



FENESTRA

A Division of Sandra Hartog & Associates

Assessment Centers 2011: Fifty years of best practices and today's innovations

THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES
Advisers to the Nation on Science, Engineering, and Medicine

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Objectives

Describe

-  What an Assessment Center (AC) is and its Technical Qualities
-  Challenges and the Innovation of Technology in ACs
-  An Example of Development and Execution of a Technology Enhanced AC (TEAC)

What is an Assessment Center (AC) ?

🏠 ...a *standardized* evaluation of behavior based on *multiple inputs*. Several *trained observers* and techniques are used. *Judgments* about behavior are made, in major part, *from specifically developed assessment simulations*. These *judgments are pooled* in a meeting among the assessors or by a statistical integration process. In an integration discussion, comprehensive accounts of behavior – and often ratings of it – are pooled. The discussion *results in evaluations of the assessee's performance* on the dimensions or other variables that the assessment center is designed to measure.

Source: Guidelines and Ethical Considerations for Assessment Center Operations (2009).

Essential Features of ACs

The 10 Essential Elements of an Assessment Center *

- 📦 Job Analysis
- 📦 Assessment Techniques
- 📦 Multiple Assessments
- 📦 Behavioral Classification
- 📦 Simulations
- 📦 Assessors
- 📦 Assessor Training
- 📦 Recording Behavior
- 📦 Reports
- 📦 Data Integration

AC Common Uses

🗑️ Selection and Promotion

🗑️ Identification of Training & Development Needs

🗑️ Skill Enhancement through Simulations



Typical Dimensions Measured

21st Century Skills	Sample AC Dimensions
Interpersonal	Communication, Influencing Others, Learning from Interactions Leadership, Teamwork, Fostering Relationships, Conflict Management
Cognitive	Problem Solving, Decision Making, Innovation, Creativity, Planning and Organizing
Intrapersonal	Adaptability, Drive, Tolerance for Stress, Motivation, Conscientiousness

Why ACs Have Lasted 50 Years in Industry

- 📦 Flexible with Guidelines
- 📦 Rich insight into *how* someone performs
- 📦 Valid and fair
- 📦 Credible with management and participants
- 📦 Provide experience and realistic previews
- 📦 Useful for selection and development

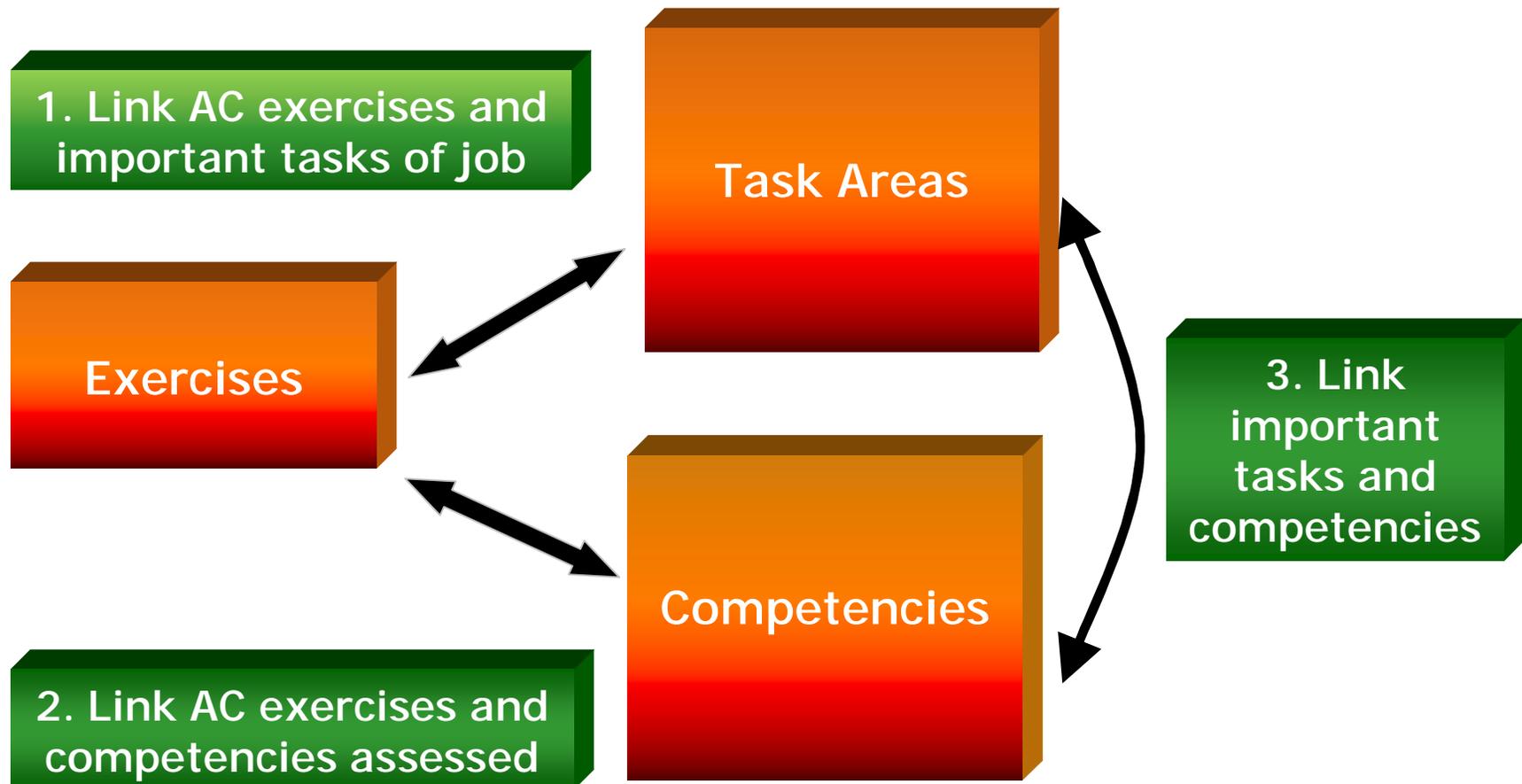


Reliability

- History of test-re-test reliability (.70)
- Inter-rater agreement before integration varies (.50-.94)
 - Assessor training, simulation interpretation guides, and BSS scales support consistency in classification and calibration

Level	Rating	Behavioral Evaluation Standards
		Examples of behaviors that represent a Significant Strength include, but are not limited
<p>Simulation Interpretation Guide Capax Communications, Inc.</p> <p><u>The Simulation</u></p> <p>Throughout the simulation the Participant assumes the role of the new Director of the Springfield Region of Capax Communications, Inc. The simulation is designed to reflect a day in the life of a Director-level manager, and thus the Participant is faced with a series of inter-related, yet distinct, problems and interactions throughout the course of the LSA. A series of background materials are provided to orient the Participant to the role. These include:</p> <p>Pre-work Documents – provided prior to the Assessment Company Overview of Capax Communications, Inc. Orientation to the role of Director Crumple Cable – New Corporate Strategy Description of Fiber Optic Network – FONSM</p>		
Some Development Needed <i>The participant would benefit from development in this area</i>	2	<p>Examples of behaviors that represent Some Development Needed include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø Built relationships with only a few trusted others Ø Worked only within select cohort group Ø Addressed work problems with little consideration to relationship building Ø Did not promote ideas with adequate arguments for position or business case Ø Had difficulty influencing others and identifying what motivates others Ø Did not customize approach based on individual need

Content Validity: Most Popular Strategy



Source: Fenestra/APT Validation Technical Report. (2007).

Criterion and Incremental Validity

Study	Validity
Management Progress Study (1966)	.33-.46
Meta-Analyses (1984-2008)	.30-.53
SH&A/Fenestra E-evaluation (2007)	.41-.48
Manager Ready (Byham, 2010)	.43

Incremental validity over cognitive ability tests, personality assessments, and interviews

History of Demonstrated Fairness

- ▣ Shown to have no adverse impact on minority groups
- ▣ Unbiased in predictions of job performance
- ▣ Viewed by participants as being more fair and has received positive support from the courts and the E.E.O.C.

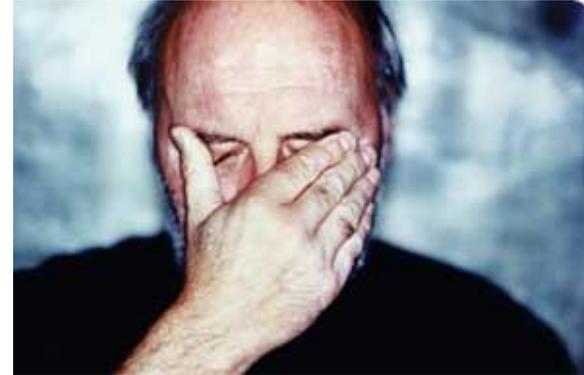
Challenges

🏠 Cost

🏠 Logistics

🏠 Scalability

🏠 Realism



Recent Innovations -- Technology



Changed the way assessment centers are developed and administered

49% of AC users surveyed have incorporated technology

75% expect over half the centers to include technology in the next 2 years



Computerization should be consistent with best practice guidelines and hallmarks of ACs!



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TEAC Example

TEAC Development Plan

Phase I	Scoping and Planning	Weeks 1
Phase II	Center Development	Weeks 3-12
	Job Analysis/Define Dimensions	
	Create Assessment Plan/Build Exercises	
	Conduct Assessment Reviews	
	Revise Assessment Materials	
	Develop Benchmarks and Interpretation Guide for Scoring Protocol	
	Conduct Content Validation	
	Load Simulation Materials into Technology Platform	
	Establish "Center" Schedule	
	Pilot Assessment	
	Train Assessors	
Phase III	Implementation	Weeks 13- ongoing
	Conduct Assessments	
Phase IV	Trend Analysis and Support for Improvement Planning	ongoing

TEAC Example: Assessment Process



TEAC Example: Administration Panel

The screenshot displays a web browser window with the URL <https://assess.fenestrainc.net/default.aspx?Path=Assessments/Assessments>. The browser's address bar shows the page title "E-evaluation - Administration Tool". The main content area features a table with three rows of assessment data. Each row includes a participant name, assessment title, date and time, status, and a list of administrative actions.

Participant Name	Assessment Title	Date and Time	Status	Actions
Participant Name	Leadership Skills Assessment 2008.03.31 (908-559-1518) Additional Contact Information	4/29/2008 9:00 AM Eastern Standard Time Fixed	6:18AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- View Summary Reports- View Flip Charts+ Admin Actions- Simulation Actions
Participant Name	Leadership Skills Assessment 2008.03.31 (301-236-7325) Additional Contact Information	4/25/2008 9:30 AM Eastern Standard Time Fixed	Incomplete	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- View Simulation Input- View Evaluation Forms- View Summary Reports- View Flip Charts+ Admin Actions- Simulation Actions
Participant Name	Leadership Skills Assessment 2008.03.31 (*) Close Section • Assessor 1: [redacted] Assessor1 (555-1234) • Assessor 2: [redacted] Assessor2 (555-4321) • Assessor 3: [redacted] Assessor3 (555-5555) • Lead Assessor: sha [redacted] lead_assessor (555-2345) • Administrator: [redacted] TA (555-1212)	4/25/2008 9:00 AM Eastern Standard Time Fixed	Not Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- View Simulation Input- View Evaluation Forms- View Summary Reports- View Flip Charts- Close Section- View Details- Mark As Completed- Delete

At the bottom of the table, there is a pagination control showing "1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ...". The browser's status bar at the bottom indicates "Internet" and "100%" zoom.

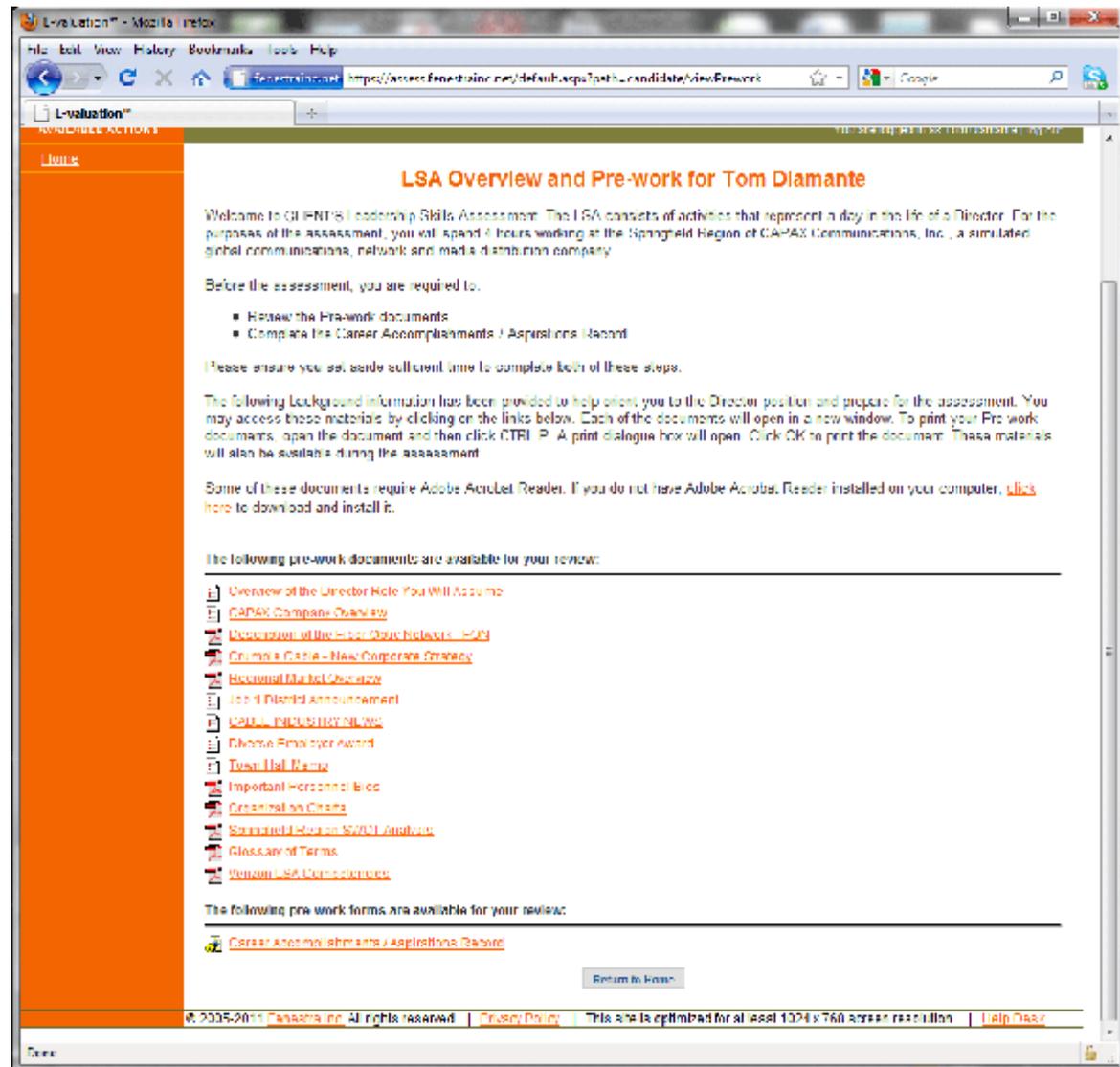
TEAC Example: Pre-work

Preparation materials

Simulated company and market background information

Position description

Career Accomplishments Profile



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title "L-evaluation™ - Mozilla Firefox". The address bar shows the URL "https://access.finastraining.com/default.aspx?path=Candidate/ViewPrework". The page content is titled "LSA Overview and Pre-work for Tom Diamante".

Welcome to CIPENT's Leadership Skills Assessment. The LSA consists of activities that represent a day in the life of a Director. For the purposes of the assessment, you will spend 4 hours working at the Springfield Region of CAPAX Communications, Inc., a simulated global communications, network and media distribution company.

Before the assessment, you are required to:

- Review the Framework documents
- Complete the Career Accomplishments / Aspirations Record

Please ensure you set aside sufficient time to complete both of these steps.

The following Background Information has been provided to help orient you to the Director position and prepare for the assessment. You may access these materials by clicking on the links below. Each of the documents will open in a new window. To print your Pre-work documents, open the document and then click CTRL + P. A print dialogue box will open. Click OK to print the document. These materials will also be available during the assessment.

Some of these documents require Adobe Acrobat Reader. If you do not have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer, [click here](#) to download and install it.

The following pre-work documents are available for your review:

- Overview of the Director Role You Will Assume
- CAPAX Company Overview
- Description of Division/Group/Network - EOC
- Company Goals - High Corporate Strategy
- Regional Market Overview
- Job Offer Announcement
- CALL INDUSTRY NEWS
- Diverse Employer Award
- Top 100 News
- Important Personnel Bios
- Organization Charts
- Springfield Region SWOT Analysis
- Glossary of Terms
- Western USA Communications

The following pre-work forms are available for your review:

- Career Accomplishments / Aspirations Record

Return to Exam

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TEAC Example: Inbox-A Virtual Desktop

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "E-evaluation™ - Program - Windows Internet Explorer" with the URL "https://assess.fenestrainc.net/candidate/". The page header is "Leadership Skills Assessment" with a login for "Matt Dreyer" and a "Sign Out" link. On the left is a navigation menu with "Mail" (selected), "Calendar", "Documents", "Tools", and "Help". The "Mail" section shows "New Mail Message" and folders for "Inbox", "Sent Items", and "Deleted Items". The main area is titled "My Inbox" and contains a table of emails:

	!	📎	Subject	From	Received
				Director, WRIGHTSVILLE Region	12:13PM
			Meeting to Discuss Sales Incentive Compensation	ronnie.larue@cpxcom.com [Ronnie Larue, Manager, Business Sales, East District - Springfield]	Mar 13 2008 12:03PM
			Monthly Performance Data for Collections	julie.miller@cpxcom.com [Julie Miller, HR Business Partner]	Mar 13 2008 4:57AM
			Meeting Today	ajr.singh@cpxcom.com [AJR Singh, Division VP]	Mar 13 2008 3:39AM
			Adjustment to Sales Incentives	romar.routh@cpxcom.com [Romar Routh, SVP, Sales]	Mar 13 2008 3:02AM
			FYI Monthly Reports	earl.randolphjr@cpxcom.com [Earl Randolph, Jr., Assistant to Jamie Washington]	Mar 13 2008 1:00AM

Below the table are buttons for "Print", "Reply", "Reply to All", "Forward", and "Delete". The selected email, "Adjustment to Sales Incentives", is displayed with the following details:

Adjustment to Sales Incentives
From: romar.routh@cpxcom.com [Romar Routh, SVP, Sales]
To: Matt.Dreyer@cpxcom.com; [CAPAX Global Distribution List]
Received: 3/13/2008 3:02:00 AM

Sales incentives are based on the projected annual revenue for products and services sold to a new or existing account. Monthly sales goals were set for each team just over 6 months ago. At that time all Sales Teams were told that there would be extra incentives for sales of FONSM and CPTV.

TEAC Example: Calendar for Scheduled Activities

The screenshot displays a web-based calendar interface for a Leadership Skills Assessment. The main window shows a daily view for Monday, February 25, 2008. The calendar is titled "My Calendar" and includes a "Print" button. The events listed are:

- 8:00am - 9:00am: 8:00-9:00 CLICK HERE FOR CALENDAR INSTRUCTIONS
- 10:00am - 10:15-10:30: Phone Call with Ronnie Larue - Ronnie calls me
- 11:00am - 11:15-11:30: Call w/ Alexis Kronos - I call conference number
- 12:00pm - 12:15-12:30: Phone call with AJR Singh, Division VP
- 12:30-1:00: Inbox Debrief Interview
- 1:00pm - 1:00-1:00: Assessment Concludes - Complete Reaction Survey

An inset window shows a weekly view of the calendar, with a red vertical bar highlighting the current day (Monday, February 25, 2008). The weekly view shows the following events:

- 1:30 PM: Assessment w/ Alex Kronos - 2:15 PM
- Assessment w/ Alex Kronos - 9:30 AM
- Meeting 2 with James Washburn - 10:30 AM
- Meeting with Alex Kronos & Eric - 11:15 AM
- Phone Call with AJR Singh, Division VP - 12:15 PM
- Inbox Debrief Interview - 12:30 PM
- Education - 2:00 PM
- Assessment - 2:15 PM

The interface includes a sidebar with navigation options: "New Event", "Daily View", "Monthly View", "2/25/2008", "Display Events for Day", "Previous Day | Next Day", "Mail", "Calendar", "Documents", "Tools", and "Help". The browser address bar shows the URL: <https://assess.fenestranet.net/candidate/defaultOpen.aspx?path=calendar/viewEvent?eventID=214849&viewType=2&fb=2/25/2008>.

TEAC Example: Written Activity Observation

The screenshot displays the Fenestra Administration Tool interface in a Mozilla Firefox browser. The page title is "Participant Manager: Participant Data". The main content area is titled "Simulation Input for John Smith".

Navigation tabs include: Mail Messages, Tasks, Calendar Events, Record Managers, Participant Form Manager, and Phone Bank.

Mail Message Details:

- Unread
- Mail Folder: Inbox
- Priority: Normal
- From: franis.impolito@cpc.com [Franis Impolito, Manager, Residential Sales - East District]
- To: John.Smith@cpc.com
- CC: hannah.benebra@cpc.com [Hannah Ben Ezra, Manager, Community & Government Relations - Springfield]
- BCC:
- Subject: Welkin Cable dragging its feet
- Display Date: 3/10/2008 1:05:00 PM
- Has Participant Viewed Email: No

Message Body:

We've had a great quarter so far selling our "Unlimited Anytime" plan against Welkin Cable's "Anytime Plus." We're taking them to the cleaners, averaging better than 60 conversions a day.

The problem is that most of those folks want to carry their number over to the new account, but Welkin Cable is dragging its feet releasing the numbers to us.

Up until now, we've been okay; most folks see it as one more reason they're better off without Welkin Cable. But recently, we've been having a few of these folks change their minds and opt to stay with Welkin Cable.

Just a trickle, now, but we need to nip it in the bud.

What is our recourse? A formal complaint to the Public Service Commission will take months, and we need to take action much sooner than that, if not immediately.

Buttons: [Print](#), [Show All](#), [Deleted \(0\)](#), [Sent \(0\)](#), [Read \(6\)](#), [Unread \(24\)](#), [VoiceMail](#), [Return to Participant Manager](#)

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TEAC Example: Evaluation and Integration

Participant Manager: Evaluation Forms
View Evaluation Forms

Simulation: Verizon Leadership Skills Assessment
Participant: Matt Driver

Evaluation Forms

Evaluation Form	Completed	Status	Action
Working with a Direct Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed	View
Working with a Peer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed	View
Working with Direct VR Role Play / Crisis Debrief	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed	View
Mini-Gen 4 - Angry Customer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed	View
Mini-Gen 1 - Request for Information	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed	View
Mini-Gen 3 - Budget Request	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed	View
Mini-Gen 2 - HR Policy Performance User	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed	View
Career Accomplishment/Aspirations Inventory	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed	View

Participant Manager: Evaluation Forms

Working with a Direct Report

Working with a Peer

Working with Direct VR Role Play / Crisis Debrief

Career Accomplishment/Aspirations Inventory

Integration Form

Describe: When applicable, provide us the following some:
1-4: 1 is lowest and 4 is highest

Significant Strengths: The Participant can be a role model or coach to obtain Strength. The Participant has demonstrated proficiency in this competency.
Some Development Needed: The Participant would benefit from development in this area.
Significant Development Opportunity: The participant has demonstrated a pressing development need in this area.

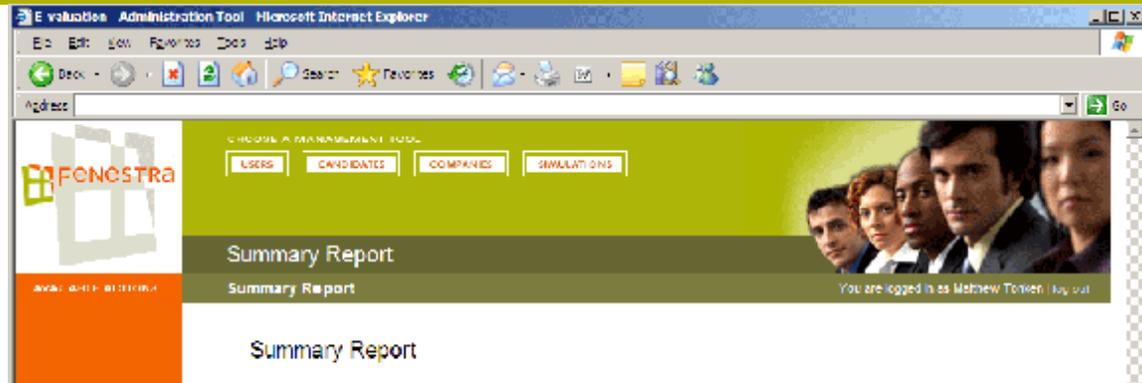
Skill	Assessor 1	Assessor 2	Assessor 3	Comments	Overall
Decision Making	2	2	2		Significant Development Opportunity
Drive for Results	2	3	2		Strength
Customer Focus	1	2	2		Strength
Coaching and Managing Others	2	2	2		Some Development Needed
Financial Acumen	1	2	1		Some Development Needed
Communication	1	3	3		Strength
Building Strategic Relationships	2	2	2		Some Development Needed
Embracing and Leading Change	1	2	1		Strength
Planning and Execution	2	3	2		Strength
Global Orientation	1	2	2		Some Development Needed
					Ready with Some Development

Save as Participant Report Manager

TEAC Example: Feedback and Reports

Feedback and Reports

Reports are made available via the secure website



LSA COMPETENCY REPORT	SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY	SOME DEVELOPMENT NEEDED	STRENGTH	SIGNIFICANT STRENGTH
Decision Making: The ability to make timely, sound strategic decisions with clear rationale for gains and costs. Gather and analyze key information from multiple sources, select the most promising alternative that is consistent with your position, and commit to action with respect to decisions. This also includes the ability to take responsibility for effectively anticipating, resolving, and preventing problems by identifying and addressing the root causes and implementing or modifying processes to prevent their occurrence.				
Drive for Results: The ability to define and pursue aggressive goals, drive for results through results and speed, and overcome challenges to create business success. This drive for results extends to the task and best the competition. Focuses performance on outcomes and personal accountability to self, direct reports, and the organization. This includes ongoing or ad-hoc coaching and accepts personal accountability for results. Focuses organizational achievement on the individual, team, and feasibility to meet high levels of performance to consistently manage the business while being innovative and change.				
Customer Focus: The ability to promote a customer-focused culture that drives successful customer needs and resolutions. Multi-channel, timely, problem-solving and solutions delivery to quality customer. Actively listens to customer concerns and requests, anticipates and understands their needs, and resolves problems completely and quickly. Evaluates organizational products for quality customer success, quality, and cost-effectiveness.				
Coaching and Mentoring Others: The ability to clearly set and communicate performance expectations, and goals to employees, monitor their performance, and provide coaching and timely feedback. It is also to learn from their mistakes and consider them as lessons through training and personal success. Provide employees with developmental opportunities and assignments, training, and resources for effective job performance and career growth. It is also the ability to complete work successfully, provide clear direction and what needs to be done, and monitor performance against a predetermined level and/or measure of quality.				
Financial Acumen: The ability to understand and use financial information, concepts, and processes to manage company-level performance. Includes basic financial concepts (e.g., P&L, margin, and ROI) and the ability to determine variances and resolve concerns. Detail the effort and long-range financial objectives aligned with business strategy. Accepts fiscal responsibility and considers the financial implications of any company decision-making business decision.				
Communication: The ability to articulate information, including technical information, openly, clearly, and accurately to needs of individual or group. Adapts content and style of communication to needs of individual or group. Actively listens to others and asks effective questions to ensure that the intended message has been accurately received, preventing interruptions when important issues are being discussed and clarifying ambiguous directions or requests. This also includes sharing all pertinent information, both positive and negative, throughout all levels of the organization and encouraging others to do so.				

Communication
The ability to articulate information, including technical information, openly, clearly, and accurately to needs of individual or group. Adapts content and style of communication to needs of individual or group. Actively listens to others and asks effective questions to ensure that the intended message has been accurately received, preventing interruptions when important issues are being discussed and clarifying ambiguous directions or requests. This also includes sharing all pertinent information, both positive and negative, throughout all levels of the organization and encouraging others to do so.

Significant Development Opportunity	Some Development Needed	X	Strength	Significant Strength
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Based on your performance during the LSA, this is an area that you need to continue to develop.

While you had good ideas and a solid rationale for decisions, you were inconsistent when it came to your ability to convey the information in a clear and succinct manner. Your style was not fluid and you sometimes came across as hesitant and uncertain, which undermined your credibility. Also, you did not consistently leverage your ability to ask insightful questions as a way of building relationships through communication.

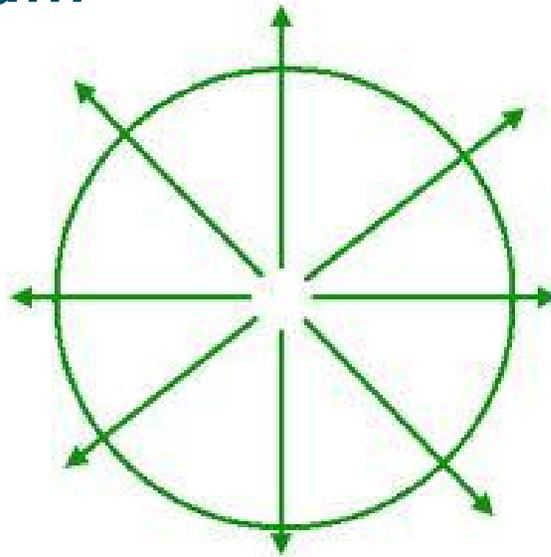
In conversations with others, you struggled to convey complex information in a confident manner. In particular, this could be seen when you presented your recommendation plans to your VP as well as during the debrief interview. During these interactions, you were often hard to understand, which limited your ability to convince and influence others. You also misinterpreted questions and/or did not listen well to the probes from your VP, and thus did not provide the information required regarding the strategic direction of the region. In addition, during the meeting with the VP, you communicated too many details and minutia rather than broader strategic goals and accompanying tactics. As a result your presentation came across as disorganized and unclear.

While you struggled in some scenarios, in others you did a better job, both in communicating your ideas and in building rapport. For instance, when meeting with your peer to ask for assistance, you did a good job conveying a convincing rationale and developing the foundation for a strong work relationship. To be effective as a leader, you need to get more adept and consistent in your ability to communicate in this manner.

Communication is an area you can improve to enhance your credibility and effectiveness as a leader.

Summary Thoughts

- ✚ ACs have a long and successful history
- ✚ AC methodology is highly adaptable
- ✚ Expect this flexible method to continue to be rediscovered...



Possibility