



ASSESSMENT CENTERS 101

Training provide by the EPCSOA



Be Advised

- The information provided in this training should be viewed as a guide and training tool to help you better understand what an Assessment Center is and what types of concepts that are used for an Assessment Center.
- At no time should it be construed that the Sheriff's Office or the El Paso County Sheriff's Officers Association is guaranteeing or advising the attendance or use of the information will in turn relate to a successful outcome in an Assessment Center.
- This information is for training only and comes from open source information.



What is an Assessment Center?

- An assessment center is not a place to go to take a test.
 - *It is a testing process in which candidates participate in a series of systematic, job related, real-life situations while being observed and evaluated by experts in policing, supervision, and management.*
- Trained evaluators, called “assessors” observe candidates individually and in groups performing exercises/scenarios that simulate conditions and situations a sergeant (for example) would encounter in real life.

What types of things are included in an Assessment?

- Several basic exercises have become fairly standard in today's assessment centers. Some examples include but aren't limited to:
 1. The In-Basket
 2. The Group discussion/Leaderless group
 3. The Interview Simulation; often called the Role play Employee counseling session/ or a Scenario based on current events, policy, or current problem.
 4. Oral presentation (often a personal biography)
 5. Written exercise
 6. Panels/Oral Boards

Critical success factors or testing dimensions which may be used:

- 1. Supervision: Management and Administration:** Knowledge of concepts and theories relative to police supervision, management, and administration.
- 2. Oral Communication:** Effective expression when presenting ideas to an individual or group (includes non-verbal communication).
- 3. Written Communication:** Clear expression of ideas in writing and use of correct form.
- 4. Planning and Organizing:** Establishing a course of action for self and/or others to achieve organizational goals; maintaining appropriate records; use of computer resources.

Critical success factors or testing dimensions which may be used:

5. Control: Taking action to coach, monitor, evaluate and correct job tasks, activities, and responsibilities of subordinates.

6. Environmental Awareness: Managing change. Using knowledge of changing situations and pressures inside and outside of the department to identify potential problems and opportunities.

7. Organizational Integrity: Action that indicates support for and maintenance of departmental standards, norms, goals, and ethics.

8. Interpersonal Sensitivity: Actions that indicate an attention to the needs, feelings, and expressions of others.

Prepare for the Part!

- Dress:
 - *The question that is always asked is do I show up in uniform or do I wear a suit?*
 - What are you most comfortable in?
 - Which one makes you feel more confident?
 - Which one enhances your professional demeanor?
- Uniform:
 - *Is it clean and pressed*
 - *Is my gig line straight*
 - *Is my gear clean*
 - *Are my boots polished and presentable*
- Suit:
 - *Does it fit properly*
 - *Is my gig line straight*
 - *Are my shoes polished*
- Professional bearing is the first thing people (assessors) are going to see about who you are and what you are about.

Practice, Practice, Practice

- Assessment centers are usually lengthy, so make sure you are prepared.
- Practice beforehand:
 - *Assessment will normally include both written and oral exercises, so practice what and how you want to say or phrase things in advance.*
 - *Use your resources:*
 - Internet
 - Books
 - Current events
 - Department resources
 - *Sometimes scenarios require you stretch beyond your normal scope of operation, so know what internal resource you have available to use in scenario based questions, i.e. personnel, special equipment, special teams, and additional local resources.*

Practice, Practice, Practice

- At some point in an assessment or scenario you will have an opportunity to give information about yourself or skills.
 - *Sell yourself: practice before hand as to what important things they need to know about you. “Why should I choose you over all the other candidates?”*
 - *If there isn't a formal interview, work it into the scenario*
 - *Believe in yourself and your abilities*



The Assessment

- You have prepared, you are ready, and you are suited and booted, now what:
 - *Show up early*
 - Give yourself enough time to be early to the location. Know where and how to get to the location.
 - *Use your time wisely*
 - During the written portion of the exercise, make sure you keep an eye on your time and use it wisely.
 - Go through the paperwork and to see what tasks are required. Some parts of the exercise will require more time than others. Read through before answering questions.
 - *Think before you speak:*
 - Make sure you completely understand the question before you answer it. If the question is unclear or your unsure about it ask them to repeat or allow you to reread the question.
 - Speak clearly and confidently
 - *If you don't know, don't make it up.*

Areas of focus for improvement

- Written Communication:
 - *Ensure documents are orderly and all addressed accordingly*
 - *Make sure the communication addresses the problem or subject*
 - *Be careful with spelling and punctuation and don't use words that are too technical (i.e. cop talk)*
- Problem analysis:
 - *Identify all the problems or subjects and address them in the order of importance*
 - *Break down large problems in to smaller chunks to promote solvability*
- Leadership:
 - *Assume a leadership position and motivate your peers or team*
 - *Be able to explain your Leadership position/function from the agencies perspective*
 - *Never lie or pretend to know a subject that you don't*
- Management Skills:
 - *Ensure that your audience understands what you are asking or stating.*
 - *Use positive or constructive criticism when faced with adversity*
 - *Promote a "Us" instead of "You" mentality*

Areas of focus for improvement

- Interpersonal skills:

- *Give respect to gain respect, be professional*
- *Use a team work approach apposed to Supervisor and subordinate relationship*
- ***Listen** to concerns*

- Verbal Communication:

- *Think before you speak; make sure what you want to say is well thought out*
- *Speak clearly and confidently*
- *Pause before you are going to say something important*
- *Don't talk over others*

- Planning and Organization:

- *Manage your time effectively*
- *Leave time for questions and to make sure your audience understands*
- *Use an outline or check list to ensure you don't miss or leave out important points to be made.*

Questions?

