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Assessment Centres and Global Talent Management

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Three Themes that Explain Our Passion for Assessment Centres as Tools for Talent Management

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The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the reader to a unique book aimed at those with a keen interest in assessment centres (ACs). It is unique for a number of distinct reasons.

Firstly, unlike most books on ACs which aim to cover every conceivable aspect of AC design and practice in equal measure, we have chosen to focus on three major themes which are becoming increasingly important in how ACs are deployed in the modern world, namely corporate strategy and talent management, cross-cultural implications of international human resources (HR) practices, and the interplay of science and practice. In this respect we have assumed that the reader already has a good grasp of the basic principles of AC practice and is interested in some of the critical factors that impact on how ACs are implemented within a global organizational context. Readers who are less familiar with the basics of theory, research, and practice related to the AC method may wish to refer to books by Ballantyne and Povah (2004), Thornton and Rupp (2006) and Schlebusch and Roodt (2008).

Secondly, it moves beyond the traditional treatment of published material on ACs, which is either the production of highly technical material for the academic researcher or a sterile, highly practical 'how to' guide for the practitioner. This book aims to plug a gap in the literature by creating a unique blend between these two different approaches. This is exemplified in the theme of the book showing the reciprocal interplay between scientific research and practical implementation. Another source that explores theory, research, and practice in alternative approaches of the AC method is Jackson, Lance, and Hoffman (in press).

Thirdly, and perhaps most important of all, this book is able to boast a significant number of the world's leading authorities on ACs amongst its contributors, either in their capacity as highly-regarded academics and/or highly experienced practitioners. In addition to this extensive level of knowledge and experience (collectively around 1,000

years) they bring a truly global appreciation of AC practice, as our 48 contributors come from 18 different countries spanning all continents.

Finally, we selected contributors on the basis of their reputations and expertise or experience with regard to a number of key AC-related issues. These included things such as:

- different approaches to centre design and implementation;
- exercise simulation design;
- diversity challenges;
- candidate motivation;
- the use of ACs to support different Talent Management strategies;
- establishing AC practice in different countries with varying levels of maturity in the world of assessment.

However, all of our contributors had one thing in common: their undeniable passion and enthusiasm for their work in the AC field, which we hope will be passed on to you!

The Three Themes and Why We Chose Them

We have chosen to focus on three major themes for this book and we now explain what they are and our rationale for choosing them.

THE INTERPLAY OF SCIENCE AND PRACTICE

This theme tackles the productive interplay of science and practice and how it helps to create top quality assessment centres and it is therefore featured throughout the whole book. Authors were asked to describe their own research and its implications or how they have used the research of others to design and implement specific assessment and development centres. In addition, researchers and practitioners alike propose research that is needed to provide guidance for new applications of the assessment centre method, especially how assessment and development centres contribute to corporate strategy and talent management. This theme perpetuates the long history of basic and applied research into the assessment centre method. Specific questions that contributors were asked to address included:

- What theories of psychology, management, leadership, organizational development, learning, and so forth, guided your development and implementation of the AC?
- What prior research studies or theories gave you guidance in designing the essential features of the AC?
 - Dimensions;
 - exercises;
 - observation and evaluation procedures;
 - method of integrating the observations;
 - feedback to assessees;
 - integration of the behavioural observations with other assessment information.

- What challenges did you face that have not been addressed in prior research? What future research would you like to see conducted to provide guidance for issues you faced?

The theme also exemplifies a more recent and broader emphasis on evidence-based management (Pfeffer and Sutton 2006). Practitioners will see how science informs good practice; scholars will find the chapters a rich source of ideas for conducting research into emerging issues in the field.

CORPORATE STRATEGY AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

This theme describes the use of assessment and development centres which are linked to corporate strategy and in particular talent management. These corporate strategies will often relate to issues or topics such as:

- globalization;
- innovation (products and markets);
- increased competition (for market share, the 'war for talent' and so forth);
- identifying leaders who are visionary, inspirational and/or entrepreneurial;
- customer service (greater focus on service or knowledge-based economies) and so forth.

The book focuses on how these strategies influence the design of the assessment centre in terms of the competencies, exercises and nature of the event, so that they can deliver what is required. Some of the questions that the contributors were asked to address included:

- What was the impetus for your development of the AC?
- What organizational problems were you trying to address?
- What opportunities were you trying to capitalize on?
- What business challenge(s) was the AC designed to meet?
- What top level executives or boards were involved in deciding to use the AC and shape its direction and scope?
- How did you get their support for this admittedly complex and costly human resource practice?
- What other HR practices was your AC linked with?
- How does your AC impact other HR interventions?
- What follow-up HR activities were needed for your AC to be successful?

Typical applications involve the use of assessment and development centres to screen external applicants, promote internal managers, diagnose developmental needs, or develop behavioural skills, often with the intention of changing organizational culture and values. It becomes clear as we read these accounts, that no matter what the ostensible reason for the AC, the intervention often results in a broader 'OD' (organization development) process. Practical examples/case studies are sprinkled throughout the book.

CROSS-CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL AC PRACTICE

The third theme explores cross-cultural implications for the design of assessment centres and development centres. We are fortunate to have an impressive cross-section of international contributors from around the world who have described the special issues faced when designing an assessment or development centre in non-traditional cultures, moving an AC from one country to another, or assessing persons from different countries in the same assessment programme. Some of these issues relate to questions such as:

- How did the specific characteristics of the culture/country influence the ways you designed and implemented the essential features of the AC in relation to the:
 - dimensions;
 - exercises;
 - observation and evaluation procedures;
 - method of integrating the observations;
 - feedback to assessees;
 - integration of the behavioural observations with other assessment information.
- If your AC was carried out in two different cultural settings, how did you deal with any cross cultural considerations? In particular:
 - Did you produce materials (such as exercises) in different languages and how did you ensure linguistic and conceptual equivalence?
 - What training did you provide assessors to make reliable and valid observations and evaluations when faced with cultural differences?
- What special challenges did you face in your cultural setting to demonstrate the effectiveness of this AC in different countries?

A Brief Word About Language and Nomenclature

With an international set of contributors we needed to make some arbitrary decisions about the language and terminology that would be adopted. In order to cater to a global readership we decided that each chapter would be written in either UK or US English, depending on the author's preference, so you will find both centre and center and other words with different UK and US spellings used throughout the book.

Also the assessment centre (center) and its various derivatives are often referred to in a variety of different ways, so we have adopted a set of standard abbreviations throughout the book to refer to the different types of programmes, generally with their different primary purposes (see Table 1.1). However, we hasten to point out that the actual purpose does not always match the ostensible purpose.

Table 1.1 Overview of the different types of Assessment Centres

Type of Assessment Centre	Abbreviation	Typical purpose
Assessment Centre (er)	AC	Selection or promotion
Development Centre (er)	DC	Development; either during or after the centre
Developmental Assessment Center (re)	DAC	Development; either during or after the centre
Assessment Development Centre (er)	ADC	Unspecified so needs to be defined in each case

Otherwise we have left the contributor to explain their own choice of terminology as appropriate.

Structural Outline

The book is divided into three parts, with each part principally focusing on one of the three themes described above. Each part contains 10 or more chapters covering a wide range of issues relating to that particular theme. However, it should be noted that the content of many of the chapters naturally relates to more than one of the themes.

We would also like to point out that this is not the type of book that you need to read from cover to cover. You should feel free to dip in and out of the different chapters, depending on your interest. Each chapter can be read independently of the others, although we have asked our contributors to highlight relevant links with other chapters.

We briefly describe each part below and highlight some of the issues covered within each chapter.

PART I: AC BEST PRACTICE

This part addresses specific technical matters and best practice principles, as well as highlighting some of the most interesting recent research, such as the debate around the relative merits of a dimensions-based approach versus a task-based approach. Although the interplay between science and practice is a recurring theme throughout the book, it is clearly most evident in Part I.

Chapter 2 by an international team of Guenole, Chernyshenko, Stark, Cockerill, and Drasgow provides evidence that ratings in an AC demonstrate construct validity to measure intended dimensions. The authors describe a large international assessment programme which provided extensive assessor training and certified assessor competence to assess distinct competencies. Using unique analytic procedures, the results reveal that dimension ratings show considerable evidence of convergent and discriminant validity of post-exercise dimension ratings. The reasons why these results differ from the results of previous studies finding a lack of this form of construct validity are described in the chapter.

In Chapter 3, Jackson, Ahmad, Grace, and Yoon describe task-based assessment centres (TBACs), which adopt a different approach to research and practice of the AC

method by focusing on task lists and roles within exercises, rather than dimensions across exercises. Although TBACs are designed in much the same way as traditional dimension-based assessment centres (DBACs), the authors argue that performance on the tasks is as important (if not more so) than performance on the dimensions. The authors' claims are supported by a case study describing a TBAC employed within a New Zealand-based organization and some further examples of similar practices employed in South Korea.

In Chapter 4, Lievens and Schollaert show how the concepts of Trait Activation Theory (TAT) can guide the development of assessment simulations and the actions of role players to ensure that participants display behaviours relevant to specified assessment dimensions. The theory of TAT explains that behaviours relevant to traits (that is, dimensions in the case of ACs) will be displayed if the situation (that is, exercises in the case of ACs) provides cues to elicit such behaviour. Situations can be made relatively 'strong' or 'weak' and thus provide different insights into individual differences in performance on dimensions. Practical examples are given, along with results of research studies showing the effects of different AC designs.

In Chapter 5, Prichard and Riley discuss the pros and cons of using off-the-shelf versus customized exercise simulations and highlight a range of factors that should be considered when deciding between the two options. Central to the decision is the concept of fidelity and the legitimacy of this approach is discussed and brought into question. In short they question the usual stance that customized exercise simulations are always best and reveal that the decision isn't quite as straightforward as had previously been thought. Thirteen questions provide the framework for considering when these two options are appropriate.

Chapter 6 by Meiring and van der Westhuizen provides insight into the long history of the applications of the AC method in South Africa and the recent challenges of human resource management in a diverse population. They show how computer-based technology can be used as a part of an AC programme to identify and develop individuals for a newly created role of service advisor in a financial institution. The chapter gives details on the process of working with IT colleagues to develop methods of presenting exercise materials, recording responses, scoring performance, integrating objective and behavioural judgements, and preparing reports. Other chapters that provide information on the history and culture of South Africa and how ACs have been implemented there include Chapters 13 by Buckett and 23 by Krause.

Chapter 7 by Dewberry discusses the relative merits of consensus meetings as opposed to pure arithmetic scoring, as a means of determining participant performance in an AC. It raises some interesting issues around the informal, latent processes that can occur within a consensus meeting which can have unforeseen impacts on the outcome, despite the use of a formal methodology within the meeting. It goes on to suggest ways of mitigating these effects and debates the relative merits of the two different approaches.

In Chapter 8, Fletcher covers the impact that an AC or DC can have on a candidate's motivation, well-being and self-awareness. It examines how attending an AC or DC can impact the candidate's emotional state (for example anxiety) during the event and how it can affect his/her performance. It also reviews the longer term effects on candidates of having been through an AC and how this can impact their psychological well-being, motivation and self perceptions.

Chapter 9 by Woodruffe raises the question as to whether ACs do enough to ensure they are sufficiently diversity-friendly. It looks at how ACs compare with other assessment

methods in terms of addressing typical diversity concerns and reviews how certain aspects of diversity are unique to ACs, such as the diversity awareness of assessors, given the critical nature of their role in determining final AC outcomes. This is one particular topic where the often stated need for more focused research is strongly justified.

Hoffman and Baldwin, in Chapter 10, provide an integration of research and practice on assessment centres and multi-source performance rating (MSPR) systems. Similarities and differences in the two interventions are described. The strengths in the approaches and research findings of both ACs and MSPRs are highlighted. Lessons from MSPRs that can improve AC methodology are noted.

Chapter 11 by Thornton traces the 50-year history of reciprocal influences of theory, research, and practice of ACs and DCs. It shows how practice has been influenced by laboratory and field research in measurement, social cognition, judgement, and learning in four time-periods. In return, researchers have been stimulated by practices in job analysis, exercise development, ratings, and feedback, and issues of fairness and efficiency in ACs operations. Questions about the construct validity of AC ratings have stimulated an exchange of research studies and practice innovations in an attempt to improve the accuracy of diagnosis of performance on distinct dimensions of performance. A call for research on current challenges is intended to perpetuate this healthy interface of evidence-based human resource management.

PART II: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

This part focuses on how ACs and DCs are used to further Corporate Strategy and to foster Talent Management in modern organizations. This part is sub-divided into two sections. One set of chapters describes the more traditional applications of ACs for selection and promotion. Here administrative consistency in implementation is essential and predictive accuracy is paramount. The second section includes chapters about DCs used for diagnosis, developmental planning, and development per se. In these instances differential diagnosis is essential and learning/training principles are paramount.

Many chapters deal with issues relevant to both selection/promotion and development. The placement in one or the other section may not represent the full contribution of the chapter. The reader will quickly realize that chapters in the first section often deal with issues related to development, and chapters in the second section often deal with issues of selection and promotion.

Chapter 12 by Birri and Melcher shows how the AC method has played a major role in the broader human capital management in Credit Suisse for over 30 years. ACs have been used in a variety of ways for individual contributor and managerial levels. While these ACs have involved different participants, assessors, assessment methods, feedback processes, and so forth, the common theme is that they all contribute unique information to talent management. For example, the dimensions dovetail with competencies tied to corporate strategy; middle managers who themselves have been assessed serve as assessors in subsequent years; new metrics are used to determine the contribution of ACs to human capital management. These and other discussions provide lessons on how to sustain ACs in organizations over time.

Chapter 13 by Buckett describes a very large-scale AC in South Africa designed to provide a skills audit of candidates seeking positions in a large government organization. The chapter shows how the designers incorporated a number of AC design features

intended to improve the accuracy of assessments in the context of a nationwide programme carried out under strict time constraints and in a potentially volatile climate. The programme succeeded in providing useful, and bias-free, assessment for hundreds of candidates. Other chapters that provide information on the history and culture of South Africa and how ACs have been implemented there, include Chapters 6 by Meiring and van der Westhuizen and 23 by Krause.

Chapter 14, by an international team of Rupp and Searle, describes the application of the AC method to a special occupation, namely the placement of medical doctors to hospitals for medical specialty training across multiple settings in the UK. Challenges included the coordination of multiple stakeholders, the administration of mass repeated assessments in a tight timeframe, and the high stakes implications for both doctors and hospitals. The authors discuss how the programme can contribute to assessing relevant non-medical dimensions, provide standardized information for different host settings, and meet the demands of numerous stakeholders.

In Chapter 15 Premarajan describes an innovative programme capitalizing on the strengths of the AC method to assess candidates for certification as human resource (HR) managers in India. This national-level programme uses a combination of knowledge tests and behavioural exercises to test the competencies required by HR managers. The author discusses the need for talent in India's growing economy and the resultant need for skilled HR professionals to assess, select, and develop such talent. The HR assessment programme, designed by a national committee, included an HR competency model, the design of tests and behavioural assessment tools, assessor training, and the design of a deployment strategy.

Chapter 16 by Bergvall describes how ACs were introduced into Swedish Local Government within the city of Gothenburg to select future leaders. The process of convincing the City's Executive Board and designing the AC commenced in 2000 and a series of centres have been run at various levels during the last decade, with some 2,000 people attending the centres. This chapter provides a classic public sector case study (see Chapters 25 by Kim, 26 by Nosworthy and Ng and 28 by Liang and Liu for others) describing the complete process of designing an AC from scratch and implementing it over many years, culminating with a validation exercise to illustrate its worth.

In Chapter 17 Livings and Mitchell describe how a global manufacturing organization used an AC to develop a talent management solution aimed at stimulating cultural change in order to implement an innovation strategy over the next 15 years. A further challenge was the need to cater to different types of talents, Leaders, Innovators and Specialists, within the same AC, where they had to demonstrate their ability to perform within a rapidly changing environment. This had a major impact on the competencies being assessed, which included Learning Agility, and the types of simulation exercises required to measure them.

In Chapter 18, Betti and Monobe provide four case studies showing how a system of assessment and development, based on principles of the AC method, make contributions to a complex system of the corporations' strategic and operational decisions about promotion, career management, and employee development. Initiated in Brazil and then extended to other countries, these case studies show the cross-national relevance of many of the traditional practices of the AC method. Lessons learned include how to influence corporate decisions about the use of ACs, how to integrate ACs into a complex talent

management system, and what alterations, if any, need to be made to implement ACs in a new culture.

Chapter 19 by Purdy describes the evolution of a series of AC initiatives within a large pharmaceutical sales organization over a period of 15 years aimed at accomplishing various talent management objectives in a commercial environment (see Chapters 12 by Birri and Melcher and 16 by Bergvall for some similar challenges). These include identifying and developing emerging leaders, determining their training needs, and planning for leadership succession. To date some 1,200 participants have attended the ACs or DCs with many progressing to director and senior executive positions, making this a truly effective, long-term programme.

Boyle in Chapter 20 reviews the influencing process used to gain acceptance of assessment and development centres (ADCs) as effective components of a talent management strategy within different organizations. This interesting challenge is investigated by the unusual approach of interviewing a panel of 10 highly experienced ADC practitioners, some of whom were in-house experts, with others being external consultants. The research examines three particular issues: ensuring alignment with the organization's strategic direction; getting buy-in from stakeholders and achieving organizational fit and maintaining support. The views expressed by the different panel members provide a valuable insight to some of the subtleties that need to be considered when trying to advocate an ADC programme. This chapter has widespread relevance to the successful implementation of any AC programme and thus it relates to many of the other chapters in this book, with particular links to Parts II and III and Boyle makes specific reference to Chapters 8 by Fletcher, 12 by Birri and Melcher and 21 by Thornton and Birri.

In Chapter 21, Thornton and Birri summarize their collective experiences over 50 years of seeing ACs come and go in organizations. They address the factors that lead to failure and success and provide suggestions for sustaining ACs over time. Ten factors leading to failure can be summarized as failures to comply with the state-of-the-art technical aspects of AC design and implementation. Making these mistakes often leads to the early demise of an AC, but do not necessarily lead to a long life. Other factors lead to sustainability over the long haul. These factors have to do with the conduct and context of the broader talent management programmes in each organization.

PART III: INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

This part includes chapters emphasizing international implications. Authors describe the special issues encountered in designing and implementing assessment and development centres in multicultural settings. Whereas centres have operated for decades in North America, Western Europe, Israel, and South Africa, in recent years they have sprung up in developing countries. They have also been used more frequently when assessees come from more than one country.

Chapter 22 by Povah provides a summary of one of the most extensive global surveys into AC practices that has ever been conducted, with 443 respondents from a total of 43 countries spanning 5 continents. With ACs being conducted in every corner of the globe, it is more important than ever to maintain consistency by advocating the best practice standards that have made the AC the successful tool that it is. There is no doubt that

cultural differences have influenced the design of some of these ACs in different parts of the World and this chapter examines some of those different features and approaches.

Chapter 23 by Krause is another survey of AC practices, in this case a comparison of operations in South Africa, Western Europe, and North America. The findings help us understand how ACs are being adapted in various countries in response to cultural differences and local concerns. ACs are not new to South Africa; in fact, they were first set up around 40 years ago. Their usage has expanded to the extent that a conference on ACs has been held annually since 1981. This survey documents the objectives, job analysis techniques, job requirements and dimensions, exercises and simulations, data integration processes, and feedback methods in the comparison region. Other chapters that provide information on the history and culture of South Africa and how ACs have been implemented there include Chapters 6 by Meiring and van der Westhuizen and 13 by Buckettt.

In Chapter 24 Pendent shows how ACs have played a role in introducing transparency into HR processes in Indonesia as a part of general reform of government and business practices in the late 1990s and the 2000s. Amidst political and economic turmoil, organizations started to use the AC method to make selection and promotion decisions more open and merit-based. The author describes the special cultural characteristics that have required modification of some AC practices, for example, due to a lack of experience of reading complex written material, participants may need more time and pictorial displays to aid their understanding in the more analytical exercises.

Kim, in Chapter 25, provides the first comprehensive summary of AC practices in South Korea's government agencies. He describes the geographical, historical, political, and cultural context that shaped traditional personnel practices. He then shows how ACs have played an integral role in making selection, promotion, and developmental decisions more valid and fair. The implementation of ACs in South Korea hasn't been without its challenges and the author describes how these were tackled in two federal ministries and the city of Seoul.

In Chapter 26 Nosworthy and Ng describe ACs in four departments of the Singapore public service. ACs have been used in the Ministry of Education for appointment to school principalships, and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for graduate recruitment and more recently for selection. ACs have also been used to select young high-potential scholars to receive scholarships to attend the best universities around the world and to design developmental activities for high-potential officers for future leadership positions. Challenges to implementing ACs in Singapore are described, including lack of familiarity with the method, diversity in languages, and leakage of content in the AC process. Lessons learned from these and other experiences reinforce the need to build support for the programme and actions to sustain the method over time while making adaptations to meet changing conditions in the government.

In Chapter 27 Manji and Dunford provide insight into how ACs were first used in East Africa (principally Kenya and Uganda) and some of the challenges that this posed in trying to introduce the methodology to a developing HR community. These challenges included being aware of the key cultural differences that determine acceptable norms of behaviour, such as the attitude towards timekeeping and how this manifests itself in the performance of both assessors and participants. It highlights a number of interesting observations made by local HR professionals within organizations using ACs and how these have influenced their design and implementation.

Liang and Liu, in Chapter 28, provide one of the first insights into AC practices in China. For centuries, candidates for the civil service have been assessed for selection and promotion, and as early as World War II, ACs were used to select and train intelligence agents. But it was not until the 1980s that ACs were reintroduced for assessment in government organizations. Subsequently ACs spread to other types of organizations. The authors describe the differences in AC applications in the public sector, state-owned companies, multinational companies, and private Chinese companies.

In Chapter 29, Simonenko reveals some of the issues faced in trying to establish ACs in the former USSR, with a particular focus on Russia. ACs are relatively new to Russia, having only been in use for the last 20 years, so a challenge faced by the local AC experts, is how to get the wider HR and business community to accept the importance of adopting best practice. Thus the challenges are similar to those being faced in East Africa (see Chapter 27 by Manji and Dunford), Indonesia (see Chapter 24 by Pendit), or China (see Chapter 28 by Liang and Liu) and this is another example of the classic situation where 'a little knowledge is a dangerous thing'. The chapter explains the nature of some of these challenges and how they are tackled.

In Chapter 30, Hirose provides one of the first published summaries of AC practices in the private and public sectors in Japan in the past 40 years. Unique practices which suit Japanese national and corporate culture are described. For example, at the junior management level, group exercises are common, and group feedback is given. Both assessors and participants give feedback in group settings after the exercises. Assessors also watch the process of peer feedback in these group settings, because this is relevant to expectations of teamwork in organizational settings in Japan.

Chapter 31 by Fox and Haboucha describes AC practices in Israel, a country which has a long history of psychological assessment, including the AC, primarily for personnel selection. They provide an in-depth analysis of several professional challenges when ACs are trimmed down and yield poor results. They compare and contrast AC practices in Israel, Europe, and the United States. They challenge the commonly accepted requirement of strict standardization by pointing out that rigid structuring of assessment activities may sacrifice the insight assessors may get from more individualized assessment. The question is whether strict standardization limits validity. More important for these authors, is the amount of stage time for candidates and observation time for assessors when relevant behaviours can be assessed.

Finally, in Chapter 32 we provide an overview of all of the preceding chapters by summarizing some of the lessons learned from the contributions of our array of international authors. In the spirit of continuous improvement, we explore several critical questions raised about AC applications. That scrutiny leads naturally to suggestions for new research studies. We close by posing and providing a preliminary answer to the question: 'To what extent is the AC field evidence-based?' (Briner and Rousseau 2011). We conclude that considerable evidence has been accumulated over 50 or more years that the assessment centre method is a valuable intervention to select, promote, and develop human resource talent in diverse organizations in diverse countries.

Summary

Few, if any of the chapters deal with all three major themes, but a number make diverse contributions to understanding how assessment and development centres contribute to talent management in the global business world through the interface of science and practice. Thus, the reader will want to be alert to multiple contributions of chapters in various parts of the book. Certainly many chapters in Part III: 'International Issues and Implications', discuss how their applications have been guided by and are in need of good theory and research; and they discuss how applications contribute to talent management. Likewise, some of the more research oriented chapters in Part I: 'AC Best Practice', have direct application to improvement for selection/promotion and development. Finally, chapters in Part II: 'Corporate Strategy and Talent Management' often describe research findings and cross-cultural issues and how these impact the execution of various Talent Management initiatives and influence wider HR practices, in pursuit of an organization's Corporate Strategy.

Our hope is that the diverse contributions of the authors will stimulate interest amongst those who are just starting to learn about the AC method, provide new ideas for practice and research amongst current users and reinforce the passion for ACs amongst established adherents.

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