methods for predicting a job candidate's potential to engage in counterproductive behavior on the job. If you are an organization that tends to shy away from paper-and-pencil measures of personality and integrity/honesty tests (that can cost \$15-\$25 per applicant to be scored), you are still in luck. I will share with you techniques that can be implemented during the interview process that are very successful for ferreting out a prospective employee who has the potential to engage in counterproductive behavior on the job.

Ideally, to accurately assess a job applicant's personality characteristics, interviewers should use an unstructured interview format instead of the popular structured format that utilizes standardized questions. The unstructured interview consists of free-flowing conversation between the interviewer and applicant with no standardized questions. This interview type is usually conducted in a very casual atmosphere, such as over coffee or lunch, and in which case many follow-up questions are asked of the applicant. Research has shown that the unstructured format

is far superior to the structured format when predicting a job candidate's personality, though the structured interview should still be used to predict the future performance of the job candidate (Blackman, 2002). Why are interviewers who use the unstructured format so successful in predicting whether the job applicant will engage in undesirable behavior? The unstructured format puts the candidate at ease and the relaxed nature of the interview elicits more candid responses from the applicant than would otherwise be the case. A lot of times the interviewer befriends the candidate during the unstructured interview and the candidate many times will inadvertently reveal telling personality characteristics about themselves to their newfound friend. Job applicants may find that the script they had prepared for the structured interview will not fit in the unstructured interview format, so they rely on off-the-cuff responses in which case their true personality characteristics have a higher likelihood of appearing during an unstructured interview format.

I would recommend that both the structured and the unstructured interview format be used during the interview process. Use the structured, standardized interview first to determine if the applicant is qualified for the position. After you have determined that, call the applicant back for a follow-up interview, which would be the unstructured interview over coffee or dinner.

As the interviewer, you need to be savvy about the tell-tale signs indicating that an applicant might be stretching the truth or deceiving you. David Funder, Professor of

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Psychology at the University of California at Riverside, has shown there are four factors or moderators that increase the likelihood of making an accurate personality judgment about the job applicant. These four factors are:

1. The Good Judge
2. The Good Trait
3. The Good Target
4. Good Information

Funder's (1995) research has shown that interviewers or judges of personality who are very extraverted and outgoing are the best judges of personality, that is, "The Good Judge." Extraverts, more than likely, have had a lot of experience socializing with individuals and reading others' personalities. Ideally, you should refrain from using an introverted colleague to conduct the interview process, because these individuals have been shown not to be as adept at reading the nonverbal behavior of others.

"The Good Trait" moderator variable is simply that some traits are easier to judge than others. Funder's research has shown that traits which are more observable to the eye, such as how talkative or dependable an individual is, are easier to judge and reliably identified than traits that are less observable, such as how much an individual daydreams or feels guilt. So, as an interviewer, if you are judging how warm and caring an individual is (a very observable trait), you will probably be very accurate about the extent to which the job candidate possesses that trait.

"The Good Target" variable suggests that some targets (or job applicants) are easier to judge than others and it is these individuals for whom you will be able to make more accurate judgments (Colvin, 1993). For example, upon

meeting a candidate, if he opens up to you, tells you his life story, and exhibits consistent behavior throughout the interview process, you can consider this individual a "Good Target" and know that you will probably be correct in your judgment of him. However, if you interview an applicant who is very closemouthed and inconsistent in his or her behavioral patterns during the interview process (a hard to judge Target), you really can't conclude with any certainty your accuracy level about this individual's personality.

And last, we come to "Good Information." Funder states it is important to look at the quantity and quality of information that you have about the job candidate. The more information and the better the quality of information you have about the applicant, the more accurate your personality judgment about him or her. Ideally, you want to gather as much information about the candidate as possible – the longer the interview, the better. Blackman and Funder (1996) have shown that increased acquaintanceship or longer interviews leads to more accurate personality judgments. To obtain "good quality" information about a job candidate, interview the candidate in a variety of settings, if possible. Perhaps, you can interview the candidate in a formal office setting, then in an informal setting over coffee at a coffeehouse, and maybe even have them interact with several of the incumbents. These varied situations will allow you to gather good quality clues and to determine a consistent behavior pattern from the job applicant. The more clues that you gather about a job candidate's personality, the more accurate you will be in making an assessment as to whether the candidate might engage in counterproductive behavior.

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IPMAAC 2005 Innovations in Assessment Award Winner

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Looking at a job candidate's nonverbal behavior is very important for obtaining clues to factor into your personality assessment of the candidate. When a job candidate is trying to pull the wool over an interviewer's eyes, the candidate tends to rehearse the deceitful statements with a conscious control of their facial expressions. Ekman (1992) has shown that individuals fail to control involuntary movements or gestures below the waist that can signal that the individual is lying. For instance, a candidate may inadvertently display a telling hand gesture (an "emblem") that may not be seen by an interviewer sitting behind a desk. Another clue that an individual may be deceiving the interviewer includes when the applicant manipulates some accessory that they are wearing (e.g. a belt or ring) or a body part (e.g. hair). Ekman warns us that these are just clues that an individual might be lying and that the more clues we gather, the more likely we can assume that an individual is not being truthful. Therefore, using just one clue as a concluding piece of evidence for deceit will limit the accuracy of that conclusion.

Ekman's clues for deceit lend more supportive evidence for implementing the unstructured interview. In this casual interview environment, you will be able to see the applicant's entire body and be more cognizant of any discrepant behaviors or telltale signs. So, when implementing the unstructured interview, make sure that you are positioned in a vantage point where you can see the applicant's entire body.

One final tip for predicting an applicant's potential to engage in counterproductive behavior – implement multiple methods. If your organization has the time, get different perspectives of the candidate from various incumbents and even family, friends, and peers of the applicant. By gathering different sources of information you should have a higher likelihood of establishing a clear picture of the applicant's true personality. Good luck sleuthing for clues!

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IPMAAC 2005 Student Paper Competition

by Lee Friedman, University Liaison/Student Paper Competition

I wanted to take this opportunity to report to you the results of the IPMAAC 2005 Student Paper Competition. First, there were four reviewers for each paper—two academicians and two practitioners. Following is information regarding the winning paper:

Awardee	Jalane M. Meloun, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Administration, Barry University
Paper Title	Computer Anxiety: A Possible Threat to the Predictive Validity of Computerized Tests
Graduate School Where the Paper Was Done	University of Akron

IPMAAC 29th Annual Conference

by Katie Pierce and Deonda Scott

Join your colleagues in beautiful Orlando, Florida, for the 29th Annual Conference on Personnel Assessment. This year's conference will be held at the Hilton (in the Walt Disney World® Resort), June 19 – 22, 2005.

This year's conference will kick off on Monday, June 20, 2005, with a keynote address from **R.J. Harvey**, author of the *Common-Metric Questionnaire (CMQ)*. Other invited presenters include **Ted Darany**, CEO of Darany & Associates, and **Ann Marie Ryan**, Ph.D., Professor at Michigan State University.

The IPMAAC Annual Conference will also feature over 40 presentations showcasing state-of-the-art information on trends, techniques, and technologies for using and applying assessment methods. Make the most of your conference experience by adding one or more of the seven pre-conference workshops to your schedule. The pre-conference workshops are held on Sunday, June 19.

Full-Day Workshops

- Selecting the Best and the Brightest Using Legally Defensible Interviews

Half-Day Workshops

- How to Create Video Tests Using Readily Available Digital Technology
- Practical Procedures for Content Validation
- Passing Scores, Weighting and Combining Test Scores, and Converting Scores to Final Grades
- Unlocking the Secrets of Selection: A Hiring Manager's Guide to Effective Staffing Decisions
- Use of Minimum Qualifications in the Employment Process

To find a complete list and description of the scheduled sessions, as well as registration information, please visit the IPMAAC website at: www.ipmaac.org and click on "2005 Conference" under the heading, "IPMAAC Information."

For more information on the IPMAAC conference, contact **Katie Pierce** at (703) 549-7100 or kpierce@ipma-hr.org.

The Orlando Experience

There is so much to do and see in Orlando, and our Host Committee, chaired by **Déonda Scott**, will be on hand to provide you with the information you need to get started. Whether it's theme parks, restaurants, shows, shopping, or nightspots, Orlando has something to offer everyone.

Orlando is one of the top tourist destinations in the world and here are just a few of the reasons:

- **Theme Parks** – Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom, Epcot, MGM Studios, Animal Kingdom; Universal Studios and Islands of Adventure, SeaWorld, need I go on?
- **Arts and Sciences** – The Orlando Science Center is top-notch as is the Orlando Museum of Art. There are many art galleries and even an antique district.
- **Nightlife** – Disney's Pleasure Island, Universal's CityWalk, and the House of Blues offer you the option of many different types music and dancing. There are wonderful comedy clubs such as SAK Theatre and the IMPROV and several excellent theater venues.
- **Dining** – There's everything from restaurants with famous-name chefs, every chain you can imagine, and even a few excellent local restaurants.
- **Miscellaneous** – A short drive lets you leave the theme park atmosphere and get to know more of Florida. You can roam Harry P. Leu Gardens, play one of our world famous golf courses, spot blue herons and bald eagles on Orlando's lakes, or shop at the outlet malls or Mall at Millennia.

Oh yeah, and we've got beautiful weather, just remember your sunscreen and shorts!

For more information on things to do in and around Orlando, visit www.orlandoinfo.com.—ACN

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IPMAAC Across the Nation – News of the Councils

By Kristine Smith, Associate Editor

American Psychological Association (APA)

Future conferences will be in Washington, DC, from August 18-21, 2005; in New Orleans, LA, from August 10-13, 2006; and San Francisco, CA, from August 16-19, 2007. For more information, visit their website at www.apa.org as it is updated.

Bay Area Applied Psychologists (BAAP)

The BAAP sponsors a speaker once each quarter. The location varies, but the format involves networking from 6-7 p.m., followed by the speaker's presentation at 7 p.m. BAAP speakers are typically leaders in the field and deliver interactive presentations with plenty of group discussion. Check their website at www.baaponline.net for upcoming speakers and topics.

Chicago Industrial/Organizational Psychologists (CI/OP)

CI/OP is a society of human resources professionals from the Greater Chicago area who meet to discuss current issues in I/O psychology. CI/OP generally has Friday after-

noon sessions from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. featuring several speakers addressing a topic. For more information and to confirm meeting dates and topics, visit their website at www.iit.edu/~ciop/.

Gateway Industrial-Organizational Psychologists (GIOP)

GIOP is a group of psychologists and human resources professionals in the metropolitan St. Louis area. The group consists of over 150 members and offers programs and conferences on a wide range of topics. For more information, visit the GIOP website at www.giop.org.

International Public Management Association – Assessment Council (IPMAAC)

The 29th Annual IPMAAC Conference is scheduled for June 19-22 in Orlando, FL. Check the IPMAAC website for the conference program and hotel information at www.ipmaac.org.

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International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR)

IPMA-HR is sponsoring the 2005 International Training Conference, "HR: The Art of Improvisation" on October 15-19 at the Hyatt Regency New Orleans in New Orleans, LA. For more information regarding the conference visit www.ipma-hr.org and click on "IPMA-HR Conference."

Metropolitan New York Association for Applied Psychology (METRO)

For more information, call the MetroLine at (212) 539-7593 or visit METRO's website at www.metroappsyach.com.

Mid-Atlantic Personnel Assessment Consortium (MAPAC)

MAPAC is chartered as a non-profit organization of public sector personnel agencies involved and concerned with testing and personnel selection issues. For details on MAPAC, contact Bob Carroll at RRC@mail3.cs.state.ny.us or visit the MAPAC website at www.ipmaac.org/mapac/.

Minnesota Professionals for Psychology Applied to Work (MPPAW)

MPPAW is an organization consisting of a broad range of practitioners, consultants, and professors who meet to encourage an open exchange of information relevant to psychology as applied to work and human resources management. For more information visit the MPPAW website at www.mppaw.org.

Personnel Testing Council of Arizona (PTC/AZ)

PTC/AZ serves as a forum for the discussion of current issues on personnel selection and testing. It encourages education and professional development in the field of personnel selection and testing and advocates the understanding and use of fair and professionally sound testing practices. For more information about PTC/AZ, contact Vicki Packman, Salt River Project, at 602-236-4595 or vspackma@srpnet.com, or visit the PTC/AZ website accessible through the IPMAAC website at www.ipmaac.org/ptcaz.

Personnel Testing Council of Metropolitan Washington (PTC/MW)

PTC/MW offers monthly luncheon programs and publishes an informative newsletter. See the 2005 calendar for scheduled luncheon speakers or visit the PTC/MW website accessible through the IPMAAC website at www.ipmaac.org.

Personnel Testing Council of Northern California (PTC/NC)

PTC/NC offers monthly training programs addressing topics and issues that are useful and relevant to personnel practitioners of all levels of expertise. The monthly programs are typically scheduled for the second Friday of each month and alternate between Sacramento and the Bay area. The monthly programs feature speakers who are active contributors to the personnel assessment field. For more information regarding PTC/NC programs, visit the PTC/NC website accessible through the IPMAAC website at www.ipmaac.org/ptenc.

Personnel Testing Council of Southern California (PTC/SC)

PTC/SC serves as a forum for the discussion of current issues in personnel selection and testing; encourages education and professional development in the field of personnel selection and testing; advocates the understanding and use of fair and non-discriminatory employment practices; and encourages the use of professionally sound selection and testing practices. For more information regarding luncheon meetings, workshops, upcoming conferences, or membership, please contact Mike Wheeler at MWheeler@per.lacity.org, or visit the PTC/SC website accessible through the IPMAAC website at www.ipmaac.org/ptesc.

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

Contact www.shrm.org/education/ for a current listing of seminars and conferences.

Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP)

The 2005 Fall Conference, "Leadership at the Top: The Selection, Globalization, and Ethics of Executive Talent" is scheduled for October 28-29 in St. Louis, MO. The 2006 conference is scheduled for May 5-7 in Dallas, TX. The 2007 conference is scheduled for April 27-29 in New York, NY. The 2008 conference is scheduled for April 11-13 in San Francisco, CA.

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Western Region Intergovernmental Personnel Assessment Council (WRIPAC)

WRIPAC comprises public agencies from the western region of the United States who have joined together to promote excellence in personnel selection practices. WRIPAC has three meetings each year that are typically preceded by a training offering. Additionally, WRIPAC has published a monograph series and job analysis manual. Additional information may be obtained by visiting WRIPAC's website accessible via the IPMAAC website at www.ipmaac.org

Western Region Item Bank (WRIB)

WRIB is a cooperative organization of public agencies using a computerized test item bank. Services include draft test questions with complete item history, preparation of "printer ready" exams, and exam scoring and item analysis. Membership includes 190 agencies nationwide. For more information, contact Bridget Styers at (909) 387-5575 or bstyers@hr.sbcounty.gov.

Upcoming International, National, and Regional Conferences and Workshops

JUNE

- 2-4: Society for Vocational Psychology. Biennial Conference. Vancouver, Canada Contact: <http://edu.ubc.ca/vpco>.
- 4-9: American Society for Training and Development. Annual Conference. Orlando, FL. Contact: www.astd.org.
- 5-8: Public Risk Management Association. Annual Conference. Milwaukee, WI. Contact: www.udreg.com/prima/.
- 10: PTC/NC Luncheon Meeting.
- 12-15: IPMA-HR Eastern Region Conference. Harrisburg, PA. Contact: www.haipma.org.
- 17: PTC/NC Meeting. Berkeley, CA.
- 19-22: IPMAAC Annual Conference. Orlando, FL.
- 19-22: IPMA-HR Central Region Conference. Dayton, OH.
- 22: METRO Dinner Meeting. Speaker: Dr. Wanda Campbell, Edison Electric Institute.
- 22: PTC/SC Luncheon Meeting. "Offline Testing That Still Benefits From Information Technology," Monterey Park, CA.

JULY

- 13: PTC/MW Luncheon Meeting.
- 27: PTC/SC Luncheon Meeting. "First Amendment Rights in the Workplace," Monterey Park, CA.

AUGUST

- 5-10: Academy of Management. Annual Meeting. Honolulu, HI. Contact: www.aonline.org.
- 7-11: American Statistical Association. Annual Convention. Minneapolis, MN. Contact: www.amstat.org.
- 12-14: Association of Management. Annual Conference. Norfolk, VA. Contact: www.aom-iaom.org.
- 18-21: American Psychological Association. Annual Convention. Washington, DC. Contact: www.apa.org.
- 24: PTC/SC Luncheon Meeting. "Physical Ability: A Validation Study," Monterey Park, CA.

(Some of the information in this calendar was reprinted with permission from the PTC/MW Newsletter which was compiled by Lance W. Seberhagen, Seberhagen & Associates.)

Kristine Smith is a Senior Associate with Darany and Associates in Redlands, California. If you have regional organization news or an item to add to the calendar, please contact her by e-mail at smithk1@earthlink.net or by telephone at (909) 798-4475.—ACN

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The *ACN* is the official newsletter of the International Public Management Association Assessment Council, an association of individuals actively engaged in or contributing to the professional, academic and practical field of personnel research and assessment. The Council has approximately 700 members.

The *ACN* is published six times a year during the even months of the year. It serves as a source of information about significant activities of the council, a medium of dialogue and information exchange among members, a method for dissemination of research findings and a forum for the publication of letters and articles of general interest.

Submissions for Publication: Assessment Council members and others with letters or articles of interest are encouraged to submit materials for review and publication. Submission deadlines for 2005 are:

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If you have questions or need further information please contact the Editor, Associate Editors, or IPMA-HR.

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