

CASE STUDY



ACCO Brands

Headquartered in Lake Zurich, Illinois, ACCO Brands Corporation is one of the world's largest suppliers of branded office products, employing approximately 6,000 employees. Businesses and workers in more than 100 countries use their products each day – from planners and organizers to school products and workspace tools. Well-known ACCO brands include Swingline®, Day-Timer®, Mead®, and Trapper®.

Workspace Tools



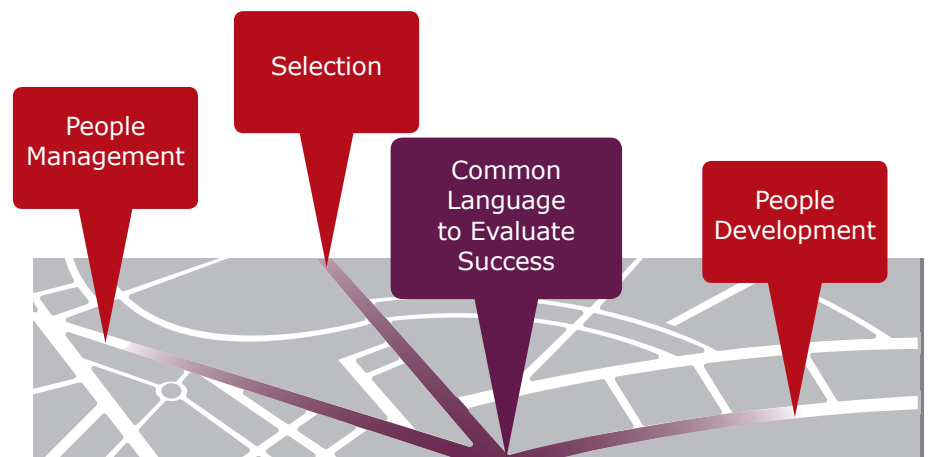
"By using a data-driven process rather than gut instincts, we knew we could raise the quality of new hires and show results to senior executives, thereby demonstrating the value of HR to the organization."

Irma Long
Director, Global Talent Acquisition

Background

In order to stay globally competitive and overcome market and economic challenges, management at ACCO Brands recognized the need to attract, develop, and retain top employees. Human Resources (HR) partnered with the business units to create a Talent Management Roadmap: an integrated strategy designed to build the individual and organizational capabilities necessary to contribute to company growth and success.

Talent Management Roadmap



Model for Success

Within this new initiative, ACCO Brands realized their success was dependent upon building a winning culture, and so they embarked on a project to create the “ACCO Brands Model for Success”.

ACCO Brands Model for Success



With the company values at the core, the model identifies six Critical Success Attributes for employees, representing the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve market success. The goal was to integrate the model into all aspects of their talent strategy.

ACCO Brands then issued an RFP for an assessment to help them identify top talent by measuring success against both the newly created Model for Success and the company’s Leadership Framework. The HR team wanted to use this tool to support efforts throughout the entire employment life cycle – from hiring to evaluating and through to coaching and development.

In the RFP, ACCO Brands’ HR staff made it clear they required a valid and reliable assessment that could work with their applicant tracking system (iCIMS), and which was available in multiple languages.

It also needed to be easy to understand and intuitive for “internal customers” – the ACCO Brands’ managers – so it aligned with the other tools they would use for employee development.

Lastly, the chosen assessment had to be able to provide information to help drive business outcomes and build capabilities in employees throughout the organization.

Competency-based Solution

After evaluating several assessment providers, ACCO Brands selected our 16PF® *Competency Report*. Because the report has common language for the selection process, the interview guide, and developmental tips, it fit their requirements perfectly as having common language would make it easy to integrate and align with the ACCO Brands competency model and provide consistency in their various people practices.

And from the onset, explained Ms. Long, our consultants were focused on bridging the gaps and working to understand what was needed. They were flexible, knowledgeable, and had a proven assessment process that met all the essential criteria.

In addition, the history and validity of the 16PF Questionnaire, available in 20 languages with more than 2,700 research articles, really impressed the team, according to Ms. Christina Thompson, Director, Talent Management.

Competency Mapping

ACCO Brands had already identified the competencies they wanted to measure, so our first task was to learn more about the component behaviors of each competency in the ACCO Brands Success Model and Leadership Framework. This was accomplished through extensive interviews and focus groups with job experts at ACCO Brands to ensure our team fully understood the nuances of the model’s attributes.

The ACCO Brands success factors were then mapped to 16PF competencies. Behavior language from six of our competencies directly mapped onto six ACCO Brands competencies. For the remaining twelve ACCO Brands competencies, we used information gathered in the focus groups to refine and tailor new competencies so that the resulting report measured their existing Leadership Framework.

Automation of the Assessment Process

We then addressed the technology aspect of the project. Our IT experts consulted with iCIMS personnel to identify system requirements and to implement an efficient, cost-effective, and seamless assessment system that resulted in minimal disruption to the current process and delivered a secure method of assessment administration and reporting.

In the final process, after the hiring manager submits the test taker information, the system takes over and is completely automated – from providing the test taker with a link to the assessment to delivery of the interpretive report to the hiring manager.

Report Components

The *ACCO Brands Customized 16PF Competency Report* provides a fit score for each competency along with behavior descriptions of the relevant personality factors, written in “plain English” that can be understood at all levels. All ACCO Brands applicants are evaluated against the six Critical Success Attributes which were deemed to be crucial for all positions. Other clusters of competencies are chosen based upon the leadership level.

The report also includes a structured interview guide with two standard open-ended questions per competency and several probing questions which are directly based on the test-taker profile. These interview questions mesh well with ACCO Brands’ structured behavioral-based interview process.

In addition, there are three validity checks embedded in the 16PF Questionnaire. And when an individual’s profile suggests a developmental need, the report includes tips for coaching and improvement.

Office Essentials

“One of the reasons we selected the 16PF Competency Report was we wanted continuity from Talent Acquisition through Talent Management. Our goal was a seamless integration and using this assessment process from hiring through development has made that a reality.”

Christina Thompson
Director, Talent Management



Results: Building a Winning Team & Culture

The use of the *16PF Competency Report* has clearly helped ACCO Brands in their quest for a skilled workforce with the values and behaviors needed to drive successful business outcomes. The business-focused report language and personalized interview guide gave managers a common language to use from the beginning with their new employees. Tools and training on the talent management resource site for ACCO Brands reinforced this language so it was used consistently in processes involving selection, people management and development.

Metrics Prove Program Success

In a company-wide survey to secure metrics on the success of the program, managers reported very high satisfaction with the overall quality of their hires, the assessment tool used in the process, and the candidate's experience. Managers using the new assessment process have high praise for its ability to identify candidates with an overall match to the job's responsibilities.

Metrics compiled from manager ratings show a large jump in successful new hire performance (from 74% to 89%) since use of the *16PF Competency Report* began in the spring of 2012. This has resulted in better hiring decisions, with improved retention - in the first year of working at ACCO Brands, retention of key employees jumped from 70% to almost 82%.

Ms. Long and Ms. Thompson attribute these improvements to the integrated process they created using the *16PF Competency Report* as their anchor assessment.

Improved Performance Ratings

