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COMPARISON OF THE SITUATIONAL CHECKLIST VERSUS THE SKILL
CHECKLIST ASSESSMENT CENTER EXERCISE REPORT FORMS

BY

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B.A., University of Central Florida, 1980

THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

An assessment center is a process in which individuals participate in a series of situations that resemble what they might be called upon to do in the real world. They are typically evaluated in these situations or exercises by several trained assessors in a fair and impartial fashion, focusing on skills associated with a given job. The evaluations are then used for a variety of organizational/human resource purposes (Frank, Sefcik, & Jaffee, 1983).

Assessment centers focus on the observations of actual behaviors which are demonstrated in a series of real world job situations. According to Flanagan (1954), these situations are selected to be typical of those in which the individual's performance is to be predicted. Each situation is made sufficiently complex so that it is very difficult for the persons tested to know which of their reactions are being assessed. There seems to be much informal evidence (face validity) that the person tested behaves spontaneously and naturally in these situations. It is hoped

that the naturalness of the situations results in more valid and typical responses than those which are obtained from other testing approaches. The rationale behind using situational exercises is that they simulate the type of work to which a participant will be exposed and allow his/her performance to be observed under somewhat realistic conditions. To evaluate properly, it is necessary to focus on behaviors which are easily observable, which can be numerically evaluated and which are relevant to a given job.

According to Hinrichs and Haanpera (1976) there are a number of reasons why the assessment center method is a powerful and useful tool. It is relatively objective, provides uniform standards for judgment by trained assessors, is valid, and can serve as a developmental experience for the participants. Perhaps among the more important reasons is that the assessment measurement provides quantitative data, statistics, about a most critical and rather imprecisely defined activity -- the promotion process in formal organizations.

In this vein, assessment has been viewed as one of the few techniques which are useful for assuring affirmative action. It makes objective what otherwise may be a very subjective, imprecise and (often) potentially biased decision process (Hinrichs and Haanpera, 1976). The American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) Company's use of the assessment center method for selecting female candidates for management positions in 1975 was a dramatic indication of this important role for assessment centers (Hoyle, 1975).

In addition to its role in selection, the assessment center method is increasingly being used to make differential decisions about individuals for action such as placement, job rotation, training, and development.

However, since their conception, assessment centers have met with controversy concerning their effectiveness and overall utility. The first industrial application of an assessment center was the Management Progress Study.

This center was conducted by the Michigan Bell Telephone Company and AT&T (Bray, 1964). According to Bray, the study was instituted as a long range research study of the psychological development of adulthood. This study involved 355 newly appointed managers of AT&T.

After eight years the center correctly identified 80% of the original participants who eventually reached middle management (Bray, 1964). This study ultimately demonstrated the ability to identify and isolate individual characteristics that lead to the success of a manager.

Multiple Exercises

Multiple exercises are included in an attempt to adequately sample the relevant content domain of incumbent behavior. This strategy demands that the various contexts of performance are also sampled. Properly designed assessment centers are carefully developed to provide observations of the participants' behaviors in a

variety of contextually accurate job situations (Neidig and Neidig, 1984). The different situational exercises are designed to represent the various demands that confront incumbents in the target positions. If construct validation or simply multiple observation were the primary concerns, little regard would need to be given to this context feature. In the latter case, assessment centers might use only a six hour in-basket exercise or be composed only of multiple group discussions, whether or not group discussions were appropriate to the target positions.

The accurate sampling of situations (or work settings) is, therefore, one of the critical steps in the establishment of the job relatedness of any assessment center. The intent of assessment centers should be to allow the observation and evaluation of job-related behaviors.

Multiple Skills

Bray and Grant (1966) first identified 25 characteristics of successful managers for use in their Mananagement Progress Study,

and later factor analysis of these rating variables yielded 11 factors for success. Many of these factors, e.g., interpersonal skills and administrative skills, are used in today's assessment centers.

Rating on several skill dimensions has the advantage of demonstrating high and low performers on specific skills and can be used for matching participants to jobs that require varying degrees of certain skills for success on the job. However, there has been debate as to whether skill performance or situational performance in assessment centers should be evaluated.

Situations vs. Skills

The general assumption that there are broad relatively stable, high consistent dispositions that pervasively influence the individual's behaviors across many situations (e.g., Allport, 1937; Jones & Nisbett, 1971) has been traditionally accepted. Most personologists (e.g., Cattell, 1946; Cattell & Scheier, 1961; McClelland, 1951; Murray, 1938) and clinicians (e.g., Rapaport, Gill & Schafer,

1945) also have assumed that personality variables are the major source of behavioral variance and are expressed in a relatively consistent manner across different situations.

However social psychologists and sociologists (e.g. Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934) have suggested that situational factors are more important than individual differences as sources of behavioral variance. Mischel (1968, 1969) suggests that the empirical evidence does not support the personologists' viewpoint and that situational factors are important. Response patterns even in highly similar situations often fail to be strongly related. Individuals show far less cross-situational consistency in their behavior than has been assumed by trait-state theories. The more dissimilar the evoking situations, the less likely they are to produce similar or consistent responses from the same individual. Even seemingly trivial situational differences may reduce correlation to zero (Mischel, 1968).

Person x Situation x Trait

In a study by Turnage and Muchinsky (1982) the relative contribution of various components (i.e., person x situation x trait) to variance in assessment ratings was measured. The overriding findings which resulted from the analysis of assessment center data was that assessment centers provide little information potentially useful to management for making personnel decisions beyond what could be obtained from a global potential rating. The high degree of convergent validity and associated lack of discriminant validity across traits (skills) indicated that assessees were evaluated globally rather than differentially. The data also supported the concept of situational (exercise) specificity of behavior as evidenced by large person x situation effects.

Low Across Exercise Correlations

In a somewhat related study by Sackett and Dreher (1982) the interrelationship among dimensional ratings between and within

exercises was examined. Post-exercise ratings of assessment dimensions were correlated and factor analyzed. In order for assessment center dimensions to meet construct validity requirements, the constructs must demonstrate convergent validity across methods of measurement and this convergence must be greater than the effects due to these methods of measurement. For assessment centers, this translates into Campbell and Fiske (1959) terms as follows: 1) ratings of the same ability across different situational exercises must be significantly correlated (convergent validity), and 2) these convergent validities must be greater in magnitude than the correlations of this ability with the other abilities within each of the exercises (a primary requirement for discriminant validity).

The results obtained by Sackett and Dreher (1982) indicated that convergent validities for the ability ratings were generally absent and there was a greater relationship among abilities within an exercise than was demonstrated for the convergent correlations. That is, there was greater effect due to method (exercises) than due to

consistency of assessee behavior or of assessor evaluation across the various assessment center exercises.

Results similar to those of Sackett and Dreher (1982) have previously been documented in other assessment center research. Neidig, Martin, and Yates (1978, 1979) and Archambeau (1979) found little evidence of discriminant validity for ratings within assessment centers.

Possible Explanations

The first possible explanation for the low across exercise correlations is that the behavior of participants in an assessment center is situationally determined; that is, there is no consistency of behavior from exercise to exercise (Sackett and Dreher, 1984). If this were true, the belief that overall skill dimensional ratings can be made representing meaningful stable behavior patterns would be misguided.

One alternative to this explanation is that these differences are due to low inter-rater reliability. The term inter-rater

reliability refers to the degree to which assessors are "interchangeable," which is to say the extent to which assessors "agree" on a set of judgments (James, Demaree, & Wolf, 1984). The ratings compared here share two potential sources of variance. They are ratings of different exercises, and the ratings in different exercises may be made by different assessors. A participant may, for example, be rated by one assessor in an in-basket exercise and a second assessor in a role-play exercise. Even if the participant's behavior was consistent across exercises, very dissimilar ratings could result from low inter-rater agreement.

Convergent coefficients could be depressed due to unreliability in the rating process, and within-exercise ratings could be more highly related due to halo error. However, research on the reliability of assessor judgments in assessing skills (e.g., Howard, 1974; Archanbeau, 1979; Borman, 1982) suggest that a moderately high inter-rater agreement is likely in the assessment center context.

Another alternative explanation is that there are wide variations from exercise to exercise in the opportunity for behavior

representing a dimension to be manifested. For example, an in-basket exercise may provide numerous opportunities for a participant to exhibit behavior that would be classified under the dimension "leadership." Other exercises may provide only one or two opportunities to exhibit behavior relevant to the dimension. This may be insufficient to obtain a reliable measure of the dimension. According to Sackett and Dreher (1982) the fact that a participant did or did not take advantage of his or her one opportunity to delegate in a given exercise may result in the participant being rated high or low in that exercise but may not be representative of the participant's typical performance on the skill dimensions.

This explanation suggests that there will be agreement across exercises in which there is sufficient opportunity for a dimension to be demonstrated. This explanation involves an idea central to examinations of consistency of behavior, the principle of aggregation (e.g., Epstein, 1979; 1980; Rushton, Brainerd, & Pressley, 1983). The argument is that proponents of situational specificity of behavior have been led astray by over reliance on single measurements of

behavior. The principle of aggregation is that the sum of a set of measurements is more stable than any single measurement from the set. A testing analogy illustrates this most clearly. The fact that single items on a test of verbal comprehension may correlate .15 with each other does not lead to the conclusion that verbal comprehension is not a meaningful construct. Rather, aggregating many items into a scale produces a measure with high reliability. A parallel argument may be made with regard to skill dimension measurement in assessment centers. Exercise ratings of a dimension can be viewed as "single items," using the testing analogy (Sackett and Dreher, 1984).

Another explanation is that there is the possibility of participant unreliability, which is independent of the type of exercise. Due to undetermined "practice effects," motivational changes, or some other variable, some participants do not display stable performance from exercise to exercise. Although these may be factors in some individual cases, Cohen and Sands (1978) found exercise order did not affect post-exercise ratings as evidence

against widespread practice effects or changes in motivational level in the course of assessment.

Thus none of these are viable explanations for the low-across exercise correlation. This suggests that the low consistency of rated performance across exercises reflects true differences in effectiveness across situations. This conclusion leads one to question the use of global skill dimension ratings. Data do not support viewing global skill dimensions as the constructs underlying assessment ratings.

Alternative To Skill Measurements

The lack of correlation between different measures of the same construct has often been emphasized by those urging a situational approach to personality research. In view of previous research it is not surprising to find low correlations between two different measures of the same constructs (Campus, 1974).

Assessment centers can be conceptualized as a series of short exercises or mini-simulations designed to assess effectiveness of a

variety of important managerial tasks, such as performance counseling and problem solving, among many others. What is assessed under this scheme is the effectiveness of task performance. Rather than ending up with a series of global skill dimension ratings, the product is a series of assessments of a participant's effectiveness in various situations, an employee discussion, problem analysis, etc.

Measuring performance of tasks in assessment centers may be the solution to the low across-exercise correlations. However because of the various uses of assessment information, as well as other reasons, it is important to be sure that what the assessment center measures has validity. And a precursor to validity, of course, is reliability of measurement. Therefore, it must first be determined if a high inter-rater agreement exists when tasks (situations) are being assessed.

Previous studies, as mentioned earlier, show that the reliability of assessors judgment of skills in assessment centers is high. However, there are no such research data to support this same claim when the assessment center is measuring situational

performance rather than skill performance. Yet assessment of situational performance may prove to be more reliable and accurate. It will provide additional data regarding the participant's situational strengths and weaknesses in performance of managerial tasks.

Research Objectives

This research proposes to examine the inter-rater reliability of assessors evaluating situational performance compared to assessors evaluating skills performance.

Assessment centers usually consist of various situations or exercises, such as Employee Discussion, Customer Relations, Problem Analysis, In-Basket, and Delegation exercises. These exercises are traditionally used to measure skills such as leadership, organizing and planning, perception, and interpersonal. However, for the purpose of this research mini-simulations will be used. These mini-simulations are similar to full length exercises; however, the material which the participant has to review is considerably less.

For example, an employee discussion exercise usually consists of 20 to 25 items and the participant is given 30 minutes to review the material. In contrast an employee discussion mini-simulation usually consists of 5 to 10 items and the participant is given 10 minutes to review the material.

For the purpose of this study, assessors will evaluate skill performance, e.g., leadership, decision making, interpersonal, etc., in these mini-simulations as well as situational performance.

However, whether an assessor is evaluating a participant's performance on skills or on tasks (situations), the assessor would follow the same evaluating process. The assessor would first observe and document the participant's behavior in the exercise situations. Then the assessor would complete an exercise checklist report form which should maximize reliability (Rehman, 1986).

Maximizing reliability within all component parts of the assessment process can assure that it is most efficient, that only appropriate characteristics are observed in specific mini-simulations and that mini-simulations are "tuned" and assessors are trained so

that desired behaviors emerging from the situations are noted and are reliably observed (Hinrichs and Haanpera, 1976).

On a checklist report form for measuring skill performance is the definition of a specific skill. Following the definition are behavioral statements relating to the skill. A space is provided beside each behavioral statement for rating the participant's performance relevant to that statement. Immediately following each of the behavioral statements a space is also provided to list any additional examples of skill-related behavior observed during the mini-simulation that was not listed on the checklist form. After all of the behavioral statements have been rated, the assessors then determine an overall rating is for each skill.

The checklist report form for measuring situational performance is similar to the skill checklist. It also contains a list of behavioral statements relating to the situation. Besides each behavioral statement is a space for rating the participant's performance relevant to that statement. Immediately following each of the behavioral statements a space is provided to list any additional

examples of situational related behavior observed during the mini-simulation that was not listed on the checklist report form.

After all of the behavioral statements have been rated, the assessors then determine an overall rating for the situation.

Requiring the assessors to use the same evaluating process allows for a clean comparison of inter-rater reliability and accuracy of the assessment of skills compared to the assessment of situations.

To summarize this study attempted to investigate comparable inter-rater reliability and accuracy of assessors measuring situations versus assessors measuring skills in the same mini-simulations. This was done by comparing the independent ratings made by trained assessors on the traditional skill dimensions to the ratings made by trained assessors on the situational dimensions. In addition, this study examined assessor preference of assessing situations or skills and the amount of time it took assessors to evaluate situational performance as compared to amount of time it took assessors to evaluate skill performance of participants.

Research Hypotheses

There were six hypotheses in this research. The first hypothesis predicted that inter-rater reliability of the assessor ratings on situations would be equal to or higher than the inter-rater reliability of the assessor ratings on dimensional skills.

The second hypothesis predicted that the expert assessors' skill scores in one mini-simulation, e.g., Employee Discussion would not be significantly different from the mean assigned situational score for that same mini-simulation, e.g., Employee Discussion.

The third hypothesis predicted that the assessors' ratings of the participant's behavior in situations would be equal in accuracy to the assessors' ratings of the participant's behavior into skills.

An expert panel of assessors' ratings of both skills and situations was used as the criterion.

The fourth hypothesis predicted that the assessors' ratings of the participant's overall performance across the three mini-simulations, whether determined by assessment of skills or

situations, would be similar and that both groups would be equal in accuracy as compared to an expert panel of assessors' ratings of the participant's overall performance.

The fifth hypothesis predicted that a significant number of assessors would prefer to assess situational performance of a participant rather than assess skill performance of a participant.

The sixth hypothesis predicted that the amount of time it took for an assessor to evaluate a participant's performance in various situations would be less compared to the amount of time required for an assessor to evaluate a participant's performance on various skills.

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects in this study consisted mostly of undergraduate students who were enrolled in an Industrial/Organization Psychology class at the University of Central Florida. There was a total of 28 subjects . All subjects participated on a volunteer basis. Before participating, it was explained to the subjects that their participation was strictly voluntary and that they could refuse to partake in any or all parts of the study at any time. Consent forms were also distributed to all subjects.

The subjects received assessor training emphasizing the evaluation of skill performance as well as the assessment of situational performance.

Training Procedure

Assessor training for the subjects covered objective observation, documentation, categorization and evaluation of human

behavior. Other areas of training familiarized the assessors in training with the use of the exercise report forms and a seven point rating scale which was used in determining overall skill ratings or situational ratings.

Mini-simulations

The three mini-simulations used in this study consisted of an Employee Discussion, a Customer Complaint, and a Problem Analysis. In each of the simulations, the participant assumed the position of a newly hired Store Manager for National, Inc., a nationwide retail and commercial distributor of medium to large appliances. The simulations are summarized as follows:

Employee Discussion: The mock participant reviewed information regarding a subordinate whose job performance had declined significantly in the last two months. The participant the met with the subordinate to discuss the problem and correct it.

Customer Complaint: The mock participant reviewed information about an important new client. The client was complaining about a National product and about National's service. The participant then met with the client to resolve the problem.

Problem Analysis: The mock participant reviewed information regarding some operational problems with his/her store. The participant then met with the District Manager to discuss the problem areas and to make recommendations regarding their resolutions.

Skills Measured

The skills being employed in this study for the categorization and rating of behaviors are defined as follows:

Leadership - to direct and coordinate the activities of others, to delegate authority and responsibility, and to provide means of follow-up.

Organizing and Planning - to establish strategies for self and

others to accomplish specific results, and to establish objectives and priorities along with establishing systems to address these priorities.

Perception - to identify and comprehend the key elements of a situation, their importance and relationship to one another and to recognize strengths and weaknesses of individuals, as well as differences among individuals.

Decision Making - to use logical and sound judgment in the use of resources, determining courses of action, and defining solutions to problems based on an understanding of the evidence at hand.

Decisiveness - to initiate action and make decisions independent of quality; to render judgments, to make commitments, to defend actions and decisions when challenged.

Interpersonal - to respond sensitively to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of others, to deal effectively with others regardless of their level or status; to accept interpersonal differences and develop rapport with others.

Oral Communication - to clearly express and convey messages

through oral means; to properly use technical factors such as grammar, vocabulary, eye contact, and voice inflection.

Adaptability - to effectively modify one's behavior and approaches based upon changes in the dynamics of the situation; to remain calm and unflustered when confronted with conflict or when challenged; to successfully adapt and handle stressful situations.

As mentioned previously, the subjects received assessor training which included an orientation to these skill dimensions and also incorporated behavioral examples of each skill. The training also included an orientation to situational dimensions and incorporated behavioral examples of each situation.

Situational Measurements

In learning to assess situational performance the subjects were taught to recognize what behaviors are necessary for successful performance in each mini-simulation. For example, in the employee

discussion mini-simulation, a successful participant needs to clarify the purpose of the meeting, confront the subordinate with specific issues regarding performance problems, suggest specific courses of action for the subordinate to follow.

After receiving training, the subjects were divided into two groups. Both groups of subjects observed a videotape of a mock participant taking the three mini-simulations. One group assessed the participant's skill performance while the other group assessed the participant's situational performance. The subjects were told to take comprehensive notes in order to rate this participant on skills or situations, depending on the group of subjects. Both groups of subjects were also provided with checklist report forms for each of the mini-simulations. The skill checklist began with a definition of the skill, (e.g., perception). Following this definitions was a series of behavioral statements illustrating probable behaviors to be observed in the simulation. The situational checklists simply listed a series of behavioral statements illustrating probable behaviors for successful performance. The subjects simply checked on a continuum of two

minuses to two pluses, whether the behavior observed was highly negative to highly positive, respectively. Then the subjects assigned an overall rating of one to seven to the dimension, whether it was a skill or situation. In this rating scale of one to seven, seven represented outstanding performance while one represented poor performance and four represented satisfactory behavior. In addition, both groups of subjects were required to assign an overall rating of one to seven for the participant's overall performance across the three mini-simulations. These ratings allowed for a comparison of evaluations across the subject groups.

All completed checklist report forms were collected for analysis purposes. The subjects were also requested to indicate their preference of assessing skills compared to assessing situations. Subjects were then debriefed. During this debriefing a complete explanation of the purpose of this study was provided. Also included was a question and answer period.

For the purpose of assessing the accuracy of the subjects ratings for both dimensions of skills and situations, an expert panel

was formed. These assessor experts have completed a four-day intensive assessor training on observing, documenting, and evaluating behavior. They also received a brief training session on categorizing behaviors into skills or into situations for these specific mini-simulations. They also have experience assessing in several assessment centers.

All of the expert assessors viewed the mock participant in the three mini-simulations videotape. The experts were divided into two groups; one group assessed the skill performance of the participant first and then the situational performance of the participant, while the other group of experts assessed the situational performance of the participant first and then the skill performance of the participant. The experts were also requested to assign an overall rating to the participant for his/her performance in all three mini-simulations.

RESULTS

Comparisons were made between the assessments of skills and situations on inter-rater reliability of ratings. Also differences in the amount of time to complete each form, and assessor preferences of assessing skills or situations were examined.

Hypothesis #1, which predicted the equally high inter-rater reliability for assessors' ratings of skills and assessors' ratings of situations was investigated by using an analysis of variance technique for estimating the reliability coefficient developed by Hoyt (1941). In this method the subjects' overall scores on each skill or situation were compared. Also comparison was made between the expert's overall skill or situational scores. The equation for obtaining the Hoyt reliability estimate is $r = \frac{(MS \text{ sub} - MS \text{ residual})}{MS \text{ sub}}$, where the mean square for subjects is the mean square within term. The mean square residual is the sum of squares between term divided by the product of $(r-1)$ and $(c-1)$, where r is the number of rows and c is the number of columns. Table 1 lists descriptive

statistics, i.e., means and standard deviations, for all subjects whether they were evaluating skill or situational performance. Table 2 lists the analysis of variance results for the experts by skill and situational treatment variables. Table 3 illustrates the analysis of variance results for subjects by both skill and situational treatment variables.

In order to test for significant differences between the inter-rater Hoyt reliability estimates, these estimates were then transformed into Fisher's Z-scores, and a test of significance was applied to these Z-scores. To compare two Z-scores, the process requires subtracting one Z-score from the other, and then dividing the remainder by the standard error of those Z-scores (Edwards, 1984). The probability of this comparison Z-score was then determined from a table of standard normal distribution. Table 4 lists the Hoyt reliability coefficients for experts and subjects on both skill and situational measurements, as well as the comparative Z-scores.

The differences between inter-rater reliabilities were found to be significant at the .05 level but not at the .01 level for both experts and subjects.

TABLE 1

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF SUBJECTS
EVALUATION OF SKILLS AND SITUATIONS

	Means	Standard Deviations
<hr/>		
<u>Skills</u>		
Leadership	6.36	.50
Decision Making	5.36	1.01
Perception	5.64	.75
Organizing and Planning	5.50	1.02
Interpersonal	5.71	1.07
Decisiveness	5.36	.84
Adaptability	5.43	1.16
Oral Communication	5.71	1.07
<u>Situations</u>		
Employee Discussion	6.29	.73
Customer Complaint	5.50	1.02
Problem Analysis	5.36	1.15

TABLE 2

SUMMARY TABLE FOR ONE-WAY ANOVA FOR EXPERTS

Treatment Variable = Skills

	SS	DF	MS
Between	6.78	7	.97
Within	21.60	32	.68

Treatment Variable = Situations

	SS	DF	MS
Between	1.73	2	.87
Within	9.20	12	.77

TABLE 3

SUMMARY TABLE FOR ONE-WAY ANOVA FOR SUBJECTS

Treatment Variable = Skills

	SS	DF	MS
Between	10.49	7	1.50
Within	93.50	104	.90

Treatment Variable = Situations

	SS	DF	MS
Between	7.00	2	3.50
Within	37.51	39	.96

TABLE 4

HOYT RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS AND TESTS FOR
SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCES IN RELIABILITIES

	Skills	Situations	Comparison Z-Scores
Experts (N = 5)	.64	.91	2.32*
Subjects (N = 14)	.87	.72	2.26*

*p < .05

**p < .01

The second hypothesis predicted that the expert assessors' mean of skill scores in a mini-simulation would not be significantly different from the mean of the situational scores for that same mini-simulation. That hypothesis was tested by first determining the mean of the expert's situation scores. Next the mean of all skill scores for a single situation was determined. A t-test was then applied to the means of the situational scores and the skill scores for comparison of significant differences.

The means, standard deviations and t-test values comparing the mean of the situational score to the mean of the skill score are listed in Table 5. No significant differences were found between the scores.

The third hypothesis predicted that the subjects' rating accuracy of situations would be equivalent to the accuracy of the ratings of skills as compared to expert panel's ratings of both skills and situations. This hypothesis was tested by determining the degree of similarity of the subjects' ratings to the expert panel's ratings. To do this a comparison of difference scores of the subjects' rating from

TABLE 5

EXPERT SITUATIONAL AND SKILL MEANS AND t-VALUES

	Situational		Skill		t-Values
	Mean	Std Dev.	Mean	Std Dev.	
Employee Discussion	5.20	.45	4.95	.41	.90
Customer Complaint	4.60	.89	4.50	.58	.22
Problem Analysis	4.20	1.30	3.87	.85	.87

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

the expert panel's mean scores was made. The method required subtracting the panel of experts' mean rating on each of the skills or situations, from each of the individual subject's ratings on that respective skill or situation, and employing the use of the absolute value of that sum for analysis.

In order to determine if significant differences existed between these difference scores, and between the more accurate expert panel's ratings a t-test was applied to the means between the difference scores. The t-values for these difference scores may be found in Table 6. The results show that the expert panel's ratings were significantly different from the subjects regardless of whether measuring skills or situations.

Further analysis was done to determine if significant differences existed between the subjects accuracy of evaluating skills and the subjects accuracy of evaluating situations. The mean ratings were examined for both skills and situations, and a t-test was used to compare significant differences between the accuracy of subjects assessing situational behavior and subjects assessing skill

TABLE 5

t-VALUES FOR MEAN DIFFERENCE SCORES BETWEEN EXPERTS
AND SUBJECTS ON INDIVIDUAL SKILLS AND SITUATIONS

	t- Values
<u>Skills</u>	
Leadership	12.26**
Organizing & Planning	4.37**
Perception	7.22**
Decision Making	5.11**
Interpersonal	5.92**
Decisiveness	3.99**
Adaptability	5.21**
Oral Communication	8.21**
<u>Situations</u>	
Employee Discussion	6.66**
Customer Relations	8.39**
Problem Analysis	6.51**

*p < .05

**p < .01

behavior. The results was a t-value of 1.23 which indicates that there is not a significant difference between the accuracy of subjects ratings of skills and subjects ratings of situations at the .05 or .01 level. However, the experts' assessments, whether using the situational or skills checklist, were, in general, a rating point lower than the subjects' scores.

Hypothesis #4 predicted that the participant's overall performance score across the three mini-simulations as determined by evaluation of skills or situations would be equivalent. This was tested by determining the degree of similarity of the two groups of subjects' overall performance scores.

To do this a comparison of difference scores of the subjects was made. A t-test was then applied to the means between the difference scores and between the mean overall performance scores of subjects evaluating situations and subjects evaluating skills. A t-test was also used to compare significant differences between the expert panel's overall performance score and the two groups of subjects overall performance score.

The means and standard deviations of both groups of subjects and expert panel for determining the overall score are listed in Table 7. In Table 8 t-test values for both groups of subjects and the expert panel are listed. No significant differences were found between the overall scores.

Hypothesis #5, which predicted that the subjects would prefer assessing situations to assessing skills, was measured through the use of a question administered to the subjects after they had experience assessing both skill and situational performance.

In an attempt to determine the subjects' preference for assessing skills or situations the subjects were asked to rate their preference of assessing skills as well as their preference for assessing situations on a one-to-five-point scale. On this five-point scale, one represented very low preference, five represented very high preference, while three represented no preference.

To do this a comparison of preference ratings was made. A t-test was then applied to the preference means between the two checklist report forms. The means of the two forms and the t-test

TABLE 7

OVERALL SCORE RATING MEANS AND STANDARD
DEVIATIONS BY SUBJECTS' ASSESSMENTS OF SKILLS
AND SITUATION AND BY EXPERT ASSESSMENT

	Situational Assessed Overall Score (N = 14)	Skill Assessed Overall Score (N = 14)	Expert Assessed Overall Score (N = 5)
Mean	5.79	5.57	4.80
Std. Dev.	.80	.85	.65

TABLE 8

t-VALUES FOR COMPARISON OF OVERALL SCORES FOR
SITUATIONAL ASSESSED, SKILL ASSESSED, AND EXPERT ASSESSED

Comparison	t-Values
Situation vs. Skill	-.685
Expert vs. Skill	1.746
Expert vs. Situation	2.34

*p < .05

** p < .01

value can be found in Table 9. The results show that there is not a significant difference in preference of forms.

Hypothesis #6, which was concerned with the length of time required to assess skills as compared to the length of time required to assess situations, was measured by recording the subjects; completion time as they turned in their checklist report forms. By computing the mean time requirements of each simulation it was found that the subjects required less time to assess situational performance as compared to the time required to assess skill performance of a participant.

Further analysis was done by applying a t-test to the mean difference of length of time required to assess skills and the length of time required to assess situations. The results indicate that there is a significant difference in time required to assess skills vs. situations at the .05 level for all three mini-simulations. There was not a significant difference in assessment time requirements at the .01 level for the Customer Complaint mini-simulation. However, there was a significant difference in time requirements in assessing

TABLE 9

MEANS AND t-VALUES FOR PREFERENCE OF CHECKLIST FORMS

	Skills	Situations
Mean	3.48	3.32

t-Value = .725

*p < .05
**p < .01

TABLE 10

MEAN TIME (SECONDS) REQUIREMENTS AND t-VALUES FOR
ASSESSING SKILL PERFORMANCE AND SITUATIONAL
PERFORMANCE ACROSS THREE MINI-SIMULATIONS

	Employee Discussion	Customer Complaint	Problem Analysis
Skill Assessment	386.14	374.21	448.86
Situational Assessment	168.21	276.07	239.57
t-Values	6.01**	2.44**	5.19**

*p < .05

**p < .01

skills as compared to assessing situations at the .01 level for both the Employee Discussion and Problem Analysis mini-simulations. Table 10 lists the t-test values and the means of length of time required to assess each mini-simulation by skill or situation.

DISCUSSION

This study compared the inter-rater reliability and accuracy of assessors measuring situational performance to assessors measuring skill performance of a participant across the same three mini-simulations. In addition the study examined assessor preference of assessing situations or skills and the length of time required by assessors to evaluate situational performance as compared to length of time required by assessors to evaluate skill performance of a participant.

Hypothesis #1 postulated that the inter-rater reliability of subjects' ratings on situational behaviors would be equal to or higher than the inter-rater reliability of the assessor ratings on skill behaviors. The results did not support this hypothesis.

All inter-rater reliability coefficients for experts and subjects on skills and situations were high, ranging from .64 to .91. However upon closer examination of these scores in comparison of skill to situation assessments they were significantly different at the .05 level for both experts and subjects.

Experts' assessments of situations was significantly more reliable than expert assessment of skills. Whereas subjects assessment of skills were more reliable than subjects assessment of situations at the .05 level.

A possible explanation for this outcome for the experts may be due to the low number of experts (5) used in this study. A more stable reliability coefficient may have been determined with a greater N value.

Another explanation for the experts' higher reliability in their assessment of situations may be that experienced assessors have a tendency to integrate behavioral data in terms of overall situational performance. In other words they may look at each behavior in broader terms of what is required for success in that overall situation as opposed to what is required for success in an individual skill category. This may be due to their wider range of experience assessing a variety of situations (mini-simulations).

In contrast, recently trained assessors may find it easier to relate behaviors to separate skill categories. They may have

difficulty integrating behaviors and thinking in terms of overall situational scores. Also since most of these subjects were students they may be more familiar and/or more comfortable with the skill behaviors than the situational behaviors.

Hypothesis #2 predicted that the expert panel's mean of skill scores in a mini-simulation would not be significantly different from the experts' mean of the situational scores for that same mini-simulation. The results supported this hypothesis which means that the experts qualify as experts.

The reason for testing this hypothesis is to ensure that the experts' scores serve as an accurate criteria. Also, as experts they should be consistent in their observation and evaluation of critical behaviors for success regardless of the format of the evaluation tool.

Hypothesis #3 examined the relative accuracy of the subjects' ratings of the participant's behavior in situations or skills as compared to expert panel of assessors' rating of both skills and situations as the criterion. Upon inspection of the subjects' situational scores versus the subjects' skill scores it was found that

the scores were not significantly different from each other in terms of how accurate they were with the experts' scores.

However whether measuring skills or situations the expert assessors' scores were usually one rating point lower than the subjects scores and thus significantly different from the subject scores. This may be a result of the experts having more experience in assessing a wider range of behaviors.

Experts may have assessed participants with behaviors ranging from one to seven on the rating scale. Thus they have more well defined behavioral anchors for criteria. Whereas the subjects lack experience assessing a wide range of behaviors and thus their behavioral anchors would not be as well defined as the experts.

In addition, the subjects may have been more lenient in their assessments because it may be less difficult to assess positive performance of a participant as opposed to assessing not so positive behavior, negative behavior, or lack of behavior.

This outcome may also be a result of the subjects' brief training period and lack of assessment experience. With more

training or assessment experience, the subjects accuracy in relation to the expert panel will probably improve.

The results supported hypothesis #4, which stated that the subjects' ratings of the participant's overall performance across the three mini-simulations whether determined by assessment of skills or situations would be similar. There was no significant difference in the two group of subjects' overall scores. However, these overall scores were slightly higher than the overall scores assigned by the expert panel, however still not significantly different from the expert panel's overall scores.

Thus the results demonstrated that the determination of overall scores require the accurate assessment of behaviors whether examining situations or skills. Another possible explanation for the similarity of overall scores may be that the subjects assessing situational behaviors were thinking in terms of skills when determining the overall score. A similar explanation may be that the subjects assessing skill behaviors were thinking in terms of situational performance when determining overall scores. Thus both

groups of subjects may have subconsciously used the same method in determining overall scores.

In regard to a possible explanation for the subjects' higher overall score as compared to the experts' overall scores may be, again that the subjects have less experience assessing and observing a wide range of behaviors or find it more difficult to observe and evaluate negative behaviors or lack of behaviors.

Hypothesis #5 which predicted that a significant number of assessors would prefer to assess situational performance of a participant rather than assess skill performance of a participant was not supported by the results. There was not a significant difference between preference of assessment of skills and assessment of situations. In, fact, most subjects indicated that they did not have a strong preference of assessing skill performance or situational performance, e.g., most preference ratings were at 3 (either /or).

One possible explanation for this lack of preference may be due to the fact that the subjects are too new in assessing to really judge their preference. They may require more experience with both forms before they are more able to decisively express their preference.

Hypothesis #6 predicted that the amount of time required for an assessor to evaluate situational performance across three mini-simulations would be less than the time required by assessors to evaluate skill performance. The results supported this conclusion. The length of time required by subjects to complete their assessment of situations was significantly different from the length of time required by subjects to complete their assessment of skills at the .05 level.

An explanation for this result is that the situational checklist is more concise than the skill checklist thus it would require less time to read the items.

An unusual finding was the fast completion time of both types of checklists, e.g, three to seven minutes. These completion times may be distorted due to the fact that the subjects were given the forms prior to viewing the videotape and may have begun completing the form during the tape.

In interpreting these results it is important to understand that the subjects in this study consisted mostly of undergraduate

college students, who had only received four hours of assessor training , and previous to this study were generally unfamiliar with the assessment center process. Thus the training and experience level of the assessors in this study are typically different from what is usually found in assessment center cycles, e.g., expert assessors, or assessor trained managers.

Another important point concerning the assessment of situational performance as compared to the assessment of skill performance is the amount of behavioral information provided by each respective assessment. For purposes of providing the participant with meaningful feedback and in order to prepare thorough final reports, it is critical to have a maximum amount of behavioral information. It may be found that the situational checklist provides fewer behavioral examples than the skill checklist, however both checklists provide critical information.

For example, if a participant is assessed by skills only, the assessment center results may indicate that the participant needs development in Leadership and Interpersonal skills. Thus the

participant may be required to take extensive training in those two broad areas. However, upon closer inspection, through the use of situational assessments it may be determined that the participant's Leadership and Interpersonal scores are weak only in the Employee Discussion situation. Thus the participant's developmental activities could be more specified, e.g., Leadership training with emphasis on performance counseling and Interpersonal training with emphasis on interrelations with a subordinate in a formal performance review setting.

It is suggested that those responsible for the development and implementation of assessment centers consider the application of assessing situational performance of a participant or at least consider the assessment of situational performance in conjunction with the assessment of skill performance. Based on the results of this research, assessing situations has proven to be as accurate as assessing skills. The reliability of assessing situation is also relatively high. This is especially true for experienced assessors. In addition both assessments of a participant's skill performance and situational performance provides useful information.

If this study is repeated it is recommended that some improvements be made in regard to experimental controls. For example in order to test whether or not inexperienced assessors are more lenient raters than expert assessors it is suggested that more training be provided to the subjects or that the training tape contain a variety of behaviors ranging from one to seven so that the subjects have better behavioral anchors.

In addition it is recommended that training programs be completely separated into two training programs. The subjects required to assess skill performance would only be trained on the assessment of skill performance while the subjects required to assess situational performance would only be trained on the assessment of situational performance. This would ensure that the subjects assessing situational performance did not rely on the assessment of skills to determine their overall scores. This would also ensure that subjects assessing skill performance do not think in terms of situational behaviors in determining overall scores.

Another suggestion for improving this study would be to disseminate the checklists after the subjects have viewed the videotape to ensure accurate completion times of the forms.

APPENDIX A

EMPLOYEE DISCUSSION SITUATIONAL CHECKLIST

ASSESSOR CHECKLIST
FOR
EMPLOYEE DISCUSSION SIMULATION

- _____ 1. Remained polite and pleasant throughout the meeting,(e.g., attempted to put Gilmore at ease immediately, acknowledged points made by Gilmore, did not interrupt Gilmore, etc.) vs. was impolite when interacting with Gilmore, ignored points made by Gilmore, interrupted Gilmore, etc.

- _____ 2. Structured the meeting in a logical, orderly fashion in order to cover all important issues, (e.g., initially clarified aims and goals of the meeting, achieved closure on topics of discussion, summarized pertinent information at close of meeting, etc.) vs. did not structure the meeting in an orderly fashion in order to cover all important issues (e.g., failed to clarify purpose of the meeting, skipped from topic to topic, and did not provide a summary at the conclusion of the meeting, etc.).

- _____ 3. Demonstrated an understanding of the basic data available vs. did not demonstrate an understanding of the basic data.
- ___ Noted Gilmore was a great sales rep until recently
 - ___ Perceived Gilmore rarely accepted full responsibility for decline in his/her work performance
 - ___ Noted extra commission would be effective July 1 for outstanding sales reps
 - ___ Noted possible causes of Gilmore's declining performance (e.g., denial of bonus, too much time spent training new reps, etc.)

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Employee Discussion

- _____ 4. Confronted Gilmore with specific issues regarding performance problems (e.g., questioned and probed for additional information, asked Gilmore to justify his/her comments, etc.) vs. was hesitant to confront Gilmore with specific performance problems (e.g., allowed Gilmore to answer questions in a vague and evasive manner, did not respond to comments made by Gilmore, etc.).

- _____ 5. Forcefully expressed, maintained and defended, without hesitancy, his/her views and opinions vs. expressed his/her opinion in an unassured or tentative maner, or failed to maintain and defend his/her position.

- _____ 6. Approached the meeting with a problem solving attitude (e.g., expressed a willingness to aid Gilmore remedy his/her performance problems, explained what level of performance is expected of Gilmore, expressed confidence in Gilmore's ability to return to his/her previous level of performance, etc.) vs. did not approach the meeting with a problem solving attitude, (e.g., offered only vague feedback regarding performance standards and expressed a lack of confidence in Gilmore, giving the impression that the situation was virtually hopeless, etc.)

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Employee Discussion

_____ 7. Attempted to maintain a constructive atmosphere, (e.g., explained reasons for disagreement by emphasizing material that supported his/her opinions and conclusions) vs. did not maintain a constructive atmosphere, and did not explain reasons for disagreement by emphasizing materials that supported his/her opinions and conclusions.

_____ 8. Expressed his her meaning in a clear, concise, and audible manner vs. did not express his/her meaning clearly.

_____ 9. Formulated logical decisions and recommendations and supported recommendations based on the available data vs. did not formulate and support logical decisions based on the data.

_____ 10. Guided and controlled the meeting, (e.g. called for attention while speaking, suggested specific courses of action and time frames, arranged for a follow-up meeting etc.,) vs. did not guide and control the meeting, (e.g., did not call for attention while speaking, failed to suggest courses of action, did not arrange for a follow-up meeting, etc.).

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Employee Discussion

_____ 11. Prior to taking action, asked Gilmore for clarification regarding incidents and considered outcome of decisions vs. did not ask for clarification and acted impulsively when making decisions.

_____ 12. Modified his/her behavior in response to situational changes, (e.g., Gilmore's behavior, time constraints, etc.) vs. did not modify his/her behavior in response to situational changes, (e.g., always or never compromised, became flustered by time constraints, etc.)

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

APPENDIX B

EMPLOYEE DISCUSSION SKILL CHECKLIST

ASSESSOR CHECKLIST

Leadership

To direct and coordinate the activities of others; to delegate authority and responsibility; and to provide means of follow-up

- _____ 1. Initially took charge of the meeting by clarifying the goals and purpose of the meeting vs. failed to establish the purpose of the session or did so only late in the meeting.

- _____ 2. Called for attention while speaking vs. failed to command attention from Gilmore.

- _____ 3. Guided the meeting in a direction toward discussing the basic problems vs. allowed the conversation to wander without any clear direction.

- _____ 4. Questioned and probed Gilmore for additional information regarding problems vs. asked no questions or allowed Gilmore to answer questions in a vague and evasive manner.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Leadership

_____ 5. Asked Gilmore to explain/justify specific points of view and/or comments he/she made during the discussion vs. did not respond to relevant or conflicting comments made by Gilmore.

_____ 6. Asked Gilmore for suggestions and opinions on how to alleviate specific problems vs. did not attempt to actively involve Gilmore in determining solutions or asked only for a very vague input.

_____ 7. Suggested specific courses of action to follow to resolve Gilmore's problems vs. offered little or only vague guidance on course of action to be taken and goals to be reached during the meeting.

_____ 8. Explained what level of performance is expected of Gilmore vs. offered only vague feedback regarding required performance standards.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Leadership

- _____ 9. Arranged a follow-up meeting with Gilmore in order to monitor Gilmore's performance vs. did not arrange for a follow-up meeting to monitor Gilmore's performance.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Organizing and Planning

To establish strategies for self and others to accomplish specific results, to establish objectives and priorities along with establishing systems to address these priorities.

- _____ 1. At the close of the discussion, summarized pertinent information vs. failed to provide a summary or provided one that was vague and difficult to follow.

- _____ 2. Made quick reference to pertinent data vs. fumbled through papers looking for information.

- _____ 3. Closed discussion on one topic before proceeding to another vs. moved on to other topics before completing discussion thereby losing continuity in the conversation.

- _____ 4. Structured specific time frames/actions for Gilmore to follow in correcting performance vs. did not structure any specific time frames/actions for Gilmore to follow.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Organizing and Planning

_____ 5. Completed the discussion session in the allotted time period so that important topics were covered vs. discussed topics of no real importance for lengthy periods and failed to discuss critical issues.

_____ 6. Arranged for a follow-up meeting with Gilmore vs. did not arrange for a follow-up meeting with Gilmore.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Perception

To identify and comprehend the critical elements of a situation, their importance and relationship to one another; to recognize strengths and weaknesses of individuals, as well as differences among individuals.

_____ 1. Perceived the basic nature of the task (i.e., to review information on the performance of an employee and to discuss performance decline with the employee) vs. did not perceive the basic nature of the task.

_____ 2. Demonstrated an understanding of the basic data available (e.g., noted that Gilmore was a great sales rep until recently) vs. did not demonstrate an understanding of the basic data.

_____ 3. Integrated related materials (e.g., compared Gilmore's regular performance to April and May's performance) vs. did not integrate related materials.

_____ 4. Perceived the possible causes of Gilmore's declining performance (e.g., denial of the bonus, training new reps, etc.) vs. failed to perceive the causes of Gilmore's decline in performance.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Perception

_____ 5. Noted that Gilmore rarely accepted full responsibility for the decline in his/her work performance vs. did not note that Gilmore failed to accept responsibility for the decline in his/her work performance.

_____ 6. Noted Gilmore's performance had declined drastically over the month of May as compared to April's monthly activity report vs. did not note a recent decline in Gilmore's performance.

_____ 7. Perceived that an extra commission would be effective July 1 for outstanding sales reps vs. did not note that an extra commission would be given to outstanding sales reps.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Decision Making

To use logical and sound judgment in the use of resources, determining courses of action, and defining solutions to problems based on an understanding of the evidence at hand.

- _____ 1. Used specific incidences of performance while discussing issues with Gilmore vs. addressed issues in a vague manner.

- _____ 2. Prior to taking action, questioned Gilmore and asked for clarification and elaboration regarding incidents cited in the materials vs. accepted all criticisms of Gilmore as totally true.

- _____ 3. Examined both sides of an issue before making a decision vs. made a decision after considering only one point of view.

- _____ 4. Emphasized material that supported opinions and conclusions (e.g., referred to last month's records and Gilmore's decline in performance) vs. gave little emphasis to any materials in particular.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Decision Making

_____ 5. Considered the outcome of decisions and recommendations before taking any action vs. acted impulsively or indiscriminately when making decisions and recommendations.

_____ 6. Used data gathered during the review period of the simulation to logically support his/her recommendations and decisions vs. did not use data gathered during the review period of the simulation to logically support his/her recommendations.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Decisiveness

To initiate action and make decisions independent of quality; to render judgments, to make commitments, to defend actions and decisions when challenged

_____ 1. Confronted Gilmore with specific issues regarding performance problems vs. was hesitant to confront Gilmore with specific performance problems.

_____ 2. Showed minimal hesitancy to offer own views and opinions on Gilmore's performance problems vs. only covered the basic factual account of performance and refrained from stating own views.

_____ 3. Asked Gilmore to explain or justify his/her views and opinions vs. allowed Gilmore's excuses to go unchallenged.

_____ 4. Maintained own view of Gilmore's poor performance despite explanations offered by Gilmore vs. did not support and or abandoned position on Gilmore's problems when confronted by Gilmore.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Decisiveness

_____ 5. Formulated specific recommendations for correcting performance problems vs. failed to provide Gilmore with recommended corrective actions or provided vague guidance.

_____ 6. Strongly expressed his/her opinion vs. expressed opinion in an unassured or tentative manner.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Interpersonal

To respond sensitively to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of others, to deal effectively with others regardless of their level or status; to accept interpersonal differences and develop rapport with others

- _____ 1. Attempted to put Gilmore at ease immediately vs. immediately jumping into the discussion of performance problems without establishing rapport.

- _____ 2. Approached the session from a problem solving approach (e.g., expressed a willingness to aid Gilmore in remedying his/her performance problems) vs. was authoritative and approached the meeting in a superior-subordinate context.

- _____ 3. Expressed confidence in Gilmore's ability to return to previous level of performance vs. expressed a lack of confidence in Gilmore and gave the impression that the situation was virtually hopeless.

- _____ 4. Attempted to maintain a constructive atmosphere by politely explaining reasons for disagreement with Gilmore vs. explained reasons for disagreement in blunt or rude terms.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Interpersonal

_____ 5. Expressed views and opinions on Gilmore's job performance in a constructive and positive manner vs. stated opinions and emphasized negative aspects of Gilmore's performance in an accusatory manner.

_____ 6. Allowed Gilmore to speak without interrupting unless done in a polite manner (e.g., pardon me) vs. interrupted constantly in an abrupt and rude manner.

_____ 7. Acknowledged valid points and concerns raised by Gilmore vs. ignored comments without acknowledging Gilmore's concerns.

_____ 8. Paid attention to Gilmore when he/she was speaking (e.g., eye contact, hand gestures, positive body language) vs. examined papers, ignored Gilmore when he/she was speaking.

_____ 9. Acknowledged Gilmore's positive performance in the past vs. concentrated only on the negative aspects of Gilmore's behavior.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Oral Communication

To clearly express and convey messages through oral means; to properly use technical factors such as grammar, vocabulary, eye contact, and voice inflection.

- _____ 1. Used appropriate hand gestures and eye contact when interacting with Gilmore vs. used no hand gestures or inappropriate hand gestures.

- _____ 2. Avoided distracting mannerisms such as pencil tapping, drumming fingers, nail biting, etc. vs. engaged in activities that took away from the conversation.

- _____ 3. Expressed his/her meaning clearly and concisely vs. rambled or became too wordy.

- _____ 4. Enunciated clearly and avoided slurring speech vs. mumbled and slurred speech.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Oral Communication

_____ 5. Used appropriate vocabulary for the setting vs. used a vocabulary that was inappropriate for the setting.

_____ 6. Spoke in an audible manner vs. spoke so loudly as to be abusive or too softly to be easily heard.

_____ 7. Used appropriate voice inflection for emphasis vs. spoke in a monotone.

_____ 8. Maintained eye contact when speaking to Gilmore vs. maintained no or very little eye contact while speaking to Gilmore.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Adaptability

To effectively modify one's behavior and approaches based upon changes in the dynamics of the situation; to remain calm and unflustered when confronted with conflict or when challenged; to successfully adapt and handle stressful situations.

- _____ 1. Showed compromise at times, as well as resistance to change at other times vs. always or never compromised.

- _____ 2. Modified behavior according to changes noted in Gilmore's behavior (e.g., from disagreeable and challenging to withdrawn and passive) vs. interacted with Gilmore in the same manner throughout the discussion.

- _____ 3. Integrated points and explanations offered by Gilmore into his/her position and recommendations vs. disregarded Gilmore's statements even when pertinent to the topic being discussed.

- _____ 4. Maintained an effective task-oriented strategy despite time constraints vs. became flustered by time constraints.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Adaptability

_____ 5. Remained calm when questioned by Gilmore vs. became defensive or hostile when questioned.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

APPENDIX C

EMPLOYEE DISCUSSION MINI-SIMULATION

NATIONAL, INC.

MEMORANDUM

TO: New Store Manager, Store 265
FROM: Morgan McKinnon, District Manager *M.M.*
RE: Sammy Gilmore
DATE: June 25

I realize you are already busy tomorrow, but your predecessor, Liddell, had arranged a meeting I want you to keep. It concerns one of your commercial sales reps, Sammy Gilmore. Sammy has been with National at Store 265 for three years and has done much to keep the store afloat. In the past year Liddell had a lot of trouble with turnover, but Sammy stayed. Six months ago, Sammy even took over training new reps in the hopes that would help lower turnover. Because of other problems unrelated to Sammy's fine work, turnover is still very high.

In the last six weeks, according to Liddell, Sammy's sales have fallen off. I don't know how serious the problem is, but I definitely want you to meet with Sammy to come to an agreement on how to solve it. Look over the enclosed materials Liddell put together and then meet with Sammy.

As I say, Sammy is a valuable employee. I'm sure you will be able to correct the situation, and get Sammy back on track.

NATIONAL, INC.

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Liddell, Store Manager, Store #265
FROM: Morgan McKinnon, District Manager *M.M.*
RE: Sammy Gilmore
DATE: February 6

I'm pleased to tell you that Sammy has been chosen Sales Representative of the Year. Sammy's consistently high number of prospecting calls, averaging 54 a week; of account calls, averaging 49 a week; and the sales of over \$20,000 every single month, more than qualify Sammy for this award. The awards ceremony will be in two weeks. I'll send details in a future letter. Please send my congratulations to Sammy.

NATIONAL, INC.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Morgan McKinnon, District Manager
FROM: David Liddell, Store Manager, Store #265 *D.L.*
RE: Sammy Gilmore
DATE: May 30

I feel I must protest your decision against my proposal for a special bonus for Sammy Gilmore. From mid-March till the end of April, Sammy did the work of two reps and is now training the new rep while having to maintain personal accounts and sales. This is above and beyond Sammy's regular fine work. Such performance should be given monetary recognition. Sammy expects it.

Since receiving word of your decision three weeks ago, Sammy's performance has fallen drastically. Since I am going into the hospital from June 1-15, there is little I can do to help stop the fall. Please reconsider your decision, and let me know as soon as possible. I would hate to lose such a good rep over a few dollars.

Monthly Activity Report - Sammy Gilmore

APRIL

Calls:

Prospecting: 80 calls total - 61 personal account calls,
19 training calls

Result: 20 personal new accounts, 24 total
new accounts

Prospecting calls eligible for bonus: 20

New accounts eligible for bonus: 15

Average total road hours per week: 37

Active Accounts: 87 calls total - 57 personal account calls,
30 training calls

Result: \$47,119 gross sales

Sales eligible for bonus: \$21,460

Average total road hours per week: 31

Comments: Sammy continues to do the job of two reps,
but is now training new rep. Hope to get
Sammy extra bonus.

Monthly Activity Report - Sammy Gilmore

MAY

Calls:

Prospecting: 40 calls total - 27 personal account calls,
23 training calls

Result: 7 personal new accounts, 12 total
new accounts

Prospecting calls eligible for bonus: 0

New accounts eligible for bonus: 5

Average total road hours per week: 31

Active Accounts: 15 calls total - 4 personal account calls,
11 training calls

Result: \$11,224 gross sales

Sales eligible for bonus: 0

Average total road hours per week: 17

Comments: Sammy is still trying to train new rep, but
own production has fallen off. Sammy is also
taking long lunches, coming in late. Have
arranged meeting for June 26, after I get
out of hospital.

NATIONAL, INC.

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Liddell, Store Manager, Store #265
FROM: Morgan McKinnon, District Manager *M.M.*
RE: Sammy Gilmore
DATE: June 19

I understand your concern for Gilmore's performance decline. Nevertheless, I cannot authorize, as per corporate executive orders, the special bonus. However, I have been able to guarantee an extra commission effective July 1 for outstanding sales reps. I will send details under separate cover, but you may let Sammy know of this immediately.

Interviewer Role Play Instructions

Role: Sammy Gilmore, Commercial Sales Representative

General Instructions

For this simulation, you will take the role of Sammy Gilmore, a commercial sales representative at National, Inc., Store #265. You have been there for three years and see yourself as a valuable employee. In the last year your superior, the store manager David Liddell, has had serious health problems. Because of this, the store has experienced several difficulties, one of which is very high turnover in the sales force. David tried to counter this by having you take on the responsibility of training new reps. This started about two months ago. But the real problems lie elsewhere, and turnover remains high.

As you've trained, you and the reps have opened many new accounts which became your accounts when the new reps moved on. You are making good money and have no complaint about it, but when Liddell asked you to do all of this extra training and work, he promised you a substantial extra bonus. This should have been paid at the first of May, but you haven't received it yet (today is June 26). Because of this and due to the strain of overworking, your production is falling off rapidly. You no longer feel motivated and think Liddell may have lied about the bonus. You still take the time to train the new reps because you hope one of them will be able to relieve you.

You were asked by Liddell for a meeting. Liddell's health caused him to leave the company, so you are meeting with Liddell's replacement, the new Store Manager (the applicant). You assume the meeting is about your recent performance decline.

You should adopt a friendly attitude at first, since you feel sure your overall record is excellent. If the applicant is overly critical, aggressive or hostile, become defensive and quiet. If the applicant maintains a helpful attitude, become open and positive.

Your role should move from friendly and wary to either defensive or cooperative, depending on the applicant's behavior. For further guidance, see Specific Instructions below. To play this role, it is imperative that you become completely familiar with the simulation materials and with this Interviewer Guide.

Specific Instructions

Begin the meeting by saying, "Hello. I'm Sammy Gilmore. I understand you wanted to see me." Allow the applicant to respond. Allow the applicant to initiate the discussion. If the applicant mentions that you have performance problems, say, "I don't know of any serious problems with my performance."

If the applicant states you are below your regular quota, say, "I am spending a lot of time training other reps. That doesn't leave much time for my own sales. Anyway, it's just a temporary problem."

If the applicant says the number of your calls has dropped, say, "I could not keep working 70-80 hours a week. I was willing to do that for the bonus and for a short while."

If the applicant mentions your good past performance, say, "I'm very proud of my record here at National." If the applicant states that your present performance must change, say, "I don't know how to change from the way I'm handling it. I have done double the work of anyone else—for nothing."

If the applicant asks you about the special bonus, say, "Liddell led me to believe I would be paid in May. I haven't seen a check yet." If the applicant explains that the bonus was vetoed, say, "They told me they couldn't do it, but I believe a company must keep its word." If the applicant mentions the extra commission for outstanding sales reps, say, "At least that's something."

If the applicant solicits your opinion for the decline in your performance, say, "I am overworked and tired." If the applicant solicits your opinions on the turnover problem, say, "I really don't know. I do know it isn't lack of training."

If the applicant criticizes your recent performance aggressively, say, "There is no reason for me to work that hard for a company that doesn't keep its word." And become quiet, only talking if a specific question is directed to you, and answering with a minimum "Yes," "No," or "I don't know."

If the applicant tries to resolve the performance problem in a positive, encouraging way, say, "I really need a vacation and some relief in the field. I still like this work and want to do a good job."

When the applicant has finished discussing the problem, say, "That concludes this simulation. Thank you for your participation." Then proceed to the next simulation or portion of the interview process.

APPENDIX D

CUSTOMER COMPLAINT SITUATIONAL CHECKLIST

ASSESSOR CHECKLIST
FOR
CUSTOMER COMPLAINT SIMULATION

- _____ 1. Remained polite and pleasant throughout the meeting, (e.g., attempted to establish rapport with Kendall, acknowledged points made by Kendall, did not interrupt Kendall, etc.) vs. did not remain polite when interacting with Kendall, (e.g., did not establish rapport, ignored or dismissed points made by Kendall, interrupted Kendall, etc.).

- _____ 2. Structured the meeting in a logical and orderly fashion, (e.g., initially clarified aims and goals of the meeting, achieved closure on topics of discussion, provided a summary at the conclusion of the meeting, etc.) vs. did not structure the meeting in an orderly fashion, (e.g., failed to clarify the purpose of the meeting, skipped from topic to topic, did not provide a summary at the conclusion of the meeting, etc.).

- _____ 3. Formulated logical decisions and recommendations and supported recommendations based on the available data (e.g., recommended that the system be upgraded since most of the repairs were due to overuse of the appliance) vs. did not formulate and support logical decisions based on the data.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Customer Complaint

_____ 4. Demonstrated a minimal amount of hesitancy in making decisions by responding to Kendall when called upon to do so (e.g., when specifically asked what he/she was going to do to resolve the problem) vs. was hesitant or avoided responding when called on.

_____ 5. Demonstrated an understanding of the basic data available vs. did not demonstrate an understanding of the basic data available.

- _____ Noted that Kendall was initially advised to purchase KitchenMax II
- _____ Perceived that most of the repairs were due to improper and overuse of the appliance
- _____ Noted that repairing the KitchenMax would not prevent future service repairs
- _____ Perceived that Kendall did not authorize a repair on sidings.

_____ 6. Remained unflustered when challenged and calmly asked Kendall to explain or justify his/her views. vs. became defensive or hostile when challenged and would not listen to Kendall explain his/her views

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Customer Complaint

_____ 7. Explained reasons for disagreement with Kendall by emphasizing data which supported his/her position vs. did not support his/her position with the data when disagreeing with Kendall.

_____ 8. Expressed his/her meaning in a clear, concise and audible manner vs. did not express his/her meaning in a clear, concise and audible manner.

_____ 9. Forcefully expressed, and defended his/her position vs. did not forcefully express opinions and/or compromised position and gave in to Kendall's demands.

_____ 10. Established definite follow-up procedures and timetables to resolve the customer's problems vs. did not establish definite follow-up procedures and timetables to resolve the customer's problems.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Customer Complaint

_____ 11. Modified his/her behavior in response to situational changes, (e.g., Kendall's behavior, time constraints, etc.) vs. did not modify his/her behavior in response to situational changes, (e.g., always or never compromised with Kendall, became flustered by time constraints, etc.).

_____ 12. Generated and evaluated logical criteria and alternative courses of action and considered ramifications of those decisions vs. did not generate logical criteria and alternative courses of action, nor considered ramifications of decisions made.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

APPENDIX E

CUSTOMER COMPLAINT SKILL CHECKLIST

ASSESSOR CHECKLIST

Organizing and Planning

To establish strategies for self and others to accomplish specific results, to establish objectives and priorities along with establishing systems to address these priorities.

_____ 1. Made quick reference to pertinent data without fumbling through papers vs. fumbled through pages to retrieve information .

_____ 2. During the meeting, discussed information in an organized manner, moving easily from one point to another vs. skipped from topic to topic without achieving closure.

_____ 3. Clarified the aims and goals of the meeting vs. did not clarify the aims/ goals of the meeting.

_____ 4. Established definite follow-up procedures and timetables vs. did not establish any follow-up procedures.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Organizing and Planning

_____ 5. Provided a summary at the conclusion of the meeting vs. failed to provide a summary at the conclusion of the meeting.

_____ 6. Kept abreast of time constraints in order to reach an understanding with the customer within the time frame vs. did not keep abreast of time constraints and reached no understanding with the customer.

Additional Behavior Observed:

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Perception

To identify and comprehend the critical elements of a situation, their importance and relationship to one another; to recognize strengths and weaknesses of individuals, as well as, differences among individuals.

_____ 1. Perceived the basic nature of the task (i.e., to review materials on a specific account and to meet with the client to resolve the complaint) vs. did not perceive the basic nature of the task.

_____ 2. Understood the relationship among items (e.g., understood that the increased need for the appliance due to more guests was causing some of the service calls) vs. did not understand the relationship among items.

_____ 3. Identified appropriate implications beyond the available data (e.g., repairing the KitchenMax would not prevent future service problems) vs. displayed no indication of having identified implications beyond the available data.

_____ 4. Perceived that the large number of service requests was a result of improper use of the appliance vs. did not perceive that the client selected an appliance that did not meet his/her needs.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Perception

_____ 5. Perceived that 10% could be deducted from any repair cost or on the price of a new product vs. did not indicate an awareness of this discount.

_____ 6. Perceived that Vista Hotels will be going national and could be a major customer for National vs. did not perceive the importance of keeping Vista Hotels a satisfied customer.

_____ 7. Perceived that Kendall did not authorize a repair on sidings vs. did not perceive that Kendall had not authorized a repair on the sidings.

_____ 8. Perceived that Kendall was initially advised to purchase KitchenMax II, a larger, hardier appliance vs. did not perceive that Kendall had been advised that KitchenMax II would better meet his/her needs.

Additional Behaviors Observed

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Decision Making

To use logical and sound judgment in the use of resources, determining courses of action, and defining solutions to problems based on an understanding of the evidence at hand.

- _____ 1. Formulated logical decisions and recommendations based on the available data (e.g., recommended that the system be upgraded to KitchenMax II) vs. did not formulate logical decisions based on the data.

- _____ 2. Logically supported recommendations and decisions based on data gathered during the analysis portion of the simulation (e.g., pointed out that most of the repairs were due to improper and overuse of the appliance) vs. failed to logically support his/her decisions and recommendations.

- _____ 3. Generated and evaluated logical criteria and alternative courses of action (e.g., suggested that in order to get the best value, Kendall should upgrade to KitchenMax II) vs. did not generate alternative courses of action.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Decision Making

_____ 4. Emphasized data which supported his/her position (e.g., that repeat service calls were a result of improper use of the appliance) vs. did not support his/her position with the data.

_____ 5. Considered the ramification of decisions made (e.g., KitchenMax II could handle the hotel's new business) vs. did not consider the ramifications of decisions made.

_____ 6. Withheld making decisions, such as reimbursing Kendall for the KitchenMax I through the money back guarantee when there was a lack of evidence to support such a decision vs. made decisions despite a lack of evidence to support the decisions.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Decisiveness

To initiate action and make decisions independent of quality; to render judgments, to make commitments, to defend actions and decisions when challenged.

- _____ 1. Made specific recommendations regarding what actions should be taken by National and Kendall to solve the problem vs. made only vague or ambiguous suggestions about what should be done.

- _____ 2. Demonstrated a minimal amount of hesitancy toward making decisions vs. was hesitant in making decisions.

- _____ 3. Responded to Kendall when called upon to do so (e.g. when specifically asked what he/she was going to do to resolve the problem) vs. avoided responding when called on.

- _____ 4. Maintained initial position vs. compromised position and gave in to Kendall's demands.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Deciveness

_____ 5. Defended position when challenged vs. made no attempt to defend stated position.

_____ 6. Strongly expressed opinions vs. was weak or vacillating when expressing opinions.

_____ 7. Asked Kendall to explain or justify his/her views and opinions vs. accepted Kendall's position as stated.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Interpersonal

To respond sensitively to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of others, to deal effectively with others regardless of their level or status; to accept interpersonal differences and develop rapport with others.

_____ 1. Attempted to establish rapport with Kendall (e.g., "I'm new here and am glad to have this opportunity to meet you," using first name, warmly shaking hands and maintaining eye contact,) vs. made no effort to establish rapport.

_____ 2. Remained polite throughout the meeting vs. became defensive or hostile during the meeting with Kendall.

_____ 3. Acknowledged points made by Kendall (e.g., that the problem is causing Kendall considerable trouble, etc.) vs. ignored or dismissed points made by Kendall.

_____ 4. Listened attentively while Kendall was speaking vs. gazed around the room or otherwise appeared inattentive while Kendall was speaking.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Interpersonal

_____ 5. Explained reasons for disagreement with Kendall vs. gave no reason for disagreeing with Kendall.

_____ 6. Continued to act pleasantly when conflict with Kendall occurred vs. became withdrawn or angry when conflict occurred.

_____ 7. Allowed Kendall to speak without frequently interrupting him/her and/or interrupted in a tactful manner vs. constantly interrupted and did so in an impolite manner.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Oral Communication

To clearly express and convey messages through oral means; to properly use technical factors such as grammar, vocabulary, eye contact, and voice inflection.

- _____ 1. Used appropriate hand gestures to emphasize points being made vs. used no hand gestures for emphasis or gestures were inappropriate.

- _____ 2. Maintained eye contact when speaking to Kendall vs. maintained no or very little eye contact while speaking.

- _____ 3. Avoided distracting mannerisms (e.g., pencil tapping, drumming fingers, etc.) vs. engaged in distracting behaviors that drew attention away from the discussion at hand (e.g., shifting in seat, scratching nose, etc.).

- _____ 4. Used voice inflection for emphasis vs. spoke in a monotone or did not emphasize points through voice inflection.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Oral Communication

_____ 5. Enunciated clearly vs. mumbled or slurred speech.

_____ 6. Used an appropriate vocabulary for the setting and material vs. used a vocabulary that was inappropriate to the situation.

_____ 7. Expressed his/her meaning in a clear concise manner vs. rambled or became too wordy.

_____ 8. Spoke in an audible manner vs. spoke so loudly as to be abusive or too softly to be easily heard.

_____ 9. Used proper grammar and sentence structure vs. poor grammar, awkward sentence structure or ambiguous meanings.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Adaptability

To effectively modify one's behavior and approaches based upon changes in the dynamics of the situation; to remain calm and unflustered when confronted with conflict or when challenged; to successfully adapt and handle stressful situations.

_____ 1. Showed compromise at times as well as resistance to change at other times vs. always agreed or disagreed with Kendall.

_____ 2. Remained calm and unflustered when challenged vs. became defensive or hostile when challenged.

_____ 3. Modified his/her behavior according to changes noted in Kendall's behavior vs. did not modify own behavior despite changes in Kendall's behavior.

_____ 4. Modified behavior as time grew short in order to render task solution vs. behaved uniformly throughout the meeting despite time pressures.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Adaptability

- _____ 5. Integrated points made by Kendall to provide further support for own position vs. was unable to integrate or use Kendall's comments to provide additional support for own position.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

APPENDIX F

CUSTOMER COMPLAINT MINI-SIMULATION

NATIONAL, INC.

MEMORANDUM

TO: New Store Manager, Store #265
FROM: Morgan McKinnon, District Manager *M.M.*
RE: Vista Hotels Account
DATE: June 26

As we discussed late last week, there is a problem with one of your newest and most important clients, Vista Hotels. I have located the information on this account which David Liddell, your predecessor, sent to me before he left. In one of the letters, a meeting was mentioned. Do not cancel that meeting. Instead, look over the materials and meet with Chris Kendall, Vista's manager. Do what you can to resolve the problem, whatever it is. I authorize you to take 10% off repairs and/or a new product, but only if you feel it's absolutely necessary.

Vista Hotels are going nationwide and obviously we want them to use our products in all their hotels. So, do what you can to win Kendall over. I'll be in touch to see how things went. Good luck!

NATIONAL, INC.

Store #265

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Liddell, Store Manager
FROM: Keith Eubanks, Commercial Service Rep
RE: Vista Hotels Account
DATE: June 20

K.E.

Terry Bradley asked me to put together all the calls I've made to Vista Hotel since they bought the KitchenMax a month ago. If you need any other information, just let me know.

- May 7: Installation of KitchenMax - 18-1/2 hours of work, no charge.
- May 17: Left front grill on Max not functioning. On inspection of wiring, found that on installing Max, two caps were not removed from charge equalizers, causing burnout of grill. Replaced wires, re-fused. 1 hour of work, no charge.
- May 31: Right bottom oven overheating, approximately 15° F too hot and rising intermittently. On inspection, found that filter and timing shelf had been removed (kitchen personnel said to make more oven space). This had affected the thermostat. Replaced filter, shelf and repaired thermostat. Four hours of work, no charge as per Liddell's orders.
- June 4: All four ovens showing minute cracks in Ceramix sides. When inspecting, asked if cooling rotation procedure was used, as stipulated in the manual. Was informed that almost throughout day, all ovens were in constant use, causing the cracks. Informed them of proper procedures. No repairs made as per manager's orders because of

Memorandum

June 20

Page 2

the cracks being very small and the cost (\$2,000 to replace Ceramix sidings). I informed the manager that the sidings are an important part of the oven. No charge as per Liddell's orders.

June 14: Top two ovens overheating. On inspection, found filter and timing shelf removed from both ovens. Ovens were all on when I arrived. Cracks in Ceramix sides were worse. I explained again the cooling rotation, replaced filters and timing shelves and repaired thermostats. Eight hours of work, no charge as per Bradley's orders.

June 19: Left grill out. On inspection, found wax build-up under Ceramix top, interfering with charge equalizers. Cleaned and reset, no charge. Grills showed over-use. Cracks in oven siding much worse. Manager asked for estimate. Quoted \$2,000 for Ceramix siding, \$250 for grill re-working.

NATIONAL, INC.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Morgan McKinnon, District Manager

FROM: Marjorie Cross, Commercial Sales Representative *M.C.*
Store #265

RE: Vista Hotel - KitchenMax

DATE: June 18

Before leaving, David Liddell asked me to get a report on the Vista Hotel account to you. I apologize for the delay. If the following is not sufficient, please let me know what other information you need.

I sold the National KitchenMax to Chris Kendall, Vista Hotel Manager, on May 2, and it was installed May 7. Kendall also bought National's "A-1 Warranty" which guarantees the product for 2 years, with a 60-day money-back and 60-day free full service guarantee built in. Kendall called me because the Hilton manager gave us a good recommendation.

The Vista Hotel is only two years old, but some of the kitchen appliances I saw on my visits there were already worn out. Also, Kendall was expecting a moderate rise in guests due to the new amusement park being built near the Vista. Despite these factors and against my advice, Kendall did not buy the KitchenMax II, which is larger and certainly hardier than the KitchenMax. The cost difference is \$3,380, but in Kendall's case, definitely worth it.

I have called Kendall several times since the installation of the KitchenMax. Lately he's had a lot of complaints. I'd hate to see their account go down the tubes, but Kendall is adamant about everything being our fault. Please let me know if there's anything I can do to help with this situation.

The KitchenMax Line

The KitchenMax

- four 3' x 2' ovens, with National's famous filter/timing shelf which keeps oven temperature level and constant. Ceramix sides regulate oven heat expansion and help control overheating.
- four 1' x 1' grills, with Ceramix tops - extremely easy to clean. Heat up in 10 seconds, cool off in 30.
- can be upgraded to KitchenMax II for \$4,000.

Ovens must be used with cooling rotation. All four ovens can be used for four straight hours only.

The KitchenMax II

- four 4' x 3' ovens, with filter/timing shelves, and Ceramix II sides. No cooling rotation needed as extra Ceramix layer and filters absorb excess heat. Oven temperature level guaranteed.
- four 1' x 1' grills, with Ceramix tops.

June 17

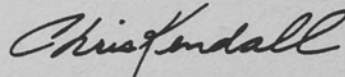
David Liddell, Store Manager
National, Inc.
401 Lakeside Street
Beaumont, Texas 77421

Dear Sir:

On May 2 I unfortunately agreed to purchase a National KitchenMax for the breakfast and lunch kitchen of my hotel, Vista Hotel. Since that time, I have had nothing but breakdowns and downtime. Obviously, this is intolerable.

I am available on June 26 to discuss this matter with you. Since the product appears to be inferior to my needs, I will want to discuss the money-back aspect of the guarantee which, fortunately, I had the presence of mind to buy. Unless I hear from you otherwise, I will be in your office on June 26.

Truly,



Chris Kendall
Manager, Vista Hotel

Interviewer Role Play Instructions

General Instructions

Your role in this simulation is that of Chris Kendall, manager of Vista Hotels. You have written a letter to David Liddell, the store manager at National, Inc., stating that you wish to return the large commercial kitchen appliance, KitchenMax. You bought the appliance approximately 1-1/2 months ago and have had to call in frequently for repairs. You bought an extended warranty that included a 60-month money-back guarantee, and 60 days of free full service, and now wish to have your money returned as you will not be able to pay for these repairs in the future.

You will meet today with David Liddell's replacement (the applicant) to discuss these problems.

You will take charge of the meeting at the outset, listing your complaints and demanding action. As the applicant responds, show willingness to listen to reasonable explanations/solutions. You are aware that the KitchenMax you purchased may be inadequate for your needs. You will be willing to upgrade your appliance if the applicant presents a good case for it.

In order to play this role, it is imperative that you become completely familiar with this simulation. See Specific Instructions below for further guidance.

Specific Instructions

Begin the meeting by introducing yourself: "Hello, I'm Chris Kendall, Manager of Vista Hotels." Then come directly to the point of the meeting, saying, "I have had considerable trouble with the KitchenMax I bought from you. I'm here today to solve my problem, one way or another."

If the applicant asks you to elaborate on your problem with the KitchenMax, bring up the following when and if appropriate:

- "The ovens are cracking on the sides. Your repairman didn't do a thing about it."
- "We have to call the repairman back after they have said they were finished."
- "We won't be able to afford these repairs when the warranty is up."
- "I can't afford to have my kitchen go out when guests are waiting!"

If the applicant suggests that your personnel are running the appliance too long and too often, say,

- "Well, that may have happened a time or two, I suppose. But it cannot be avoided all the time. Especially with the increase in business."

If the applicant recommends upgrading the system to the KitchenMax II, ask,

- "How much will that cost us?"

- "What all can the KitchenMax II do for us?"
- "Yes. I can see where it would make sense to upgrade the system. I'll have to go through Accounting."

If the applicant chooses to recommend repairing the KitchenMax, ask.

- "What repairs need to be done? How much will it cost?"
- "Sure. We can fix it under your warranty, but I want some kind of protection after 60 days."

Whichever tack the applicant takes, ask, "That's too expensive! Can't you come down on the cost?"

If the applicant offers a 10% discount on the needed repairs on the KitchenMax I, say, "That sounds fair. I'll run it through Accounting."

When the discussion has finished, end the simulation, saying, "That concludes this simulation. Thank you for your participation." Then proceed to the next simulation or phase of the interview process.

APPENDIX G

PROBLEM ANALYSIS SITUATIONAL CHECKLIST

ASSESSOR CHECKLIST
FOR
PROBLEM ANALYSIS SIMULATION

- _____ 1. Remained polite and pleasant throughout the meeting (e.g., attempted to establish rapport, acknowledged points made by McKinnon, did not interrupt McKinnon, etc.) vs. did not remain polite when interacting with McKinnon (e.g., did not establish rapport, ignored points made by McKinnon, interrupted McKinnon, etc.)

- _____ 2. Explained his/her interpretations of the store's problems and recommendations for improvement in a logical and orderly fashion (e.g., clarified purpose of meeting, achieved closure on topics and summarized his/her recommendations at the conclusion of the meeting) vs. haphazardly explained his/her interpretations of the store's problems (e.g., did not clarify purpose of the meeting, skipped from topic to topic without gaining closure, did not summarize his/her recommendations, etc.)

- _____ 3. Demonstrated an understanding of the basic data available vs. did not demonstrate an understanding of the basic data available.
- _____ Noted that his/her store's operating profit was much lower than norm and operating expenses were high
 - _____ Perceived that the average number of sales made per employee at his/her store is much lower than company average
 - _____ Perceived that ad practices at his/her store are not in line with effective strategies

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Problem Analysis

___ Noted that his/her store had too many salespeople compared to the company norm

___ 4. Asked McKinnon to explain his/her views and integrated points made by McKinnon to provide further support for own position vs. did not ask McKinnon to explain his/her views and was unable to integrate or use McKinnon's comments to provide additional support for own position.

___ 5. Formulated logical decisions and recommendations and supported recommendations based on available data vs. did not formulate and support logical decisions based on available data.

___ 6. Forcefully expressed, maintained and defended his/her views and recommendations vs. expressed his/her views in an unassured or tentative manner or failed to maintain and defend his/her views when questioned.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Problem Analysis

_____ 7. Generated and evaluated logical criteria and alternative courses of action and considered ramifications of those decisions vs. did not generate logical criteria and alternative courses of action, nor considered ramifications of decisions made.

_____ 8. Demonstrated a minimal amount of hesitancy to offer own views, to make decisions, and to respond to McKinnon when questioned vs. only covered the basic factual account of data and refrained from stating own view, interpretations, or opinions, hesitated to make decisions and failed to respond to McKinnon's questions.

_____ 9. Structured a definite course of action to take in order to resolve the problems at the store vs. did not structure a course of action to take in order to resolve the problems at the store.

_____ 10. Expressed his/her meaning in a clear, concise and audible manner vs. did not express his/her meaning in a clear, concise and audible manner.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Problem Analysis

_____ 11. Modified his/her behavior in response to situational changes (e.g, compromised at times depending on Mckinnon's points, did not become flustered by time constraints, etc.) vs. did not modify his/her behavior in response to situational changes, (e.g., always or never compromised, became flustered by time constraints, etc.)

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

APPENDIX H

PROBLEM ANALYSIS SKILL CHECKLIST

ASSESSOR CHECKLIST

Organizing and Planning

To establish strategies for self and others to accomplish specific results, to establish objectives and priorities along with establishing systems to address these priorities.

- _____ 1. Prior to discussing specific points, clarified the aims and goals of the meeting vs. launched into discussion of problems without first summarizing the aims and goals of the meeting.

- _____ 2. When discussing problems, achieved closure on the topic under discussion before moving on to the next topic vs. jumped from one topic to another without achieving closure.

- _____ 3. Made quick reference to pertinent data vs. fumbled through papers to retrieve information during the discussion.

- _____ 4. Provided a summary at the close of the meeting on the results of the meeting and the steps that would be implemented to resolve the problem vs. failed to provide a summary at the conclusion of the meeting.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Organizing and Planning

_____ 5. Established definite follow-up procedures and timetables to continue the discussion of the store's problems or status of suggested action plans vs. did not establish follow-up procedures.

_____ 6. Structured a definite course of action to take in order to resolve the problems at the store vs. did not structure a course of action.

_____ 7. Kept abreast of time constraints in order to reach an understanding with McKinnon regarding the store's problems vs. did not keep abreast of time constraints.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Perception

To identify and comprehend the critical elements of a situation, their importance and relationship to one another; to recognize strengths and weaknesses of individuals, as well as, differences among individuals

_____ 1. Perceived the basic nature of the task (i.e., to review material about the store's operations and present suggestions/ plans of improvement to his/her superior) vs. failed to perceive the basic nature of the task.

_____ 2. Perceived that the average number of sales made per employee at his/her store is low (5) compared to the company average (10) vs. did not note low sales in his/her store.

_____ 3. Perceived the relationship among items (e.g., that poor advertising is affecting sales) vs. did not perceive the relationship among items.

_____ 4. Noted that his/her store's advertising budget was lower than the company wide average advertising budget vs. did not note the inconsistency of his her store's advertising budget with the company wide average advertising budget.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Perception

_____ 5. Perceived that his/her store had three commercial salespeople and two retail salespeople compared to the norm of one retail salesperson and one or two commercial salespeople vs. did not perceive that his/her store had too many salespeople.

_____ 6. Perceived that his/her store's operating expenses were higher than the normal operating expenses vs. did not perceive that his/her store's operating expenses were higher than normal.

_____ 7. Perceived that his/her store's operating profit was much lower than the norm vs. did not perceive that his/her store's operating profit was much lower than the norm.

_____ 8. Noted that the previous store manager, David Liddell had not been following the corporate's marketing advertising strategies (e.g., Liddell advertised through TV despite high cost and highlighted National's reputation despite corporate advertisements covering that aspect) vs. did not note inappropriate advertising strategies implemented by Liddell.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont

Decision Making

To use logical and sound judgment in the use of resources, determining courses of action, and defining solutions to problems based on an understanding of the evidence at hand.

- _____ 1. Used data gathered during the review period to logically support his/her decisions and recommendations (e.g., that turnover is high because the sales are spread over too many salespeople) vs. did not cite data analyzed during the review period to support his/her decisions.

- _____ 2. Explored the possible effects of decisions and alternative courses of action prior to making any recommendations (e.g., that in the long run turnover will be reduced by letting some salespeople go now) vs. made decisions without considering their consequences or exploring alternatives course of action.

- _____ 3. Made decisions based on appropriate implications beyond the available data (e.g., suggested that combining a smaller work force with greater sales volume due to proper advertising would bring up profits) vs. did not base decisions on appropriate implications beyond the available data.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Decision Making

_____ 4. Formulated logical decisions and recommendations based on available data (e.g., recommended to cut back on the number of salespeople) vs. did not formulate logical decisions based on available data.

_____ 5. Used appropriate data based arguments to defend his/her decisions (e.g., that ad practices at his/her store are not in line with effective strategies, and the salespeople are suffering the consequences) vs. did not use appropriate data based arguments to defend his/her decisions.

_____ 6. Considered the ramifications of decisions made (e.g., the store already was experiencing several problems, thus he/she could not afford to make a poor decision which may cause the store more problems) vs. did not consider the ramifications of decisions made.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Decisiveness

To initiate action and make decisions independent of quality, to render judgments, to make commitments, and to defend actions and decisions when challenged.

_____ 1. Showed minimal hesitancy to offer own views vs. only covered the basic factual account of data and refrained from stating own views, interpretations, or opinions.

_____ 2. Maintained own positions on the situation vs. did not support and/or abandoned position when questioned by McKinnon.

_____ 3. Responded to McKinnon's questions and comments with minimal hesitancies vs. evaded, ignored or otherwise failed to respond to McKinnon's questions.

_____ 4. Asked McKinnon to explain or justify his/her views and opinions vs. allowed McKinnon's statements to go unchallenged or unanswered.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Decisiveness

_____ 5. Made specific recommendations and decisions (e.g., suggested allocating ad dollars in line with the corporate suggestions) vs. failed to make specific recommendations and decisions.

_____ 6. Strongly expressed his/her opinion (e.g., "We must let some people go because there are too many salespeople now.") vs. was weak or vacillated when expressing his/her opinion.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Interpersonal

To respond sensitively to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of others, to deal effectively with others regardless of their level or status; to accept interpersonal differences and develop rapport with others.

- _____ 1. Initially attempted to establish rapport prior to discussing problems (e.g., politely greeted and introduced himself/herself, used first names, etc.) vs. immediately began a discussion of problems without attempting to establish rapport.
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-
-
-

- _____ 2. When expressing views and opinions, did so in a tactful and constructive manner vs. stated views in an overly blunt or accusatory manner .
-
-
-
-

- _____ 3. Allowed McKinnon to speak without frequently interrupting him/her and/or interrupted in a tactful manner vs. constantly interrupted and did so in an impolite manner.
-
-
-
-

- _____ 4. Acknowledged valid points or concerns raised by McKinnon vs. ignored comments or stated disagreement without any acknowledgement of concern for other's viewpoints.
-
-
-
-

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Interpersonal

_____ 5. When disagreeing with McKinnon, couched disagreement in positive terms vs. stated disagreement in an overly blunt manner.

_____ 6. Responded to questioning and probing in a polite manner vs. responded impatiently or rudely to McKinnon's questions.

_____ 7. Gave attention to McKinnon when he/she was speaking by maintaining appropriate eye contact or body gestures, etc. vs. provided little or no eye contact with McKinnon, (e.g., examined notes, shuffled through papers or in other ways ignored McKinnon while he/she was speaking).

_____ 8. Remained polite throughout the meeting vs. became defensive or hostile during the meeting with McKinnon.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Oral Communication

To clearly express and convey messages through oral means, to properly use technical factors such as grammar, vocabulary, eye contact, and voice inflection.

- _____ 1. Used appropriate hand gestures to emphasize points being made vs. used no hand gestures for emphasis or gestures were inappropriate.

- _____ 2. Maintained eye contact when speaking to McKinnon vs. maintained no or very little eye contact while speaking.

- _____ 3. Avoided distracting mannerisms such as pencil tapping, drumming fingers, etc. vs. engaged in distracting behaviors that drew attention away from the discussion at hand (e.g., shifting in seat, scratching nose, etc.).

- _____ 4. Used voice inflection for emphasis vs. spoke in a monotone or did not emphasize points through voice inflection.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Oral Communication

_____ 5. Enunciated clearly vs. mumbled or slurred speech.

_____ 6. Used an appropriate vocabulary for the setting and material vs. used a vocabulary that was inappropriate to the situation.

_____ 7. Expressed his/her meaning in a clear concise manner vs. rambled or became too wordy.

_____ 8. Spoke in an audible manner vs. spoke so loudly as to be abusive or too softly to be easily heard.

_____ 9. Used proper grammar and sentence structure vs. used poor grammar, awkward sentence structure or ambiguous meanings.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Adaptability

To effectively modify one's behavior and approaches based upon changes in the dynamics of the situation; to remain calm and unflustered when confronted with conflict or when challenged; to successfully adapt and handle stressful situations.

- _____ 1. Showed compromise at times, as well as resistance to change at times vs. always agreed or disagreed with statements by McKinnon.

- _____ 2. Integrated points made by McKinnon to provide further support for own position vs. was unable to integrate or use comments to provide additional support for own position.

- _____ 3. Maintained an effective task-oriented strategy despite time constraints vs. became flustered by time constraints.

- _____ 4. Remained calm when challenged vs. became defensive or hostile when challenged.

Assessor Checklist, cont.

Adaptability

_____ 5. Modified behavior as time grew short in order to render task solution vs. behaved uniformly throughout the meeting despite time pressures.

_____ 6. Modified his/her behavior according to changes noted in McKinnon's behavior vs. did not modify own behavior despite changes in McKinnon's behavior.

Additional Behaviors Observed:

Rating _____

APPENDIX I

PROBLEM ANALYSIS MINI-SIMULATION

NATIONAL, INC.

MEMORANDUM

TO: New Store Manager, Store #265
FROM: Morgan McKinnon, District Manager *M.M.*
RE: Store #265
DATE: June 26

I would like to meet with you tomorrow to discuss some pressing issues concerning your store. Your predecessor, David Liddell, brought several problems to my attention but he was unable to do anything to resolve them before he left. I am enclosing the materials David gave me and some others as well. From a very brief overview of these materials it looks like we may need to raise the salespeople's salaries to reduce turnover and perhaps raise the advertising budget as well.

Look over the information to see what you think the problems are. I'll be by tomorrow to discuss your ideas and recommendations.

OPERATING STATEMENT

MAY

National, Inc., Division of AMD, Store #265

I. Current Month Sales Summary A

	Actual	YTD Actual
Appliance Sales-Retail	\$ 36,527	\$184,699
-Commercial	43,791	215,257
Service Sales	15,848	75,972
Miscellaneous Merchandise Sales	<u>7,875</u>	<u>35,884</u>
Grand Total Sales	\$104,041	\$511,812

Current Month Sales Summary B

	YTD This Month	YTD This Year	YTD as of May Last Year
Average Dollar Sales Per Customer:	\$ 794	\$ 810	\$ 814
Average Number of Sales Per Employee:	5	9	10
Average Dollar Sales Per Employee:			
Manager	\$1,911	\$2,572	\$3,884
Retail Salesperson	\$ 549	\$ 681	
Retail Salesperson	\$ 320	\$ 496	
Commercial Salesperson	\$ 274	\$ 303	\$1,171
Commercial Salesperson	\$ 425	\$ 494	
Commercial Salesperson	\$ 491	\$ 375	
Assistant Manager	\$1,182	\$ 941	\$1,437
Service Supervisor	\$ 911	\$1,699	\$1,181

OPERATING STATEMENT—Continued

II. Current Month Profit Summary

<u>Gross Profit</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Appliance—Retail	24,107
—Commercial	28,464
Service	10,776
Miscellaneous Merchandise	<u>5,276</u>
Total Gross Profit	68,623
Operating Expenses	62,491
Operating Profit	9,132
	6,132

Current Month Personnel Summary

	<u>Number Employed</u>	<u>Salary</u>
Manager	1	\$3,710/month
Assistant Manager	1	2,499/month
Secretary	1	7.10/hour
Service Supervisor	1	\$1,896/month
Sales Representative Commercial	3	\$5.40/hour + 7% commission
Sales Representative Retail	2	\$4.75/hour + 1% commission
Service Representative	3	\$7.95/hour

NATIONAL, INC.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Morgan McKinnon, District Manager
 FROM: David Liddell, Store Manager, Store #265 *D.L.*
 RE: Store operations
 DATE: June 12

Could you send me the company-wide averages on: operating expenses, salaries for salespeople, total sales, average sale per customer and average sale per employee? I think my problem is high sales turnover—I only have one that has been here for a year. I am considering hiring two more salespeople because I expect turnover to keep up during our peak season, July-September.

Also, you asked about my ad budget. It is as follows:

Retail Appliances—(75% total budget) newspaper ads in Sunday editions of both large local papers. Highlight National's reputation. Also, one 30-second television ad on local T.V. station—highlights quality retail service.

Commercial Appliances—(25% total budget) Ads in trade magazines and stands in trade shows. Highlight large products, service warranty.

Total ad budget: ⁵ \$58,594

Ad dollars spent:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE (Projected)
\$3,732	\$2,587	\$4,339	\$4,144	\$5,404	\$2,882

NATIONAL, INC.

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Liddell, Store Manager, Store #265
 FROM: Morgan McKinnon, District Manager *M.M.*
 RE: Company-wide averages
 DATE: June 14

The data you requested follows:

Company-Wide Averages:

Total Sales: \$120,960
 Operating Expenses: \$54,939
 Operating Profit: \$27,314
 Salaries (Salespeople only):

	Range
Retail Salespeople:	\$4.75 + 1% to \$7.95 + 3%
Commercial Salespeople:	\$5.35 + 7% to \$7.44 + 10%

Number of Sales Per Employee: 10/month
 Dollar Sales per Customer: \$816
 Dollar Sales per Employee (Retail/Commercial Salespeople): \$657

Also, regarding the advertising figures you sent to me, it looks as though you need to raise the overall budget, as co-wide advertising budget averages are around \$65,000.

Regarding your idea to hire on extra salespeople, according to my records you currently have two more than normal. The norm is to have one retail and one or two commercial salespersons, and you have five total. I think we need to get together to discuss all of these issues. Let me know when we can meet.

NATIONAL, INC.

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Store Managers
FROM: Corporate Marketing Department
RE: Advertising Strategies
DATE: June 17

After thorough analysis we have been able to show that the following marketing/advertising strategies improve sales. We wish to make these ideas available to you and any research information you may require on your specific district.

1. Spend an even amount of your budget during off-peak months.
1. Spend 10-15% more on advertising the two months before peak season. During peak months, spend 20% more than off-peak months.
3. Use your ad dollars on specific products or line of products. Do not concentrate on vague intangibles such as "quality" or "reputation." The key is to show the customer a product he/she may need. Our corporate advertising will cover such aspects as reputation and company image.
4. To whatever extent possible, link advertising to local celebrations and events or national holidays.
5. Avoid television advertising because it is too expensive to be used in this recommended, product-specific way. Instead, use radio and newspaper ads extensively.

We hope this will be of use to you. Please let me know if you need any further information or aid.

Interviewer Role Play Instructions

Role: Morgan McKinnon, District Manager

General Instructions

For this simulation you are to play the role of Morgan McKinnon, District Manager for National, Inc., a chain of appliance stores. You are meeting with the new Store Manager of Store #265 (the applicant) to discuss various problems which the predecessor, David Liddell, left. The problem concerns salaries, number of personnel and allocation of advertising dollars. For your specific ideas, see **Specific Instructions** below

At the outset of the meeting, show concern about the seriousness of the problems and ask the applicant for specific recommendations, ideas, etc. Your purpose is to make the applicant choose a course of action and to probe thoroughly for his/her rationale.

As the applicant develops his/her ideas and recommendations, do not express your opinion of them by saying things such as, "Good!" or "Yes, that's right." Limit yourself to the questions and statements provided below. Do not commit yourself to any specific action, but if the applicant has presented sound and logical ideas, you may say at the close of the meeting that you feel the ideas are good.

It is imperative that you become completely familiar with the role play materials, in particular this Guide

Specific Instructions

Begin the meeting by saying, "Hello, I'm Morgan McKinnon, your District Manager." Allow the applicant to respond and then say, "You've had a chance to look over the information. What do you think the problems are?"

If the applicant asks for your input, say, "I didn't have time to really look at the information. I need your opinion, anyway; it's your store."

If the applicant mentions the advertising budget, say, "It is lower than the company average." If the applicant says the ad money is not being spent judiciously, ask, "What specific changes would you make? Why do you want to change that?"

If the applicant mentions the operating expenses of the store, ask, "Is there anything out of line with your operating expenses? Why do you think they are so high?"

If the applicant states there are too many salespeople at the store, say, "You have two more salespeople than normal. What will you do about that?" If the applicant suggests letting some go, ask, "What about your turnover problem? Liddell had difficulty keeping people. Why do you think turnover is high at your store? What do you intend to do about it?" If the applicant mentions the fact that sales are being

spread over too many people. say, "Yes. I see your point." If the applicant does not mention this, say, "Do you think raising the salaries of salespeople will help reduce turnover?"

When the applicant has finished making suggestions and answering your questions, say, "That concludes this part of the interview. Thank you for your participation." Then proceed to the next simulation or phase of the interview process.

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