

## Assessment and Development Centers

*In an Assessment or Development Center several participants are observed and evaluated at the same time. The results of this evaluation may either be used to choose the most suitable candidate for a specific position or serve as the basis for the participants' individual development.*

The Assessment Center (AC) and the Development Center (DC) are customised instruments for selection and support purposes. With these tools, the behaviour of several participants can be described and assessed by members of management according to a previously established set of requirements.

In Assessment and Development Centers, practice-oriented group exercises, discussions and various tasks are performed together with trained observers from the client-company and mpw consultants. The results of these procedures are used primarily to demonstrate social and leadership competences, as well as performance.

### Assessment Center

An Assessment Center is used to evaluate the participants' abilities and potential. It is often used as part of a selection process in view of accessing a higher hierarchical level. The participants work on a number of tasks both independently and in groups. Several assessors are involved, providing structure, while observing and evaluating the participants on the basis of clearly defined competences.

The results of the Assessment Center are set out in a written report. This is followed by feedback discussions with the participants in order to explain how the conclusions stated in the report were drawn. A development plan based on the AC could usefully be drawn up.

### Development Center

Development Centers usually consist of events organised outside the normal work environment. The participants practice their skills in communication, leadership and problem-solving in down-to-earth, practice-oriented and challenging situations. Their behaviour is observed on the basis of proven methods, and they are provided continuous feedback pertaining to clearly defined competences. The DC takes place in a constructive and supportive environment which promotes the learning process and allows the participants to adapt to new behavioural methods.

The goal of a Development Center is to attain the highest possible correspondence between the potential of the employee and the requirements of the company so that the company's management may make the best use of its abilities to meet corporate objectives. A development plan may be set up on the basis of the results of the DC.

### Benefits

Efficient cooperation and effective leadership are desired in any organisation. While facts and figures are reflected in statistics and balance sheets, managers rarely receive feedback on their social behaviour. This lack of guidelines is perceived by many as a shortcoming. A DC or an AC carried out in a professional context is the solution for accommodating this shortfall.

### Involvement on the Part of Management

Whenever feasible we do our best to involve the supervisor of the Assessment or Development Center participants. Our experience in this field has shown that involvement on the part of the participant's superior brings clear advantages: instead of forming their impression by simply referring to a factual report, bosses have the opportunity to experience first-hand how their subordinates deal with the various tasks as compared with the other participants.

Such eyewitness experience is often more meaningful than the most comprehensive expert report. The tendency on the part of a manager to assess his or her own employee too positively can be easily overcome by a competent facilitator.

#### **Methods and Tools**

The exercises in our Assessment and Development Centers are designed to reflect as realistically as possible everyday management situations in the business world. The tasks we set are representative; they are examples of practice-oriented problems that mirror typical leadership and management issues.

These are the exercises which we normally use in our Assessment and Development Centers:

- Group discussions
- Pair discussions (primarily concerning leadership, negotiation or sales)
- Presentations
- Computer simulations (linked systems)
- Personality and Performance tests

The exercises are partly interconnected, making it therefore possible to observe how the participants make use of the information and feedback gathered from previous tasks.

The feedback discussions with the participants form an important element of every Assessment or Development Center. This particular aspect is highly valued at mpw as we want to make sure that each participant understands the rationale behind the statements contained in the report. For the purpose of the learning process, it is crucial that one understands the actual effects and repercussions of one's behaviour.

#### **Duration**

Assessment/Development Centers are carried out normally over two or sometimes three days. mpw can draw on a variety of long-standing tried and tested programmes. Our services range from the development of the AC to its organisation and performance, including its integration into the company's management development system.

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