

# *Sun, Sea and SELECTION*

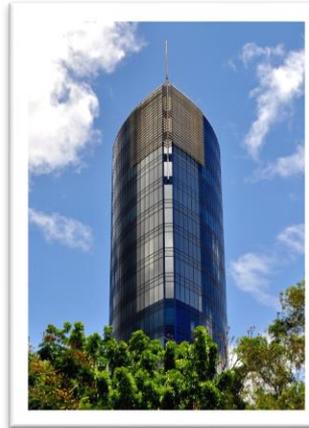
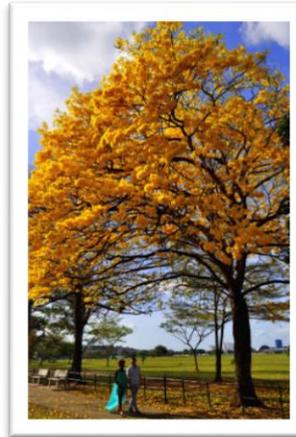
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*A View of Assessment Centres  
in the Caribbean*



[www.beyondhappyatwork.com](http://www.beyondhappyatwork.com)

# Who we are...



# Objectives:



- Overview of the current environment.
- Identify the main challenges to Assessment Centre use and growth within the region.
- Identify key characteristics.
- Discuss strategies and lessons learned.

# Assessment Centres in the News...



# Review of CoP process:

- **July 2008:** Nomination to the post of CoP goes to Parliament. Government rejected nomination.
- **July 2010:** New Government elected. Another candidate was nominated and appointed. In 2011, the new CoP was fired.
- **2011 – 2018:** The original candidate was appointed as acting Commissioner, in a series of short-term contracts.
- **2016:** The (new) Government (elected in 2015) put out a tender for the appointment of a new Commissioner.
- **Tender stated that an Assessment Centre was to be used to identify the successful candidate.**

# Review of CoP process:

- **2017:** A consulting firm was hired and the process was initiated.
- 50 persons applied for the position. After a review of CVs, was shortlisted to 20.
- AC was done- list shortened to 12, for both CoP and Deputy CoP.
- **2018:** Police Service Commission selected top candidate, and made a recommendation to the Government.
- **The Government rejected the Candidate.**

# Review of CoP process:

- A Special Select Committee to investigate the process.
- The findings, in part were as follows:

*Additionally, having regard to the observations and findings set out above, the Committee considers that in many respects the manner in which the entire process was conducted by the PSC was defective and unreliable and may expose the PSC to allegations of arbitrariness and lack of transparency.*

- Eventually (July 2018) the candidate with the highest score was offered the role.

# The Landscape:



- Historically, it is not a well known or used process
- Limited to Senior roles
- Usually employ consultants from international organisations

As a result:

- Local practitioners with the requisite skill and experience has been very low.
- **Beyond Consulting was set up to change that.**

# The Company



- Beyond Consulting was started in 2009 to address this issue.
- One of the few consultancies in the region who specialize in Assessment Centres
- Have conducted AC's with close to 100 candidates over the period.
- Have trained over 70 local practitioners as Assessors.



# The Presentation:



- A look at the challenges and outline how we have sought to overcome them.
- The presentation will be primarily focused on how practitioners can mitigate these challenges.
- Issues practitioners should be aware of when entering such a market



# The Presentation:



- As part of the presentation we sought feedback from 125 companies in the region over a period of four months. The respondents came mainly from Trinidad, Barbados and Jamaica, and was collected to add some context.

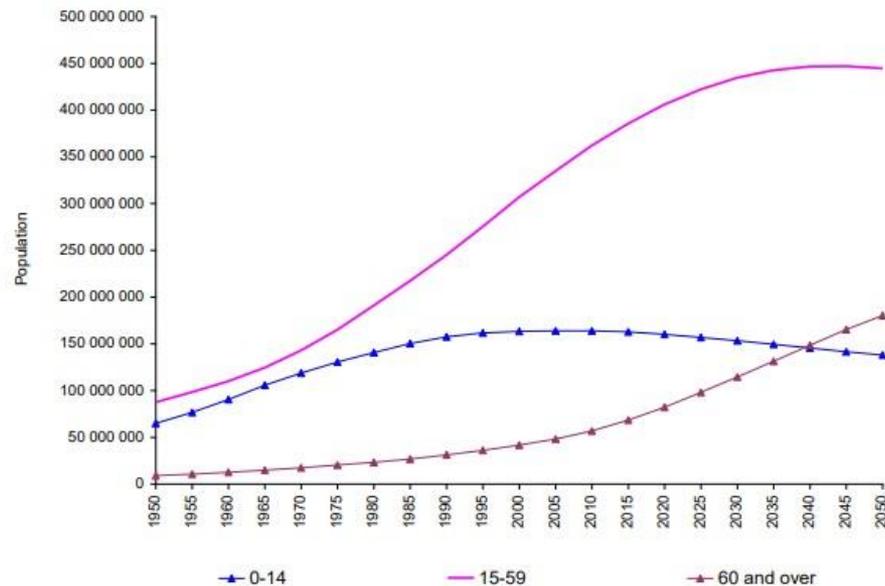


# Regional Info:

- Population: 44 million
- % of world population: 0.5
- If London were a country in the Caribbean, it would be the 4th largest (by population size)
- 20 islands –less than a million total population
- Several different languages are spoken, including English, French, Spanish, Dutch and a few local dialects.

# Regional Info:

Figure 5: Latin America and the Caribbean: Population by Age Group, 1950–2050



Working population expected to grow rapidly in the next 50 years.

Source: CELADE/ECLAC population estimates and projections, 2007.

# Regional Info:

Countries in the Higher Income bracket are more likely to invest in Assessment centres.

Thirteen countries be classified as upper middle or high income countries based on their GNI per capita

Country	GNI Per Capita in US\$ millions 1	Income category 2
Antigua and Barbuda	20,070	High-income
The Bahamas	21,540	High-income
Barbados	15,080	High-income
Belize	8,160	Low-middle income
Dominica	9,800	Upper-middle income
Dominican Republic	11,150	Upper-middle income
Grenada	11,120	Upper-middle income
Guyana	1,240	Low-middle income
Jamaica	8,480	Upper-middle income
Saint Kitts and Nevis	20,400	High-income
Saint Lucia	10,350	Upper-middle income
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	10,610	Upper-middle income
Trinidad and Tobago	20,070	High-income

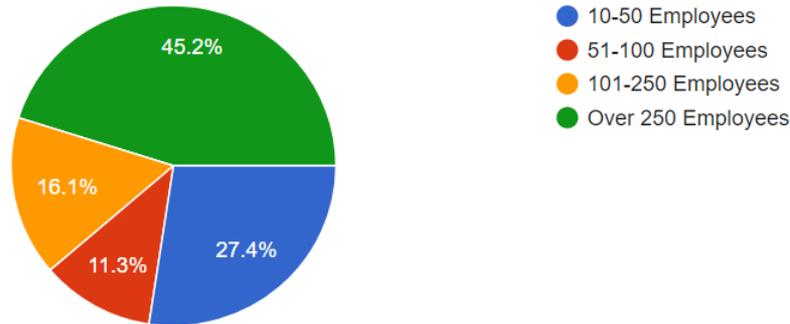
1. Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators (2014).

2. Source: SIDS Statistics, World

# Company Survey:

What is the size of your organisation?

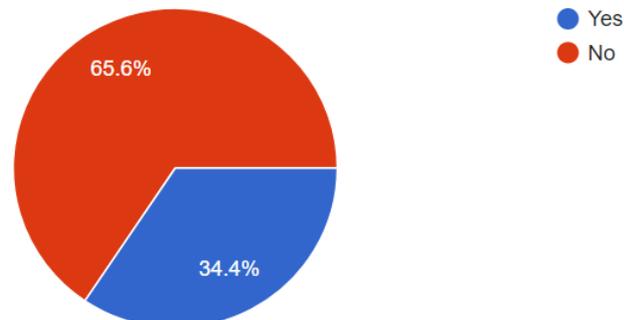
124 responses



The largest employer in the region are the Government- the process is rarely used.

Have you used the Assessment or Development Center process for either Recruitment or Employee Development?

125 responses



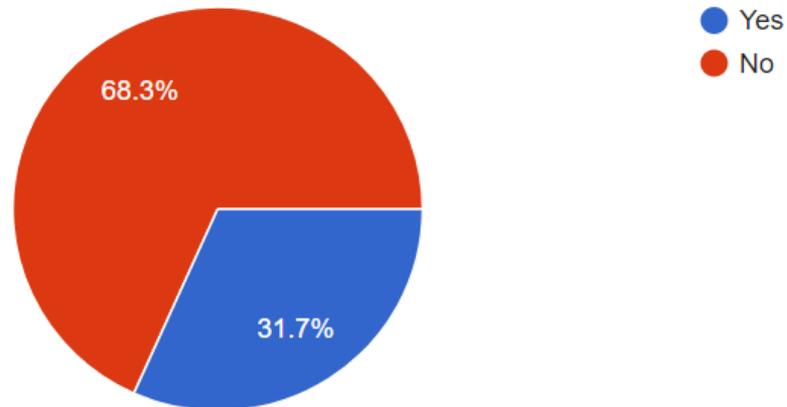
What some companies refer to as an AC, isn't always what they practice.

# The Challenges:

**1. Lack of Knowledge of the Process:** While many clients have heard of the Assessment Centre process, they do not know what it entails.

Have you heard of the Assessment Center Process?

82 responses



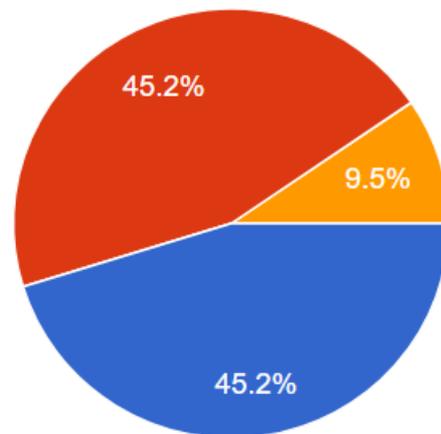
Even when organisation have heard of it, they are still unclear on what it actually is, or does.

# The Challenges:

This is in part because many HR practitioners in the region do not have a background in OccPsy.

Does any of the HR staff have a background/qualifications in Psychology?

42 responses



- Yes
- No
- Not sure

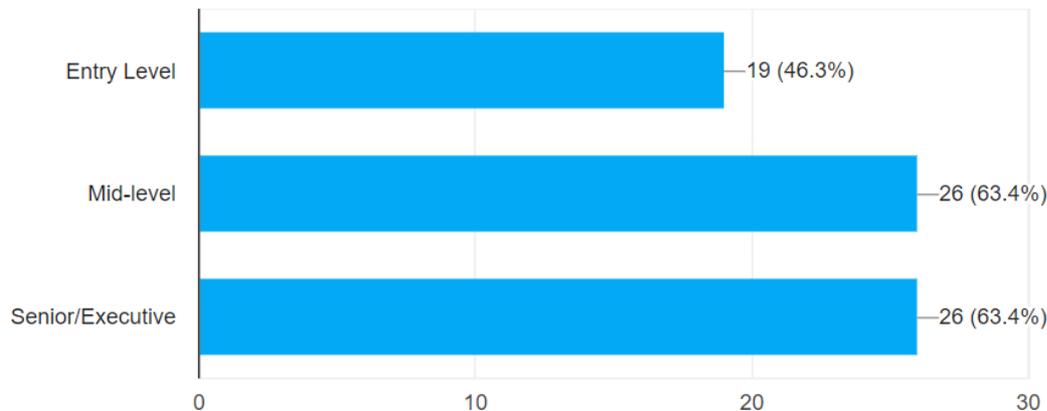
I rarely meet HR professionals in the region with a background in Psychology.

# The Challenges:

**2. Cost:** Those who have heard of the process all know one thing- it is expensive or is perceived to be. As a result, many are unwilling to invest or only use it for senior levels.

What levels are assessed?

41 responses



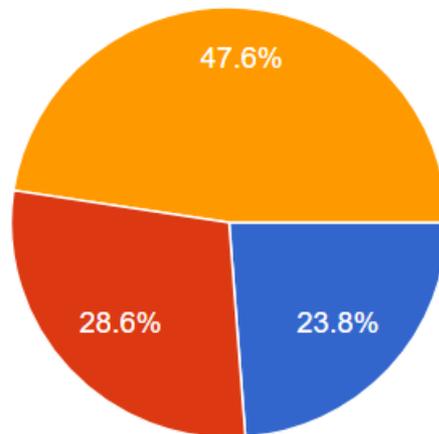
The number of candidates assessed is also sometimes restricted.

# Cost Issues:

- Internal resources or outsourced?

Do you outsource to an external consultant, or is it done with internal resources (staff)?

42 responses



- Outsourced
- Internal Resources
- Both (hybrid)

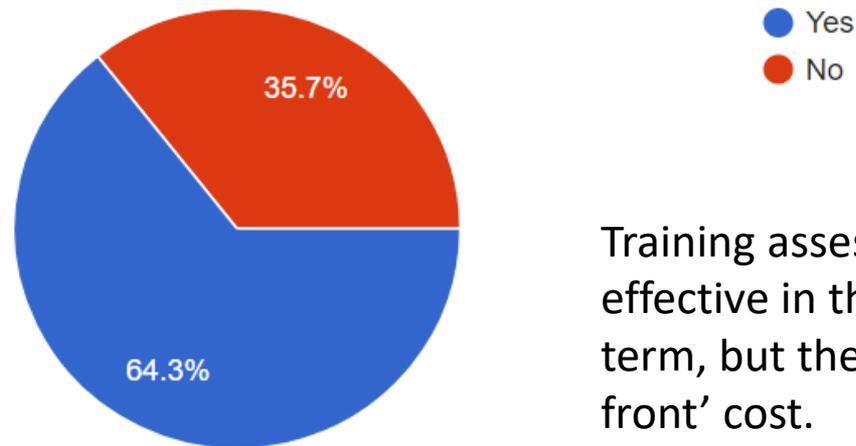
Outsourcing is more expensive, but is sometimes necessary.

# Cost Issues:

- Trained Assessors?

Does the organisation have any trained assessors?

42 responses



Training assessors is more cost-effective in the medium to long-term, but there is a high 'up front' cost.

# The Challenges:

**3. Small Talent Pool:** Due to issues related to small population size, migration and industry-type, the talent pool for many organisations is small, especially at the top.

- In some countries, there are more nationals living in the diaspora than in their country of origin: e.g. Guyana
- Trinidad- 400K nationals living in the US alone.
- Jamaica- 800K British people of Jamaican origin.
- Brain drain- many highly skilled nationals working in developed nations.

# The Challenges:

**4. Diversity:** When you have a highly homogenous population (generally), issues related to diversity are rarely an issue. Or is it?

- **Barbados-** 90% of population of Afro-Caribbean descent and mixed descent.
- **Jamaica:** Jamaicans of African descent represent 76.3% of the population, followed by 15.1% Afro-European, 3.4% East Indian and Afro-East Indian
- **T&T:** East Indian 35.4%, African 34.2%

# Size and Diversity Issues:

- War for talent at the top.
- Some organisations actively recruit in other islands.
- The issue of expats.
- Returning nationals.

ACs have had to adapt to having candidates from different countries and/or cultural backgrounds in the same event.

Cultural differences between islands can be significant.

# The Challenges:

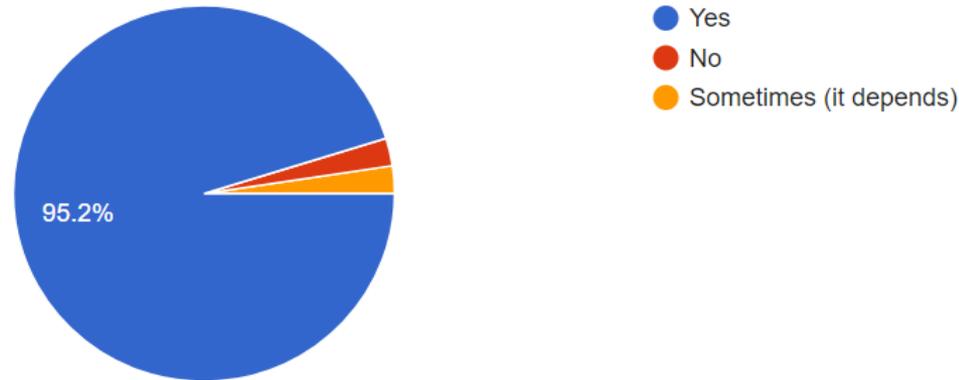
**5. Current Recruitment Practices:** Selection practices in the region have a strong relationship bias- who you know opens a lot of doors.

- As a result, the objectivity and rigour of the Assessment Centre Process present a unique challenge to an organisation who is accustomed to hiring based on relationships and networking.

# Recruitment Practices:

Are Interviews used as part of the process?

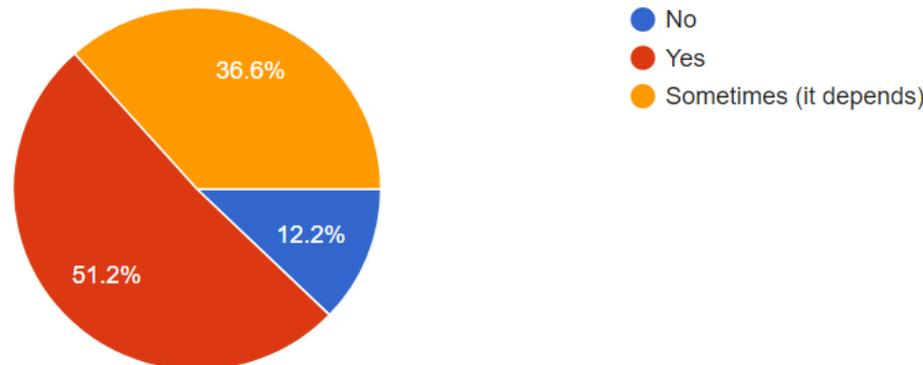
42 responses



**Competency-Based Interviewing (CBI)** is relatively new to many organisations—they tend to be unstructured.

Are Psychometric Assessment used as part of the process?

41 responses



The use of assessments is growing, though the cost is a barrier to some organisations.

# The Challenges:

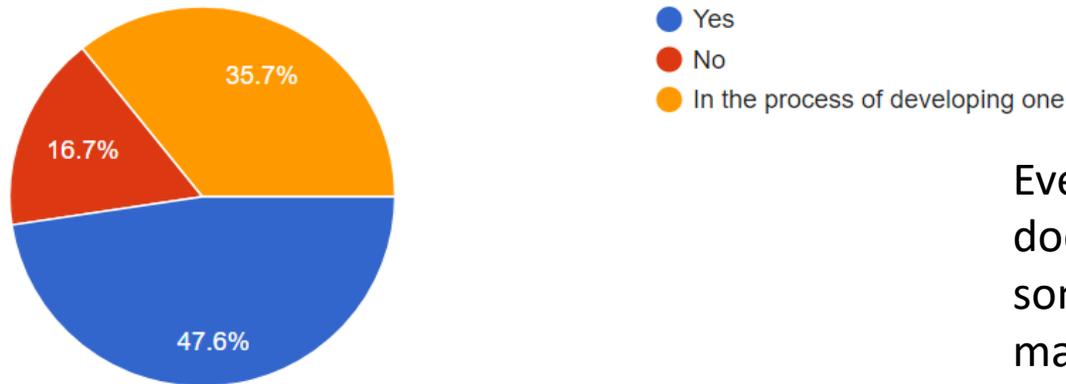
**6. Competency Development:** Though most organisations talk about competencies, very few have found a way to articulate them concerning job roles and performance.

- There is a greater focus on the *qualifications and experience* rather than the *Competency*.
- High weighting placed on academic/technical qualifications in the region.
- **Consultancy Opportunity:** Assistance with developing frameworks and policies.

# Competency Development:

Does your Organisation have a Competency Model?

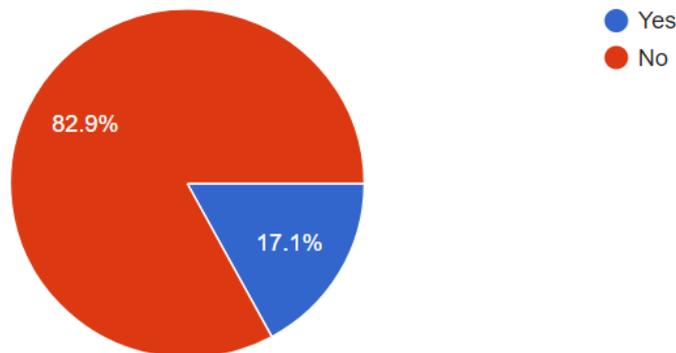
42 responses



Even where this does exist, there is sometimes a mismatch between the document and the practice.

Is there an Assessment Center Policy in your Organisation?

41 responses



I am yet to work with an organisation that has one.

# The Challenges:

**7. Technology:** Access to the internet and technological resources is not an issue (usually)- the region is technologically savvy, and this is a growing area.

- However, most organisations are not comfortable with doing remote Assessment Centres or recruitment, as they prefer to have the candidate physically present for the exercise.
- This is in part due to cultural issues, where relationship building has a lot to do with physical interaction.

# The Challenges:

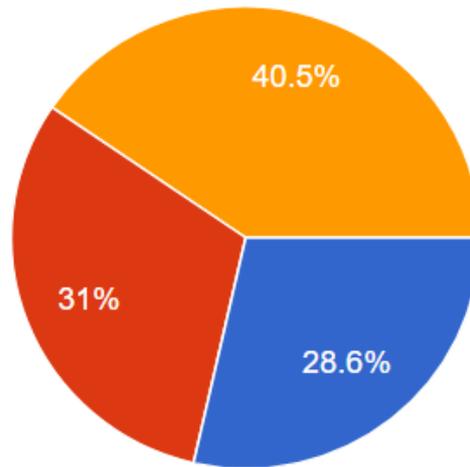
**8. Off the Shelf vs Bespoke Exercises.** In the main, off the shelf exercises present the easiest way to get clients 'up and running'; however, there are sometimes cultural and other organisational mismatches that occur.

- The development of bespoke exercises also poses some challenges (related to reliability and validity) that have to be addressed.

# Off the Shelf or Bespoke?

Do you use Off the Shelf Exercises or develop your own?

42 responses



- Off the Shelf (generic)
- Internally developed exercises (bespoke)
- Or both (hybrid)

Internal exercises tend not to be validated in some cases.

# The Challenges:

**9. Time:** Many clients have balked at the length of time Assessment Centres take, and in several cases, have asked for the 'short version.'

- This has brought up a set of unique scenarios related to the optimum amount of exercises necessary to adequately assess a candidate.
- Using 3 exercises proves to be a challenge. Mixing with interviews and/or psychometric assessments (on the same day) may be more useful.

# The Challenges:

**10. Reporting on Results.** This has proved to be a unique challenge because clients often want you to tell them who to hire.

- Just giving the client the scores from the Assessment Centre is not enough, so we have had to devise ways of reporting that stop short of saying who to hire, but give more detail than 'just the numbers.'

# Report format:

COMPETENCY	SCORE
Planning and Organizing (P&O)	4
Judgement (J)	5
Problem Analysis (PA)	3
Strategic Perspective (SP)	4
Commercial Awareness	3

The scores, along with a brief write-up relating their performance to the competencies being measured.

The candidate was able to do a comprehensive analysis of the product under review in the case (P&O), and as a result was able to make effective assumptions/plans for the company going forward (J). Her use of the data and information on the target company and population was sufficient (PA) and was able to make some linkages to medium and longer term issues (SP). Sufficient attention was paid to the financial viability of the recommendations (CA), though some more concrete recommendations would have been beneficial.

# Other points to note:

If 'Other' what other barriers exist?

6 responses

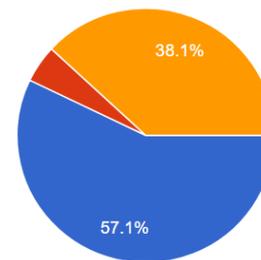
Not sure
Government policies and structure
Resources
n/a
Appropriate Facility
training only provided by tertiary institutions, need more flexibility for potential workplace individuals

Other than cost, these were mentioned.

Has the process improved the quality of candidates for selection?

42 responses

- Most companies that use the process believe that it improves the quality of hire.



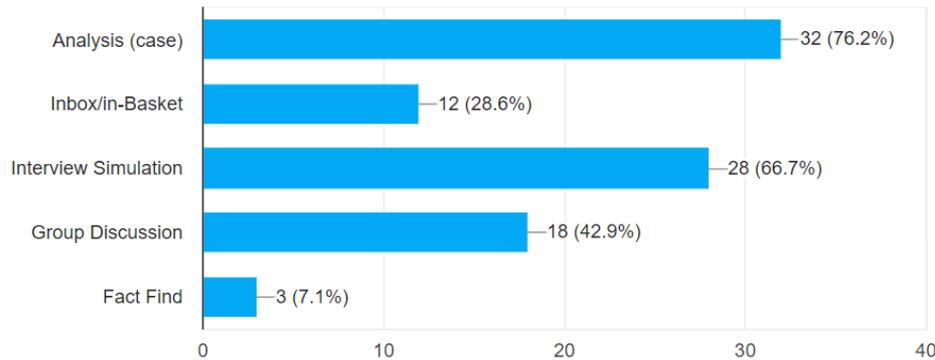
● Yes  
● No  
● Depends on the position

- Most common competencies assessed include: Judgement, Planning and Organising, Commercial Awareness, Strategic Perspective and Problem Analysis.

# Other points to note:

Which are your preferred type/s of exercises?

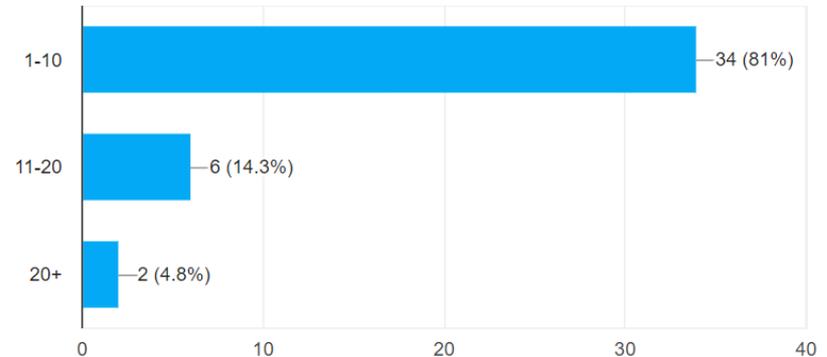
42 responses



- Analysis Exercises are very popular.
- Caribbean nationals tend to do poorly in Inbox exercises

On average, how many Centers are done per year?

42 responses



The use of ACs are growing, as more organisations invest in Assessors.

# Client Testimonial



Operates in 22 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

16 retail brands, including RadioShack and Courts.



**Staff count: 15,000**

**Trinidad: 942**

**Caribbean: Approx. 6,000**

## *Why did Unicomer invest in Assessor Training?*

1. To strengthen our recruitment process and quality of candidates selected.
2. To equip our HR team with skills needed to execute current and best practice assessments.



## To what extent has it improved Unicomer's Hiring process?

*‘Not only are candidates impressed with our thorough process, but now our internal customers are even more pleased with the quality of hires received. This redounds in improved individual and by extension, departmental productivity.’*

# QUESTIONS?



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