

SUPERVISORY TEST BATTERY

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL

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BACKGROUND

- Surveys indicate that Supervisory practices are related to employee turnover and are a major source of job stress
- Subordinates basically want two things from Supervisors:
 1. For them to be involved in their Work Structure
 2. Want them to be considerate
- New set of job skills needed in order to be a successful supervisory

BACKGROUND

Objectives:

- Improve retention of professional employees by selecting those who will perform effectively as supervisors.
- Assessment of supervisor-related attributes rather than relying on ratings of experience or examinations designed to assess technical knowledge.
- Use new technologies to simulate real life.
- Increase test utility through “banking” of scores.

JOB ANALYSIS

- In-depth review of the literature, review of job analyses performed by other public HR agencies, and review of previous New Jersey state government job analyses and title specifications.
- Matrix developed which listed core attributes of effective supervisors - identified by each author or study.
- Same attributes identified across studies - different labels.
- Results became the basis for a Job analysis booklet developed for ease of administration and data analysis.

JOB ANALYSIS

- Most important supervisory abilities identified and measured by the STB:

Interpersonal Factors

Interpersonal Skills
Interpersonal Understanding
Relationship Building
Conflict Management
Customer Service Orientation
Valuing Diversity

Supervision Factors

Leadership
Developing
Evaluating
Supporting and Motivating
Others
Team Building
Teamwork and Cooperation
Human Resource Mgmt.
Directing and Guiding

JOB ANALYSIS

Thinking Factors

Problem Solving
Information Seeking
Analytical Thinking
Decisiveness
Judgment

Communication Factors

Communication Skills
Written and Oral Communication
Listening and Speaking Skills
Informing Others

JOB ANALYSIS

Personal Factors

Drive

Initiative

Self-Direction

Achievement Orientation

Self-Confidence

Flexibility

Honesty

Integrity

Stability

Stress Tolerance

DESCRIPTION

Computer-based exam designed to measure the degree to which test candidates possess the many attributes associated with being a successful supervisor.

- Multiple-Choice Format
- Scenario-based
- Weighted options
- High degree of SME involvement
- Instantaneous test results
- Candidate may retain score for up to two years

TEST FORMAT

- “Day-in-the-life” simulation - 120 multiple-choice test items, 2 and 1/2 hours to complete.
- Candidates given background information concerning a fictitious organization and presented with In-Basket items (memos, e-mails, phone calls, etc.) prior to start of the test (50 minutes to review).
- Software allows unlimited number of answer choices including more than one “correct” response.
- Software allows item “branching” so that candidates may choose more than one answer for some questions.

TEST FORMAT

(Continued)

- Answer options may be differentially weighted.

+ 2 Essential to do in the situation

+1 Helpful to do in the situation

0 Neither helpful or harmful to the situation

-1 Harmful to the situation

-2 Essential to avoid in the situation

TEST FORMAT

(Continued)

- Candidates may begin test when ready
- Count-down clock displayed on computer at all times
- Candidates receive their test score upon completion and know if they passed or failed.
- Candidates not permitted to return to previous item:
 - Eliminate test-taking strategy
 - Decisiveness required on job
 - Belief that Items may be related

TEST VALIDATION

- Multiple panels of SMEs used to review and validate.
- 35 SMEs used in validation process. SMEs identified as “above average” or “outstanding.”
- Two separate teams used to review background, draft questions and responses. Each item rated in terms of:
 - Relevance
 - Importance
 - Difficulty
- Each item response reviewed in terms of relative degree of correctness.

TEST VALIDATION

- Each test item linked to supervisory dimensions/competencies.
- “Sensitivity Review” team.
- Last group of SMEs used to pre-test exam.

TEST ADMINISTRATION

- Candidate retains test score for two years; score used for subsequent announcements.
- Candidate has option to re-take exam after one year or retain score.
- No test review
- Two pass points assigned:
 - Supervisors who oversee professional staff
 - Supervisors who oversee paraprofessional staff (no BA/BS required)

RESULTS

- No Adverse Impact
- High Level of Candidate Acceptance
- Faster Turnaround
- Increased Examination Utility

EXAM UTILITY

- STB used to generate eligible lists for over 200 separate, State, County and Municipal titles.
- Used to test Over 500 separate announcements since May 2000.
- Over 3500 candidates tested to date.

EXAM UTILITY

Some of the titles tested by the STB include:

- DISTRICT SUPERVISOR, WAGE AND HOUR COMPLIANCE**
- FIELD SERVICE SUPERVISOR 2, FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**
- INVESTIGATOR 1, REAL ESTATE COMMISSION**
- MICROBIOLOGIST 1**
- PROGRAM SUPERVISOR INTERNAL AUDITS**
- RESEARCH ECONOMIST 1, STATISTICS**
- SUPERVISING ACCOUNTANT**
- SUPERVISING BIOLOGIST - FISHERIES**
- SUPERVISING CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR**
- SUPERVISING LIBRARIAN**

FUTURE

- Alternate version of STB developed and being validated
- Other test batteries in various stages of development:
 - ▶ Managerial Test Battery
 - ▶ Administrative Test Battery
 - ▶ Supervisory Test Battery for Clerical
for Clerical and Paraprofessional Supervisors
- Additional Test Administration sites