Implementing an Assessment Program for Executive Candidates

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Overview

- **Background**
  - Sodexo – who are we?
  - Hiring process for management positions

- **Executive Assessments**
  - Why?
  - The process
  - Resources
  - Outcomes

- **Recommendations and future directions**
First of all, we have no “h”!

Sodexo is the leading food and facilities management services company in North America

**Revenues:** $7.2 billion USD
- Including approximately $1 billion in facilities management

**Locations:**
- **Schools:** 500
- **Universities & colleges:** 1,000
- **Nursing and retirement homes:** 500
- **Hospitals:** 1,800
- **Business and Industry:** 2,000
- **Government and Defense:** 70
- **Remote sites:** 50 (Alaska, Canada and Mexico)

**Employees:** 125,000+; 20,000 management, 105,000 hourly
Sodexo Management Competency Model
Hiring Process for Management Positions

1. Job Posted on Career Center
2. Candidates Apply for Job
3. Basic Qualifications
4. Phone Screen
5. Competency Interview
6. Hiring Manager Interview
7. Tentative Selection Made
8. Review Panel Approval
Objectives of Executive Individual Assessment Process

• Implement a standardized, valid, and fair selection process for executive hiring

• Provide hiring managers with detailed information on candidates’ abilities, skills, and personal characteristics that impact executive success

• Utilize multiple assessments to assess candidates’ overall executive potential

• Scope: All VP positions grade 13 and above; optional and for a fee for grade 12 positions
  • Filled 40 positions in calendar year 2007
  • Projected to fill 60 positions in 2008
Executive Selection Process

1. Job Posted on Career Center
2. Candidates Apply for Position
3. Initial Screening of Candidates
4. Executive Individual Assessment and Feedback Report to Hiring Managers
5. Interviews (Panel and/or Multiple)
6. Hiring Manager Selection Decision
7. Feedback Report Provided to Internal Candidates
Executive Assessment Competencies

- Achieving Market Growth
- Building Strategic Relationships
- Communicating Persuasively
- Financial Acumen
- Leading for Excellence
- Promoting a Client-Focused Culture
- Strategic Thinking
- Talent Management
Executive Assessment Components

- Interview with I/O Psychologist
- Analytical Skills Assessments
  - Verbal Reasoning Test
  - Critical Thinking Skills Test
  - Creative Problem Solving Test
  - Numerical Reasoning Test
- Personal Characteristics Assessments
  - “Values” Assessment
  - “Social Styles” Assessment
Executive Assessment Part I: The Interview

Description: Candidate participates in an interview with Sodexho I/O Psychologist
Administration Time: 1 ½ hours
Assessment Scoring: Sodexho Psychologist records responses and provides clinical assessment of candidate’s experiences and work styles.

Interview

- Interview focuses on candidate’s history, qualifications, skills, and personality
  - Education and Work History
  - Accomplishments
  - Problem Solving Style
  - Leading/Management Style
  - Work Style
  - Strengths and Developmental Needs
  - Career Goals and Aspirations
  - Communication Style
Executive Assessment Part Ila: Analytical Skills Assessments

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Reasoning Test</td>
<td>Assesses verbal reasoning abilities that impact executive success.</td>
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<td>Executive norms used</td>
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<td>40 Questions (18 Minutes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Problem Solving Test</td>
<td>Assesses spatial reasoning that impacts executive creativity and planning/organizing success.</td>
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<td>Executive norms used</td>
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<td>64 Questions (20 Minutes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking Skills Test</td>
<td>Assesses critical thinking abilities that impact executive success.</td>
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<td>Executive norms used</td>
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<td>40 Questions (35 Minutes)</td>
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<td>Numerical Reasoning Test</td>
<td>Assesses quantitative analytical reasoning that impacts executive success.</td>
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<td>Executive norms used</td>
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<td>20 Questions (5 Minutes)</td>
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Description: Candidate is administered four cognitive ability tests that address thinking and decision-making skills.
Administration: Timed paper and pencil tests
Administration Time: 1 ½ hours
Assessment Scoring: Responses are scored. Scores are then compared with normative database of over 9,000 high-performing managers and executives.
Executive Assessments Part IIb: Personal Characteristics Assessments

Description: Candidate is administered two personal characteristics assessments.
Administration: Timed paper and pencil assessments.
Administration Time: 1 hour
Assessment Scoring: Responses are scored. Scores are then compared with normative database of over 9,000 high-performing managers and executives.

“Values” Assessment
- Focuses on a person’s underlying values that impact executive decision-making
- Executive norms used
- 45 Questions (Not Timed)

“Social Styles” Assessment
- Assesses four social styles that lead to executive success.
- Executive norms used
- 18 Questions (Not Timed)
Feedback Report

Two part report:
  • Narrative Report
    - Problem Solving and Critical Thinking
    - Communication and Persuasiveness
    - Work Style and Motivation
    - Leadership Abilities
    - Overall Recommendation for the Position and Factors to Maximize Success
  • Metrics Page
    - Percentile scores on the four cognitive tests
    - Ratings on each of the executive competencies

Feedback report given to hiring manager and debriefed with Sodexo I/O

Internal candidates (or externals who are hired) are given the same feedback report for development
Resources

- **Sodexo I/O Psychologists’ time and expertise**
  - Estimated about a full day of time for each candidate, including administration, scoring, and feedback report
  - Analysis of volume of candidates – break point for need for another I/O

- **Consortium with other organizations – normative database for test scoring and feedback summary**
  - $400 per candidate for scoring
Outcomes

- In-depth analysis of critical skills for key leadership positions
- Feedback from hiring managers:
  - Better hires
  - Greater confidence in hiring decisions
  - Ability to help new executives hit the ground running
- Some candidates hired are now hiring managers in this process...
- Expansion of the process:
  - Developmental purposes
  - VP positions grade 12
Recommendations and Future Directions

- **Recommendations:**
  - Target competencies critical for the positions
  - Develop assessments that minimize time for candidates
  - Minimize time impact on hiring process
  - Tangible outcomes for hiring managers and organization
  - Partnership with stakeholders – executive recruiters, hiring managers

- **Future directions:**
  - Continued expansion of the program to field positions (e.g., District Managers)
  - Tie-in to global executive assessment process for Sodexo
  - Link to 360 assessments, currently contractual and as-needed
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