

Telephone Assessment Programs: A Low Tech Approach to High Quality Assessment

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Why Do We Care About Low Tech?

- Not Luddites or technophobes!
- Computer Based Testing, Web-Based Testing, other “high tech” approaches have benefits
- So do low tech approaches
 - Paper and pencil testing
 - In this case, utilizing the telephone to accomplish remote assessment
- Select a delivery system that makes sense
 - Mirrors the job
 - Matches organization’s technology infrastructure

What is a Telephone Assessment Program (TAP)?

- Realistic job simulation
- Experience “a day in the life” – or at least a couple hours
 - RJP
 - Face Valid
 - Content Valid
- Participant given time to review background materials
 - Organizational charts, emails, telephone messages, calendar, etc
- Interactions with professional assessors
 - Via telephone, email, chat
 - Each interaction linked to important competencies
 - Based on typical interactions on the job

What is a TAP? (continued)

- Candidate receives and/or makes telephone calls
 - May be expected or unexpected
 - Vary in length
 - One or more assessors on the call
- Competency Based Ratings
 - Interactions rated using behavior-based rating scales
 - Questionnaires
 - Other work product

Developing a TAP

- Determine use
 - Selection, promotion, development, combination
- Begin with thorough job analysis
- Identify situations that might be appropriate for scenarios
 - Job observations and interviews
 - Collect critical incidents
- Work closely with job experts to develop content
 - Includes candidate materials, roleplayer script, evaluation guidelines
- Create draft materials
 - Review, edit, repeat

Validating a TAP

- Content validate materials
 - Review all materials
 - Listen to sample calls
 - Link scenarios to competencies
 - Rate typicality of scenarios
 - Rate similarity of TAP overall to target position
- Review evaluation guidelines
 - Are guidelines associated with appropriate competency?
 - Are guidelines at appropriate level?
 - Are guidelines measuring behaviors that the scenario will elicit?

Implementation

- Setting a cutoff score
 - Determine weighting scheme, if any
 - Job experts provide judgment of minimum score for each competency
- Roll out to field
- Scheduling
 - Challenge of scheduling thousands of candidates at multiple locations
 - Requires coordination among internal and external parties
- On-site presence
 - Material distribution and test administration

Implementation (continued)

- Professional assessors
 - Ph.D. or Masters level
 - Certified on individual programs
 - Diversity
- Rating composites
 - Assessor ratings entered into computerized system
 - Roll up ratings by competency for each scenario, then across scenarios
- Report generation
 - Computer generated feedback report within minutes
 - Complexity of feedback dependent on client needs

Implementation (continued)

- Ongoing quality assurance
 - Taping
 - Monitoring
 - Dual ratings
 - Statistical process control

Results

- Content validity ratios typically from .80 to .99
 - Significant consensus regarding job-relatedness
- Follow-up criterion validation studies have shown strong correlations
 - TAP with various performance measures range from .24 to .45
- Rich in feedback to candidates
 - Is the job right for them and do they have required skills?
- Applicants perceive the TAP as fair – fewer complaints

Challenges and Solutions

- Scenarios must be realistic...
 - Work closely with job experts to ensure realism
 - Obtain access to necessary resources (e.g., job experts at all levels) to capture culture
- ...but not too specific or technical
 - Avoid scenarios dealing with overly technical or organization-specific knowledge
 - Assessors still have to learn a great deal of acronyms and lingo
- How can outside assessors rate “our” people?
 - Highly qualified psychologists (M.A., Ph.D. level)
 - Fully certified on programs with ongoing monitoring
 - Completely anonymous & don’t have any “organizational biases”

Factors Leading to Success

- High-level and broad-based buy-in
 - Senior leadership must support process
 - Legal team, Human Resources, employee associations
- Access to knowledgeable job experts
- Strong internal project manager
 - High level of organizational knowledge