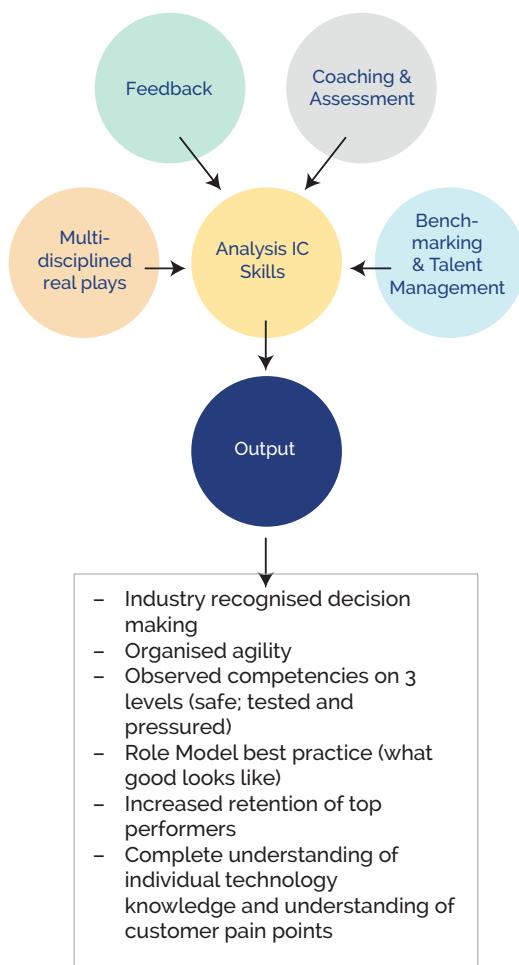


Mentor Group White Paper

Development Centres – An Introduction



A Development Centre approach is recognised as one of the most accurate and efficient ways to identify the needs of, and provide development options for, your leadership and management population.

The Mentor Group third generation Development Centres ensure these goals are achieved by using linked scenarios which reflect the real life pressures of your operational working environment.

We also deliver 'freeze frame' feedback and coaching during the events, to provide added value to the attendees, and give them positive reinforcement.

In our design, we use your role-specific competencies, face-face behaviours and current working processes to ensure reality and relevance. We design tailored scenarios and team-working situations that reflect everyday challenges and conflicts.

This reality means that your managers have to demonstrate sustainable skills and behaviours throughout a full day, and not just act out a series of 30-minute role-play exercises.

How does a development centre work?

A Development Centre is usually a one day activity. The day comprises a set of scenarios which link together and are developed through short face-face meetings, and a constant feed of related emails.

The meetings are with business actors playing the roles of team members, bosses or clients, and develop the storyline during the day.

The manager is challenged to plan and respond to the changing situation as the day develops.

In every meeting, the manager is observed by trained coaches, who assess their performance and then give constructive feedback at different points in the day.

This feedback is always viewed as very high value by the attending managers, and is given against your competencies and behaviours.

This allows the attendee to evaluate themselves against the expectations of the organisation, and identify for themselves what their key development areas are.

Looking at the Centre in more detail, there are usually 4 scenarios which unfold, and which can link together. Each would have a feedback/coaching session to follow.

- Managing performance
- Leadership
- Customer/consumer relations
- Flexibility/problem solving

These interlinked scenarios all require management activity and responses, either by email or in face-face meetings.

In addition, each participant also receives a number of pressing internal and external tasks and issues to resolve throughout the day.

The purpose of this multi-situational environment is to re-create the real pressures and dilemmas experienced on a daily basis, so that participants can then:

1. Review how they react to and balance priorities when faced with internal and external demands, which may conflict with each other
2. Gain insight into how they react to and manage team member issues under pressure
3. Assess how their 'management style' impacts on the individual, team and Business

Scenario building and actor briefing

Input and feedback is taken from a number of managers from different parts of the business who are interviewed by our consultant team. This is incorporated and used to develop the scenario material, with other topical issues and concerns.

We have a library of existing scenarios that we can use to keep this stage simple and short.

Once they are developed, the scenarios are then briefed to the actor team, to ensure they play the most accurate role possible.

They will learn your language and issues to help them provide maximum realism in the meetings, and help the managers to react normally.

Working globally with clients, experience shows that dealing effectively with these factors can significantly boost sales forecast accuracy.

Participant review and planning

Following each work-based activity or task, the participants are invited to review their behavioural responses, assess their development against the specific competencies, and plan for their own development as a result. In addition to this individual work, we also build an overall picture to provide the client with a group view of the management capability.

Participant feedback and coaching

During the Development Centre each participant receives feedback and coaching, following the management scenarios, to maximise their insight and learning.

The feedback and coaching is delivered in two ways: immediate feedback from the actor at the end of each 'meeting'; and at regular coaching points during the day.

They discuss with the actor or coach, tips and techniques for improving their performance in the targeted competencies.

This feedback allows participants to benchmark themselves against 'what good looks like' and consider how to improve their performance in the next stage.

In each case the coach gives an overview of what was expected in the previous task (knowledge and behaviour), and helps the participant to decide what to work on next, and how to do this.

Sustainable learning

Learning on the day is developed in three ways, through:

1. A competency rating (behavioural)
2. Best practice actions or solutions during feedback and coaching (developmental)
3. Action and reflection (application)

Most managers attending these events become totally committed to all the activities and challenges throughout the day. The feedback and real applied learning also results in a very positive personal development experience.

The key to ongoing improvement is the sustainability of these skills and behaviours.

Each participant receives an individual report (see below), and their own personal reactions act as a constant reminder to help them sustain the developments in their performance.

Focusing on these questions can significantly improve the sales manager's knowledge of the pipeline, aiding forecasting.

Diagnostic reports

A short personal report is prepared for each delegate manager, although more detailed options are available for more in-depth feedback. This is fed back to the delegate, either by your senior managers or by our team.

The focus is on positive recognition of strengths, and a specific plan of development where needed. The competency ratings are given for each delegate, based on the observed behaviours.

A summary report of the whole group can also be supplied, with averages and comparisons as required. This can form the basis of a development plan for the whole group, and also give good Talent Management data for forward planning.

About Mentor

Founded in 1996, Mentor Group is now recognised as a leading global people and performance company that focuses on Sales Transformation and Organisational Leadership.

We create integrated coaching programmes that use no-nonsense tools and metrics, incorporate outstanding technology and are delivered by over 200 instructors and coaches considered to be the best in their field.

We enjoy long-standing relationships with our clients and work with over 70 active businesses, including FTSE100 companies, such as BP, British Standards Institution, Cisco, Computacenter, Dell, IGT, Microsoft, Skype, Amazon, Vodafone and Aon. Currently, we are operating programmes in over 57 countries worldwide in 20 different languages. Over 20 years, we have retained 90% of our clients through continually developing their core competencies.

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