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Profiles International: *A Multifaceted Approach for Assessing Talent*

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Introduction

Throughout the process of talent management (e.g., recruiting and selecting candidates, assessing performance and potential, developing people, and implementing rewards programs), there is a common and critical thread – the need to assess people. Thanks to extensive research and many innovative solution providers, the market for assessment tools has exploded. Today, companies are using a wide variety of assessment tools to screen and assess candidates, uncover strengths and weaknesses, determine job fit[1] and leadership potential, and identify specific development needs that drive success.

Profiles International, a world leader in selecting and developing high-performance workforces, offers a comprehensive suite of employment assessments that help companies gain a competitive advantage by selecting, hiring, retaining and developing great talent. Continually validating and updating its assessment products, Profiles serves many of the largest companies in 122 countries around the globe.

In this report, we define the different types of assessments and the applications of each. We will also highlight three of Profiles International's flagship assessments – ProfileXT®, Customer Service Profile™ and CheckPoint 360°™, as well as its CheckPoint SkillBuilder Series™. We will share the real-life application of these products within Rosewood Hotels and Resorts, and AECOM.

[1] "Job fit" refers to the assessment of current knowledge, skills, competencies and other key qualifications of an individual against the requirements of a specific role, current or future.

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KEY POINT

Companies use assessment tools to screen and assess candidates, uncover strengths and weaknesses, determine job fit and leadership potential, and identify specific development needs that drive success.

Types of Assessments

There are many different kinds of assessments on the market today, including competency, personality, potential and team effectiveness. Assessments can be conducted on paper or online, and are completed via self-assessment or multirater. The two types of multirater assessments are:

1. 180-Degree – Completed by self and manager; and,
2. 360-Degree – Completed by self, manager, direct reports, peers and customers.

360-degree assessments are very powerful tools for new managers and leadership development. A 180-degree assessment is a more standard assessment used by a manager and the direct report, and typically utilized for performance appraisals.

The tools highlighted in this report address the following four areas.

- **Skills and Competency Assessments** – These tools measure proficiency against a set of defined competencies. These assessments should be both skills and behavioral-based. Many vendors, like Profiles International, have their own competency libraries and 360-tools that their clients use.

  Profiles' "Checkpoint 360™" is a multirater feedback process that assesses employees against 18 competencies grouped into eight skill clusters (see Figure 1).

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Figure 1: Profiles International Management and Leadership Competencies

Cluster	Competencies
Communication	• Listens to others • Processes information • Communicates effectively
Leadership	• Instills trust • Provides direction • Delegates responsibility
Adaptability	• Adjusts to circumstances • Thinks creatively
Relationships	• Builds personal relationships • Facilitates team success
Task Management	• Works efficiently • Works competently
Production	• Takes action • Achieves results
Development of Others	• Cultivates individual talents • Motivates successfully
Personal Development	• Displays commitment • Seeks improvement

Source: *Profiles International, 2009.*

ANALYSIS

Personalized 360-degree feedback helps leaders to increase their leadership effectiveness by learning more about themselves and the impact they have on organizational results.

Profiles' "Checkpoint SkillBuilder Series™" can then be used to build or enhance the skills and competencies that are most relevant to the individual's career goals. This self-paced, self-study professional development system is aligned with Profiles' 18 competencies.

- **Job Fit Assessments** – These tools evaluate the current knowledge, skills, competencies and other key qualifications of an individual against the requirements of a specific role, current or future.

  An example of a job fit tool includes Profiles' "Customer Service Profile™" which identifies six behavioral characteristics (trust, tact, empathy, conformity, focus and flexibility) and two proficiencies (vocabulary and mathematics) that have been validated to be essential to extraordinary customer service. The tool also measures

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KEY POINT

Potential assessments are used most often for senior leaders and executives, by 22 percent and 29 percent of companies, respectively.[2]

the alignment with a company's customer service policies and attitudes.

- **Job Interest Assessments** – This type of assessment looks at patterns to discern the type of role, function or industry in which a person demonstrates interest that can lead to increased employee satisfaction.
- **Potential Assessments** – These tools do not assess someone against a particular role but, rather, evaluates an individual against a number of defined criteria (such as learning agility, integrity and drive) to determine growth leadership potential.

Profiles' ProfileXT™ can be used to assess job fit, job interests and potential. The ProfileXT:

- Measures thinking style, behavioral traits and occupational interests;
- Compares candidates to job-specific patterns to predict future success;
- Improves quality of hire; and,
- Provides a foundation for ongoing employee performance management.

The Application of Assessments

The application of assessments in talent management programs is varied. In the following sections, we briefly highlight the function of assessments within each of the core talent management processes.

Recruitment and Selection

To maximize talent investments during an economic slowdown, organizations need to rethink their current strategies – and make the necessary changes to reduce costs, and improve the accuracy and quality

[2] For more information, *Leadership Development Factbook® 2009: Benchmarks and Analysis of Leadership Development Spending, Staffing and Programs*, Bersin & Associates / Kim Lamoureux and Karen O'Leonard, October 2009. Available to research members at www.bersin.com/library or for purchase at www.bersin.com/ldfactbook.

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of hires. With more candidates in the workforce, recessions are an excellent time to "upgrade" your talent pool.

Companies are spending a considerable amount of time and energy to restructure their sourcing and screening strategies. At McDonald's, psychometric[3] tests contribute to a seamless interview process. These tests are fully integrated into the company's recruiting solution, so that candidates are screened before they are brought in for an interview.[4]

Performance Management

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Aetna redefined its performance management approach to include competencies, as well as a complementary skills database.

Each year, managers must go through the difficult process of assessing employees' performance against a set of performance goals, as well as required or desired skills and capabilities. Often done via a 180 or 360, these assessments indicate standards against which to measure employees. Skills gaps are identified and development plans are put in place to close these gaps.

Aetna (a leader in healthcare, dental, pharmacy, group life and disability insurance, and employee benefits) redefined its performance management approach to include competencies, as well as a complementary skills database. The philosophy was that skills plus competencies equal performance, for which skills are psychomotor and competencies are behavioral. The manager and employee complete a skills assessment, followed by a discussion related to competency gaps, development actions and career planning.[5]

Career Management

Career management addresses the career goals of employees. Companies employ assessments (such as job fit and potential assessments), so that employees are able to measure themselves against future roles.

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[3] Psychometric tests are a measure of knowledge, abilities, attitudes and personality.

[4] For more information, *McDonald's U.K. Strengthens Its Company Brand and Improves Its Recruitment Process with an Investment in Technology*, Bersin & Associates / Madeline Laurano, May 2009. Available to research members at www.bersin.com/library.

[5] For more information, *Integrated Talent Management at Aetna: Supporting the Transition from Turnaround to Industry Leadership*, Bersin & Associates / Leighanne Levensaler, October 2008. Available to research members at www.bersin.com/library.

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KEY POINT

Companies use job fit and potential assessments to evaluate employees against future roles.

Textron (a large global conglomerate) developed a career management process that the company refers to as the "next generation of talent development."[6] As part of this process, high-potential employees[7] complete a battery of assessments that show aptitude for proceeding to higher levels and receive 360-degree feedback, which indicates assessment against competencies. With this information, the employee and manager are able to develop a robust career plan that is in line with the employee's interests and capabilities.

Succession Management

Succession management is a critical part of any talent management strategy. Companies use assessments to predict the future capabilities and potential of its employees. With this information, companies create succession plans and build a leadership pipeline[8] that will enable the company to endure through the retirement, departure and termination of its leaders.

For example, Whirlpool uses 360-degree assessments to evaluate and provide feedback to employees; employees at the manager-level and above also receive 180-degree assessments annually. These assessments are used to develop a balanced scorecard for every employee. The metrics provide a mean score for leadership competencies for each region and at the global level. Global HR is able to focus its efforts on particular geographies that need help building deeper pools of leadership talent.[9]

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6 For more information, *Modern-Day Career Management: Key Trends, Models and Case Studies*, Bersin & Associates / Kim Lamoureux, July 2009. Available to research members at www.bersin.com/library.

7 A "high-potential employee" is an employee who has been identified as having the potential, ability and aspiration for successive leadership positions within the company. Often, these employees are provided with focused development as part of a succession plan and are referred to as "HiPos."

8 "Leadership pipeline" refers to an organization's ongoing need to have a pool of talent that is readily available to fill positions at all levels of management (as well as other key positions) as the company grows. At each level, different competencies, knowledge and experiences are required, and (to keep the pipeline filled) the organization must have programs designed to develop appropriate skills sets. (Also known as the "leadership bench.")

9 For more information, *Leadership Competencies as the Foundation for Talent Management: Whirlpool Corporation Sets Performance Standards to Drive Sustainable Growth*, Bersin & Associates / Kim Lamoureux, November 2007. Available to research members at www.bersin.com/library.

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ANALYSIS

The way in which a company manages its talent has become a critical business lever and will provide companies with competitive advantage.

Leadership Development

In a recent study of more than 350 companies[10], we found that 360-degree feedback, leadership style and personality are the three most common assessments for managers, regardless of level. Overall, assessments are more frequently used for senior-level leaders, likely due to associated costs. Assessments help define the critical skills necessary to drive organizational performance.

HP, as an example, relies on assessments to make decisions regarding nominations for high-potential leadership programs, leader promotions and succession plans. Assessments are aligned against the company's business standards, each individual's job profile and overall career development framework. The information is used to drive coaching and individual development plans for each person.

Benefits of Assessments

There are many benefits for using assessments and the data that comes from them. Figure 2 describes both the individual employee benefits, as well as the benefits to the business.

Figure 2: Benefits of Assessments

Individual Benefits	Business Benefits
Obtain data that describes specific strengths and weaknesses	Improve hiring and selection decisions
Increase awareness and acceptance for development	Uncover individual and organizational skills gaps
Realize others' perceptions	Improve learning and development strategies
Receive coaching	Increase integrity of succession planning
Gain insight into behaviors that drive performance	Reduce time to productivity
Improve communication skills	Uncover "hidden" talent
Learn how to be an effective team player	Determine job fit

Source: *Bersin & Associates, 2009.*

[10] For more information, *Leadership Development Factbook® 2009: Benchmarks and Analysis of Leadership Development Spending, Staffing and Programs*, Bersin & Associates / Kim Lamoureux and Karen O'Leonard, October 2009.

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Companies are using a variety of assessments for every level of employee and at all key phases of an employee's lifecycle.

Conclusion

Assessments are no longer just for executives. Companies are using a variety of assessments for every level of employee and at all key phases of an employee's lifecycle. Assessments help employees to become more self-aware and enable employees to develop career goals that are obtainable. For companies, assessments help leaders make better selection decisions, uncover skills gaps to drive learning priorities and build capabilities necessary for long-term sustainable growth.

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Appendix I: Case Study

Rosewood Hotels and Resorts

Established in 1979, Rosewood Hotels and Resorts is a privately held, ultra-luxury hotel management company based in Dallas, Texas. With more than 20 properties around the world, including the U.S., England, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Dubai and the Caribbean, Rosewood is a recognized leader in the resort industry. It has received more than 200 awards and honors from the likes of *Travel + Leisure*, Conde Nast and *Forbes Traveler* magazines.

Overview

In 2004, Rosewood began to look for a partner to help reduce turnover and increase productivity. The company ultimately selected Profiles International because of its variety of reports, language capabilities and customer service. Rosewood uses two products – ProfileXT and Customer Service Profile (hospitality version). The core objectives have stayed in place over the years, including lowering recruiting costs and increasing employee engagement. Today, however, Rosewood's relationship with Profiles has evolved, as has the application of these two tools. As described by the corporate human resources manager,

> *"We have evolved to a point where we can take what we have and leverage it in ways we couldn't have imagined in the beginning."*

ANALYSIS

The best assessments are designed to be reliable for analysis and decision-making.

ProfileXT

The ProfileXT, which takes about an hour to complete, assesses individuals in three key areas – thinking style, behavioral traits and occupational interests.

1. **Thinking Style** – The corporate human resources manager refers to this as "the smarts." The tool evaluates an individual's verbal and numerical reasoning; the responses are either correct or wrong. A weighted average score is computed based on the type of role. For example, numerical reasoning would not be as critical for an HR role as compared with a role in accounting.

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2. **Behavioral Traits** – Referred to by Rosewood as "the hearts," this part of the tool assesses 10 esoteric "feel good" characteristics. Examples of the behavioral traits include energy, assertiveness, sociability, attitude, decisiveness, independence and objective judgment. These questions are subjective, and there is no correct or wrong answer.

   Profiles developed a distortion scale that helps its clients determine if people are being honest with their responses. The tool asks four different questions that evaluate the same trait in determining if an individual answers them consistently. The more consistent the responses, the higher the distortion scale is – which leads to the conclusion that the individual is being truthful. As the corporate human resources manager stated,

   "Some candidates will tell you what they think you want to hear. This scale increases the reliability of the responses."

3. Occupational Interests – This section assesses an individual against six areas of interest. As described by the corporate human resources manager, every job has some areas that are more applicable than others. For example, in the human resources profession, "people service" is high. Every job has three areas of interest that are more important and three that are less important. The theory is that, if an individual's areas of interest match, he / she will be happier in the role and be a better performer. (See Figure 3.)

   The corporate human resources manager clarified,

   "We don't rely on this part of the assessment as much. We like balance in our people. It is 'nice to know' information, but we have never not hired a candidate because their interests don't align to our patterns."

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Companies, like Rosewood, understand the limitations of an assessment and how the information will be used.

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Figure 3: Sample Text from "ProfileXT"

Occupational Interests

The Interest section assesses the relative interests between the six interest areas. The top three interests for Ms. Sample are shown here, along with the top three interests for this position. Note that Sally shares TWO top interests with the requirements of this position.

TOP THREE areas of interest for **Sally Sample.**

Enterprising — Indicated interest in activities associated with persuading others and presenting plans and concepts.

People Service — Indicated interest in activities such as helping people and promoting the welfare of others.

Creative — Indicated interest in activities using imagination, creativity and original ideas.

TOP THREE areas of interest for this position.

Enterprising — Indicated interest in activities associated with persuading others as well as presenting plans and concepts.

Financial/Admin — Indicated interest in activities such as organizing information or business procedures.

People Service — Indicated interest in activities such as helping people and promoting the welfare of others.

Source: *Profiles International, 2009.*

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Custom assessments should be evaluated and updated to align to company-specific needs and criteria.

ProfileXT Application

The ProfileXT is used for three distinct purposes at Rosewood – selection of new hires, coaching, and career and succession planning.

Selection of New Hires

All management candidates are required to complete the ProfileXT at the final stages of the interviewing process. A placement report compares the persons profile against a pre-determined job pattern. Rosewood initially used the ProfileXT predefined job patterns. Over time, however, the company was able to develop its own patterns customized to the company's culture and positions, so that it would have a more accurate tool. As Rosewood experienced, the creation of custom job patterns can happen quickly. Every six to 12 months, the company revisits patterns and updates them based on the current top performers and dynamics with which it is dealing.

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KEY POINT

If someone is not performing well, the company can run a report to see deficiencies and patterns of where the employee is not aligned to the job profile.

The corporate human resources manager shared that 30 percent of the hiring decisions is based on the ProfileXT report, in addition to interviewing data and feedback, work history, and reference checks.

Coaching

Rosewood progressed from only using the tool for placement to understanding its application in talent management. For existing employees, a coaching report can be created. If someone is not performing well, the company can run a report to see deficiencies and patterns of where the employee is not aligned to the job profile. The report offers coaching tips for managers to be able to coach employees into alignment. For example, an HR role requires a numerical reasoning range of five to eight out of 10. The corporate human resources manager shared that her numerical reasoning score was a two. The report gave detailed guidance to her manager on how to coach her to the job pattern. The report suggested that she be assigned numerical-based projects to force her to use numbers.

Career and Succession

The ProfileXT report can be used to assess individuals against a future position. The system can take the results of the ProfileXT assessment and indicate the jobs for which employees are best-suited. For employees, the tool is also useful for helping them to make career decisions. If an individual is at a crossroads, the company can give him / her the assessment to find out what jobs he / she is closely aligned with, based on personal interests and styles.

Customer Service Profile

The Customer Service Profile (CSP) is similar to the ProfileXT, and measures behavioral traits and proficiencies in mathematics and vocabulary. A 'thinner" version of the XT, the CSP measures six behavioral characteristics (instead of 10) that are most relevant to a career in customer service. The six areas are trust, tact, empathy, conformity, focus and flexibility. The assessment gives Rosewood a good indication of how people will interact with their guests.

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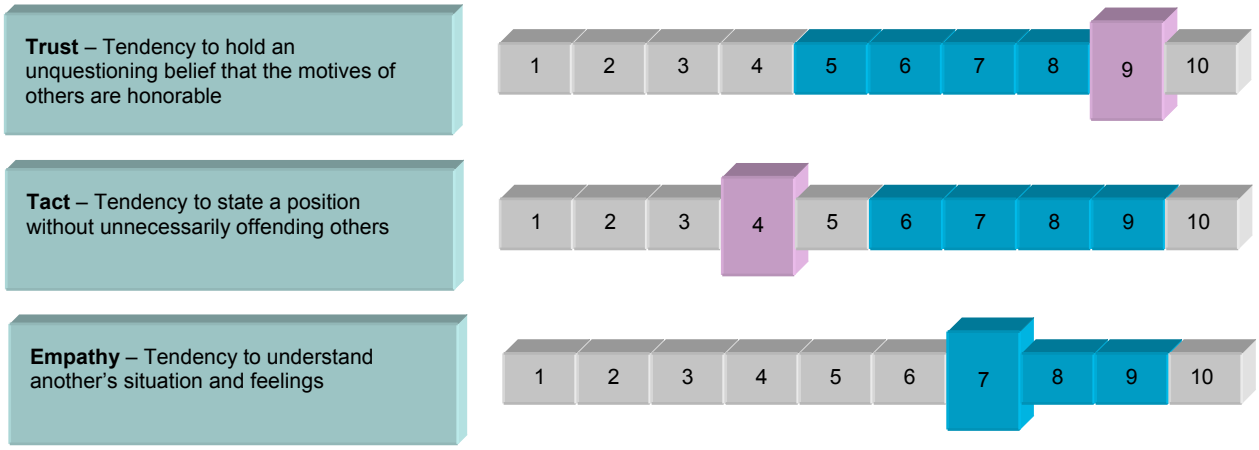
The CSP report is presented in five sections, including behavioral characteristics (see Figure 4), proficiencies, job match percent and considerations for interviewing (see Figure 5). The last section, the company service perspective, evaluates the degree of alignment between the individual's perspective on providing service to the customer and that expressed by the company.

Figure 4: Sample Text from "Summary of Behavioral Characteristics"

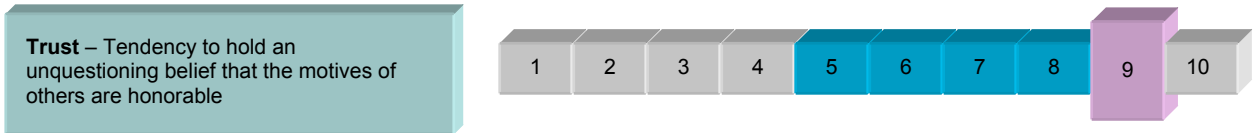
The darker shading represents the Job Match Pattern for the role of Demonstration Pattern-NOT FOR ACTUAL USE. The larger box indicates her score.



Source: *Profiles International, 2009.*

Figure 5: Sample Text from "Considerations for Interviewing"

The darker shading represents the Job Match Pattern for the role of Demonstration Pattern-NOT FOR ACTUAL USE. Ms. Sample scored outside the Job Match Pattern in the areas listed below. Information and interview questions are provided to facilitate the selection process.



Considerations for Interviewing

Ms. Sample has a score on the Trust Scale above the Job Match pattern for this position. The issue of interest is whether she is able to discern the motivations of others who may try to take advantage of her. Is too much trust in everyone's motivations a liability that she cannot overcome? A few typical questions may include:

- How do you feel about co-workers who think that most people are basically dishonest? Is there any truth to such an opinion?
- Describe a recent situation in which you discovered that a customer was trying to take advantage of your good nature. Does this happen often?

Source: *Profiles International, 2009.*

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KEY POINT

Rosewood uses the CSP assessment for its hourly line-level positions.

The company service perspective asks individuals to indicate if they agree or disagree on 50 statements about the philosophy of guest service. Examples of statements include the following.

- Generally, when my patience with a guest reaches its limits, the best option is to get my supervisor involved.
- Guests need to feel that I have the capability to serve their needs without supervisory support.
- If a guest has trouble understanding what I am saying, I should ask someone else to explain it to them.
- Even though I may personally disagree with a patron, they should always be served cooperatively.

CSP Application

Rosewood began using the CSP assessment in 2008. The tool (available in Spanish and English) is only used for its hourly line-level positions and is utilized more so by its properties than at the corporate office.

The corporate human resources manager admits that the company has not evolved in its use of this tool as much as the ProfileXT. For example, Rosewood is just beginning to build custom job patterns. The company divides its jobs into two groups – front of the house and back of the house. For the "front of the house" positions, it expects more and better customer service. The company is building patterns for high, medium and low guest contact. Examples of the segmentation of roles into these three categories include:

- **High** – Doorman, front desk agent, concierge;
- **Medium** – Cafeteria worker, room attendant; and,
- **Low** – Gardeners, launderers.

Business Results

Rosewood has realized a number of key benefits by using the ProfileXT and Customer Service Profile assessments.

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KEY POINT

Rosewood has realized a number of key benefits by using the ProfileXT and Customer Service Profile assessments.

- Nearly 10 percent more "poor matched" employees are being terminated than those who were a "good match."
- Average tenure of employees who are a "good match" is a running total 16 months and growing, as compared with only 11 months for "poor matched" employees.
- Recruiting expense per hire dropped by almost 80 percent. The cost for a "good matched" employee is about $3,600 versus $5,200 for a "poor matched" employee.
- "Good matched" employees continue to grow their skills and capabilities; while "poor matched" employees' capabilities are almost stagnant.

"We now make more informed hiring decisions, selecting people who will stay with us longer. But it doesn't end there. Profiles' products have become an important part of our culture. We use the terminology and the concepts in our performance reviews, our recruiting decisions and everyday discussions. If we took the products away from our managers, we would be dealing with some disappointed internal guests."

Corporate Human Resources Manager
Rosewood Hotels and Resorts

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Appendix II: Case Study

AECOM

AECOM (NYSE:ACM) is a global provider of professional, technical and management support services to a broad range of key end markets, including transportation, facilities, environmental, energy, water and government. With approximately 45,000 employees around the world, AECOM is a leader in all of the key markets that it serves.

AECOM provides a blend of global reach, local knowledge, innovation and technical excellence in delivering solutions that enhance and sustain the world's built, natural and social environments. A *FORTUNE* 500 company, AECOM serves clients in more than 100 countries and had revenue of $6.1 billion during its fiscal year 2009.[11]

KEY POINT

AECOM's key talent goals are to improve performance, build bench strength and enhance personal performance of its employees.

Overview

In 2006, one of AECOM's original operating companies began working with Profiles International to help senior leadership understand its individual strengths and areas of development. This strategic initiative was so successful that, today, the company is optimizing what it has learned at the senior levels, and is pushing the application of the CheckPoint 360 and CheckPoint SkillBuilder Series strategically across parts of the workforce and the organization.

Leadership Development

AECOM utilizes a number of programs and services from Profiles International to help improve performance, build bench strength[12] across the organization and its businesses, and enhance personal performance of its leaders. Three key tools include:

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[11] Source: http://www.aecom.com/About/Fact+Sheet.

[12] "Bench strength" refers to the capabilities and readiness of potential successors to move into key professional and leadership positions.

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The engagement of AECOM executives builds credibility, and instills prioritization and accountability for the assessment process.

- CheckPoint 360;
- Individual and group coaching; and,
- CheckPoint SkillBuilder Series[13].

CheckPoint 360

AECOM uses Profiles CheckPoint 360, that includes a set of 18 standard competencies that are universal and which capture the fundamental skills for leadership. *(See Figure 1 for a complete listing.)*

AECOM works in partnership with Profiles to implement the 360 tool. A number of steps are involved to make the process a success (see Figure 6).

- Communication from a senior AECOM executive builds credibility and priority of the process.
- Webcasts are conducted by Profiles consultants to educate the leaders and their raters about the process.
- Profiles distributes the online surveys and develops the reports.
- AECOM analyzes the information and integrates data into its talent strategies.

[13] For more information about these tools, http://www.profilesinternational.com/product_catalog.aspx.

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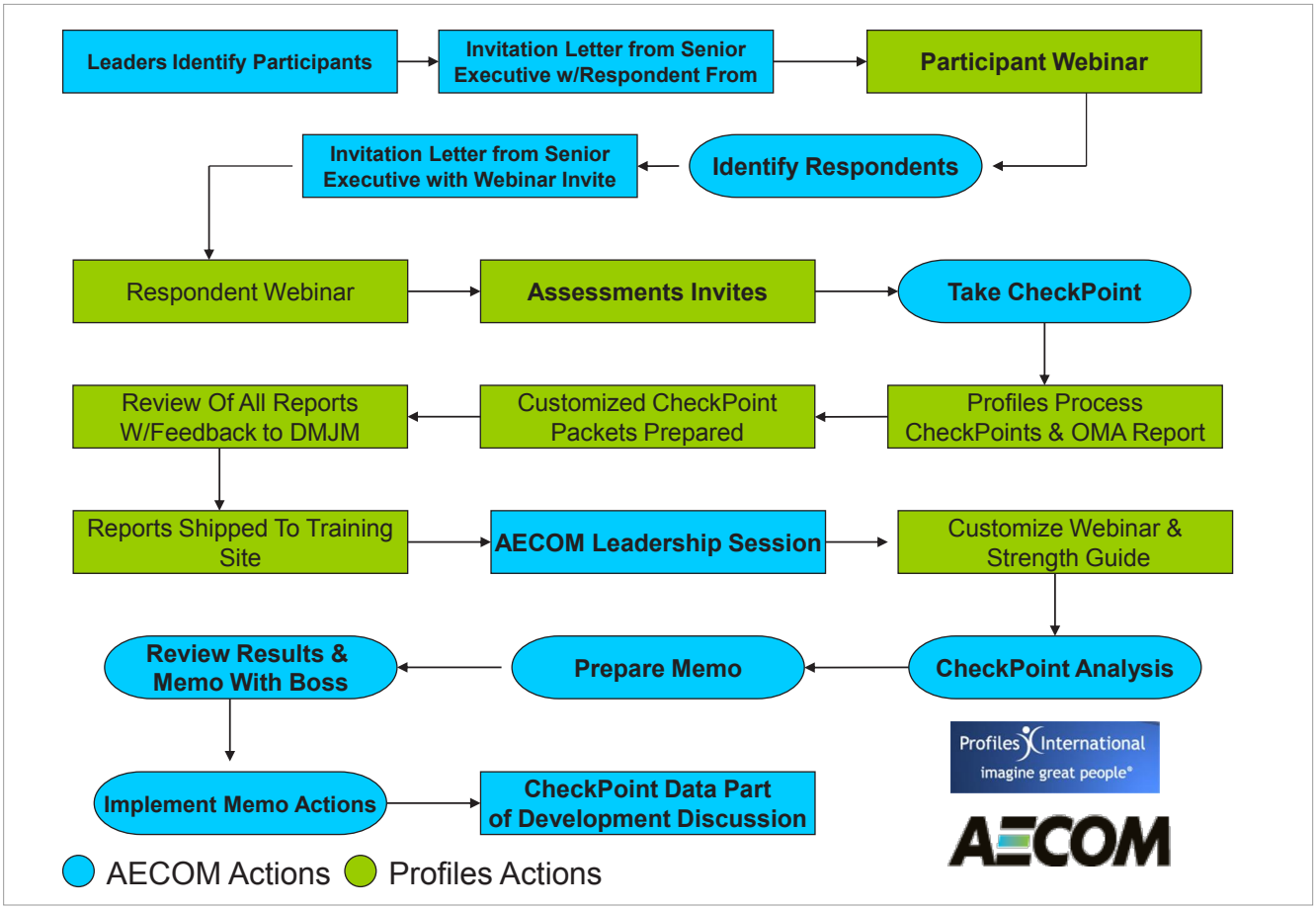
Figure 6: AECOM Leadership Assessment Process



Source: *Profiles International, 2009.*

★ BEST PRACTICE

AECOM trains its managers, and gives them the tools for providing feedback and establishing relevant action plans.

AECOM's training and development group has also built a solid understanding of Profiles and how to utilize the vendor's tools. As a result, the group is able to support the successful application and implementation based on individual leader needs.

Further, the managers of the participating leaders receive coaching about how to conduct an effective leadership development discussion. A custom one-page guide or job-aid (see Figure 7) was also created, which documents the process – and includes recommended discussion topics and tips for providing feedback and creating on-the-job actions that will insure success.

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Figure 7: Manager Job-Aid for CheckPoint 360

Meeting With Your Boss

CHECKPOINT 360° DISCUSSION AGENDA	
Purpose: To discuss the *CheckPoint360°™ Feedback Report* and action memo. To achieve leadership alignment and agree upon appropriate follow-up in support of the implementation of actions within the action memo.	
1. LEADERSHIP ALIGNMENT DISCUSSION	**DISCUSSION TIPS**
a. Identify the leadership skills where there is alignment between the leader and the boss.	*Acknowledge where there is alignment and ask if he or she has any further questions.*
b. Identify any leadership skills identified as critical, but were not selected by the boss.	*Seek to understand why he or she chose the particular Leadership Skills as critical. Do not put the person on the defensive or cross-exam.*
c. Identify any leadership skills identified by the boss as critical, but were not selected by you.	*Explain why you selected those leadership skills as critical.*
d. Gain agreement on which leadership skills are not in alignment and are most critical to the organization's success.	*There is no rule that you cannot have more than six critical leadership skills.* ***Remember – less is more!***
2. LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION	**DISCUSSION TIPS**
a. Discuss the talents identified by you.	*Ask how we can build on those talents.*
b. Discuss the performance gaps identified by you.	*Explain your assessment in any leadership skill labeled as a gap. Ask him or her to assess his or her performance in any leadership skill labeled as a gap. Be prepared to share suggestions so that he or she knows what to do to eliminate the performance gaps and focus areas.*
c. Discuss the focus areas identified by you.	*Share suggestions.*
3. REVIEW REFERENCE GROUP DATA	**DISCUSSION TIPS**
a. Discuss the direct report data.	Identify actionable areas for improvement.
b. Discuss the peer data.	Identify actionable areas for improvement.
4. REVIEW ACTION MEMO	**DISCUSSION TIPS**
Discuss the responses for each of the four questions.	*Be prepared to offer suggestions and to provide feedback. Ask what you might be able to do to support the implementation of the stated actions.*
5. ESTABLISH ACCOUNTABILITIES	**DISCUSSION TIPS**
Set a date and time for the follow-up meeting.	*Remember - be supportive.*

Source: *Profiles International, 2009.*

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Reporting

Completion of the CheckPoint 360 assessment results in a comprehensive individualized report, which is provided to each leader and his / her manager. This report is used as the foundation for a discussion between the leader and an assigned coach *(discussed in more detail in the next section)*.

An Organizational Management Analysis™ (OMA) is also completed. The CheckPoint OMA is a comprehensive tool *(designed specifically for senior executives)* that provides valuable insights into the overall abilities and alignment of the 18 management skills sets. This is a high-level overview of all of the individual leader results (e.g., a group report). The OMA report is about 15 to 20 pages long and has the following four key deliverables.

1. A detailed description of how AECOM leaders were rated individually, as well as collectively.
2. A detailed analysis of alignment between individual leaders and their managers, regarding the critical skills sets important for business success. Of the 18 management skills, the leader and manager are asked to select six that are most critical with the hope that both individuals' selections align. This sparks a necessary conversation between the leader and his / her manager.
3. A composite on favorability against the 18 management skills. This is essentially an organizational skills gap. As an example, for "instilling trust," 60 percent of leaders may be rated above favorable and eight percent may receive a less than favorable rating.
4. A description of what each leader needs in terms of development. This information allows AECOM to prioritize its leadership development initiatives. The report includes recommendations of specific types of training interventions based on the individual gaps identified.

KEY POINT

According to Profiles International, the average person is aligned with his manager between 46 percent to 53 percent of the time *(about three out of six skills).*

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ANALYSIS

A coach is essential to a 360 feedback process for ensuring that the learner correctly interprets and accepts the information received.

Coaching

Coaching is provided by Profiles to help AECOM leaders interpret the report correctly and create a development plan. The company's senior vice president of HR for North America stated,

> *"We find it useful for Profiles to conduct the coaching session. They have the expertise in the assessment instrument and it provides for a trusted environment to gain insight into the leader's development needs."*

A primary purpose of a coach is to ensure that people get the correct message from the 360 assessment. Once the leader understands and accepts the feedback, then the coach works with the leader to create a development plan for achieving higher levels of effectiveness. This action plan should also force some accountability onto the leader.

At AECOM, the coaching relationship continues over the next 30 to 45 days and, in some cases, up to six months. This is based on how much emphasis the organization wants to place on this part of the process. For the first four weeks, it is common for weekly or biweekly phone calls, which help the leader focus on what he / she needs to do to arrive at a plan.

To be successful, the coach needs to have context and ask questions of the leader in the right way. The coach must make the hard statements, and reinforce the purpose and goal. Also, the coach must always remember that the customer is AECOM and not only the leader who he / she is coaching.

CheckPoint SkillBuilder Series™

The CheckPoint SkillBuilder Series works in conjunction with the 360 assessment to help managers improve performance. AECOM takes advantage of this offering, so that its leaders can improve their performance "just in time."

For each of the 18 competencies, there is a SkillBuilder that goes along with it. This is not a course but, rather, tips and tools for improving a skill on the job. Each SkillBuilder is similar to a teaching opportunity and

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KEY POINT

Providing relevant developmental opportunities immediately following feedback increases the likelihood that skills and behaviors will be changed.

lasts about six weeks. For example, if delegation was identified as an area for improvement, a leader can use the SkillBuilder to work through the process. The process may include the following three steps.

- The first activity may be to identify and list some tasks that can be delegated.
- The second activity would be to identify people to whom the tasks can be delegated.
- The third step may involve listing the pros and cons for delegating to each of these people.

The SkillBuilder Series is highly interactive. By the time the leader is done, he / she will actually have things to delegate. The selection of the SkillBuilders is prioritized between the leader, coach and manager. Each SkillBuilder comes with a custom coaching guide that includes tips for every activity and a coaching agenda for up to six critical coaching sessions. Upon completion of each SkillBuilder, a plan is produced that includes lessons learned from all activities and a strategy for ensuring skill changes are sustained.

Summary

Since 2006, AECOM has been using Profiles' CheckPoint 360 and CheckPoint SkillBuilder Series to uncover and develop the skills and capabilities of its leaders. The company began with its senior leadership team, and is now *(with much success)* tapping into these resource tools for specific individual needs and business groups.

> *"The concept is that you start small and then expand slowly when something works. Take best practices that work in various operating units and bring them into the fold of the broader organization. It says a lot more when you have a senior leader from the operational side saying that this is a valuable tool. Creates buy in by the business, which is absolutely critical to get to a win-win."*
>
> *Senior Vice President, HR for North America*
> *AECOM*

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KEY POINT

AECOM leaders who have gone through the 360 process and received coaching have done quite well.

Overall, AECOM leaders who have gone through the 360 process and received coaching have done quite well. Some of those leaders have moved into broader positions, others have been promoted and still others have learned more about themselves through the eyes of the Checkpoint 360. According to AECOM's senior vice president, HR for North America,

> *"Profiles has established an extended relationship with AECOM through its global business model ... Profiles International has become a true and trusted partner."*

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