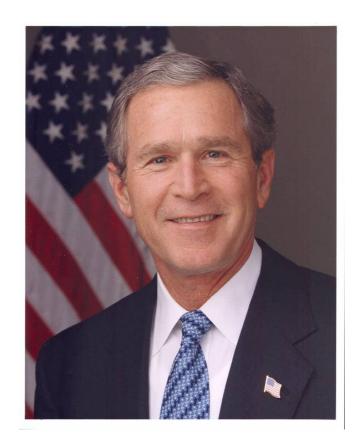


Identifying Human Capital Needs



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT





"We are not here to mark time, but to make progress, to achieve results and to leave a record of excellence."

President George W. Bush





"Motivated, talented employees are key to the success of the strategic management of human capital."

> Kay Coles James Director Office of Personnel Management



Symposium Overview



- Presentation 1 Staying Current: The Diagnostic Testing of Technical Competencies
- Presentation 2 A Competency-Based Needs Analysis of a Federal Agency's IT Workforce: Using Web-Based Assessments to Identify Competency Gaps
- Presentation 3 Using Competency Assessment to Identify High-Potential Leaders for the General Services Administration (GSA)



Diagnostic Testing of Technical Competencies Background



- Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998
- In 2001, IRS implemented modernized structure and management plan
- New IRS structure built around similar taxpayer segments
 - Wage and Investment
 - Small Business and Self-Employed
 - Tax Exempt and Government Entities
 - Large and Mid-Size Business





- Field Assistance is within Wage and Investment Division
- Provides face-to-face customer service for taxpayers with wage and investment income only
- Developed single point of contact approach
- Created Taxpayer Assistance Centers ("walk-in" sites)
- Staffed with new position Tax Resolution Representative (TRR)





- Tax Resolution Representatives (TRRs) provide one-stopservice to taxpayers
- TRRs must maintain proficiency on a wide array of complex issues
- IRS lacked a formal mechanism to identify individual strengths and weaknesses
- Providing refresher training to each employee on each content area would waste valuable training resources

Solution: Training Assessment Battery



- Assesses gaps between required and current knowledge
- Targets and quantifies specific developmental needs
- Avoids staggering costs of unnecessary training
- Contains modules for specific competency areas
- Links diagnostic test results to delivery of targeted training
- Provides separate Training Assessment Battery (TAB) for managers (M-TAB) and employees (E-TAB)



Item Pool Development – Managers



- Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) developed test specifications derived from job analysis
- Manager SMEs reviewed existing material and wrote additional test items to fill out test plan
- Second SME panel reviewed item pool and developed additional items
- Manager SMEs began preliminary work on E-TAB specifications
- Consensus across both manager SME panels was that a single TAB would be appropriate for employees *and* managers

Item Pool Development – Employees



- Employee SME panel not informed of managerial panel results
- SME panel reviewed test specifications and item bank
- Employee SMEs independently concluded that a single TAB would be appropriate for managers and employees
- Consensus: Managers and employees are expected to maintain the same level of technical proficiency
- Employee SME panel also wrote additional items



Content Validation Study



- 15 Subject Matter Experts (7 managers and 8 employees) participated in the validation study
- Five phases of study
 - Answer each test item
 - Classify each item by content area and sub-area
 - Rate quality of item as a measure of the intended competency
 - Estimate item difficulty
 - Provide comments on item clarity, technical accuracy, quality of response options, etc.



Selecting Test Items



- Goal: Select the very best items from each sub-area for inclusion in the TAB
- Item selection criteria (in order of importance):
 - Relevance of item to test plan content area
 - Average item quality rating
 - Agreement concerning keyed response
 - > Average item difficulty (balance of easy, medium, and hard)
- Separate SME panel reviewed item statistics and made final item selections



Final Comments



- Linking assessment to developmental needs
- Diagnostic versus selection test development
- Measuring different types/levels of knowledge
- Multiple-choice format: efficient, economical, and objective
- Importance of the organizational culture and working environment



Identifying Competency Gaps Background



- Large Federal Government agency
- Most critical technical competencies for Information Technology (IT) workforce
- Maintenance/enhancement of workforce skill-base
- Greater organizational flexibility

Process



- Conducted panel of fourteen subject matter experts from across IT specialty areas
- Linked agency knowledge, skills, and abilities to IT competencies
- Rated IT technical competencies on criticality
- Defined minimum level of proficiency required of any employee
- Linked most critical technical competencies to online IT assessments
- Reviewed assessment information, assessment scoring protocols, and minimum level of proficiency needed to establish minimum score
- Administered assessments

Results



- 252 of 330 employees participated (76%)
- 972 out of possible 1320 assessments administered (74%)
- Agency gap in 1 of 4 measured competencies
- Sectional and/or Office deficiencies in 2 of remaining 3 competencies

Summary



- Successes:
 - Identification of most critical competencies
 - Objective assessment of proficiency
 - Targeted training and development
 - Enhanced organizational skill-base and flexibility
 - Ability for follow-up assessment
- Areas for improvement:
 - Greater participation
 - Enhanced coverage of competencies by assessments
 - Examination within career levels and/or specialty areas



Assessment to Identify High-Potential Leaders Background



- Early 2001, demographic studies showed that more than half of the executives in the federal government would be eligible to retire within 5 years
- Public Buildings Services (PBS) of the General Services Administration decided to undertake an aggressive program to develop the next cohort of leaders for their agency
- OPM worked with PBS to identify high-potential individuals for an accelerated leadership development program



Identifying Core Leadership Competencies for PBS (2001)



- OPM psychologists conducted focus groups for three levels of management at PBS. Groups conducted at headquarters and field locations.
- OPM's 27 leadership competencies (which aggregate into the Five Executive Core Qualifications) were used as the starting point for the focus groups discussions.
- Criterion: Importance in foreseeable future (i.e., 3 years).
- Focus group results and executive input used to narrow list to 14 core leadership competencies.



Design of Selection System to Identify High Potential Leaders



- Three part competency assessment process developed by OPM: (1) Accomplishment Record, (2) Assessment Center, and (3) Executive Panel Interview.
- Accomplishment Record and Executive Panel interview assessed past behavior of candidates. GSA senior-level leaders trained on how to assess candidates.
- Assessment Center was provided by Third Party Vendor. Placed candidates in demanding situations to assess current ability to perform competencies at a high level.
- Process designed to select on the basis of individual merit and to place all candidates on an even-playing field.

Lessons Learned



- Involve key stakeholders throughout the process
- Focus on procedural fairness
- Use multiple methods to evaluate candidates
- Avoid "clinical" judgment in deciding who gets in
- Involve third-party experts (e.g., OPM's Assessment and Training Assistance Group)
- Evaluate program annually and make adjustments



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