

Session 5

Part 2: Effective skills for assessment centres

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Part 2 of this session aims to;

- ▶ Provide an insight into Assessment Centres (A.C.s), what's involved and why employers use them
- ▶ Identify the competencies that are being assessed
- ▶ Consider how to prepare for assessment centres
- ▶ Provide sources of information

What are assessment centres?

May include some of these;

- ▶ In tray and E tray exercises
- ▶ Presentations
- ▶ Psychometric tests
- ▶ Personality tests
- ▶ Group discussions
- ▶ Role Play
- ▶ Attending social events
- ▶ Team activities
- ▶ Individual interview



Why does an employer use an A.C.?



Evaluate if candidates demonstrate key skills



More accurate method of selection



Candidates can be observed and tested in a range of situations

Presentations

Assesses;

- ▶ Communication skills and delivery
- ▶ Organisation skills
- ▶ Content and structure including knowledge
- ▶ Ability to manage time efficiently
- ▶ Ability to handle pressure
- ▶ Ability to influence
- ▶ Use of visual aids
- ▶ Confidence
- ▶ Ability to answer questions

Role Play

Assesses ;

- ▶ Understanding of role
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Interpersonal skills
- ▶ Negotiation Skills
- ▶ Initiative
- ▶ Problem solving
- ▶ Influencing
- ▶ Ability to work under pressure



The social event

Assesses;

- ▶ How you mix with others
- ▶ If you ask interesting & relevant questions
- ▶ Your listening skills
- ▶ How you deal with awkward situations
- ▶ Your interpersonal skills
- ▶ Your attitude and behaviour
- ▶ Your commercial awareness

The discussion group



- Topic may be **business-related** or a general topic
- Not usually given time to prepare
- At the end you may be asked to comment on conclusions

Competencies assessed include; Communication, leadership; assertiveness, confidence, co-operation, listening, negotiation, problem-solving, influencing, planning, team work, time management and analytical skills

Example of a general topic:
Advertising should be banned during television programmes for those under seven years of age

The group case study exercise



- ▶ Group given a set time to work together on a case study/problem
- ▶ Usually based on a real-life business situation.
- ▶ Candidates may be given roles to play
- ▶ The group has to reach a conclusion despite different views
- ▶ Group usually asked to present its findings

Competencies being assessed;

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| ▶ Communication | Creativity | Influencing |
| ▶ Initiative | Team work | Planning |
| ▶ Problem solving | Flexibility | Time management |
| ▶ Ability to work under pressure | | |

Practical team tasks

▶ **May be required to:**

- ▶ Create a structure with resources provided
- ▶ Devise a poster with a slogan to advertise one of the company's products

▶ **Competencies assessed include;**

- ▶ communication
- ▶ assertiveness
- ▶ co-operation
- ▶ initiative
- ▶ time management
- ▶ Working effectively under pressure
- ▶ leadership
- ▶ teamwork
- ▶ creativity
- ▶ planning
- ▶ interpersonal

Group exercises – positive behaviours



- ▶ Make quality contributions
- ▶ Provide original insights and contributions
- ▶ Be pro-active and flexible re roles
- ▶ Summarise discussion and move it on when required
- ▶ Monitor activity and remind group of objective if they stray from this
- ▶ Ensure group keep to time scale
- ▶ Demonstrate a positive, can-do attitude

Group exercises – positive behaviour



- ▶ **Support** the others in the group
- ▶ **Respect and encourage** their contributions
- ▶ **Acknowledge** positive contributions
- ▶ **Provide** objective feedback
- ▶ **Build on** points they make
- ▶ **Involve** those who don't contribute
- ▶ **Argue your case** persuasively but.. be prepared to compromise

Group exercises – negative behaviours



- ▶ **Don't** criticise, ridicule or put down other group members
- ▶ **Don't** dominate discussion
- ▶ **Don't** force your opinions on others
- ▶ **Don't** talk over or interrupt other group members
- ▶ **Don't** become overly focused on reading the paperwork
- ▶ **Don't** switch off and let others do all the work
- ▶ **Don't** fall out if your ideas are not accepted
- ▶ **Don't** sulk and disengage from the task
- ▶ **Don't** refuse to contribute
- ▶ **Don't** be disrespectful to others
- ▶ **Don't** be negative
- ▶ **Don't** be aggressive

Preparing for assessment centre group activities



- ▶ **Prepare:** make use of resources and advice
- ▶ **Information:** read any information provided in advance
- ▶ **Job role:** reflect on the type of competencies required for the role.
 - ❑ The tasks will be designed to assess you against these.
- ▶ **Research:** the employer, sector, market etc.
 - ❑ Think how you might use your knowledge in any business-related tasks/discussions and interviews
- ▶ **Reflect:** on your strengths and how you can show them in the tasks
- ▶ **Reflect:** on your weaknesses and how you can overcome them in the tasks
- ▶ **On the day:** ask for clarification of instructions if you are not sure

Sources of support

Hand-outs:

- ▶ Assessment Centres Psychometric testing
- ▶ Presentations E and In tray Exercises
- ▶ Networking Commercial awareness
- ▶ Researching employers

Useful websites:

- ▶ Target jobs <http://targetjobs.co.uk>
- ▶ Job Test Prep <http://www.jobtestprep.co.uk>
- ▶ Wikijob <http://www.wikijob.co.uk>
- ▶ Prospects <http://www.prospects.ac.uk>