

# MAPAC News

Mid-Atlantic Personnel Assessment Consortium, Inc.  
Winter/Spring 1999

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President:

James E. Frankart  
Pennsylvania State Civil Service  
Commission  
320 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17108-0569  
(717) 783-2697, Ext. 3517  
(717) 783-0838 (FAX)  
JFrankart@scsc.state.pa.us

Past-President:

David G. Hamill  
The Pittman McLenagan Group, L.C.  
6626-A Wilson Lane  
Bethesda, MD 20817  
(301) 320-9500  
(301) 320-9525 (FAX)  
davidh@pittmanlc.com

President-Elect:

Linda Dunn, Director  
Examinations & Civil Service Operations  
City University of New York  
535 E. 80th. Street - Room 603  
New York, N.Y. 10021-0767  
(212) 794-5672  
acsbh@cunyvm.cuny.edu

Treasurer:

S. Ann Stewart  
Delaware State Personnel Office  
P.O. Box 1401  
Dover, Delaware 19901-1401  
(302) 739-5458  
(302) 739-3000 (FAX)  
astewart@state.de.us

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## President's Message

Greetings fellow MAPAC members. We met in Philadelphia at our spring meeting to discuss how computers and technology will change the future of selection. This topic is of particular interest to me because the Civil Service Commission of Pennsylvania has just received funding for a five-year project to computerize our testing and other operations. The future is indeed here now.

I am happy to report that since last fall's meeting in Princeton, the committee process has been reinvigorated in MAPAC. We now have many members who have joined in working on the committees. This has greatly reduced the work burden that used to fall on the chair of each committee. We are doing well but I believe that we can do better. If you or your agency is not currently involved, I strongly encourage you to join in. MAPAC, like any organization, is only as strong as the participating members are. It's hard work but it's also a lot of fun and you get to meet and network with some very interesting people.

On a personal note I would just like to say that it is an honor and a privilege to serve as your President. MAPAC has been very useful to me in my career as a personnel specialist. I have learned many things about this interesting field from my colleagues and have developed professional relationships with a great group of people. I have

been impressed by the way that most people in this field really care about their work and are willing to share information with others in the hope of improving the field of selection.

Sincerely,

*James Frankart,*  
President, MAPAC

## MAPAC Winter Business Meeting Minutes

January 28, 1999  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

The meeting was called to order by President Jim Frankart.

Roll Call: Nine member jurisdictions were present for the business meeting, eleven for the vote.

### Reports

Treasurer: We currently have \$11,133.57 in the treasury.

Program: MAPAC will continue to respond to the member's interests and needs in programming. A survey was handed out to assess interests for future meetings.

Training: The Job Analysis course is being revised by INS, Pennsylvania Civil Service Commission and Maryland Department of Highways. Plans are being made to present it in the spring of 1999.

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Membership: We currently have 22 members and there are no prospective members at this time (pre-spring meeting). The chair requested that all changes of address should be sent to her (Beth Risser, PA State Civil Service Commission, Strawberry Square Complex, 320 Market Street, P.O. Box 569, Harrisburg, PA 17108-0569).

Communications: Jill Guice is changing jobs and will no longer co-chair this committee. Information can be sent to Betsy Kaido at [emk1@mail3.cs.state.ny.us](mailto:emk1@mail3.cs.state.ny.us)

### Old Business

One of the reasons for MAPAC was for jurisdictions to be able to combine resources and work on joint projects. Jim Frankart will head today's meeting of the Joint Project Committee. The group will determine the project(s) they will work on.

### New Business

Pat Zarro retired at the end of March. We thank him for all of his support at conferences and training sessions.

Jim Frankart proposed that each jurisdiction receive one hard copy of the newsletter, programs, etc. Anyone requesting an e-mailed copy will be sent copies. A copy of the newsletter and proposed programs are also available on the IPMAAC home page.

Wally Borman will be the IPMAAC sponsored speaker at the spring convention in Florida. He will discuss the nature of contextual or citizenship

performance and describe research intended to better understand this concept.

At one time, MAPAC was incorporated. Ann Stewart proposed we incorporate again and all member jurisdictions voted in favor of this. (It has been done.)

MAPAC offers speakers doing the full day training up to \$200.00 to cover expenses. A proposal to consider offering other speakers up to \$50.00 to cover expenses was considered but tabled.

Dropping MAPAC membership for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey was considered since they have not participated in two years and have not paid their 1998 dues. One more attempt will be made to contact them before action is taken.

S. Ann Stewart  
Delaware State Personnel Office

## **WINTER MEETING PRESENTATIONS**

### **Oral Examination Workshop**

Bruce Davey, of Bruce Davey Associates, Glastonbury, Connecticut conducted a one-day pre-conference workshop on January 27, 1999 prior to the Winter MAPAC meeting. Following is a summary of some information covered in the workshop.

Advantages of oral examinations were described, including high

candidate acceptance, low adverse impact, high interrater reliability and high validity if the oral examination is carefully developed and structured, cost effectiveness for small groups of candidates, quick turnaround time, and versatility. The versatility of the oral examination was illustrated by a description of a wide variety of formats and procedures which can be used within the oral examination format, such as: role playing, case studies, group exercises, and use of videotape vignettes. Different oral examination question formats were discussed including situational questions, knowledge questions, problem analysis and planning questions, and background (work experience and training) questions.

Guidance was provided on jobs for which use of the oral examination is and is not appropriate. For example, oral examinations are most appropriate for jobs that have interpersonal and oral communications skill requirements.

Bruce strongly supported use of job simulation exercises and questions in oral examinations, and advised test developers to think about how they can best simulate the job in the oral examination setting.

Problems with oral examinations were shared. The greatest of these is the issue of oral examiner quality. Bruce presented research results, which showed that the validity of oral examinations could be improved by improving oral examiner quality. Ways to improve examiner quality

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included selecting better examiners, evaluating examiners during training, screening out weak examiners, using three rather than two member oral boards, and giving more feedback to examiners. As a general rule, Bruce advised that the higher the oral examination structure, the higher the validity.

Procedures for scoring oral examinations were described, including scoring by factor and scoring by question. Bruce was a strong advocate for scoring by question. Scoring by question focuses the examiners' attention on specific responses, combats halo error, allows analysis of item effectiveness, and allows deletion of problem items from scoring.

Participants discussed and asked many questions during the workshop and shared experiences. For example, there was considerable discussion of questions such as: Should examiners discuss their ratings prior to finalizing ratings? To what extent should follow-up and probe questions be used? Is it an advantage to be the first oral examination candidate?

Those attending the workshop received a variety of helpful materials. Handouts included examples of oral examination rating forms, factor definitions, and rating scales. An example of a high-structure approach to scoring by question was provided, along with an example of item analysis data for an oral question. Participants received an excerpt from expert witness testimony on oral examinations, a candidate processing form, a bibliography, and a booklet of "Guidelines for Writing Oral

Examination Questions."

The workshop was well attended. Participants enthusiastically expressed appreciation to Bruce Davey for sharing his knowledge and work products, and for an outstanding presentation.

Submitted by:  
Charles Sproule  
PA State Civil Service  
Commission

#### **Competency/Personality Assessment in Mid-level Managerial Assessment**

**Gary Schmidt, Ph.D.  
Saville Holdsworth Ltd.  
Landy-Jacobs**

*"A job competency is an underlying characteristic of a person which results in an effective and/or superior performance in a job- it may be a motive, trait, or aspect of skill."*  
--Boyatzis

Drawing on this definition of competency, Dr. Schmidt traced its emergence in the selection process. In the 1950's, informal selection methods predominated (e.g., recommendations and references). The 1960's and 1970's witnessed the development of more structured approaches, such as job descriptions on the position side and the use of personality instruments on the applicant side. The personality assessments used at the time tended to be too clinically oriented in their approach and too global to focus on job-related competencies, per se. In the 1980's and subsequently,

competency-based assessments that targeted job-related behavioral patterns emerged. Contemporary competency-based assessments are characterized by an emphasis on evidentiary links between the construct being tested and relevance to job performance.

Job performance, especially in the managerial domain, may have very different parameters, depending on the type of organization that is hiring. Dr. Schmidt traced an organizational taxonomy, based on the distribution of expertise across levels of responsibility. In a traditional organization, supervisory personnel combine technical expertise with the ability to organize people; managers also combine their technical expertise with their higher-level responsibility for organizing people; and directors have far fewer technical responsibilities and capacities, but they have to exercise business leadership and organize people. In a company organized along TQM lines, operating in teams is an essential component at all levels, and even lower-level staff members will be expected to organize people. In a de-layered "empowered" organization, supervisors and staff share in business leadership and entrepreneurial roles. In some of these organizations, there is a high reliance on technical proficiency even at the executive level. Corporate culture is another factor that may modify an organization's hiring preferences, regardless of its structuring of responsibilities (e.g., at Coca-Cola, everyone is said to be aggressive and competitive, including the

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shipping clerks). A job's structure and its place in the corporate hierarchy can determine what competencies will contribute to the applicant's success in the position.

Many of the non-technical demands of a job are not well assessed by cognitive measures. Dr. Schmidt discussed a range of these assessment methods and their validities: assessment centers ( $r = 0.6$ ); ability tests ( $r = 0.45$ ); traditional application forms ( $r = 0.15$ ). Other types of measures do not have particularly high validities either: clinical personality inventories ( $r = 0.23$ ); work-oriented personality instruments such as structured interviews, biodata instruments and other instruments that address work styles (in the range around  $r = 0.35$ ); and the early-used phrenology and graphology techniques ( $r = 0.0$ ).

Traditional personality inventories are often associated with a medical model, and measure a broad spectrum of characteristics, many of which do not relate to job performance (e.g., only three of the 16 traits in the 16 PF instrument predict job performance). Thus, even those measures whose total scores predict work performance in tend to have their predictive value diluted by non-predictive scales.

Traditional personality measures were not designed with selection or work adjustment as primary foci.

To illustrate his points, Dr. Schmidt focused on the Occupational Personality Questionnaire (OPQ), discussing several studies that his organization had undertaken.

OPQ items consist of statements (e.g., "People say that I am creative") that are presented in conjunction with five-point Likert scales ("strongly agree" to "strongly disagree"). Data from several studies were cited to show that the OPQ could rival cognitive tests in predicting supervisors' and colleagues' ratings of incumbents on constructs such as intellect and creativity. The OPQ exceeded the cognitive measures in predicting ratings on leadership, interpersonal relations, and entrepreneurial orientation. Moreover, Dr. Schmidt stated that the work style measures achieved incremental validity in conjunction with the cognitive measures, accounting for additional portions of the variance.

Dr. Schmidt argued for the efficacy of work style measures on several grounds. Work style measures: 1) explain performance not explained by ability; 2) do not usually manifest adverse impact; and 3) can assess traits that tend to be valuable as jobs and organizations change. Work style measures are linked to the competency level of abstraction and as a result can be more flexible over time than assessments linked to the more micro KSA level.

Although work style instruments appear to be susceptible to faking, Dr. Schmidt said that people tend to be honest, especially when they know that their responses are subject to discussion. He indicated that work style instruments could be used as aides to self-improvement, as well as for selection. He concluded by

characterizing them as fair, cost-efficient, and fertile grounds for development.

Submitted by:  
George M. Davidson  
The City University of New York

#### **Different Approaches to the Structured Oral Exam**

**Richard Tonowski, Ph.D.**  
**U.S. Postal Service**

**PROBLEM:** You must develop a selection system for 80,000 mid-level, non-bargaining executive and administrative jobs dispersed over 85 nationwide districts. These jobs have highly heterogeneous attribute requirements, both across and within job classes. Intermittent and difficult-to-predict vacancies must be filled expeditiously. The system must: be implemented by non-specialists in selection; not impose undue resource demands; have management and employee buy-in; be both fair and defensible against challenge; and be effective in selecting competent employees.

**NOT A TALL TALE:** Dr. Tonowski confronted just such a daunting scenario. His presentation recounted both the hows and whys of the solution fashioned to this large-scale variant of a relatively common selection conundrum—namely, how to configure a high stakes selection system so as to meet multiple, individually difficult, and potentially conflicting objectives.

**BEHOLD THE BEGUILINGLY SIMPLE SOLUTION:** Employ a single assessment approach for

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virtually all jobs. Use the application blank for pre-screen purposes, followed by the structured oral for final selection. Why would it work? It has inherent measurement versatility and practical user-friendliness.

**DEPARTING FROM THE MAINSTREAM:** The system incorporates several features different from common public sector practice:

- Supplements centrally identified job class attribute requirements (common practice) with prescribed procedures for both determining their applicability to individual positions and identifying position-specific requirements (uncommon practice)
- Uses application blanks to collect not only credential information (common practice), but also behavioral demonstrations of attribute levels and use of these for screen-out purposes (uncommon practice)
- Uses behavior description interviews questions of the “tell me a time when” variety, supplemented only as needed with situational, “what would you do” questions (uncommon in that the “situational interview” has historically been the public sector mainstay)
- Uses an informational pamphlet for candidates and training pamphlet for evaluators (common practice), and a training video for evaluators (uncommon practice)

**PSYCHOMETRIC PRECEPTS UNDERLYING SYSTEM DESIGN:**

- Design selection to capture variance beyond g—by defining target KSAs in terms of “task” capabilities rather than generically conceptualized (cognitive) attributes which underlie such capabilities
- Base selection on the “behavioral consistency” principle (i.e., predict future performance based on *past behavior*) along with content considerations (i.e., adequate sampling of relevant KSA domains)
- Employ the “best meets” standard (i.e., recommend for hiring consideration *only* candidates predicted to perform at a *superior overall level*)
- Observe research findings relating to “interview structure.”

**OPERATIONAL AIMS:**

- Structure system centrally to ensure adherence to features critical to achievement of principal objectives, but permit sufficient latitude for customization to local needs
- Make system easy to understand and procedures easy to execute
- Achieve face validity--for both staff and candidates
- Minimize paper trail
- Provide effective training of local staff
- Monitor system implementation on ongoing basis

**STALKING THE PREY—THE APPLICATION-BASED PRE-SCREEN:**

- Employ a KSA-driven, rather than credential-driven,

application (and require credential-related information for only a highly select subset of classes).

- Solicit whatever information supports possession of target KSAs, but with an indicated preference for behavioral demonstrations.
- Collect information for no more than about ten KSAs and no less than about five.
- Assemble a three member “selection committee” and have members independently evaluate each application with respect to each target KSA, using a four point scale (unqualified, minimum, strong, and excellent qualifications). Then have members share their respective evaluations and reach consensus based on the “best meets” standard as to which applicants to interview for further consideration.

**THE COUP DE GRACE--THE BEHAVIOR DESCRIPTION INTERVIEW:**

- Prepare “planned behavioral questions” in advance of the interview. Formulate questions based in part on review of information provided on applications.
- Conduct the interview following a pattern of posing a pre-formulated question about a KSA, then posing follow-up questions.
- Elicit descriptive information about *past behavioral demonstrations* of *each* applicable KSA, either in the form of *incidents* or *sustained demonstrations* of behavior.
- Seek *prescribed* information

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*per* incident or sustained demonstration. The prescribed information fits four categories—nicely captured by the mnemonic acronym, STAR: S/T for “situation or task” that the candidate confronted, A for “actions” that the candidate took, and R for “results” of the actions.

- Elicit descriptions of at least two STARs per KSA, but seek additional STARs if the STARs provided leave doubt as to the candidate’s qualifications with respect to the given KSA.
- Place no differential emphasis on obtaining STARs for different KSAs.
- Observe the following general interview guidelines –
  1. Discourage “theoretical” responses
  2. Do not telegraph “right answers”
- 3. Pace the interview (i.e., speed it up to cover more ground when the interviewee is reporting unnecessary detail or digressing, and slow it down when more detail is needed, using such techniques as “interrupting and re-directing” and “summarizing and moving on”.

### ARRIVING AT FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Interviewers separately review their notes and categorize the information collected with respect to its relevance to each KSA. Next, they review the KSA requirements on the vacancy to ensure understanding of and a focus on, these KSAs. They

then consider the behavioral examples described in their notes and arrive at a rating with respect to each KSA on the unqualified, minimum, strong, and excellent qualifications scale. They then compare their ratings and resolve differences so as to arrive at consensus with respect to the rating given per KSA. Finally they determine whether to predict that the candidate will perform at a superior level (i.e., meet the “best meets” standard) by making a judgmental/holistic consideration of the candidate’s profile of ratings. If the candidate is predicted to perform at a superior level, the committee recommends that the candidate be considered for hire. No score is provided to management, only a hire or do not hire recommendation. In addition, no record is maintained of the interviewers’ notes or ratings.

Submitted by  
John Scarpato  
City of Philadelphia

## Different Approaches to the Structured Oral Exam

**Leroy Sheibley, Director  
Bureau of Personnel  
Assessment  
Pennsylvania Civil Service  
Commission**

Pennsylvania’s oral test for managers is well grounded in job analysis. It is relatively easy to administer, and has been used successfully for almost ten years. The test assesses managerial competencies determined to be important for managerial jobs in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Using a combination of written questionnaires and oral interviews, Civil Service staff gathering job information from a representative sample of Commonwealth managers. Analysis of the results indicated that one set of competencies was important for all the jobs. The competencies include decision making, communicating orally, setting objectives, problem solving, managing time, delegating, motivating, and managing conflict.

Civil Service staff developed a test to assess the important competencies. The test consists of in-basket items that collectively present a variety of interrelated conflicts and problems. Candidates are given time to read the in-basket items.

They then orally present responses describing how they would handle the situations posed in the items. The test has been used to select managers for a wide variety of agencies. Test administrators have been pleased with the ease of administration, there is relatively

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good candidate acceptance, and appointing authorities have been well satisfied with the quality of the candidates.

### **Utility Analysis and Managerial Selection: Establishing the Practicality and Economic Utility of the Immigration and Naturalization Service's Promotional Assessment System**

**Dr. Ilene Gast, Ph.D. and Paul Valdivia**  
**Immigration and Naturalization Service**

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) Research and Development Division used a utility analysis to show the value added to the organization by the new Border Patrol Competency-Based Promotional Assessment System. This utility analysis quantifies the value of the employees selected using the new system in comparison to the old system.

The new assessment system measures job-related competencies, identifies top-quality candidates, provides objective scores, and provides candidates with developmental feedback. This system rates thinking skills, administrative skills, writing skills, personal attributes, and technical skills. In 1997 approximately 650 candidates were assessed for supervisory border patrol agent positions under the new system.

As part of the overall utility analysis methodology, the INS Research and Development Division framed their study within an overall return for investment model. The return for investment model evaluated the costs or investments and the returns on those investments. The costs measured included basic research and design, system development, program management, program operation, and evaluation. The monetary returns included the annual dollar value of selecting higher producing managers over less productive managers. In addition, the INS researchers cited non-monetary returns such as providing higher levels of feedback to candidates.

The cost of the new assessment system was estimated at \$804,060 per year. The pre-existing T&E system cost approximately \$733,781 per year.

The results of the utility analysis indicated a total annual benefit from the new system of \$2,236,726 for supervisory selections (at N=223 supervisors per year, the per selection benefit is \$10,030) and \$991,334 for managerial selections (at N=65 managers per year, the per selection benefit is \$15,251).

The INS Research and Development Division also solicited feedback from as many candidates and selecting officials as possible through multiple site visits and candidate surveys. In general, candidates were satisfied with the test

administration and they viewed the new system as providing a better assessment of their abilities. Also, managers were generally satisfied with the quality of candidates selected. On the negative side, candidates did not feel the Past Achievement Record portion of the new system adequately portrayed the depth and breadth of their experiences. In addition, candidates wanted more feedback on specific needs for improvement. Managers wanted more flexibility in using the eligible lists – they wanted to be able to choose from more than the top three names.

INS has adopted some of the suggested changes they received. Referral lists were expanded to 12 names. A Job Experience Measure that takes better account of the depth and breadth of candidates' job experiences has replaced the Past Achievement Record. INS has also expanded the diagnostic feedback to candidates.

The future plans for the INS Research and Development Division include conducting additional studies, refining methodologies, examining the feasibility of criterion-related validity studies, and expanding data collection.

Submitted by:  
William Davis  
NYS Department of Civil Service

**A Job Experience Measure  
in a Competency-Based  
Promotional Assessment  
System for Supervisory and  
Managerial Border Patrol  
Titles**

**Tom Lyons, Ph.D.  
Immigration and Naturalization  
Service**

One of the outcomes from INS' study of its new selection system for Border Patrol supervisory and managerial jobs focussed on the assessment of prior work experience. The new system used a Past Achievement Record (PAR) to collect information from candidates on prior experiences that relate to successful performance in upper-level Border Patrol jobs. However, INS researchers found that the PAR did not assess the depth and breadth of candidates' experiences to the most desirable extent. The INS has now replaced the PAR with the Job Experience Measure (JEM).

Dr. Lyons described how the JEM assigns specific values to experiences based on such factors as recency, length, and level of experience. This new instrument is designed to address two factors: 1) INS' management's need to incorporate more details concerning the quantity and quality of candidates' experience into assessments for promotion, and 2) the candidates' desire for the opportunity to present more information about themselves that would distinguish them from their competitors.

**New York State Supervisory  
and Mid- and High-Level  
Management Promotion  
Test Batteries**

**Betsy Kaido, Ph.D.  
New York State Department of  
Civil Service**

The New York State Department of Civil Service currently assesses managerial competencies using Promotion Test Batteries for promoting individuals to supervisory, management, and administrator positions. There are actually two Promotion Test Batteries: one for supervisors and specialists, and the other for Mid- and High-Level Managers and Administrators. Test battery results are used in many promotion examinations, but the battery itself is not a civil service examination. No appointments are made from the results of the Promotion Test Batteries without a specific examination announcement.

Development of the batteries involved: reviewing previous examination announcements and managerial competencies from previous job analyses; rating and grouping of competencies by subject matter experts; and linking tasks/activities back to test options after draft test was developed.

The following job dimensions are assessed using the Promotion Test Battery:

**SUPERVISORS AND SPECIALISTS:**

Dimensions

- Managing and Supervising Subordinate Staff (Written Simulation Test-supervisors only)
- Written Communication (Multiple Choice)
- Analysis of Information (Multiple Choice)

**MID- AND HIGH-LEVEL  
MANAGERS:**

Dimensions

- Management and Supervision (Written Simulation Test)
- Written Communication (Multiple Choice)

The Written Simulations portion of the Test Battery focuses on information gathering, problem solving and decision making set within the context of the job. Specifically, the simulations assess individuals' abilities to manage workloads, deal with cross-sectional relationships, and solve complex analytical problems.

A sensitivity review was conducted to check for offensive content or language; to determine if wording was confusing to non-native English speakers; and to ensure no use of stereotypes.

Criterion validity ( $r=.74$ ) was measured using a global management/supervisor appraisal as the criterion.

Submitted by:  
David Rea  
Maryland State Highway  
Administration

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### Executive Selection in the Public Sector

**Ann Marie Yanushefski, Ph.D.**  
**Personnel Decisions International**

Personnel Decisions International's (PDI) goal is helping clients build successful organizations. PDI provides services in the areas of career management, selection products and systems, organization and management development, assessment and coaching, training and development, and multi-rater feedback instruments. Dr. Yanushefski described PDI's full package of executive selection services.

#### 1. Define Job Requirements

Purpose: To determine critical knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for successful performance.

Process:

- Review documentation.
- Ask key individuals: Who are the key customers? How is the job or expectation for the job changing? How do technology and community changes affect the job?
- Use questionnaire to obtain additional information.
- Compile the information – Pay particular attention to the key job demands and the challenges facing the position.

Outcome: An updated position description and position profile that includes

minimal qualifications, desired experience and necessary skills and abilities. This description serves as a basis for recruiting advertisements and provides the organization with feedback about critical issues.

#### 2. Recruitment

Purpose: To identify largest possible pool of qualified applicants and to have qualified people emerge so whatever selection people do, they can't go wrong.

Process:

- Determine the scope of recruitment.
- Determine where individuals most likely to meet position requirements can be found (e.g., National Directories).
- Determine how to reach potential candidates (e.g., broadcast letter, target key position managers who know possible candidates).

Outcome:

- List of candidates meeting minimal qualifications.

#### 3. Screening

Purpose: To identify who will receive follow-up material, and to reduce the size of the candidate pool to a manageable number.

Process:

- Screen applications – Separate resumes into piles of “want to see/don't want to see”.
- Review targeted resumes (targeted for specific positions).
- Rate accomplishment records – Quantify specific information from the application form/accomplishment record.
- Ask essay questions – Use job analysis to generate important targeted questions.
- Keep candidates informed about: their continuing status in the process, conditions regarding confidentiality (use of state laws), and timetable for the selection process (dates and availability).

#### 4. Assess Candidates

Purpose: Gather more detailed information in a consistent and reliable way on each candidate.

Reminder: Discuss salary expectations and clarify confidentiality.

Process:

- “Live” assessment techniques – Oral panel interviews (questions or issues are solicited ahead of time). Brief orientation and training session are held for the interview panel.

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- Simulations – Capture the challenging demands. PDI consultant panel interviews. Types: In Basket, Subordinate Meeting, and Press Conference (roll playing assessments, group exercises/issue discussions).
- Written assessment techniques – Aptitude testing, personality inventories.

### 5. Finalist Assessment—Post Assessment

Purpose: Extensive information gathering on the finalist candidates to ensure no surprises later on. Verifies the information on the applicant.

Process:

- Reference check – PDI uses nine to twelve references. Rules: Promise and keep confidentiality. Use the “Woodward and Bernstein” technique.
- Background check to look for possible poor work history, ethical violations, arrest record.
- Computer press search/Media record – Contact major papers. Utilize confidentiality. Build a personal relationship with the media.

### 6. Six Month Performance Review

Purpose: To identify the need for early course corrections.

Process:

- Use 360-degree instrument to collect information.
- Total Outcome: There is one goal and only one goal – **No Surprises.**

Benefits of this multi-step process:

- Allows for fewer surprises.
- Gives people the feeling it's an important position.
- Provides maximum credibility.
- Increases evaluation skills of decision-makers.
- Legally defensible.
- Includes feedback.
- Is efficient – Takes eight to ten weeks total.

Submitted by:  
Jaime Rivera  
Delaware State Personnel Office

## What Does the Literature Say?

Types of tests used to assess management skills often require that groups of raters score the candidates' performance. The following study looked at possible sources of inconsistency in these ratings.

Clauser, B.E., Clyman, S.G., & Swanson, D.B. (1999). Components of rater error in a complex performance assessment. *Journal of Educational Measurement*, 36, 29-45.

Clauser and his colleagues studied ratings of patient management problems (PMPs) used in medical licensing examinations. These problems are conceptually similar to the supervision and management simulation problems that form part of the New York State Promotion Test Batteries: both assess candidates' problem solving skills by presenting real-life problems that evolve as the test-taker makes choices. Each computer-administered PMP presents a patient having a set of symptoms. Candidates choose various medical tests and treatments by making entries on the computer. They receive various kinds of information about the patient from the results of the choices that they make, they form conclusions about the patient's condition, and they pursue treatment regimes. The choices that test-takers make as they progress through the problem are captured by the computer as a transaction list, and this list is scored by rater-physicians. The PMP rating program includes a detailed nine-point rating scale and extensive training for the raters. The training includes having raters discuss their ratings in order to make sure that within-committee consistency is high.

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Using analysis of variance statistics, Clauser and his colleagues studied two possible sources of error (or lack of reliability) in these ratings: inconsistency across the committees of raters, and instability across time. Because the PMP testing program is so large, the transaction lists are divided among several rating committees. It is essential that the committees all use the same level of stringency in making their ratings. Clauser et. al. found that committee discussion, which is necessary for within-committee consistency, does reduce within-committee differences, but it magnifies between-committee differences.

The second study addressed across-occasion consistency. The same group of raters rated the same set of transaction lists on two occasions separated by six to eighteen months. The results indicated small, but practically significant differences across occasions.

The results of these studies suggest that rater training should focus raters on maintaining the same standards no matter which committee they work with, and on reminders to raters that will help them maintain consistent standards over long periods of time.

The implications of this study go beyond PMP problems to all constructed-response types of tests where raters are scoring the results of performance, be it oral, essay or physical/medical test. They also apply to

simulation problems that are scored by computer according to keys developed pre-test administration by the test-writers. The scoring keys may need to be revised for later uses, and different committees of test writers will be making those revisions. It is therefore important to keep in mind the possible threats to maintaining parallel test forms with consistent standards.

### Upcoming Events...

By **Lance W. Seberhagen**  
**Seberhagen and Associates**  
([sebe@erols.com](mailto:sebe@erols.com))

June 17-18  
SEAK, Inc. Expert Witness and Litigation Seminar. Cape Cod, MA. Contact: SEAK, (508) 457-1111.

June 27-30  
Society for HR Management. Annual Conference. Atlanta, GA. Contact: SHRM, (703) 548-3440.

July 12-14  
International Quality & Productivity Center. Conference. "Broadbanding: Aligning Compensation and Career Development to Drive Organizational Performance." Chicago, IL. Contact: IQPC, (800) 882-8684.

Aug. 6-11  
Academy of Management. Annual Conference. Chicago, IL. Contact: AOM, (914) 923-2607.

Aug. 8-12  
American Statistical Association. Annual Convention. Baltimore, MD. Contact: ASA, (703) 684-1221.

Aug. 11  
PTC/MW. LUNCHEON MEETING. Dr. Deborah Gebhardt, Human Performance Systems, Hyattsville, MD. "Medical Standards and Physical Ability Tests." Pier 7 Restaurant, Washington, DC. Contact: Suzanne Tsacoumis, HumPRO, (703) 706-5660.

Aug. 20-24  
American Psychological Association. Annual Convention. Boston, MA. Contact: APA, (202) 336-6020.

Sept. 8-9  
U.S. Office of Personnel Management. Conference. "Strategic Compensation." Alexandria, VA. Contact: Radiah Rose, OPM, (202) 606-8486 or [totalcomp@opm.gov](mailto:totalcomp@opm.gov).

Sept. 8-10  
Institute for Professional Education. Seminar. "Applied Multivariate Methods Using Popular Statistical Computing Packages." Washington, DC. Contact: IPE, (703) 527-8700.

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Sept. 8-10  
Institute for Professional  
Education. Seminar.  
“Categorical Data Analysis,”  
Washington, DC. Contact: IPE,  
(703) 527-8700.

Sept. 13-15  
Institute for Professional  
Education. Seminar. “Applied  
Statistics.” Washington, DC.  
Contact: IPE, (703) 527-8700.

Sept. 29-Oct. 1  
Mid-Atlantic Personnel  
Assessment Consortium. Fall  
Meeting. New York, NY.  
Contact: Linda Dunn, CUNY,  
ACSBH@CUNYVM.CUNY.EDU .

### MAPAC Committee Chairs

Program:  
Linda Dunn, Director  
Examinations & Civil Service  
Ops  
City University of New York  
535 E. 80th. Street - Room 603  
New York, N.Y. 10021-0767  
(212) 794-5672  
acsbh@cunyvm.cuny.edu

Membership:  
Beth Risser  
Test Development Division  
Penn. State Civil Service  
Commission  
P.O. Box 569  
Harrisburg, PA 17108-0569  
(717) 787-1878, ext. 3525  
brisser@scsc.state.pa.us

Publications:  
Elizabeth Kaido  
New York State Dept. of Civil  
Service  
The Harriman Office Campus,  
Bldg. 1, Room 369  
Albany, NY 12239-0001  
(518) 457-8461  
emk1@mail3.cs.state.ny.us

Training:  
Robyn Talesnik  
State Highway Administration  
Recruitment and Examination  
Division, Room 602  
Baltimore, MD 21203-0717  
(410) 545-5630  
rtalesnik@sha.state.md.us

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New York State Unified Court  
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New York City Transit Authority  
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