



Newsletter

A monthly publication of the Personnel Testing Council of Metropolitan Washington
Volume XXV Number 6
June 2001

June PTC/MW Luncheon

- Date:** Wednesday, June 13, 2001
- Time:** 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Lunch is served at noon and is included in the registration fee.
- Place:** **Pier 7 Restaurant.** 650 Water Street, SW, Washington, DC (approximately one block south of the intersection of Maine Avenue and 7th Street SW).
- Price:** \$17 members, \$20 non-members. Free parking up to 3 hours.
- Menu:** Medallions of New York Sirloin, Breast of Chicken Tarragon, Chef Salad, Broiled Filet of Sole and Scallops, Seafood Newburg with Rice, Vegetable Plate, or Fruit Plate.
- Reservations:** Please sign up via our website, www.ptcmw.org. If you do not have internet access, you can contact the receptionist at Caliber Associates, Tel: (703) 385-3200, Fax: (703) 385-3206. Please include the following information in your message: name, membership status, menu selection, e-mail address, and telephone number. **The deadline for luncheon reservations is 2:00 p.m., Monday, June 10th.** Cancel by 2:00 p.m. Tuesday to avoid having to pay for the meal. Members are welcome to come for the program only without having lunch. (The program begins at approximately 12:30 p.m.)
- Topic:** **Measuring Customer Service Skills**
- Speakers:** **Seymour Adler, Ph.D.,** *Assessment Solutions Incorporated*

From the customer's perspective, representatives are the organization. Customer satisfaction is critical to the success of every organization—whether in the private or public sectors. Proper tools and techniques for selection, performance measurement and training are essential to improving the customer care function. This session will describe some state-of-the-art tools to select, evaluate and train customer contact representatives.

Dr. Adler is a Principal and Senior Vice President at Assessment Solutions Incorporated, recently acquired by Aon Consulting. In addition to having served as a consultant to industry throughout his professional career, Dr. Adler has been on the faculties of the City University of New York, Purdue University, Stevens Institute of Technology and currently, New York University. Over the past 20 years, he has developed and validated numerous simulation, assessment and development programs, with particular emphasis on customer service, sales and management positions in financial services, telecommunications, retail and high-technology organizations. Dr. Adler is a Fellow of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

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President's Message

Ann Quigley
United States Postal Service

It's not that Christianity doesn't work; it's just that it's really never been tried.

George Bernard Shaw

Finally, unjust treatment is an important cause of CWB (counterproductive work behaviors). Interpersonal treatment and reward systems that are seen as capricious and unfair can lead to extreme emotional reactions.

Paul Spector¹

An increasingly popular technique for evaluating employees is prompting lawsuits at three big companies.

New York Times²

I don't remember what she did when she was here, but I sure was glad when she left.

Past Employer "Reference" for Military Applicant

What do the foregoing quotations have in common? For one, they all apply to how we do/don't/purport to/should appraise or otherwise measure employee performance. Like the cobbler's children who have no shoes, developers/purveyors/advocators of measuring employee performance often do not experience bona fide performance appraisal themselves as either givers or receivers of constructive performance feedback.

A quick search of the PsychInfo database for "performance appraisal" turns up over 2,000 citations. So we talk about it, we write about it, we (some of us) earn a living telling others about What It Is And How to Do It. Yet organizations all over the country continue to struggle to achieve success – or perhaps avoid altogether – appraising employee performance.

At issue in the New York Times article is the use of forced distribution of performance ratings whereby managers are forced to rate some employees on the low side – even though those individuals may in fact be good performers outperforming others in the organization who receive higher ratings than they do. This is the "solution" to the problem of managers who in Lake Wobegon tradition

consider everyone they supervise to be "above average" (or even superior). Irrespective of whether that is a delusion, denial, or the inability or unwillingness to manage inadequate or unacceptable performance, it is equally pernicious.

I once reluctantly removed a performance appraisal component from a firefighter promotional process because there was *no variance* in the ratings ("ma'am – we have to be perfect; we save lives!"). I was evidently not sufficiently facile in my explanation of how that would increase the weight of each exam item (which is exactly what they did **not** want...).

So – we select managers and supervisors who are unwilling or unable to appraise performance effectively (or who have managers who do not support them in doing so.)

So – then we are tasked with revising the performance appraisal process because no one likes/uses/supports it. (Somewhat like tweaking a well-developed cognitive ability test as a way of "dealing with" adverse impact.) Time passes, and then we replace *that* system. On and on this Sisyphean cycle continues, with the reward systems resulting in disaffection, bitterness, counterproductive acting out, or the literal or figurative loss of high potential employees who just need some encouragement. Then there's the attrition of high performing employees who cannot be recognized as such because of the mechanics/politics of the system.

How would you like your merit increase – or even retention of your job – to be based on the "lifeboat discussions" alleged in the Microsoft lawsuit? (Managers rank order employees based on their preferences for whom they would like to be with in a lifeboat...)

Perhaps the challenge then, is not in refining our technical skills to build better performance appraisal instruments (though that is a worthy endeavor). Perhaps the real challenge is in influencing our organizations and clients so that we don't waste time, energy, and money continually fixing things that are not broken. Instead, we could focus on selecting managers and supervisors who will be accountable for providing employees with fair, honest, and timely feedback about how they are doing on the job and – gosh – maybe even tell them what they need to do to improve. And maybe, just maybe, we could encourage the disciplining or even termination of those managers and supervisors who are unwilling or unable to perform that basic management task.

PTC

PTC Executive Board Meeting

The Executive Board holds regular meetings throughout the calendar year. Contact PTC/MW President Ann Quigley via telephone at (202) 268-3952 or e-mail at aquigley@email.usps.gov for the date and location of the next meeting.

¹ Spector, P. (May/June 2001). Counterproductive work behavior: The secret side of organizational life. Psychological Science Agenda, pp. 8-9.

² Abelson, R. (2001, March 19). Companies turn to grades and employees go to court. The New York Times, pp. A1, A12.

APRIL LUNCHEON SUMMARY

General Equivalency Diploma (GED) and Military Attrition: Factors Underlying Their Relationship

Ray Morath

Caliber Associates

This presentation was based on research sponsored by the American Council on Education. It began with a discussion about the recruiting challenges currently faced by today's military services. Ray then discussed recent statistics showing that GED holders are a large and growing candidate pool from which the military services and private sector alike may be able to draw. He reviewed the more stringent selection requirements for GED holders relative to traditional high school graduates. For example, GED holders' scores on Armed Forces Qualification Test scores (combined math and verbal sections of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) can't fall in below the 30th percentile for military eligibility.

The presentation reviewed studies that examined the attrition rates of GED holders and traditional high school graduates (HSGs). These studies have found first-term attrition rates of approximately 45-50% for GED holders and 25-30% for HSGs. This finding of a substantially higher attrition rate for GED holders remains even after controlling for numerous potential confounding variables (e.g., aptitude, race, gender, socio-economic status, age, job, branch of service). Research has repeatedly shown that the attrition rates of the high aptitude GED holders are still greater than low aptitude HSGs.

To provide the context for better understanding the factors underlying GED holder attrition from the military, Ray reviewed both the reasons behind military attrition and the reasons why GED holders drop out of high school. He discussed study findings indicating that non-cognitive factors play a large role in military attrition. These non-cognitive factors often fell into categories related to: (a) personality/temperament, (b) moral character/delinquency, and/or (c) social skills/organizational identification. His review of studies investigating the reasons why GED holders leave high school suggest that students typically leave high school for reasons related to: (a) personality/temperament, (b) moral character/delinquency, (c) disengagement/social isolation, (d) family/monetary problems, and (e) academic capability/aptitude.

The results of his reviews of military and high school attrition indicate that non-cognitive characteristics and attributes play large roles for both types of attrition. GED

holders appear to differ from HSGs on these attributes. For example, Brady, Busciglio, White, and Young (1991)³ found that those students who left high school differed significantly from HSGs in terms of personal discipline. GED holders were found to have Article 15 and Flag Action rates⁴ that were two times greater than HSGs.

The presentation highlighted the fact that 50-60% of GED holders do not leave the military before their first tour is completed. These GED holders likely differ in moral character, motivation, and other background characteristics in as yet undetermined ways from those that leave prematurely. For example, Elster and Flyer (1982)⁵ found that for the cohort of military personnel serving a minimum of 4 years, a greater percentage of GED holders than HSGs remained on active duty beyond 4 years. This finding suggests two sub-groups of GED holders may exist; the key is to be able to identify those who persevere from those who do not.

The presentation concluded by providing recommendations of ways to address the GED-military attrition problem. The recommendations involve: research to better identify attributes of GED holders more likely to complete their military enlistment terms; systematic collection of background information and assessment of non-cognitive attributes of GED holders to identify at-risk sub-groups; provision of intensive organizational skills/work-place skills training to these at-risk groups to promote adjustment and adaptation to military and private sector jobs; and provision of career counseling linked with non-cognitive data from O*NET.

PTC

Visit PTC On-line

Visit us at <http://www.ptcmw.org>

Find out about recent legal and other I/O developments

Check the calendar for upcoming professional events

Learn about PTC

Find out how to become a PTC member

³ Brady, E.J., Busciglio, H.H., White, L.A., & Young, M.C. (1991). The relationship of educational credentials to enlisted job performance. Paper presented at the meeting of the Military Testing Association.

⁴ These terms relate to non-judicial punishments that Commanders can levy due to certain infractions of military or civilian indiscipline. The terminology varies by service (e.g., Army's "Article 15s" are the Navy's "Flag Actions").

⁵ Elster, R.S., & Flyer, E. (1982). A study of relationships between educational credentials and military performance. Monterey, CA: Department of the Navy, Naval Postgraduate School.

Seventh Circuit Rules Favorably Regarding Use of Banding

David W. Arnold, Esq.

Reid London House

On May 3, 2001, the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals held that treating employment examination scores within a certain range as identical does not violate Section 106 of the Civil Rights Act of 1991. See *Chicago Firefighters Local 2, et al. v. City of Chicago, et al.* Nos. 00-1272, 00-1312, 00-1313, 00-1314 and 00-1330.

According to the Civil Rights Act of 1991 (CRA), it is an unlawful employment practice to adjust the scores of, use different cutoff scores for, or otherwise alter the results of employment-related tests on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. In the above referenced case, a white firefighter alleged that the City of Chicago's use of banding constituted a violation of this provision of the CRA.

While the 7th Circuit panel acknowledged that the use of banding has been upheld as an acceptable professional practice in a variety of cases (e.g., *Boston Police Superior Officers Federation v. City of Boston*, 147 F.3d 13, 24 [1st Cir. 1998], *Officers for Justice v. Civil Service Commission*, 979 F.2d 721 [9th Cir. 1992]), the court emphasized that whether banding constitutes unlawful race norming is one of first impression.

The opinion's initial comment regarding the issue indicated that the court had "...no doubt that if banding were adopted in order to make lower black scores seem higher, it would indeed be a form of race norming, and therefore be forbidden." However, the court stated that banding is not race norming per se. In its opinion, the court recognized that banding is a universal and normally unquestioned means of simplifying scores by eliminating meaningless gradations. "Any school that switches from number grades to letter grades is engaged in banding." In fact, the court opined that even number grading systems are commonly banded. For instance, if an examination contained 200 items, an individual answering 199 items correctly might commonly receive a score of 99%—the individual has been placed in a band. In essence, the court recognized that making distinctions in examination scores can sometimes "...be misleading rather than illuminating."

While the 7th Circuit held that in this particular case the City of Chicago's use of test score banding did not constitute unlawful race norming, it is important to note that banding is not lawful per se. Arguably, the practice is best legitimized from the perspective that it aids in the interpretation of test data and is appropriate from a scientific (e.g., measurement error) and/or common sense perspective.

PTC

Update on Revision of SIOP Principles

Lance Seberhagen

Seberhagen & Associates

Last year, SIOP President Nancy Tippins (TIP, 7/00) appointed Dick Jeanneret, Jeanneret & Associates, Houston, TX, to lead a task force to revise the *Principles for the Validation and Use of Personnel Selection Procedures* (SIOP, 1987) to reflect the revised *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, NCME, 1999) and other recent developments in the field. SIOP did not provide an official progress report on the revision of the *Principles* at the April 2001 SIOP conference in San Diego, but Dick Jeanneret gave me an unofficial progress report.

During the past year, the Task Force has been quietly writing the first draft of the revised *Principles*. This draft is expected to be a major re-write of the current *Principles*, following the general structure of the *Standards* and providing about 80% new content. The Task Force will meet in July 2001 to complete work on the first draft. After a review of the first draft by the SIOP Executive Committee, the Task Force hopes to issue the first draft for public review and comment sometime next fall.

PTC

MEMBER NEWS

John Campbell, University of Minnesota, and Deirdre Knapp, HumRRO, edited a new book *Exploring the Limits of Personnel Selection and Classification* (Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001). Chapter authors include PTC/MW members Jane Arabian, Bruce Barge, Anthony Bayless, Leaetta Hough, Deirdre Knapp, Rod McCloy, Scott Oppler, Norm Peterson, Elaine Pulakos, Douglas Reynolds, Teresa Russell, Hilda Wing, Laress Wise, and Mark Young.

NCS Pearson recently acquired Reid Psychological Systems, which was then combined with NCS London House. The combined organization is called Reid London House (www.reidlondonhouse.com). This affects two PTC members: Dr. David Arnold of Reid Psychological Systems and Dr. John (Jack) Jones of NCS London House. The new organization will be located in downtown Chicago, Illinois.

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Welcome New Members!

Regular Members

Keith Cousins, The Pittman McLenagan Group, L.C.
Jennifer Mielnik, The Pittman McLenagan Group, L.C.
Valarie Sheppard, Human Performance Systems, Inc.

PROFESSIONAL CALENDAR

by Lance W. Seberhagen, Seberhagen & Associates, sebe@erols.com

- Jun 9-14 IPMA Assessment Council. Annual Conference. Newport Beach, CA. Contact: IPMA, (703) 549-7100.
- JUN 13** **PTC/MW. LUNCHEON MEETING. Dr. Seymour Adler, Assessment Solutions Inc, Washington, DC. "Measuring Customer Service Skills" Pier 7 Restaurant, Washington, DC. Contact: Ms. Sara Mallory, Caliber Associates, Tel. (703) 385-3200, or ptcmw.org.**
- Jun 14-15 SEAK, Inc. Expert Witness and Litigation Seminar. Cape Cod, MA. Contact: SEAK, (508) 457-1111 or seak.com.
- Jun 14-17 American Psychological Society. Annual Conference. Toronto, Canada. Contact: APS, (202) 783-2077.
- Jun 14-17 University of Hawaii. 2001 Hawaii Conference on Business. Honolulu, HI. Contact: David Yang, UH, (808) 956-3762 or hcb.hawaii.edu.
- Jun 19 James Madison University. Leadership Seminar. Tom Peters, author of *In Search of Excellence*. "From Excellence to WOW: Reinventing the Rules for the Brand New Workplace." Arlington, VA. Contact: Lessons in Leadership, (800) 689-9771 or lessonsinleadership.com.
- Jun 24-27 Society for Human Resource Management. Annual Conference. San Francisco, CA. Contact: SHRM, (703) 548-3440.
- Jun 25-27 Center for the Study of Work Teams. Conference. "Project Teams: Collective Genius for Performance Excellence." Austin, TX. Contact: CSWT, (940) 565-3096.
- JUL 11** **PTC/MW. LUNCHEON MEETING. Speaker to be announced. Pier 7 Restaurant, Washington, DC. Contact: Ms. Sara Mallory, Caliber Associates, Tel. (703) 385-3200, or ptcmw.org.**
- Aug 5-8 Academy of Management. Annual Meeting. Washington, DC. Contact: AOM, (914) 923-2607.
- Aug 5-9 American Statistical Association. Annual Convention. Atlanta, GA. Contact: ASA, (703) 684-1221.
- Aug 5-10 International Conference on Engineering Psychology and Cognitive Ergonomics. New Orleans, LA. Contact: Gavriel Salvendy, Purdue University, (765) 494-5426.
- Aug 24-28 American Psychological Association. Annual Convention. San Francisco, CA. Contact: APA, (202) 336-6020 or apa.org.
- Aug 27-29 Institute for Professional Education. Seminar. "Analysis and Modeling of Binary and Ordinal Response Data." Washington, DC. Contact: IPE, (703) 527-8700 or info@ipeseminars.org.
- Sep 10-12 Center for the Study of Work Teams. Annual Conference. "Work Teams." Dallas, TX. Contact: CSWT, (940) 565-3096.
- Sep 17-19 Institute for Professional Education. Seminar. "Applied Multivariate Methods Using Popular Statistical Computing Packages." Washington, DC. Contact: IPE, (703) 527-8700 or info@ipeseminars.org.
- Sep 30-Oct 2 Development Dimensions International. International Congress on Assessment Center Methods. Frankfurt, Germany. Contact: Cathy Nelson, DDI, (412) 257-3952 or ddiworld.com.

Future SIOP: Toronto, 2002; Orlando, 2003; Chicago, 2004; Los Angeles, 2005.

Job Announcements

Personnel Research Psychologist. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) expects to have an opening for a Psychologist in the near future. At the time of the deadline for the June PTCMW newsletter, the approval process for this position had not been completed. This would be a GS-14 (Series 180) position with Research and Analytic Services in the Office of General Counsel. For applicants with extensive background and experience, there may be promotion potential to GS-15. Major duties include: the analysis and evaluation of technical data and studies on the validity of

tests and other employment standards used by employers who are the subject of an EEOC investigation or lawsuit. Applicants should have completed the requirements for a doctoral degree in psychology, or three years of appropriate professional experience or an acceptable combination of education and experience. Those interested in applying should check the EEOC website at www.eeoc.gov and click on Jobs at EEOC to search via USA Jobs. For additional information contact Jack Kearns, Chief Psychologist, Office of General Counsel, EEOC, 1801 L Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20507; (202) 663-4754.

PTC

PERSONNEL TESTING COUNCIL OF METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON

4608 Willard Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

<http://www.ptcmw.org>

PTC/MW Elected Officers, 2001

Office	Name	Affiliation	Work Phone	E-Mail
President	Ann Quigley, M.A.	U.S. Postal Service	(202) 268-3952	aquigley@email.usps.gov
Past President	Shane Pittman, Ph.D.	Pittman McLenagan Group	(301) 320-9500	shanep@pittmanlc.com
President-Elect	Suzanne Tsacoumis, Ph.D.	HumRRO	(703) 706-5660	stsacoumis@humrro.org
Vice President	Chris Sager, Ph.D.	HumRRO	(703) 706-5671	csager@humrro.org
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Treasurer	Tina Strickland, M.A.	OPM	(202) 606-1428	tsstrick@opm.gov
Recorder	Elaine Engle, Ph.D.	Marriott International	(301) 380-8838	elaine.engle@marriott.com

PTC/MW Committee Chairs, 2001

Committee	Name	Affiliation	Work Phone	E-Mail
Nom/Elections	Shane Pittman, Ph.D.	Pittman McLenagan Group	(301) 320-9500	shanep@pittmanlc.com
Membership	Anthony Bayless, Ph.D.	Dept of Justice, INS	(202) 616-3564	anthony.bayless@usdoj.gov
Legal	Lance Seberhagen, Ph.D.	Seberhagen & Associates	(703) 790-0796	sebe@erols.com
Newsletter	Lia Meyer, M.A.	Pittman McLenagan Group	(301) 320-9500	liam@pittmanlc.com
Website	Lance Anderson, Ph.D.	Caliber Associates	(703) 219-4448	anderson@calib.com
Training	Daniel P. Russell, M.S.	Aon Consulting	(703) 208-6803	daniel_p_russell@aoncons.com
Calendar	Lance Seberhagen, Ph.D.	Seberhagen & Associates	(703) 790-0796	sebe@erols.com

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PTC/MW
Rob Michel
GEICO Direct
4608 Willard Avenue
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

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