

AC/DC: the benefits of assessments

Over the last couple of years assessment centers (AC) and development centers (DC) have been established in many companies. There is growing demand especially for DCs.

What are assessment centers and what are the benefits of them? What is behind the different names for an instrument that has people divided on?

The assessment center as a tool for selecting and developing staff has the participants run through different standardized tasks similar to their future job responsibilities.

Observers assess participants according to defined criteria and decide which candidate might fit the position best.

University graduates and job novices as well as employees sought after for a special measure e.g. project team, development program, or first managerial duties make typical target groups for ACs.

Some examples for ACs designed by CONTUR:

- 1st Line AC to select experts for master level
- AC to select university graduates for trainee programs
- AC to select potential group leaders

In contrast to an AC a development center (DC) focuses on the personal development of the participants

Methodologically the DC works like an AC but focuses much more on personal advancement of the participants as mentioned before; therefore, being a

major tool for the individual qualification of employees.

A DC aims at aligning employee skills with company requirements and at determining the individual strengths and needs of the participants in order to deduce concrete development measures.

After a DC participants receive professional feedback regarding their performance and concrete development measures. The latter will then be discussed with the superior and human resources department to align them with the respective work place setting.

Our recommendations for individual development mix measures taking place at the workplace as well as outside and include reading lists, feedbacks, exercises, mentoring, project tasks, or tailored trainings.

Some examples for DCs designed by CONTUR:

- DC in the frame of international personnel development programs
- Talent Diagnosis Workshops
- Single assessments to deduce individual development measures for different target groups

Questions we can answer through a development center:

- Does the participant show potential for leading others?
- How can the participant be supported and developed efficiently?
- Which may be the right position for the participant?

- Where could the participant apply his/her specific knowledge and skills even more effectively for the company in the future?

CONTUR's approach to ACs/DCs:

We conduct assessment center selection as well as development centers for individual participants and for groups of 4-12 participants; they take 1-3 days depending on the complexity.

Our assessment centers are always customer tailored individual or group workshops consisting of diverse exercises such as group discussions, role play, presentations, case studies, and interviews.

We pay special attention to high validity and acceptance (by all parties) of our results. We start by creating job specifications including skills relevant for the present and future workplace, so-called critical incidents.

In case the company cannot supply these information we conduct structured interviews and/or workshops to find out. From there we develop behavioral individual/group exercises that include – if possible – different feedback (e.g. peer feedback, self-assessment, interim feedback, or video feedback) to assist self-reflection and new learning experiences. Participants get, thus, a chance to look closely at their own strengths and needs.

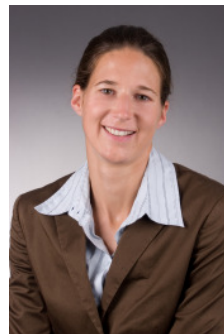
We develop the overall frame of the measures, the exercises, evaluation forms, and observer material. Together with the human resources department CONTUR conducts the workshops and attends in the feedback process. CONTUR gives recommendations for the individual development plans and assessments.

Prior to the workshops we train the internal observers (managers and human resources staff). It is one of our main concerns to ensure a fair and smooth assessment process.

Each assessment center is a good opportunity for the assessors to review and reflect their standards and to be involved in the selection and development of the participants.

We are especially happy about the positive feedback: from participants that tell us they felt treated fairly, from assessors that stated they made new experiences they can use in their day to day business, and from supervisors that received concrete individual recommendations for the development of their candidates.

Are you interested? Give us a call – we design a process together with you!



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