

May 10, 2013

Dear Cohort Participant:

As an integral element of the APG Senior Leadership Cohort Program you will be going through a **Senior Executive Assessment Center** to be held on **May 29 & 31**. This workshop is designed to provide you with objective, in-depth feedback about your managerial skills. This feedback is designed to help you significantly increase your benefit from this program.

This particular Assessment Center is used as part of an on-going leadership development program at the Office of Personnel Management's Western Management Development Center. We're bringing this Center to APG to provide you with rigorous leadership feedback that you can use to set development goals, explore further through the cohort sessions and discuss with your executive coach. The purpose of this letter is to give you an idea of what to expect and some details about the training itself.

The first day (Wednesday, May 29th), you'll be asked to go through a series of situations presenting you with opportunities to use your administrative, communications, and interpersonal skills. Sometimes you will work by yourself and sometimes in a group. Although the situations are in somewhat different settings from your specific job, many of the problems you face will be similar.

Objective, trained assessors will observe how you handle these situations and will give you individual feedback about their observations on Friday. All of their feedback will be based on a variety of observations and will represent a consensus of their evaluations. Most participants in these workshops find the assessment to be challenging but worthwhile. There is no special preparation needed. Everything you need for the assessment center will be provided to you.

Our first gathering will be **Wednesday morning (May 29) at 0730 sharp** in the C4ISR Multipurpose Room. The room will be available as of 0700 so please arrive early to be prepared to start promptly – everyone must start at the same time and it will be a long day, ending by 2000. Please plan your schedules accordingly. Thursday we'll meet at our regular times 0800 – 1630 and Friday from 0800 – Noon also in the C4ISR Multipurpose room.

We're looking forward to meeting and working with you. If you have any questions, please call Claire at 443/838-1483 or email Clairemeany@aol.com

Best wishes,

Claire Meany

The Assessment Center Method

The assessment center method is a way to see and evaluate individuals' effectiveness by observing them in action. In an assessment center, participants work through simulations--realistic, job-related tasks. Specially trained assessors observe the people at work, then meet in consensus sessions to evaluate the participants' effectiveness through a structured consensus process. Assessors give detailed feedback to participants on a one-to-one basis, including: demonstrated strengths, areas in which less effectiveness was demonstrated, and ideas for how to improve effectiveness.

The strength of the assessment center method lies in its disciplined structure that promotes objectivity, validity and reliability. According to the International Congress on the Assessment Center Method, for an evaluation process to qualify as an assessment center it:

- ***Is competency-based***--The assessment center evaluates individuals' demonstrated ability in previously identified and carefully defined job-related competencies.
- ***Is behavior-oriented***--In the assessment center, people work through job-like simulations and their effectiveness is evaluated based on actual behavior, observed in a controlled environment. This approach provides a more accurate evaluation than the most common alternatives: self-insight instruments in which the evaluation is based on self-reports of what people generally do, or 360-degree instruments in which the evaluation is based on others' impressions about what people generally do.
- ***Uses trained assessors***--Assessment center evaluations are developed by people who are specially trained in skills of: Observation, documentation, classification, consensus, and feedback. The use of trained assessors ensures the consistency and quality of evaluations.
- ***Uses a consensus (collective) evaluation process***--All evaluations in the assessment center are developed by consensus of a team of assessors or by some other pooling method. In this way, individual biases among assessors are neutralized and an objective evaluation is assured.

Assessment centers are used by many *Fortune 500* companies as part of the process to select people into management or executive jobs. It is also used in a number of federal agencies for both selection and development purposes, especially at the SES level.