

ACN

Assessment Council News

Newsletter of the IPMA-HR Assessment Council

August 2005

Inside:

Presidential Message..... I

Practice Exchange:
FireTEAM® Emergency Response
Testing and Training System 4

Technical Affairs: The Case
Against Unstructured Employment
Interviews 8

HR Humor 11

IPMAAC Across the Nation –
News of the Councils..... 12

Upcoming International, National,
and Regional Conferences and
Workshops 14

2005 IPMA Assessment Council
Officers and Board Members 15

2005 IPMAAC Committee Chairs ... 16

About the ACN 18

IPMAAssessment
Council

International Public Management
Association for Human Resources
1617 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: (703) 549-7100
Fax: (703) 684-0948

Presidential Message

By David Hamill

2005 IPMAAC Conference: A huge success any way you assess it!

Informative, innovative, and fun are words that describe this year's IPMAAC conference held in beautiful Orlando, Florida. However, before the post-conference "high" fades into antiquity, let me first formally thank everyone who made this year's conference a booming success. This includes our entire Program Committee, Host Committee, Student Paper Competition Committee, Innovations in Assessment Committee, the IPMA Staff, our vendors, the workshop and paper presenters, and everyone who attended the conference. Our program chairs, **Inés Fraenkel** and **Chris Parker**, assembled an outstanding program that represented cutting edge science with practical application. **Déonda Scott** in her role as Host Chair provided several opportunities to relax and have fun after the sessions. Some of the conference highlights included:

- **R.J. Harvey's** keynote address on the emerging trend of adopting "quick and easy" methods for solving problems in the fields of occupational analysis and personnel assessment and the dangers of using these methods.
- **Ann Marie Ryan's** address on the need for HR professionals to con-

sider applicants' perceptions regarding selection system design and the implications of these perceptions for organizations.

- **Ted Darany's** address on the return on investment (ROI) of quality personnel selection for organizations using a simple, yet powerful, method for estimating ROI.
- **Ilene Gast** of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection received the Stephen E. Bemis Memorial Award for her outstanding contribution to the profession and its practitioners.
- **Jalane Meloun** received the Student Paper Award for her research done at the University of Akron on computer anxiety and its possible threat to predictive validity of computerized assessments.
- **The City of Long Beach, CA**, won the Innovations in Assessment Award for their innovative FireTeam testing system.
- **Neil Davidson** received the Clyde Lindley Achievement Award for the significant contributions he has made to IPMAAC over the past two years with marketing and membership projects.
- Dinner with Shamu at SeaWorld with an open pass to the park.

(continued on next page)

This was also the first year that IPMAAC leveraged the Internet via a Web cast, or Webinar, to bring the conference to individuals who were unable to attend in person. Although there was no substitute for attending the conference in person and interacting with like-minded colleagues, the Webinar provided a fantastic opportunity to share our collective knowledge to professionals who otherwise would have missed the information altogether. I would like to thank all the presenters who agreed to have their presentations broadcast over the Internet, and I would like to thank all the individuals and agencies who took a chance and registered for these non-traditional learning sessions. These sessions were hugely successful and we are planning to improve upon them for next year's conference in Las Vegas.

IPMAAC 2005 Business

As part of every conference, IPMAAC conducts a business meeting that is open to all members. I wanted to highlight some of the significant issues emanating from that meeting:

- The results of the 2005 elections were announced. Congratulations to **Déonda Scott** who was elected President-Elect for 2006, and **Oscar Spurlin** who was elected to the Board of Directors beginning in 2006. **Beverly Waldron** will be taking over as IPMAAC President in 2006, as I take on the coveted role of Past-President.
- IPMAAC continues to partner with IPMA-HR. IPMAAC has contributed expertise to several IPMA-HR committees and taskforces, and has provided speakers to IPMA-HR's International Conference and regional conferences. IPMAAC's **Shelley Langan** and **Steve Serra** presented at different regional conferences.
- **Martin Anderson** continues to chair Membership and Committee Services. He has been directing a project aimed at increasing our membership numbers by contacting previous IPMAAC members, updating our contact information of existing members, and identifying new strategies for membership growth. Martin will also be working on publishing the IPMAAC directory in the coming weeks.
- **Anthony Bayless** continues to improve the ACN with every publication, and is constantly identifying ways to improve the content and its value to members.
- The Professional and Scientific Affairs Committee, chaired by **Dennis Doverspike**, has finished a new monograph on Situational Judgment Tests. The Committee is currently working to identify effective ways to distribute the monograph to our membership.
- The Training Committee, chaired by **Mabel Miramon** and **Kristine Smith**, has been working with **Jim Johnson** to tailor IPMAAC's workshops for a member agency.
- IPMA-HR is currently examining the current membership structure of its chapters, regions, and sections (IPMAAC and the Federal Section). With this effort, a Membership Advisory Committee (MAC) was formed to develop recommendations about a united membership structure and present it to IPMA-HR's Executive Council. The goals of the MAC are to minimize membership confusion, and to bolster a more cohesive national association. Many of the proposed changes would not affect IPMAAC members; however, I would encourage each of you to learn more about this initiative at www.IPMA-HR.org.
- 2006 IPMAAC committees are forming and have already begun working on next year's conference in Las Vegas. I would like to encourage everyone to play an active role in IPMAAC and to volunteer to assist a committee. This is a great way to learn more about IPMAAC and establish a strong professional network. For a complete list of all of the committees and chairpersons, please visit the IPMAAC web site at www.ipmaac.org.

On a personal note, I am pleased to share with you that we had our second baby boy, Collin, born on July 22. Collin and mom are doing great. With any luck, I'll be able to persuade Collin to join IPMAAC in a few years. In addition to a new family member, I have recently accepted a position with Marriott International located in Bethesda, Maryland, and will be charged with performance management and workforce planning. Although I will sincerely miss my daily interactions with my wonderful colleagues at the Department of Homeland Security, I will continue to see them at various professional events throughout the year, and, of course, at the annual IPMAAC conference.—ACN

Web Assessment Solutions
CORPORATE | GOVERNMENT | EDUCATION

The logo features the word "PAN" in a bold, stylized, black font with a registered trademark symbol. It is centered over a large, faint target graphic with concentric circles and intersecting lines. Below the logo, the tagline "Everywhere You Need It To Be." is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

PAN[®]
Everywhere You Need It To Be.

- **Testing & Assessments**
- **Testing Centers**
- **Biodata**
- **Vita** *Vital Information for Talent Assessment*
- **poet pan[®]** *Online Educational Testing*

www.panpowered.com

1 877 449 TEST

Practice Exchange

By Kathryn Singh and Bridget Styers, Associate Editors

This month, the ACN features an article by the winners of IPMAAC's 2005 Innovations in Assessment Award. Congratulations to all the team members at the City of Long Beach.

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

FireTEAM[®] Emergency Response Testing and Training System

Mario Beas, Executive Director – City of Long Beach Civil Service Department

Christopher Daclan, Personnel Analyst – City of Long Beach Civil Service Department

Melinda George, Employment Services Officer – City of Long Beach Civil Service Department

Craig Haines, retired Employment Services Officer – City of Long Beach Civil Service Department

Robert Pfingsthorn, Personnel Analyst – City of Long Beach Civil Service Department

Leah Salgado, Personnel Analyst – City of Long Beach Civil Service Department

Christina Winting, Recruitment Officer – City of Long Beach Civil Service Department

Brad Wilson, Deputy Chief – City of Long Beach Fire Department

The Long Beach City Civil Service Department conducts merit-based selection processes for approximately 300 classifications, including those within the Fire Department. The Fire Department has 23 fire stations and 431 sworn firefighters. The recruitment and examination process for Fire Recruit is conducted every three to four years, resulting in an eligibility list that is used by the Fire Department to hire approximately 28 Fire Recruits each year. The examination process for Fire Recruit is especially significant because of the number of applications that are received (i.e., over 7,000) and the importance of the recruitment within the community.

Previous Recruitment and Testing Process

For many years, the recruitment and testing process for Fire Recruit took 22 weeks to complete. There were several logistical and financial weaknesses with the existing system that resulted in a lack of consistency in the testing process. Test results could not be used to produce a practical comparison of all candidate scores.

The testing process consisted of a multiple hurdle approach. The first hurdle in the examination process consisted of a written test that was weighted 30% of the candidate's final score. Prior to the written test, candidates were allowed to study from a test preparation manual for a

one-month period. The manual contained information relevant to dimensions of the written test such as reading comprehension, interpretation, and recall abilities. Distributing the manual to candidates was logistically challenging. Therefore, the City designated one day when candidates could submit their application and collect a manual. The City did not have facilities to accommodate over 7,000 candidates, so facilities at the California State University, Long Beach campus were rented. Approximately 2,300 candidates passed the written test and were invited to the next phase of the test.

The second phase of the Fire Recruit examination process was a structured situational interview that was weighted 70%. The dimensions measured were oral communication, interpersonal, and decision-making skills. Three situational questions were asked of each candidate. The interview panelists included an Interview Specialist and a Fire Captain. The structured interview process required a total of 11 panels that conducted interviews for 20 days. Fortunately, the City was able to hold these interviews at a local public school at no cost.

Administering the structured interview to such a large number of candidates was both labor and time intensive. Interview Specialists were consistently present during the

(continued on next page)

interviews; however, Fire Captain interviewers were rotated daily to accommodate the scheduling needs of the Fire Department. It was rare to have a consistent rating panel for the duration of the four weeks. As a result, it was difficult for a consistent evaluation criterion to be followed.

In addition, maintaining the confidentiality of the interview questions with 2,300 candidates was also difficult. The validity and reliability of the interview component was decreased when candidates began sharing information about the interview questions with other candidates. Therefore, new interview questions were used each week to help counteract cheating. However, this subjected candidates to different types of questions, so once again consistency was impacted.

Another issue with the structured situational interview process was the subjective nature of the interview questions. The Civil Service Department received numerous complaints about the process being too subjective in

nature. Because the questions were situational in nature, the expected or correct response was not always universally accepted by the test administrators, subject matter experts, the interview panel, or the candidates.

New Recruitment and Testing Process

The City of Long Beach collaborated with Ergometrics, a human resource management firm specializing in personnel selection and training, to develop the new FireTEAM Testing System.


Prior to the administration of the testing process, a validation study was conducted to ensure that the new process conformed to both professional and legal standards. To do this, Ergometrics and the Long Beach Civil Service Department administered the FireTEAM Testing System to many incumbent firefighters. Additionally, performance evaluations were completed for the incumbents. The data collected for the Long Beach validation study were com-

(continued on next page)

An industry-first software program to help employers validate written tests

Call now for a free demo CD!

Established in 1974



Biddle Consulting Group, Inc.

(800) 999-0438
staff@biddle.com

Test Validation & Analysis Program™

[TVAP™]

Software designed to completely automate the written test validation and analysis process, including:

- * Validate written tests using decision rules that have been approved in court
- * Set cutoff scores using the **modified Angoff technique**
- * Analyze SMEs for rater reliability and conduct "outlier analyses"
- * Evaluate **item bias** against women and minorities using **Differential Item Functioning (DIF)**
- * Conduct item and test analyses (item analysis statistics, test reliability, etc.)
- * Analyze cutoff score options for **adverse impact** using the 80% test, statistical significance, and practical significance

www.biddle.com

bined with data from validation studies completed at five other jurisdictions. The overall results of the validation studies provided support that the examination process was, in fact, valid.

After an extensive six-week recruitment campaign, over 6,900 candidates filed for the exam. After screening the applications, over 5,600 candidates were invited to participate in the new FireTEAM Test. FireTEAM consists of three examination components: a video scenario test, a mechanical aptitude test, and a reading test. The exams are designed to assess critical skills essential to becoming a successful Firefighter, such as the ability to work with other people, mechanical aptitude, and how to deal with problems.

The video scenario test is a timed, multiple-choice, video-based human relations test specifically designed for the firefighter job that measures teamwork and human relations skills. This 80-minute test consists of 115 items in two parts. In the first part, after viewing a video segment, applicants are required to identify the best and worst course of action for that particular segment in a brief time-frame. In the second part, applicants answer questions regarding the firefighters' actions depicted in the video scenarios. The video scenario test is weighted 70%.

The video scenario test is followed by a test that measures mechanical aptitude by requiring the candidates to demonstrate troubleshooting skills in an animated factory. Candidates view a detailed introduction to an animated brick-making factory and then answer 40 multiple-choice questions about the factory within 45 minutes. The mechanical aptitude test is weighted 30%.

Finally, a reading test is administered that is designed specifically for the job of the firefighter. The test is based on training materials that require applicants to choose a word that best fits the blank. This 15-minute test consists of 25 items. The reading test is qualifying. Candidates who are successful on all three tests are placed on the Fire Recruit eligibility list.

In order to administer the exams, two examination sessions were scheduled with 2,300 candidates per session. A total of 68 individuals worked at each session to assist in candidate processing as well as proctoring the exams. The

check-in and testing process for each session was accomplished in five hours. The exams were administered in two days compared to 20 days using the previous testing process.

The implementation of this revised testing process significantly streamlined the examination process from a period of ten weeks to a one-day, three-phase examination process. A major benefit of using the video testing format was the minimal administration cost. Depending on the number of applicants, it can be administered to a large number of candidates in one or more testing sessions. The exam answer sheets were scanned and scored in-house for faster results.

By replacing the existing written exam and structured situational interview processes, this exam was completed ten weeks faster (a 40.9% reduction in time) than previous Fire Recruit exams. The final result was a hiring list of 3,490 highly qualified job candidates with a combined savings of \$111,900 to the Civil Service and Fire Departments for this first administration. In addition, the FireTEAM testing format provided a more consistent and objective testing process for all candidates. Analysis of the 600 job incumbents participating in the criterion-related validation study suggested that FireTEAM shows far less adverse impact than other types of tests.

Further analysis of over 14,000 applicant cases confirmed that the FireTEAM Testing System has less adverse impact than traditional, written cognitive ability tests. The FireTEAM video test had, on average, less than 1/4 standard deviation difference for minorities. The average score was 76.9% for combined ethnic groups and 78.6% for Caucasians. There were no gender differences on the video test.

The revised examination provided qualified individuals in significantly less time, resulting in huge budget savings for the City. Both the Civil Service Department and the Fire Department were extremely pleased with the results. It is anticipated that the City of Long Beach will save \$447,600 (a 61.5% cost reduction) over four administrations by using this innovative testing process. By administering the newly developed tests, the City's goal of delivering an efficient selection process to meet the needs of the Fire Department was achieved.—ACN

Testing Services for Law and Fire Agencies



"Being a new Fire Chief and needing new test material for hiring purposes my search lead me to CPS and I must say that from my very first contact I was able to create two firefighter entry exams that fit our needs perfectly. The staff was helpful and made my job easy. I look forward to working with CPS in the future."

William E. Knoop, Fire Chief
Rescue Fire Protection District

"We administer CPS tests to entry-level applicants and for promotional opportunities within the Sheriff's Office. We participated in CPS surveys to help identify areas for question formulation that appear in the promotional exams. Our experience with CPS has been favorable. The staff is friendly and helpful. Our tests have always arrived on time and in good order."

Morgan Hendricks, Lt.
Bonneville County
Sheriff's Office

1.866.867.5272

www.cps.ca.gov

Entry-level and promotional exams

CPS has been in the testing business for more than 70 years working exclusively with public agencies in the United States and Canada. We possess the depth of experience and breadth of products and services to meet the testing needs of any size or type of public agency. Whether it's the use of a test through our test rental program, or a fully customized testing solution to meet your unique needs, we look forward to earning your business.

CPS offers a broad catalog of Test Rental products as well as an expansive array of testing and consulting services, including job analysis and validation studies, custom test development solutions, survey design and analysis, training and development, and assessment centers.

Law Enforcement Tests

Entry Law Enforcement
Senior Law Enforcement Officer
Law Enforcement Sergeant
Law Enforcement Lieutenant
Law Enforcement Captain
Correctional Officer
Correctional Sergeant
Police Technician/Community Services Officer

Fire Service Tests

Entry Firefighter
Entry Firefighter – Metric
Fire Engineer/Driver Operator
Fire Inspector
Fire Captain
Battalion Chief
Fire Service/Incident Command Supplements
Dispatcher

Clients come to us because of our reputation and stay with us because of our expertise, professionalism, and superior customer service. Because we are also a public agency, we understand *your* needs.



Human Resource Services

California

Wisconsin

Washington, D.C.

Technical Affairs

By Mike Aamodt, Associate Editor

The Case Against Unstructured Employment Interviews

Although structured interviews were covered in a previous *Technical Affairs* Column (February 2001), it seems like a good idea to review the differences between structured and unstructured interviews. As most readers will agree, interviews are the most commonly used method to select employees. What readers may not agree on is the best way in which interviews should be conducted and the relative merits of different interview formats.

Interviews are based on the assumption that a manager or human resource professional can ask an applicant questions, listen to the answers and the paralanguage associated with the answers (e.g., tone, speed, volume), observe the applicant's nonverbal cues and appearance, make judgments about the applicant's knowledge, skills, abilities, personality, interests, and values, and then logically combine this information to predict the applicant's future performance, tenure, and person-organization fit. Though this practice sounds good in theory, in reality, traditional interviews do not do a good job of predicting anything.

Types of Interviews

Perhaps a good place to start a discussion on interviews is to define the various types of interviews. Interviews vary on three main factors: structure, style, and medium.

Structure

The structure of an interview is determined by the source of the questions, extent to which all applicants are asked the same questions, and the structure of the system used to score answers. A *structured interview* is one in which (1) the source of the questions is a job analysis (job-related questions), (2) all applicants are asked the same questions, and (3) there is a standardized scoring key to evaluate each answer. An *unstructured (or traditional) interview* is one in which interviewers are free to ask anything they want (e.g., Where do you want to be in five years? What was the last book you read?), are not required to have consistency in what they ask of each applicant, and points assigned to an answer are at the discretion of the interviewer. Because interviews vary in their structure, rather than calling interviews structured or unstructured, it might make more sense to use terms such as highly structured (all 3 criteria are met), moderately structured (2 criteria are met), slightly structured (1 criterion met), and unstructured (none of the

3 criteria are met). The research is clear that highly structured interviews are more reliable and valid than interviews with less structure (Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994).

A source of confusion regarding interview structure is the tendency to call structured interviews, behavioral interviews. The behavioral term actually relates to the type of question rather than the interview itself. Regardless of the structure of the interview, interviews contain six types of questions: clarifiers, disqualifiers, skill-level determiners, past-focused (behavioral), future-focused (situational), and organizational fit.

Clarifiers allow the interviewer to clarify résumé, cover letter, and application information, fill in gaps, and obtain necessary information. Because each applicant's résumé and cover letter are unique, specific clarifiers are not standard across applicants. For example, an interviewer may need to ask one applicant to explain what she won the McArthur Award for and another applicant what she was doing during a two-year gap between jobs.

Disqualifiers are questions that must be answered a particular way or the applicant is disqualified. For example, if a job requires that employees work on weekends, a disqualifier might be "Are you available to work on weekends?" If the answer is "no," the applicant will not get the job.

Skill level determiners tap an interviewee's level of expertise. For example, if an applicant says she is proficient in Microsoft Word, an interviewer might ask some questions about the word processing program. If an applicant claims to be fluent in Spanish, the interviewer might want to ask her a few questions in Spanish.

Future-focused questions, also called *situational questions*, ask an applicant what she would do in a particular situation.

Past-focused questions, commonly referred to as *behavioral questions* or *patterned behavior description interviews*, differ from situational interview questions by focusing on previous behavior rather than future intended behavior. That is, applicants are asked to provide specific examples of how they demonstrated job-related skills in previous jobs.

(continued on next page)

Rather than trying to predict future performance, *organizational-fit questions* tap the extent to which an applicant will fit into the culture of an organization or with the leadership style of a particular supervisor. For example, some organizations are very policy-oriented whereas others encourage employees to use their initiative. Some supervisors are very task-oriented whereas others are more person-oriented. The idea behind organizational-fit questions is to make sure that the applicant's personality and goals are consistent with those of the organization.

Style

The style of an interview is determined by the number of interviewees and number of interviewers. *One-on-one interviews* involve one interviewer interviewing one applicant. *Serial interviews* involve a series of single interviews. For example, the HR manager might interview an applicant at 9:00 a.m., the department supervisor interviews the applicant at 10:00 a.m., and the vice-president interviews the applicant at 11:00 a.m. *Return interviews* are similar to serial interviews with the difference being a passing of time between the first and subsequent interview. For example, an applicant might be interviewed by the HR manager and then brought back a week later to interview with the vice-president. *Panel interviews* have multiple interviewers

asking questions and evaluating answers of the same applicant at the same time, and *group interviews* have multiple applicants answering questions during the same interview. Of course, one could put together several combinations such as a *serial-panel-group interview*, but life is too short for such nonsense.

Medium

Interviews also differ on the extent to which they are done in person. In *face-to-face interviews*, both the interviewer and the applicant are in the same room. Face-to-face interviews provide a personal setting and allow the participants to use both visual and vocal cues to evaluate information. *Telephone interviews* are often used to screen applicants but do not allow the use of visual cues (not always a bad thing).

Videoconference interviews are conducted at remote sites. The applicant and the interviewer can hear and see each other but the setting is not as personal nor is the image and vocal quality of the interview as sharp as in face-to-face interviews. *Written interviews* involve the applicant answering a series of written questions and then sending the answers back through regular mail or through email.

(continued on next page)

DENNIS A. JOINER & ASSOCIATES

Specialists in Supervisory and Management Assessment Since 1977

Why Situational Judgment Tests (SJT) have become so popular:

- Low-cost approach for assessing supervisory and managerial competencies
- Easily administered to either large or small candidate groups
- No reading list or candidate study time required (quicker eligible list)
- Require no human ratings and no hand scoring (machine/computer scored)
- Appropriate for virtually all supervisory and management job classifications
- Result in positive candidate feedback and candidate acceptance
- Can be custom keyed to the culture and requirements of your organization
- Low or no adverse impact as compared to other types of written tests

Tests (SJTs) now available for First Level Supervisor through Department Director (multiple versions)
Special versions available for all promotional ranks of Law Enforcement & Fire/Emergency Services

For a price list, more information or to order preview copies contact:

DENNIS A. JOINER & ASSOCIATES
4975 Daru Way, Fair Oaks, CA 95628
Phone: (916) 967-7795
Toll free: (877) 623-7432
E-mail: joinerda@pacbell.net

Problems with Unstructured Interviews

As mentioned previously, research is clear that highly structured interviews demonstrate higher levels of criterion validity than unstructured interviews (Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994; McDaniel, Whetzel, Schmidt, & Maurer, 1994). There are many reasons why unstructured interviews do not do a good job of predicting future performance.

Unstructured Interviews Lack Content Validity

By definition, unstructured interviews are not based on a job analysis, and thus many of the questions asked are not job-related. Perhaps the best evidence of this is to look at any of the popular books that give advice on how to answer common interview questions. When interviewers ask such questions as, *Where do you want to be in five years?*, *What was your favorite subject in school?*, and *What did you like least about your previous supervisor?*, it is not surprising that unstructured interviews do not predict performance.

Humans Have Poor Intuitive Ability

Interviewers often base their hiring decisions on “gut reactions,” or intuition. However, people are not good at using intuition to predict behavior. And contrary to what many HR professionals think, there are no individual differences in interviewers’ ability to predict future performance (Pulakos, Schmitt, Whitney, & Smith, 1996). That is, research does not support the idea that some interviewers are able to predict behavior whereas others are not.

Divorce rates provide an excellent example of this poor predictive ability. Couples involved in romantic relationships spend, on average, two years together before getting married. In spite of this time together, 50% of all marriages fail—an important reason for which is lack of compatibility. So, if after two years of “interviewing” a prospective spouse, we make the wrong choice 50% of the time, is it logical to assume that after spending only 15 minutes interviewing an applicant we can predict how well she will get along with the varied members of an organization?

Research also indicates that people are not very good about reading nonverbal cues and making judgments. For example, Heather Mitchell and I conducted a meta-analysis of individual differences in the ability to detect deception and concluded that people are barely above chance at detecting when people are lying, that trained professionals such as police detectives are no more accurate in their judgments than the average person, and that individual difference variables such as sex, personality (e.g., extroversion, self-monitoring), intelligence, and experience are not related to our ability to detect deception (Aamodt, 2005; Aamodt & Mitchell, in press).

Perhaps even more troubling are the meta-analysis results indicating that our confidence in making judgments is not related to our actual levels of accuracy. That is, we think we are accurate but, in fact, are not. Meta-analyses have shown low correlations between confidence and accuracy in detecting deception (Aamodt & Mitchell, in press), eyewitness testimony (Sporer, Penrod, Read, & Cutler, 1995), and test performance (Kennedy, Lawton, & Plumlee, 2002). This blissful ignorance allows us to believe that our judgments are accurate, even when the research shows that “other people” are not very intuitive.

Even if we were good at using interview answers, non-verbal cues, and vocal cues to accurately determine an applicant’s personality, mood, interests, and values, what would that do for us? If we look at meta-analyses of the validity of various selection methods, we find that personality inventories and interest inventories are two of the lowest predictors of performance! So, if using reliable measures of personality (i.e., personality inventories) result in low levels of prediction, what would we get if we used unreliable human judgment?

Interviewers are Subject to Common Rating Errors

In unstructured interviews, interviewers are subject to several types of common ratings errors that are unrelated to actual interviewee performance. For example, interviewers are subject to *primacy effects* in which we make quick judgments, *contrast effects* where our rating of an applicant is based on our evaluation of the previous applicant, and *negative information bias* in which we apply too much weight to negative information.

Humans are Biased

In highly structured interviews, interviewers are forced to use a scoring key that limits their individual judgments of interviewee answers and limits judgments based on extraneous variables such as sex, race, and appearance. Again, research dealing with unstructured interviews clearly shows that individuals are affected by such things as the applicant’s physical attractiveness, weight, type of perfume or cologne, disability, and similarity to the interviewee (e.g., sex, race, & personality). Not surprisingly, research indicates that structured interviews result in less adverse impact than do unstructured interviews (Huffcutt & Roth, 1998).

Final Thoughts

As mentioned previously, the use of highly structured interviews in which the questions are based on a job analysis, all applicants are asked the same questions, and there

(continued on next page)

is a standard scoring key for each question, will result in more reliable ratings, higher validity coefficients, lower levels of adverse impact, and better legal defensibility (Williamson et al., 1997) than unstructured interviews. Why the superiority? Structured interviews reliably tap job-related information while at the same time reducing the chance for bias and the influence of extraneous variables. Unstructured interviews, however, encourage interviewers to use intuition and are a breeding ground for bias and rating errors.

Research has shown that, whereas structured interviews can add incremental validity to cognitive ability tests (Cortina, Goldstein, Payne, Davison, & Gilliland, 2000), unstructured clinical interviews actually reduce the validity of personality inventories (Aamodt, 2004). Though it is tempting to think humans are good at reading people, using intuition, and making judgments, there is no body of evidence to support such thinking.

References

- Aamodt, M. G. (2005, February). Detecting deception in human resource contexts. *Assessment Council News*, 5-6.
- Aamodt, M. G. (2004). *Research in law enforcement selection*. Boca Raton, FL: BrownWalker Publishing.
- Aamodt, M. G., & Mitchell, H. (in press). Who can best catch a liar? A meta-analysis of individual differences in detecting deception. *Forensic Examiner*, in press.
- Cortina, J. M., Goldstein, N. B., Payne, S. C., Davison, H. K., & Gilliland, S. W. (2000). The incremental validity of interview scores over and above cognitive ability and conscientiousness scores. *Personnel Psychology*, 53(2), 325-351.
- Huffcutt, A. I., & Arthur, W. (1994). Hunter and Hunter (1984) revisited: Interview validity for entry-level jobs. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79(2), 184-190.
- Huffcutt, A. I., & Roth, P. L. (1998). Racial group differences in employment interview evaluations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83(2), 179-189.
- Kennedy, E. J., Lawton, L., & Plumlee, E. L. (2002). Blissful ignorance: The problem of unrecognized incompetence and academic performance. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 24(3), 243-252.
- McDaniel, M. A., Whetzel, D. L., Schmidt, F. L., & Maurer, S. D. (1994). The validity of employment interviews: A comprehensive review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79(4), 599-616.
- Pulakos, E. D., Schmitt, N., Whitney, D., & Smith, M. (1996). Individual differences in interviewer ratings: The impact of standardization, consensus discussion, and sampling error on the validity of a structured interview. *Personnel Psychology*, 49(1), 85-102.
- Sporer, S., Penrod, S., Read, D., & Cutler, B. L. (1995). Choosing, confidence, and accuracy: A meta-analysis of the confidence-accuracy relation in eyewitness identification studies. *Psychological Bulletin*, 118, 315-327.
- Williamson, L. G., Campion, J. E., Malos, S. B., Roehling, M. V., & Campion, M. A. (1997). Employment interview on trial: Linking interview structure with litigation outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82(6), 900-912.

HR Humor

Because the topic of the technical affairs column was structured interviews, I am going to reuse a piece of *HR Humor* from the October, 1996 *Technical Affairs* Column. These are actual interviewing methods I have read about or have been told by people that they use (they usually preface the statement with, "I have this perfect method for screening applicants").

Mike's Top Ten Stupid Interviewer Tricks

- A manager at Wells Fargo won't hire MBA's who take more than 60 seconds to scan the menu at lunch
- A CEO wouldn't hire applicants who salted their food before testing it
- Holiday Inn doesn't hire applicants who smile less than four times during the interview
- An HR professional wouldn't hire applicants who didn't have the backs of their shoes properly shined
- An auto insurance executive takes off points for education, stating, "I don't want the valedictorian. I want the kid who sold cigarettes in the bathroom."
- An HR manager asks applicants about their favorite book
- A town manager likes to leave the room, not come back, and then wait to see how long an applicant will wait
- An HR recruiter asks applicants, "If you could be an animal, what would you be?"
- A local school superintendent won't hire men with hair in their ears

1 Stupid Interviewer Trick

- Any interviewer who does not use structured interviews!—ACN

IPMAAC Across the Nation – News of the Councils

By Kristine Smith, Associate Editor

American Psychological Association (APA)

This year's conference is in Washington, D.C., from August 18-21. Future conferences will be in New Orleans, Louisiana, from August 10-13, 2006, and in San Francisco, California, 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 afternoon sessions from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. featuring several speakers addressing topics, 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 bi-monthly programs and conferences on a wide range of topics. For more information, visit the GIOP website at www.giop.org

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

The 29th Annual IPMAAC Conference was held June 19-22 in Orlando, FL. Bill Waldron has posted many of the session handouts to the IPMAAC website. The 2005 IPMA-HR annual conference is October 15-19 in New

Orleans. The 2006 IPMAAC conference will be June 25-28 in Las Vegas, Nevada. The call for proposals will be issued in the fall.

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.metroapppsych.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 it 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

(continued on next page)

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/ptcnc

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/ptcsc

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.

Western Region Intergovernmental Personnel Assessment Council (WRIPAC)

WRIPAC is comprised of 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 at www.wripac.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 more than 160 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

AUGUST

- 5-10: Academy of Management. Annual Meeting. Honolulu, HI. Contact: www.aomonline.org
- 7-11: American Statistical Association. Annual Convention. Minneapolis, MN. Contact: www.amstat.org
- 10: PTC/MW Luncheon Meeting. Speaker: Dr. Lance Anderson, Caliber Associates.
- 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

SEPTEMBER

- 14: PTC/MW Luncheon Meeting. Speaker: Dr. Deborah Gebhardt, Human Performance Systems, "Physical Ability Tests."
- 21: WRIPAC Training Workshop. Presenter: Mike Willihnganz, "Item Writing." Folsom, CA.
- 21: WRIPAC Training Workshop. Presenters: Donna Terrazas and Shelley Langan. "Workforce Planning: An Approach for Addressing Tomorrow's Challenges Today." Folsom, CA.
- 22-23: WRIPAC Meeting. Folsom, CA.
- 26-30: Human Factors & Ergonomics Society. Annual Conference. Orlando, FL. Contact: www.hfes.org

OCTOBER

- 15-19: IPMA-HR Annual Conference. New Orleans, LA.
- 20: PTC/MW Breakfast Meeting. Speaker: Dr. Fritz Drasgow, University of Illinois, "Assessment & Technology."
- 20-21: PTC/SC Fall Conference.
- 24-26: Society for Human Resources Management. Conference. "Workplace Diversity." Las Vegas, NV. Contact: www.shrm.org
- 26-28: Society for Human Resources Management. Conference. "Strategic HR: Aligning With the Business to Drive Results." New York, NY.
- 28-29: SIOP Fall Conference. "Leadership at the Top: The Selection of Executive Talent." St. Louis, MO. Contact: www.siop.org
- 28-30: Ohio State University. Conference. "Commitment in Organizations: Accumulating Wisdom and New Directions." Contact: klein.12@osu.edu

(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

2005 IPMA Assessment Council Officers and Board Members

President

David Hamill (2001-2006)

Personnel Research Psychologist
Personnel Research & Assessment
Division
Customs and Border Protection
U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW,
Room 2.5B
Washington, DC 20229
Tel (202) 344-3847
Fax (202) 344-3052
David.Hamill@dhs.gov

President-Elect

Beverly Waldron (2005-2007)

Employment and Testing Manager
Pinellas County Government
400 South Fort Harrison Avenue
Clearwater, FL 33756-5113
Tel (727) 464-3367
Fax (727) 464-3876
bwaldron@co.pinellas.fl.us

Past-President

Ilene Gast (2003-2005)

Senior Personnel Research
Psychologist
Personnel Research & Assessment
Division
Customs and Border Protection
U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW,
Room 2.5B
Washington, DC 20229
Tel (202) 344-3834
Fax (202) 344-3052
Ilene.Gast@dhs.gov

IPMAAC Representative to IPMA Executive Council

Paul Kaiser (2003-2005)

Director,
Testing Services Division
New York State Department of Civil
Service
The State Campus
Albany, NY 12239
Tel (518) 457-5465
PDK@cs.state.ny.us

Board Members

Dennis Doverspike (2003-2005)

Professor of Psychology
Psychology Department
University of Akron
Akron, OH 44325
Tel (330) 972-8372
Fax (330) 972-5174
dd1@uakron.edu

Kathryn Singh (Paget) (2004-2006)

EEO Supervisor
County of San Bernardino HR
Department
157 W. Fifth Street - 1st Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0440
Tel (909) 387-5583
Fax (909) 387-6075
ksingh@hr.sbcounty.gov

Donna Terrazas (2004-2006)

Manager of Recruitment &
Classification
East Bay Municipal Utility District
375 11th Street
Oakland, CA 94607
Tel (510) 287-0707
Fax (510) 287-0986
donna@ebmud.com

Inés Fraenkel (2005-2008)

Attorney at Law
Liebert Cassidy Whitmore
153 Townsend Street, Suite 520
San Francisco, CA 94107
Tel (415) 512-3055
Fax (415) 856-0306
ifraenkel@lcwlegal.com

Roxanne Cochran (2005-2008)

Human Resources Analyst
County of San Bernardino HR Department
157 W. Fifth Street, 1st Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0440
Tel (909) 387-5839
Fax (909) 387-5609
rcochran@hr.sbcounty.gov

2005 IPMAAC Committee Chairs

Conference Program

Christine Parker

CPS Human Resources
Senior Personnel Management
Consultant
444 North Capital Street, Suite 201
Washington, DC 20001
Tel (202) 220-1393
Fax (202) 220-1394
CParker@cps.ca.gov

Inés Fraenkel

Attorney At Law
Liebert Cassidy Whitmore
153 Townsend Street, Suite 520
San Francisco, CA 94107
Tel (415) 512-3055
Fax (415) 856-0306
ifraenkel@lcwlegal.com

Conference Host

Déonda Scott

Employment, Assessment and
Development Manager
City of Orlando
400 S. Orange Avenue
Orlando, Florida 32802-4990
Tel (407) 246-2061
Fax (407) 246-2019
deonda.scott@cityoforlando.net

Membership and Committee Services

Martin Anderson

Connecticut Dept of Administrative
Services
165 Capitol Avenue, Room 404
Hartford, CT 06106
Tel (860) 713-5042
Fax (860) 713-7413
martin.anderson@po.state.ct.us

University Liaison/Student Paper Competition

Lee Friedman

SpecTal
13481 Falcon View Court
Bristow, VA 20136
Tel (571) 331-1388
leefriedman1406@yahoo.com

Continuity

Beverly Waldron

Employment and Testing Manager
Pinellas County Government
400 South Fort Harrison Avenue
Clearwater, FL 33756-5113
Tel (727) 464-3367
Fax (727) 464-3876
bwaldron@co.pinellas.fl.us

Professional/Scientific Affairs

Dennis Doverspike

Professor of Psychology
Psychology Department
University of Akron
Akron, OH 44325
Tel (330) 972-8372
Fax (330) 972-5174
dd1@uakron.edu

Assessment Council News

J. Anthony Bayless

Personnel Research Psychologist
Personnel Research & Assessment
Division
Customs and Border Protection
U.S. Dept of Homeland Security
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW,
Room 2.5B
Washington, DC 20229
Tel (202) 344-3833
Fax (202) 344-3052
Anthony.Bayless@dhs.gov

Electronic Communications Network

Bill Waldron

Waldron Consulting Group
4111 Canoga Park Drive
Brandon, FL 33511
Tel (813) 689-8196
webmaster@ipmaac.org

Training/Workshop

Mabel Miramon

California State Personnel Board
MS 37
801 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814
Tel (916) 653-1401
Fax (916) 653-1353
mmiramon@spb.ca.gov

Kristine Smith

Senior Associate
Darany & Associates
1250 San Pablo Avenue
Redlands, CA 92373
Tel (909) 798-4475
smithk1@earthlink.net

Innovations in Assessment Award

Martin Anderson

Connecticut Dept of Administrative
Services
165 Capitol Avenue, Room 404
Hartford, CT 06106
Tel (860) 713-5042
Fax (860) 713-7413
martin.anderson@po.state.ct.us

Nominations/Bylaws

Ilene Gast

Senior Personnel Research
Psychologist
Personnel Research & Assessment
Division
Customs and Border Protection
U.S. Dept of Homeland Security
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW,
Room 2.5B
Washington, DC 20229
Tel (202) 344-3834
Fax (202) 344-3052
Ilene.Gast@dhs.gov

Bemis Award-Nomination

David Hamill

Personnel Research Psychologist
Personnel Research & Assessment
Division
Customs and Border Protection
U.S. Dept of Homeland Security
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW,
Rm. 2.5B
Washington, DC 20229
Tel (202) 344-3847
Fax (202) 344-3052
David.Hamill@dhs.gov



WHO TO HIRE? WHO TO PROMOTE?

**"IPMA-HR provides valid, job-related examinations
used in screening and selecting entry-level police
officers, firefighters and public safety dispatchers."**

**DANNY FORTNER, CHIEF OF POLICE
CITY OF HUNTSVILLE, AL**

- Professional, top-quality exams for police, fire service, corrections, and administrative personnel.
- Exams for hiring or promotion, with customized exams available for upper-level positions in police and fire service.
- A leading specialist with over 50 years of experience.
- Currently assesses more than 200,000 candidates per year.

Contact us for a test catalog or questions.



WEB: www.ipma-hr.org
PHONE: 1-800-381-TEST (8378)
or 703-549-7100
E-MAIL: assessment@ipma-hr.org
FAX: 703-684-0948

About the *ACN*

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:

October issue due on September 2

December issue due on November 4

Articles and information for inclusion in the sections (*News of the Councils, Technical Affairs, Public Sector Practice Exchange*) should be submitted directly to the Associate Editor responsible for the appropriate section. Submissions may also be made to the Editor.

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

Editor

J. Anthony Bayless

Personnel Research Psychologist
U.S. Department of Homeland
Security
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Rm. 2.5B
Washington, DC 20229
Tel (202) 344-3833
Fax (202) 344-3052
Anthony.Bayless@dhs.gov

Associate Editors

Assessment Council Affairs

Kristine Smith

Senior Associate, Darany and Associates
1250 San Pablo Ave.
Redlands, CA 92373
Tel: (909) 798-4475
Smithk1@earthlink.net

Technical Affairs

Mike Aamodt

Professor, Radford University
Department of Psychology
Box 6946, Radford University
Radford, VA 24142
Tel: (540) 831-5513
Fax: (540) 831-6113
maamodt@runet.edu

Practice Exchange

Kathryn Singh (Paget)

EEO Supervisor
County of San Bernardino
Human Resources Dept
157 W. Fifth Street - 1st Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0440
Tel (909) 387-5583, Fax (909)
387-6075
ksingh@hr.sbcounty.gov

Bridget A. Styers

County of San Bernardino
Senior Human Resource Analyst
Manager, Western Region Item
Bank
Tel (909) 387-5575
Fax (909) 387-5792

IPMA Assessment Council

International Public
Management Association –
Human Resources
1617 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: (703) 549-7100
Fax: (703) 684-0948

IPMA-HR Staff

Kathleen Pierce

Manager of Assessment Services
kpierce@ipma-hr.org

IPMA-HR

1617 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: (703) 549-7100
Fax: (703) 684-0948