



Public Service Commission
of Canada

Commission de la fonction publique
du Canada



Streamlined Assessment Centre for Executive Selection

Valid, Quick, Cost-effective & Portable

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Canada

The Public Service Commission of the Government of Canada (PSC)

- Mandate: to ensure that staffing in the Public Service is meritorious, non-partisan and representative
- Personnel Psychology Centre (PPC) operates within the Staffing and Assessment branch of the PSC to provide assessment services and tools for the selection and development of people at all levels in the Public Service



Overview...

- Assessment centres and executive selection
- Impetus for developing a new tool
- Challenges
- Considerations
- Steps taken in developing the new tool
- Meeting the challenges
- Summary



Assessment centres and executive selection

- AC's for executive development since the 1970's
- AC for executive selection since 1992
- Assessment Centre for Executive Appointment
- “AC for EXA”
 - Candidates placed in a simulated position at the entry level for executives
 - Candidates provided with opportunities to show competencies by dealing with varied issues and challenges typical for the position



Assessment centres and executive selection... the AC for EXA in 1992

- 3 day process
 - background material sent by post in advance
- 12 leadership dimensions / competencies
 - Intellectual, management, personal
- 5 exercises
 - In-basket; meeting with subordinate manager, employee, client, superior
- 4 actors play the roles
- 2 assessors
 - **Day 1:** one assessor observes each meeting; completes summaries
 - **Day 2:** rate the candidates and integrate results
- 1 psychologist
 - Day 1: scores in-basket; Day 2: conducts integration; **Day 3** completes and dispatches report which is in narrative form, and feedback



Impetus for developing a new tool

- AC for EXA 10 years old
- Evolution of the competencies
- Anticipated increase in executive staffing
- Increased focus on development



Challenges

TO DO THIS:

- **Reduce assessment to one day**
- **Make assessment portable**
- **Incorporate richer feedback**
- **Incorporate technology**

BUT NOT TAKE AWAY THIS:

- **Provide rigorous, independent, 3rd party assessment**
- **Provide a level playing field**
- **Valid, reliable and fair**



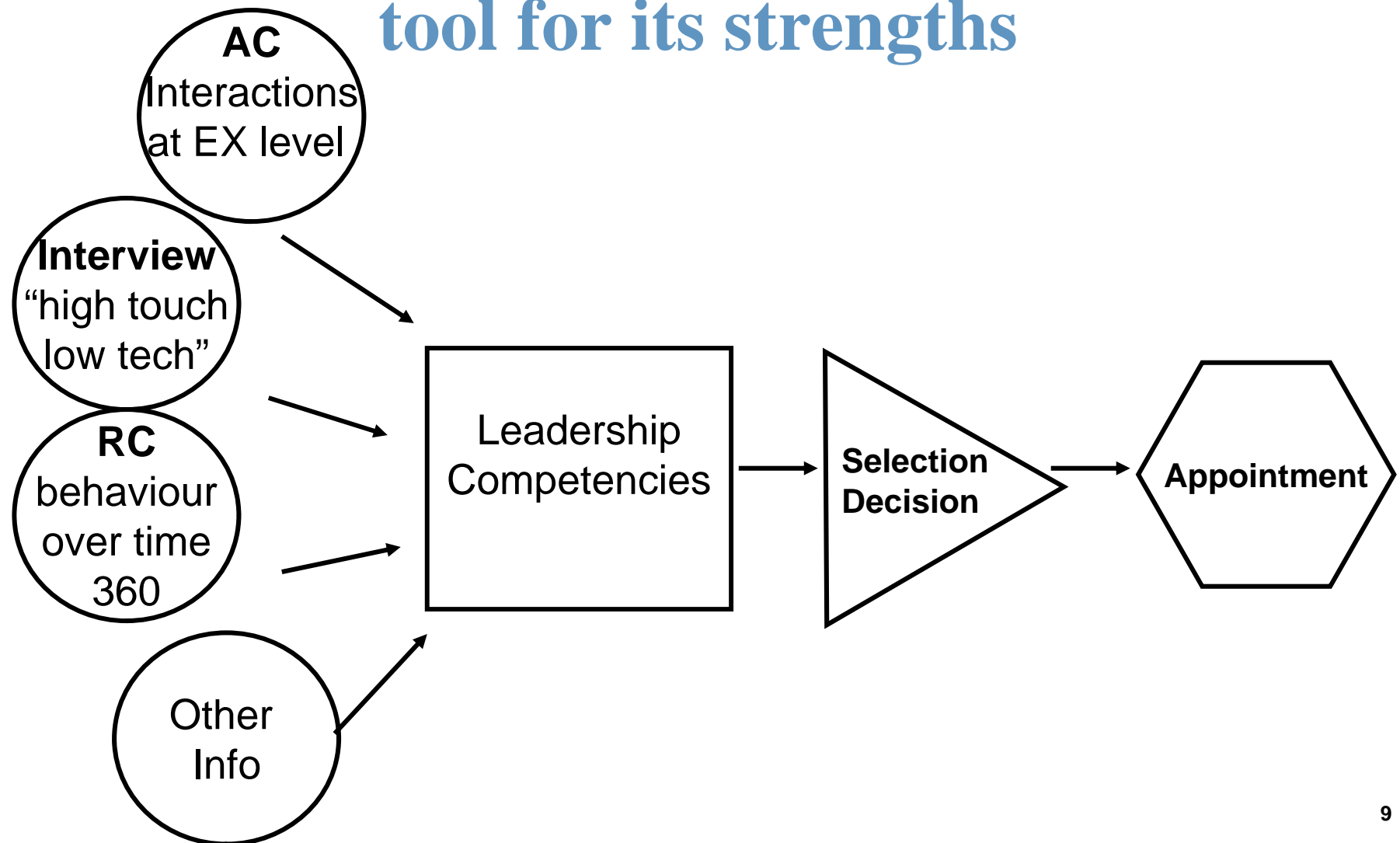


Considerations

- **Need to consider the entire selection process**
- **Use each tool for its strengths**
 - Each tool has its advantages and disadvantages
- **Assessment tools driven by the leadership competencies to be assessed...**



Consider the entire process and use each tool for its strengths



Steps taken in the development process

- Consulted widely within and outside of the Public Service
- Identified the leadership competencies to be assessed
- Identified executive issues and challenges
- Developed the scenario and sequencing
- Developed the scale and behavioural descriptors
- Developed the framework for integration and report
- Conducted multiple pre-tests and made refinements



Meeting the challenges... What does the new AC look like?

- OLD
 - 3 days
 - 12 competencies
 - 5 exercises
 - 4 actors
 - 2 assessors
 - Integration next day
 - 1 psychologist
 - Report Day 3
 - Low tech
- NEW
 - 1 day
 - 7 competencies
 - 3 interactive exercises
 - 2 assessors observe all exercises; scripts
 - Integration same day
 - 1 psychologist
 - Report same day
 - “High tech”

Meeting the challenges... through a new approach to the exercises

- Criteria for choosing a scenario for the Public Service
- National in scope, futuristic, rich in diversity issues, rich in dynamic tensions... yet familiar
 - Cultural institution: Canada Health Sciences Museum
 - Candidates placed in the simulated position of the museum's director



Meeting the challenges...through a new approach to the exercises

- Meeting with superior and peer
 - **Big picture focus – “cool”**
- Meeting with two subordinate managers
 - **Interpersonal focus – “warm”**
- Meeting with a client...
 - **External focus**

All meetings interactive, and equally “rich”, providing candidate opportunities to demonstrate all the competencies and behaviours assessed



Meeting the challenges...through a new approach to integration

- Historically: consensus approach
 - Assessors met after candidate completed all exercises
 - Final rating on each competency arrived at through discussion
- Statistical approach
 - Assessors individually rate each competency
 - Ratings combined mathematically to yield the final rating
 - Research: “virtually the same bottom line results...without going through the consensus process”
 - But no definitive answer on best method to combine ratings

PPC's combined consensus and statistical approach



Meeting the challenges...through a new approach to integration

- Two assessors observe first exercise and take notes
- Immediately after, for the first competency, they individually rate each behaviour and arrive at a rating
- Share rating on the behavioural indicator
 - If agree or within one point of agreeing, go on to next behaviour
 - If 2-point disagreement, discuss and reach 'consensus'
- Repeat for each competency in turn, and all 3 exercises
- Candidate's overall rating on a competency is the average of ratings across the 3 exercises

15



Meeting the challenge... rating guides

1	2	3	4	5
Minimal	Some	Moderate	Considerable	Great

Competency: Cognitive Capacity

Behaviour 1 of 3: Provides a coherent picture of multiple issues and projects by analyzing, integrating and accurately interpreting complex information

5 Great

- sub-behaviour

-e.g.,

-e.g.,

- sub-behaviour

-e.g.,

- sub-behaviour

-e.g.,...

3 Moderate...

1 Minimal...

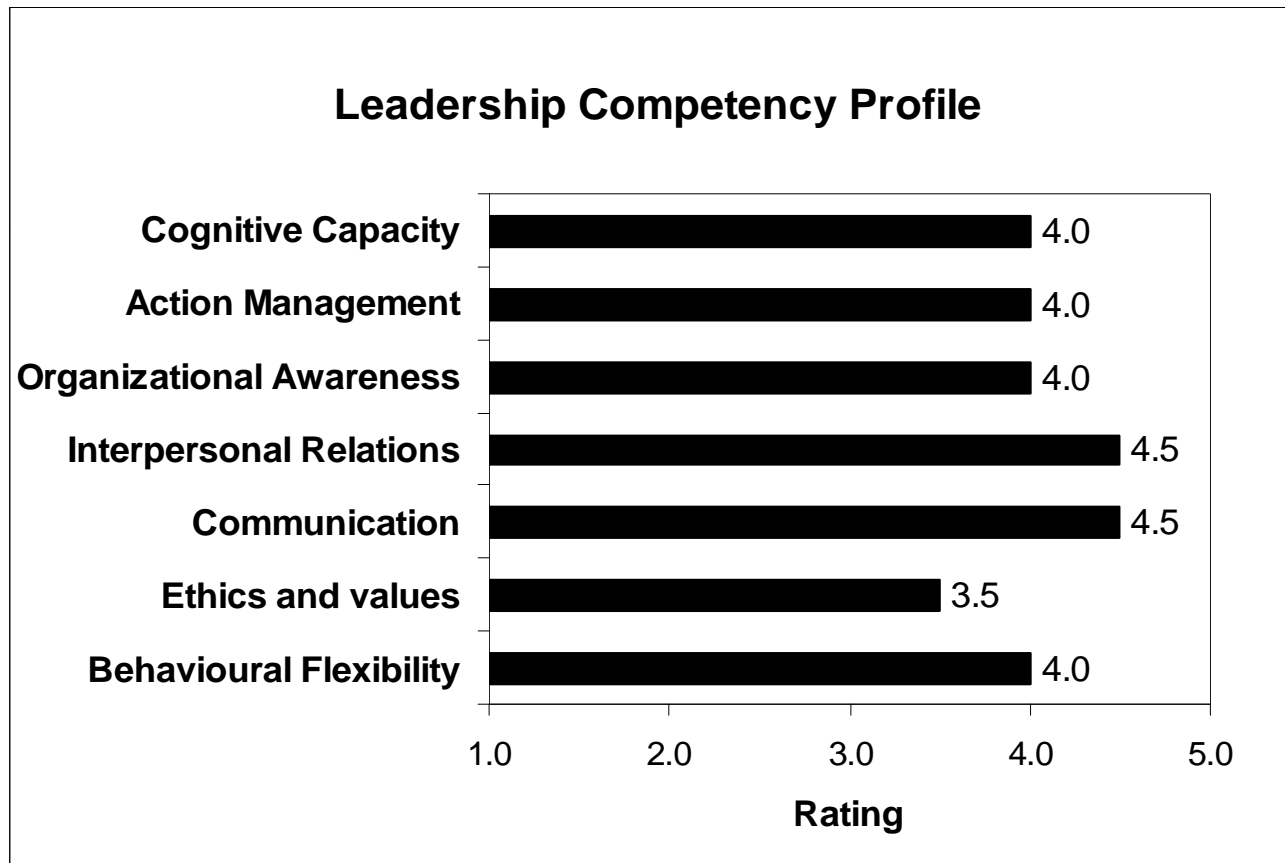


Meeting the challenges...through a new visual approach to the report

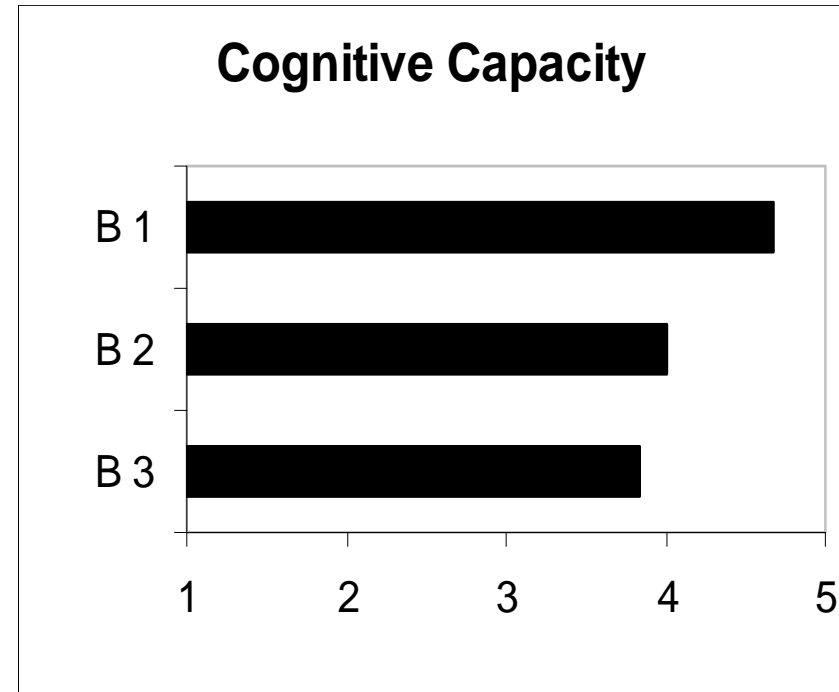
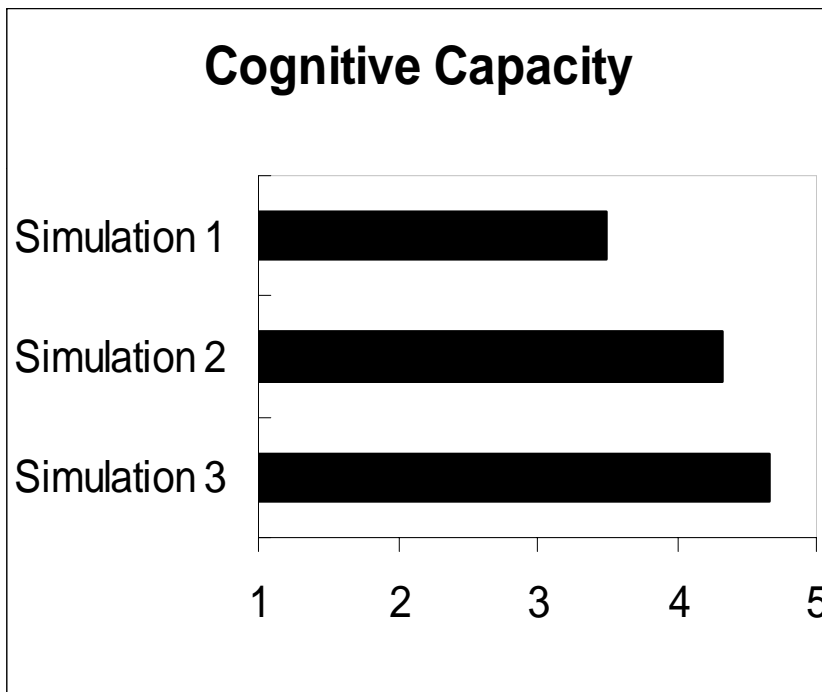
- Old: narrative report
- Selection information
 - Competency ratings
 - Narrative for each competency
- Labour intensive
- **New:** graphic format
- Additional information for development
 - Ratings by exercise
 - Ratings by behaviours
- Labour friendly
 - automated report



Meeting the challenges...through a new visual approach to the report



Meeting the challenges...through a new visual approach to the report



Summary

- ✓ Completed in one day
- ✓ Portable
- ✓ Rich in feedback
- ✓ Efficacious through technology
- ✓ Rigorous, independent, 3rd party assessment
- ✓ Level playing field
- ✓ Valid, reliable, fair

VALID, QUICK, COST-EFFECTIVE & PORTABLE





Questions?

www.psc-cfp.gc.ca

THANK YOU

