**The Bill Blackwood**
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# Validating Law Enforcement Assessment Centers

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**An Administrative Research Paper**
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# ABSTRACT

The promotional process of assessment centers is becoming more common each day in law enforcement. Primarily, this is due to the incredible amount of both direct and indirect benefits. The success of an assessment center can often depend on whether or not the assessment center is validated. Proper validation ensures that moral, ethical and legal issues have been properly addressed. The techniques for validating assessment centers are not widely understood, nor are they widely practiced. Both descriptive and evaluative research methodologies are utilized in order to properly address the subject of validation, promotional philosophies, assessment centers and promotional legal issues. Three things are considered in order to provide adequate information relating to validation aspects pertaining to assessment centers. For example, it is important to consider why it is necessary to validate an assessment center. It is also crucial to evaluate the applicable methods of validating assessment center dimensions and exercises. Moreover, it is essential to examine the procedures necessary to perform a validation of assessment center dimensions and exercises. The applied research procedures for this study essentially replicate the research of previous authors. The subject of the validation of assessment centers presents a degree of difficulty regarding the minimal quantity of available research material. The research data indicates a quantifiable need for validation for any promotional instrument, whether it is by assessment center or a cognitive examination. It is critical for assessment center administrators to validate assessment centers. The failure to establish validity may result in a biased

assessment center, which could unfairly, and perhaps illegally, discriminate against testing participants.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the past, police departments across the nation have utilized conventional testing instruments such as cognitive, written examinations for promotional processes. This testing trend is changing, according to John L. Coleman, “It is apparent from historical information that the use and development of assessment center processes and methods has continually expanded since its infusion in the United States in the 1940’s” (p. 8). This is also due to the testing instrument’s ability to accurately assess the required knowledge, skills and abilities of candidates that pertain to a specific job function. Previously, the primary utilized option of testing only addressed the ability of a candidate to test his or her knowledge cognitively.

Assessment Centers, according to the 33rd International Congress on Assessment Center Methods:

> involves multiple evaluation techniques, including various types of job-related simulations, and sometimes interviews and psychological tests. Common job simulations used in assessment centers are in-basket exercises, group discussions, simulations of interviews with "subordinates" or "clients," fact-finding exercises, analysis/decision-making problems, oral presentation exercises, and written communication exercises. Simulations are designed to bring out behavior relevant to the most important aspects of the position or level for which the assessees are being considered. Known as "dimensions" (or competencies), these aspects of the job are identified prior to the assessment center by analyzing the target position. A job analysis procedure identifies the

> behaviors, motivations, and types of knowledge that are critical for success in the target position. During assessment, the job simulations bring out assessees' behavior or knowledge in the target dimensions. (n.p)

Perhaps the most important feature of the assessment center method is that it relates not to current job performance, but to future performance. By observing how a participant handles the problems and challenges of the target job or job level (as simulated in the exercises), assessors get a valid picture of how that person would perform in the target position. This is especially useful when assessing individuals who hold jobs that don't offer them an opportunity to exhibit behavior related to the target position or level.

There is little doubt that assessment centers provide law enforcement leaders with a modernistic method of selecting candidates for advancement to organizational levels requiring advanced levels of knowledge, skills and abilities. Companies such as IBM, J.C. Penny, AT&T, and even the Peace Corps utilize assessment centers as a selection tool (Beer & Spector, 1985.)

Assessment center exercises are commonly validated through content and/or construct validation methodologies. Though these exercises are commonly validated, the dimensions being measured within the assessment center, such as leadership, interpersonal dynamics, written communications and problem solving are rarely, if ever, validated. The importance of validating (criterion, content or construct validation) the measuring and validation of dimensions cannot be overstated. The Guidelines and Ethical Considerations for Assessment Center Operations (2000), reiterates the importance of validation by stating:

> Ascertaining the validity of an assessment center program is a complicated technical process, and it is important that validation research meet both professional and legal standards. Research should be conducted by individuals' knowledgeable in the technical and legal issues pertinent to validation procedures. In evaluating the validity of assessment center programs, it is particularly important to document the selection of the dimensions, etc., assessed in the center. In addition, the relationship of assessment exercises to the dimensions, attributes, or competencies assessed should be documented as well. Validity generalization studies of assessment center research suggest that overall assessment ratings derived in a manner conforming to these guidelines show considerable predictive validity. Such findings support the use of a new assessment center in a different setting if the job, exercises, assessors, and assesses in the new situation are similar to those studied in the validation research and if similar procedures are used to observe, report, and integrate the information. The validity generalization studies of the predictive validity of the overall assessment rating do not necessarily establish the validity of the procedure for other purposes such as diagnosis of training needs, accurate assessment of skill level in separate dimensions, or the developmental influence of participation in an assessment center. (pp. 45-48)

The necessity for dimension validation is driven by the fact that it is problematic to consider all of the dimensions on an equal playing field during an assessment center. If an organization were to conduct an assessment for a top-level leadership position, it

would be illogical to calculate scores without placing emphasis on the importance of those dimensions or behaviors that are most important to the organization. Therefore, a dimension validation methodology should be devised. This would provide assessment center administrators with a method of applying coefficients or multipliers to specific dimension scores, which would accurately reflect the needs and requirements of the organization. The intended outcome of this method is a “fill-in-the-blank” matrix, which will utilize current job descriptions or task analysis. After the careful computation, the matrix would ultimately provide a coefficient value (multiplier) to the score in each dimension. This will allow each organization to custom tailor assessment center scoring to reflect the values and culture of the organization and reward those who score higher in those dimensions which are most important to the organization. It is also important not to place undue emphasis on those areas, which are less significant to the success of the organization.

The research methods of this applied research project will consist of surveys, periodicals, articles, books, and electronic sources. There are many sites on the World Wide Web that offer information and several different types of validation strategies on assessment centers. Additionally, the World Wide Web will be a major source of information utilized for this research.

Authenticating, or validating the assessment center is perhaps one of the most significant considerations the assessment center administrator addresses. The outcome will provide a authentication methodology of validating an assessment center where the needs of the organization will play a major part in the assessment center scoring process. The cost of an assessment center can range from $25 to thousands of

dollars per candidate (Beer & Spector, 1985). The cost of defending a poorly constructed and validated assessment center can and would probably cost many times more. This cost can often be in the form of litigation expenses. The unnecessary litigation outlay, relating to a poorly constructed assessment center, is not only limited to civil action, but also includes “in-house” grievance procedures, which may require either or both extensive manpower hours, or costly legal representation.

The intended outcome of this research will include a step-by-step process that assessment center administrators can utilize to determine the weight, or value of each dimension that will be used on an assessment center. Both descriptive and evaluative research methodologies were utilized in the preparation of this research project. The intended outcome will be achieved by considering the importance of considering why it is necessary to validate an assessment center. It is also important to evaluate the applicable methods of validating assessment center dimensions and exercises. Moreover, it is important to examine the procedures necessary to perform a validation of assessment center dimensions and exercises. The intended audience for this research project is law enforcement assessment center administrators or private industry assessment center administrators who have a desire to validate assessment center dimensions during the assessment center process.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review was completely conducted utilizing college textbooks available through both the public and college library, in addition to local college bookstores. A vast majority of the textbooks that were initially reviewed revealed some type of information relating to assessment centers. Information for this research was

found at the Newton Gresham Library at Sam Houston State University and the Learning Resource Center (LRC) at the National Emergency Training Center. The "key words" that were used to search the library's computers were "assessment centers," "validation" and "promotion." The material both repositories provided included a collection of articles on the philosophies of assessment centers, as well as validation aspects and methods, the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences made from test scores.

Six books (Legel, O'Sullivan, & Rafilson, 2005; Berk & Rossi, 1990; Beer & Spector, 1985; Babbie, 1989; Fair Employment Practices, 1989; Title 29 CRF) provided the background research on the validation aspect of assessment centers. Legel, O'Sullivan, & Rafilson (2005), compiled the Fundamentals of Law Enforcement Management (I/O Solutions) and provided a section in their text which addressed the importance of weighing certain behaviors (traits). The textbook provided a wide range of police management topics, including promotional strategies.

Berk & Rossi (1990) address the philosophies of validation and the benefits of credible research. Their writing also includes a brief analogy of the importance on validation of assessment centers and the results as they relate to credibility.

The text that provided critical elements of assessment centers is *Readings in Human Resource Management* by Beer & Spector (1985). Though the text information lacked actual specifics of validation, it indirectly addressed validation through aspects such as job analysis and critical job elements.

Babble (1989), author of *The Practice of Social Research* (1989), addresses research reliability and the results of inadequate research. He also addresses specific

terms such as “validity” and “research techniques.” The *Fair Employment Practices* (1989) directs attention to discrimination aspects. Though the information specifically addresses the legality aspects of discrimination, it also assists with ethical guidelines of promotional examinations. *Guidelines and Ethical Considerations for Assessment Center Operations* (2000) provides a very concise perspective on technical issues relating to the industry standard of constructing assessment centers.

Due to the specific research subject of validation (as it relates to assessment centers), clear-cut information was not quite as available as was general information concerning assessment centers. This lack of abundant information only confirmed the need to further research the validation of assessment centers. This analysis of literature indicates that the information contained within the texts is somewhat informative, yet the majority of the data lacked the characteristics of empirical studies.

Research articles provide the most specific literature on how validation of assessment centers has been achieved. Two key articles, one on assessment center job analysis and validation procedures (Clancy, 1989), and the other on ethical considerations for assessment centers (Boehm, et al., 1989), provided specific aspects of assessment center validation.

A telephone interview was conducted with Chief of Police Gary M. Brye of Memorial Villages Police Department. The qualifications and accomplishments of Chief Brye regarding research, development and administration of assessment centers, is the result of his personal studies regarding this particular academic subject matter. In addition, Chief Brye has completed a Master’s thesis project, which was directed toward assessment center construction, including validation aspects.

A survey titled “Assessment Center Validation Survey” (Appendix 1) was distributed to the Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas Leadership Command College class at Texas A & M on January 17, 2006. The class was comprised of twenty-seven executive level police officers. One hundred percent of the surveys were returned and the data was compiled.

## METHODOLGY

A step-by-step process evaluating what assessment center administrators could utilize to determine the weight, or value of each dimension used on an assessment center, the following research questions will be addressed in reaching the intended conclusion: 1) Why is it necessary to validate an assessment center? 2) What are the applicable methods of validating assessment center dimensions and exercises? 3) What procedures are necessary to perform a validation of assessment center dimensions and exercises?

In order to answer the aforementioned questions, systematic research and the review of the available data is essential. The research data that was obtained from this project is a result primarily of replicated research methods of previous authors. Furthermore, two research methods were utilized, descriptive and evaluative. By utilizing these two different inquiry methods, this author’s research method is actually categorized as “triangulation” (Barrie, 1989).

An initial literature review of all the data collected was necessary. This review will include a brief survey of the material for specific data on assessment centers, validation, or information on promotional fairness. Material that does not include any of the applicable subject matter will be excluded from further review.

The remaining material will be reviewed for accuracy and important aspects that would assist in researching validation of assessment centers. In general, articles and data will then be summarized as to the value relating to either the specific aspect of validation or assessment center ethics. Due to the limited amount of resources available, materials that were determined to have limited relevance to the project were still retained.

All of the written data will then be thoroughly read and reviewed. Due to the extreme difference of the subjects of validation methodology, discrimination and assessment centers, it is critical to review each article presented and the related specific data on its on merit. A telephone interview will be conducted with a colleague with an intense background in assessment centers. The information from the telephone interview is conducive with the reviewed printed material, resulting in the decision to interview only one content expert. A draft version of the administrative research project (ARP) “Validating Law Enforcement Assessment Centers” then be completed and reviewed for completeness and technical accuracy. After the revisions were completed, the final format of the research project was then constructed

## FINDINGS

The Assessment Center Validation Survey, with essentially four yes or no questions, was distributed and the results interpreted to the 27 members of the Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas (LEMIT)/Leadership Command College (LCC) class at Texas A & M on January 17, 2006. The class presents a fair, broad-based spectrum of different law enforcement agencies in Texas. Data compilation would simply indicate answers to the following questions: 1) Does your organization use

assessment centers for promotions in your agency? 2) If your organization utilizes assessment centers for promotions, is this conducted “in-house” or outsourced? 3) Are the assessment centers validated? 4) Would it be beneficial for those participating in an assessment center to be “rewarded” for scoring in dimensions that are found to be of greater importance to the organization? For instance, if leadership is found to be very important in the tested position, and a candidate scored well in this, should this be reflected in the scoring and greater value placed on this leadership score?

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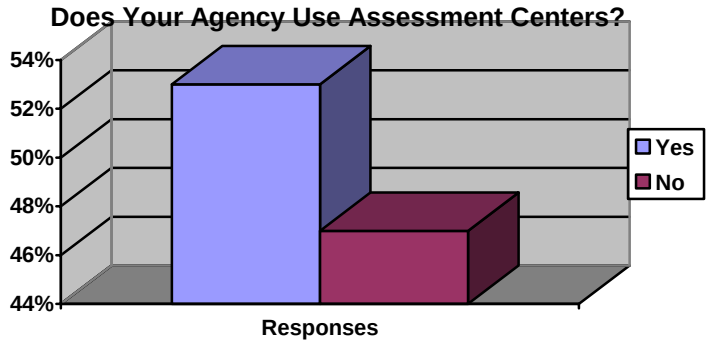
A draft version of “Validating Law Enforcement Assessment Centers” was then completed and reviewed for completeness and technical accuracy. After the revisions were completed, the final format of the research project was then constructed.

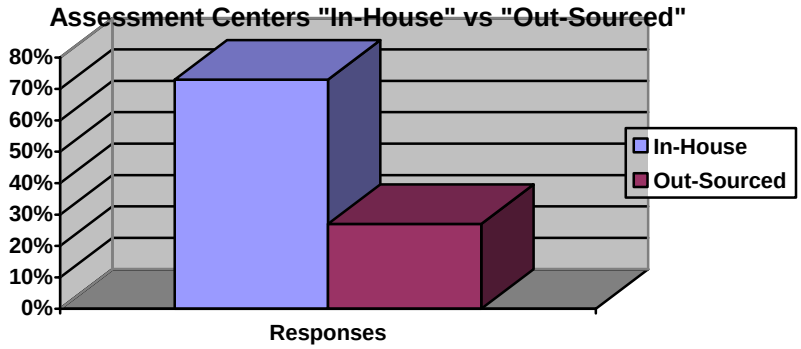
The sampling of the twenty-seven members of the Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas Leadership Command College class at Texas A & M on January 17, 2006 should be considered an accurate representation of law enforcement executives across the State of Texas. The criteria for student selection is strictly based on self-initiated applications for qualified persons in leadership positions in law enforcement, and there is no indication of racial, gender, ethnic or otherwise discrimination. Analysis of the “Assessment Center Validation Survey” is important to examine initially as it is a precursor that indicates that there is still a immense lack of understanding of assessment and it’s processes. The first question which considers

whether or not the survey respondent's organization uses assessment centers for promotions in his/her agency, is charted in the response below.



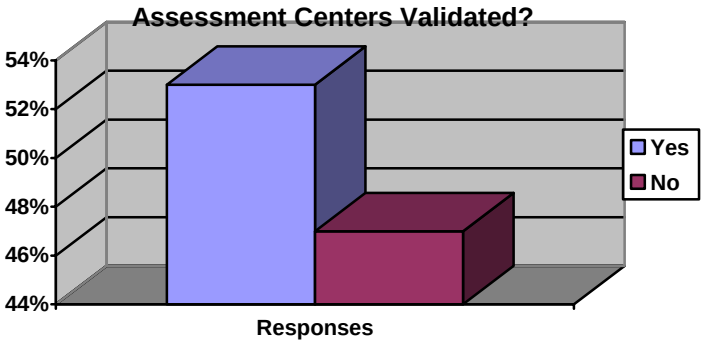

The responses clearly indicate that 53% of the respondents use assessment centers in their agencies. It is difficult to verify if the "assessment centers" are true and legitimate assessment centers, or if they are a "buzz word" for a process similar to assessment centers with greater internal control. It does however indicate that a majority of the organizations are using some type of assessment center process and due to the complexity of constructing an assessment center, the potential for ambiguity greatly exists.

The second survey question (assuming that the organization utilized assessment centers) was "… is the assessment center conducted in-house or outsourced?" Overwhelmingly, (73%) responded that the process was conducted "in-house." Though this project strictly addresses the validation methodology, this high response to using in-house assessment centers itself can contaminate the process and those responding "yes" to this question, and conversely answering "no" to survey question #4, may indicate a lack of confidence and reliance in an unbiased promotional system.




It is important to note, in question #4, that 100% of those who did not believe that it would be beneficial to “reward” those scoring in dimensions found to be of greater importance to an organization, either conducted “in-house” assessment centers, or did not conduct them at all.

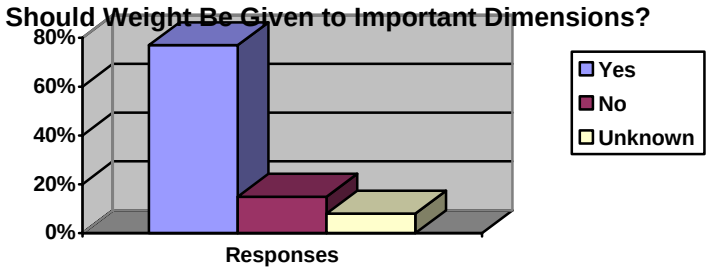
Question number three asked if the assessment centers were validated. The response was split. Fifty-three percent surveyed assumed that their assessment center was validated. Forty-seven percent assumed that their assessment center was not validated.




The author followed up verbally with many of the respondent’s regarding whether or not their agency assessment centers were validated. The resounding response determined that this was a “best guess” scenario. It is safe to assume that only those involved in the construction of the assessment center would be able to accurately

answer whether or not the assessment centers were accurately validated. The respondent's remarks regarding whether or not their agencies assessment centers were validated also indicated that not only was there confusion regarding the true meaning of validation, but there was also uncertainty as to any pre-assessment center process or procedures within their organization.

The last survey question was the most significant question of the instrument. Essentially, it asked this particular group of leaders in law enforcement if they believed that it was important to reward in the assessment center process (by adding coefficient value) to those candidates demonstrating behaviors that were most important to the organization.




The results of the survey were a resounding yes (77%), with only 15% stating "no" to "Should weight be given to important dimensions?" Four responding individuals stated "unknown." It is very important to point out that the 15% of respondent's who responded "no" it was not important, were conducting "in-house" assessment centers at the time and were not relying on external expert assessment center resources/consultants.

The findings of the survey indicate that there is a tremendous disparity in understanding assessment centers and the necessity of validation. The survey clearly

indicated a lack of education regarding assessment centers and how validation applies. The text sources provided information regarding necessary validation strategies and the potential effects if the assessment center was not legally validated.

## DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS

The issue of validating assessment centers presents many challenges to today's law enforcement leadership. In order for the assessment center to appropriately measure its candidates, the dimensions and exercises must reflect organizational expectations. Prior to examining the methodology or necessity of validating assessment centers, it is critical to comprehend validation. Berk & Rossi (1990) state that validity "refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the *real meaning* of the concept under consideration" (p. 171). Essentially, this definition could also be restated as "is the instrument measuring what is intended" (p. 173).

There are several ways a researcher can address the validation issue. First, face validity must be considered. Understand that particular empirical measures may or may not coincide with our common agreements and our individual mental images associated with a particular concept. Face validity could actually be described as a mental perception associated with a particular concept. In essence, each individual perceives different values and methods of measuring productivity. Face validity simply addresses the question: Is the measure acceptable in evaluating a particular concept, or is there a more appropriate method?

Berk & Rossi (1989) offer an interesting analogy regarding face validity. They state:

> You and I might quarrel about the adequacy of measuring worker morale by counting the number of grievances filed with the union, but we'd surely agree that the number of grievances has *something* to do with morale. If I were to suggest that we measure morale by finding out how many books the workers took out of the library during their off-duty hours, you'd undoubtedly raise a more serious objection: That measure wouldn't have any face validity. (p. 165)

According to Berk & Rossi (1989), here are essentially three types of validity, which include: criterion-related validity, content validity and construct validity. It is important to understand the elements of each type of validity. As was indicated with face validity, there are different methods of validating a situation. Utilizing the correct method of validation is nearly as critical as the validation itself.

Criterion-related validity is sometimes called predictive validity and is based on some external criterion. For example, the validity of the College Board is shown in its ability to predict the college success of students. Additionally, the validity of a written driver's test is determined in this sense by the relationship between the scores people receive on the test and how well they drive. In these examples, college success and driving ability are the criteria.

Construct validity is based on the way a measure relates to other variables within a system of theoretical relationships. Suppose that someone is interested in "marital satisfaction," its sources and consequences. As part of the research, you would develop a measure of marital satisfaction, in addition to assessing its validity. In addition to developing your measure, you will have also developed certain theoretical expectations about the way the variable martial satisfaction relates to other variables.

For example, it is possible that satisfied husbands will be less likely than dissatisfied husbands to participate in wife abuse. If the measure of marital satisfaction relates to wife abuse in the expected fashion, which would constitute evidence that the measure is construct validity. However, wide spousal abuse would challenge the validity of the measure.

Content validity refers to the degree with a measure covers the range of meanings included within a concept. Berk & Rossi (1989), suggest that a test of mathematical ability cannot be limited to addition alone, but also needs to include subtraction, multiplication, division, and so forth. If prejudice in general were measured, would measurements reflect prejudice against racial and ethnic groups, religious minorities, women, the elderly, and so on?

There is little doubt that all types of validity play a role in the assessment center process. However, the methods of criterion-related validity and construct validity are the most difficult to perform empirically. Therefore, the content validation methodology with “critical aspects” is the most commonplace (G. M. Brye, personal communication, July 8, 2006). Brye’s term of “critical aspects” could also be termed as important work behaviors.

In order for critical aspects, or important work behaviors to be determined, a job analysis must first be performed. According to Title 29 (1989):

> There should be a job analysis which includes an analysis of the important behaviors required for successful performance and their relative importance, and, if the behavior results to work product(s), an analysis of the work product(s). Any job analysis should focus on the work behaviors and the

> tasks associated with them. If work behaviors are not observable, the job analysis should identify and analyze those aspects of the behaviors that can be observed and the observed work products. The work behaviors selected for measurement should be critical work behaviors and/or important work behaviors constituting most of the job. (Part 1607)

Title 29 (above) mentioned the “relative importance” performing job analysis. It is critical to understand that all work behaviors are not equally important. This must be considered in the validation process. The process for applying this to assessment centers will be addressed in shortly. Title 29 (1989) further states:

> To demonstrate the content validity of a selection procedure, a user should show that the behaviors demonstrated in the selection procedure are a representative sample of the behaviors of the job in question or that the selection procedure are a representative sample of the behaviors of the job in question, or that the selection procedure provides a representative sample of the product of the job. (Part 1607)

As Title 29 (1989) indicates, in order to qualify for content validity, the behaviors demonstrated in the assessment center (selection procedure) must be a representative sample of the work product of the job. In other words, the behaviors being assessed must be actual behaviors currently being required to perform essential job functions.

This would indicate that there are several issues relative to a validated assessment center. First, a job analysis should be performed and an analysis of relevant behaviors must be conducted to determine the dimensions, knowledge, skills and abilities that are necessary for effective job performance. It is important to identify

what should be evaluated by the assessment center. Secondly, if content validation is desired, it must be shown that the knowledge, skills and any abilities assessed must be compatible with knowledge, skills and abilities that are actually required to be successful with the job.

The issue of validation presents a dilemma relating to what is the actual amount of the knowledge, skills and abilities in a particular dimension that is actually required. Additionally, the question considering whether or not it is ethical and legal to structure the assessment center, based on the procedures used to obtain the validation information must be posed. Title 29 (1989) has already partially answered these questions in the aforementioned text. However, it further states that “if a user can show by a job analysis or otherwise, that a higher score on a content validation procedure is likely to result in better job performance, the results may be used to rank persons who score above minimum levels” (Part 1607). This would indicate that the answers are yes. This (Title 29) demonstrates that some tasks are more critical than others and it may be used in the selection process.

Brye stresses that during the validation process, stresses that during the validation process, it is critical to utilize the input of incumbents. The individuals who are currently performing the actual job should be utilized in the validation, which is primarily due to perception. An individual, who is not currently involved in the job in question, may perceive something different than what is actually required. The failure to utilize incumbents in the validation of the job and analysis and comparison matrixes (to be detailed later) may actually invalidate the entire process (G. M. Brye, personal communication, July 8, 2006).

The word “tasks” has been utilized many times relating to the job analysis. It must be understood that tasks are the specific work chores or duties. Assessment centers are utilized to evaluate dimension, or commonly called behaviors. The *Guidelines and Ethical Considerations for Assessment Center Operations* (2000) states “Behaviors displayed by participants must be classified into meaningful and relevant categories such as dimensions, attributes, characteristics, aptitudes, qualities, skills, abilities, competencies, and knowledge.” It further states, “The technique used in the assessment center must be designed to provide information for evaluating the dimensions previously determined by job analysis” (Page 3).

The *Guidelines and Ethical Considerations for Assessment Center Operations* implies that the assessment center, when utilized as a promotional tool, must evaluate dimensions that are relevant for a particular job. As was earlier indicated, it is critical that a job analysis provide this important information. Additionally, it has been determined that (through content validation), each dimension should be ranked “when it is likely to result in better job performance Guidelines and *Ethical Considerations for Assessment Center Operations* (2000). The dilemma seems to be “how is this to be accomplished?”

The solution of this “dilemma” is to compare the importance, relative time spent, and the amount of difficulty of each task to the assessed dimension. It is important to reiterate that not all dimensions are equally important. For instance, an assessment center for a top level administrator’s position, may, and probably would place a higher emphasis on leadership skills, rather than job knowledge. For the Chief of Police, it

would, in all probability, be more critical to possess advanced leadership skills rather than possess advanced investigative skills.

Therefore, appropriate dimensions should be determined. Again, these dimensions are to be determined from the job analysis, utilizing content validity. For example, it would probably be inappropriate to assess a candidate's leadership skills and abilities for the position of entry-level police officer. However, a job analysis with content validity would probably indicate that job knowledge would be an important dimension of job-related behavior.

The assessment center administrator must construct a tool that will determine a relationship, importance, and other critical elements between job aspects. This can be accomplished with the use of matrixes. Though some assessment center critics feel that this may be too complex and unnecessary, it is critical that a thorough analysis and validation process occur in order to ensure that the assessment is a validated instrument, rather than a primary concern to "dropping the weights altogether…to enable easier understanding (of the validation process) by candidates" (Bannon, 1993, Page 2).

A comparison method should then be utilized in determining the weights, or value of each dimension. The first matrix should be constructed to determine the importance of each dimension as it relates to the task (Appendix 2). This particular matrix is designed to determine the relative importance of each task. Regardless of the amount of time spent on performing each task, the following questions must be asked: "How important is it to the overall job that that this task be carried out properly?" and in addition, "To what extent would the inability to perform this task affect overall job

performance?" Title 29 (1989) states that a selection process may include aspects that are "important parts of the job." It is important to restate that the incumbents (individuals currently in the position that is to be assessed) complete each matrix.

The next comparison matrix (Appendix 3) should determine the relative time spent on each task. Obviously, some tasks occur more frequently than others. This is an important aspect of content validity. Though a task may be of high importance, it may not occur very often, thus reducing how critical the task actually is. The incumbents are asked to consider the typical amount of time spend doing this task, and the rate of time performing this task relative to the time spent performing other tasks which make up the entire job. Additionally, all of the tasks performed in the job should be considered when making the time spent rating. It is also important to examine how much time is spent doing this task relative to all other tasks performed.

The fourth matrix addresses the difficulty of each task (Appendix 4). The candidate should be instructed to consider the degree of difficulty in performing each task, and rate how hard it is to complete it (relative to other tasks). As indicated in Title 29, in order to obtain validity, the "characteristics which have been determined t be more important in successful performance in the job are to be evaluated" (Part 1607). All of the tasks that are indicated from a job analysis are critical, and therefore appropriate attention is necessary for those tasks, which are more difficult to accomplish.

The next step is to determine the relationship between tasks and dimensions. Essentially, the incumbent is asked to what degree knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA's) are required of each dimension to complete each task. The candidate should

be reminded that each dimension is separate and should be considered independently with each task, relative to KSA (Appendix 5). This also helps to attain a relationship between the dimensions to be measured with the necessary job tasks. After each of the comparison matrixes have been completed and values have been assigned, they must be applied to arrive at a value (coefficient) for each dimension. This value is the absolute key ingredient in the validation process.

Appendix 6 is simply a matrix that allows a convenient chart to place the previous values for further computation. For instance, the assessment center administrator should then take the average of each dimension in comparison to each task and place it in the corresponding position on Appendix 6. Appendix 6 also requires the average of Appendix 1, 2 and 3's values. This procedure places appropriate weight on each particular task for the tested position. Rather than using this type of manual methodology, it is recommended to create a spreadsheet to calculate the values, thus eliminating the chance of error and after transferring the averaged task values, multiply it with the average dimension value. These are then added together and the average is placed in the appropriate location at the bottom of the matrix (see example on matrix). The number placed at the bottom for each dimension is called a coefficient. The coefficient is then used as a multiplier for the candidate's score in that particular dimension.

The coefficient applies appropriate weight on each dimension as it relates to each particular task. This ensures that the required amount of knowledge, skills and abilities (as they relate to the appropriate job tasks) are being considered in an appropriate fashion. Reiterating the validation perspective that some tasks are more

important than others. Just as some dimensions are more important than other dimensions.

Appendix 7 gives an example of a “cover sheet” that should be attached to the packet of matrix’s. A document such as this removes much of the uncertainty and assists with in the understanding of the process that the incumbents are participating in.

The candidate’s score in each dimension is then multiplied by each coefficient. Assessment centers evaluate a candidates’ ability to perform behaviors, or dimensions. The final score sheet allows the assessment center administrator to place the actual score of the candidate of each dimension, and multiply it by the appropriate coefficient, which ultimately allows each dimension to be valued individually.

It is important to reiterate that each dimension adds an ingredient to the validated product. For instance, a task of a Police Shift Commander may be to command and control at a high risk, emergency incident. By utilizing the matrixes, it may be indicated that it is more critical that the command and control be stressed greater at a domestic disturbance, rather than it would be at the scene of a terrorist incident. Though a terrorist incident may occur, it is more probably that a domestic disturbance will be the common event, rather than a terrorist bombing.

This method of considering particular dimensions more important than others places certain realism in the testing instrument. It is now custom tailored to the position that is being assessed. Different organizational cultures and philosophies essentially mandate this and the end result is a valid testing instrument. The instrument would not only assess the candidate’s behaviors in meaningful and relevant dimension, but it would also apply validated emphasis to each dimension as well.

The key to an effective assessment center lies in the validation process utilized by the assessment center administrator. The reasons for the validation of assessment centers should be considered both on ethical and legal implications. Federal guidelines can assist the assessment center coordinator with the legal aspects of validation.

The assessment center must be reliable and unbiased. It begins with a validated job analysis. It is not inferred that each assessment center must perform a job analysis; however, a current analysis must be available. Though the method of content validity was stressed in the job analysis, other methods may be utilized. However, it was found that content validity seems to be the most efficient. Title 29 (1989), warns that "users should avoid techniques which tend to overestimate validity findings (Part 1607). The entire instrument must present face validity.

The assessment center administrator must understand the aspects of validation. Methods such as criterion-related, construct, and content are three methods of validation available. Though content was expressly utilized, the option lies with the assessment center administrator. Validation applies to the job analysis, dimensions, tasks, relative time spent, relative importance, and the degree of difficulty of each task. The process utilized must be systematic and methodical and lastly accurate.

If law enforcement administrators are to effectively select leaders for their organizations, they must utilize recognized validation strategies. Essentially, this will ensure that the instrument is not only valid and reliable, but equally as important, it will be fair and unbiased for our testing colleagues.

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## Appendix 1

## Assessment Center Validation Survey

(1) Does your organization use assessment center for promotions in the agency?

Yes ☐ No ☐
***(If no, then proceed to question #4)***

If yes, which positions?
(Check all that apply)

Corporal ☐ Lieutenant ☐ Deputy Chief ☐
Sergeant ☐ Captain ☐ Assistant Chief ☐
Other: _____

(2) If your organization utilizes assessment centers for promotions (yes to #1). Is this conducted "in-house" or outsourced?

In-House ☐ Outsourced ☐ Unknown ☐

(3) Are the assessment centers validated?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, how? _____

(4) Would it be beneficial for those participating in an assessment center to be "rewarded" for scoring in dimensions that are found to be of greater importance to the organization? For instance, if leadership is found to be very important in the tested position, and a candidates scored well in this, should this be reflected in the scoring and a greater value be placed on this leadership score?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown☐

Name: _____

Agency: _____

Sworn Officers in Agency: _____

PLEASE RETURN SURVEY TO:
BRUCE URE, WATAUGA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

# Appendix 2

## *TASK IMPORTANCE MATRIX*

## Job Summary

**The Lieutenant of Police shall provide senior level administration and supervision to an assigned division of the department such as Patrol, Criminal Investigations, Staff, Administration, Narcotics or Support Services. In addition, Lieutenants are to render police services to include enforcement of the law, regulate traffic and protection of the rights and property of the citizenry.**

Regardless of the amount of time spent doing this task, **"*How important is it to the overall job that this duty task be carried out properly?"*** and in addition, ***"To what extent would inability to perform this task affect overall job performance?"***

**0 = This task is not performed**
**1 = This task is of little or no importance**
**2 = This task is of moderately low importance**
**3 = This task is of moderate importance**
**4 = This task is of moderately high importance**
**5 = This task is of high importance**

### *TASKS*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Make division assignments by ensuring that subordinates receive duty assignment information, information relating to current activities or needs and instructions relating to same. | |
| 2. | Oversee division activities by maintaining a level of presence in the field so as to remain aware of subordinate actions. Address non-compliance with directives in a formal or informal manner. Make scenes of emergency calls and direct police activities. | |
| 3. | Review documents for accuracy by ensuring that subordinates produce documents that are complete and accurate. Ensure that all required forms are submitted. Ensure that all documents are properly routed. Review all requisitions made by assigned personnel. | |
| 4. | Complete performance evaluations on sergeants within respective assigned division. Conduct and review performance evaluations on all other personnel within respective division. Provide instruction to others involved in process. Continually evaluate sergeants assigned within division and provide guidance or direction in a formal or informal manner. Evaluate activities and reports in accordance with standing orders, goals and objectives. | |
| 5. | Address complaints by citizens or officers against subordinates as needed to remedy conflicts. Accept formal complaints against subordinates as directed by established procedures. Conduct formal investigations as directed by appropriate authority. Investigate discrepancies reported by sergeants concerning the failure of officers to perform their duties. | |
| 6. | Maintain communications with superiors and subordinates so as to ensure that important information is made available for their consideration. Maintain awareness of crimes, trends, tensions, etc. that exist in the field. Inform Deputy Chief (of that bureau) of violations or misconduct by assigned personnel that require administrative attention. | |
| 7. | Capable of enforcing laws and conducting investigations. Take necessary police action as required, conduct investigations and submit necessary reports in a timely manner. | |

# Appendix 3

## *TIME SPENT MATRIX*

## Job Summary

**The Lieutenant of Police shall provide senior level administration and supervision to an assigned division of the department such as Patrol, Criminal Investigations, Staff, Administration, Narcotics or Support Services. In addition, Lieutenants are to render police services to include enforcement of the law, regulate traffic and protection of the rights and property of the citizenry.**

Think about the typical amount of time spent doing this task and rate the time spent performing this task relative to the time spent performing all other tacks which make up the entire job. Consider all of the tasks performed in this job when making this time spent rating. Ask yourself, ***"How much time is spent doing this task relative to all other tasks performed?"***

**0 = This task is not performed**
**1 = This task is of little or no importance**
**2 = This task is of moderately low importance**
**3 = This task is of moderate importance**
**4 = This task is of moderately high importance**
**5 = This task is of high importance**

***TASKS***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Make division assignments by ensuring that subordinates receive duty assignment information, information relating to current activities or needs and instructions relating to same. | |
| 2. | Oversee division activities by maintaining a level of presence in the field so as to remain aware of subordinate actions. Address non-compliance with directives in a formal or informal manner. Make scenes of emergency calls and direct police activities. | |
| 3. | Review documents for accuracy by ensuring that subordinates produce documents that are complete and accurate. Ensure that all required forms are submitted. Ensure that all documents are properly routed. Review all requisitions made by assigned personnel. | |
| 4. | Complete performance evaluations on sergeants within respective assigned division. Conduct and review performance evaluations on all other personnel within respective division. Provide instruction to others involved in process. Continually evaluate sergeants assigned within division and provide guidance or direction in a formal or informal manner. Evaluate activities and reports in accordance with standing orders, goals and objectives. | |
| 5. | Address complaints by citizens or officers against subordinates as needed to remedy conflicts. Accept formal complaints against subordinates as directed by established procedures. Conduct formal investigations as directed by appropriate authority. Investigate discrepancies reported by sergeants concerning the failure of officers to perform their duties. | |
| 6. | Maintain communications with superiors and subordinates so as to ensure that important information is made available for their consideration. Maintain awareness of crimes, trends, tensions, etc. that exist in the field. Inform Deputy Chief (of that bureau) of violations or misconduct by assigned personnel that require administrative attention. | |
| 7. | Capable of enforcing laws and conducting investigations. Take necessary police action as required, conduct investigations and submit necessary reports in a timely manner. | |

# Appendix 4

## *TASK DIFFICULTY MATRIX*

## Job Summary

**The Lieutenant of Police shall provide senior level administration and supervision to an assigned division of the department such as Patrol, Criminal Investigations, Staff, Administration, Narcotics or Support Services. In addition, Lieutenants are to render police services to include enforcement of the law, regulate traffic and protection of the rights and property of the citizenry.**

Think about, ***"The difficulty in performing this task and rate how hard it is to complete this task, relative to other tasks."***

**0 = This task is not performed**
**1 = This task is of little or no importance**
**2 = This task is of moderately low importance**
**3 = This task is of moderate importance**
**4 = This task is of moderately high importance**
**5 = This task is of high importance**

### *TASKS*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Make division assignments by ensuring that subordinates receive duty assignment information, information relating to current activities or needs and instructions relating to same. | |
| 2. | Oversee division activities by maintaining a level of presence in the field so as to remain aware of subordinate actions. Address non-compliance with directives in a formal or informal manner. Make scenes of emergency calls and direct police activities. | |
| 3. | Review documents for accuracy by ensuring that subordinates produce documents that are complete and accurate. Ensure that all required forms are submitted. Ensure that all documents are properly routed. Review all requisitions made by assigned personnel. | |
| 4. | Complete performance evaluations on sergeants within respective assigned division. Conduct and review performance evaluations on all other personnel within respective division. Provide instruction to others involved in process. Continually evaluate sergeants assigned within division and provide guidance or direction in a formal or informal manner. Evaluate activities and reports in accordance with standing orders, goals and objectives. | |
| 5. | Address complaints by citizens or officers against subordinates as needed to remedy conflicts. Accept formal complaints against subordinates as directed by established procedures. Conduct formal investigations as directed by appropriate authority. Investigate discrepancies reported by sergeants concerning the failure of officers to perform their duties. | |
| 6. | Maintain communications with superiors and subordinates so as to ensure that important information is made available for their consideration. Maintain awareness of crimes, trends, tensions, etc. that exist in the field. Inform Deputy Chief (of that bureau) of violations or misconduct by assigned personnel that require administrative attention. | |
| 7. | Capable of enforcing laws and conducting investigations. Take necessary police action as required, conduct investigations and submit necessary reports in a timely manner. | |

# Appendix 5

## JOB TASK AND DIMENSION COMPARISON MATRIX
## POSITION OF POLICE SERGEANT/CONROE

| **DIMENSION RELATIONSHIP RATING SCALE**<br><br>7 = A person needs a **very extensive amount** of this KSA to perform this task adequately..<br>6 = A person needs a **great amount** of this KSA to perform this task adequately.<br>5 = A person needs a **considerable amount** of this KSA to perform this task adequately.<br>4 = A person needs an **average amount** of this KSA to perform this task adequately.<br>3 = A person needs **some** of this KSA to perform this task adequately.<br>2 = A person needs a **small amount** of this KSA to perform this task adequately.<br>1 = A person needs **little or none** of this KSA to perform this task adequately.<br><br>**KSA= Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities** | **LEADERSHIP** | **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** | **WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS** | **PROBLEM SOLVE/ANALYSIS** | **INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS** | **PLANNING&ORGANIZING** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Make division assignments by ensuring that subordinates receive duty assignment information, information relating to current activities or needs and instructions relating to same. | | | | | | |
| 2. Oversee division activities by maintaining a level of presence in the field so as to remain aware of subordinate actions. Address non-compliance with directives in a formal or informal manner. Make scenes of emergency calls and direct police activities. | | | | | | |
| 3. Review documents for accuracy by ensuring that subordinates produce documents that are complete and accurate. Ensure that all required forms are submitted. Ensure that all documents are properly routed. Review all requisitions made by assigned personnel. | | | | | | |
| 4. Complete performance evaluations on sergeants within respective assigned division. Conduct and review performance evaluations on all other personnel within respective division. Provide instruction to others involved in process. Continually evaluate sergeants assigned within division and provide guidance or direction in a formal or informal manner. Evaluate activities and reports in accordance with standing orders, goals and objectives. | | | | | | |
| 5. Address complaints by citizens or officers against subordinates as needed to remedy conflicts. Accept formal complaints against subordinates as directed by established | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| procedures. Conduct formal investigations as directed by appropriate authority. Investigate discrepancies reported by sergeants concerning the failure of officers to perform their duties. | | | | | | |
| 6. Maintain communications with superiors and subordinates so as to ensure that important information is made available for their consideration. Maintain awareness of crimes, trends, tensions, etc. that exist in the field. Inform Deputy Chief (of that bureau) of violations or misconduct by assigned personnel that require administrative attention. | | | | | | |
| 7. Capable of enforcing laws and conducting investigations. Take necessary police action as required, conduct investigations and submit necessary reports in a timely manner. | | | | | | |

# Appendix 6

## JOB TASK AND DIMENSION COMPARISON MATRIX
## POSITION OF POLICE SERGEANT

| | LEADERSHIP | ORAL COMMUNICATIONS | WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS | PROBLEM SOLVE/ANALYSIS | INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS | PLANNING&ORGANIZING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Task #1 Average Value (From Matrix 1, 2, & 3) Example: 3.2 | 5.6 | | | | | |
| 2. Task #2 Average Value (From Matrix 1, 2, & 3) Example: 2.1 | 4.0 | | | | | |
| 3. Task #3 Average Value (From Matrix 1, 2, & 3) Example: 3.0 | 3.5 | | | | | |
| 4. Task #4 Average Value (From Matrix 1, 2, & 3) Example: 3.2 | 4.5 | | | | | |
| 5. Task #5 Average Value (From Matrix 1, 2, & 3) Example: 1.9 | 4.8 | | | | | |
| 6. Task #6 Average Value (From Matrix 1, 2, & 3) Example: 4.5 | 4.0 | | | | | |
| 7. Task #7 Average Value (From Matrix 1, 2, & 3) Example: 4.1 | 4.0 | | | | | |
| **Multiply each average task value with average dimension. The result is the scoring coefficient.** | **13.53** | | | | | |

# Appendix 7

## Task Matrix Completion Instructions

- The tasks of the Lieutenant are first reviewed three different ways:

    1.) How important is each task to the success both to the Lieutenant and to the organization?
    2.) How much time is required for each task "on average?" In other words, does each particular task require no time up to a large amount of time.
    3.) How difficult is each task to complete (on average)? For instance if a particular task requires a large amount of knowledge, skills, and abilities, then it would rate very high.

- How to rate:

    1.) The lowest score is a 0 and the highest score is 5. The scores may range on each sheet, or there may be multiples of the same rating numbers.
    2.) Base your rating ONLY on what it ACTUALLY takes, not what it should be.

## Job Task and Dimension Comparison Matrix

- How to rate:

Each <u>dimension</u> is applied to each <u>task</u> that the Lieutenant is expected to perform. For instance, the first task:

> "Make division assignments by ensuring that subordinates receive duty assignment information, information relating to current activities or needs and instructions relating to same."

The first dimension is leadership. The question becomes, "How much leadership is required to perform this group of tasks? The minimum score is 0 and the maximum is 7.

After writing the score, you are to again review the group of tasks and ask "How much oral communication is required to perform this group of tasks? Again, the scoring ranges from the minimum of 0 to the maximum of 7.