



Minnesota Professionals for Psychology Applied to Work

Upcoming Speaker

By Marcia Sytsma, VP Programs

Thursday, Nov. 18: Building a Bridge: Integrating Measurement Results Into Compensation: A Public Sector Case Study

Harry Brull, Ph.D., Senior Vice President of Public Sector Services for Personnel Decisions International



Have you been looking for an innovative pay-for-performance system that incorporates individual, team and organizational goals? A system that aligns individual performance with organizational goals? A management tool that provides guidance and incentive for employees without creating unhealthy competition?

Then our November presentation is for you.

On November 18, Harry Brull will describe the development and implementation of a unique, three-tier, pay-for-performance system designed to encourage teamwork and cooperation and also designed to give employees a clear picture of what constitutes excellence. The system he will present includes tools to measure outcomes and processes, results and behaviors, and the perceptions of supervisors and coworkers.

When the City of Minnetonka, Minnesota decided to move to a pay-for-performance model, they faced a challenge to provide evidence that people actually were performing at an "above average" level, while meeting the goals outlined above. The resulting program, now entitled MERIT, encompasses citywide, department-wide, and individual goals. Harry's presentation will describe the MERIT program as a case study of a pay-for-performance system. Harry will describe the genesis and evolution of the program and its implications for linking individual, team, and organizational performance. With the city's permission, actual program materials will be shared.

Harry Brull is Senior Vice President of Public Sector Services for Personnel Decisions International. He joined PDI in 1978. Harry has been the champion of the Public Sector business within PDI. He also was recognized as a leader in public sector consulting, recently completing a term as President of the International Public Management Assessment /Council (IPMAAC). Harry's contributions to public sector work were acknowledged when he received the 2002 Bemis Memorial Award. He also is a charter member of the Minnesota Employment Law Council where he is the only non-attorney.

During his tenure at PDI he has designed and implemented more than 3,000 selection and promotion processes. He also has taught at Cornell University, the University of Minnesota, and the Southern Police Institute. He continues to teach I/O psychology at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota and Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota.

MPPAW Update

by Dan Sachau, President

I would like to start by congratulating MPPAW member Janet Prescott. Janet's husband, Edward C. Prescott, won the 2004 Nobel Prize in Economics. Janet recently retired from MDA Consulting. Look for Janet's bio in an upcoming MPPAW member profile.

MPPAW is moving. Our November meeting will be on the U of Minnesota - St. Paul campus in the new conference center. The room that we have been using for the last few years is being converted to a computer lab. The new conference center should work out well. The center has large meeting rooms and convenient parking.

Harry Brull, Senior Vice President of PDI, is this month's speaker. Mr. Brull's talk is about a "pay for performance system that seems to be performing." There will not be a December meeting but we will start again January 20th when Bruce Sevy, Vice President of North American Sales for SHL, will discuss utility analysis.

In our effort to expand the MPPAW membership, we will be sending membership invitation letters to members of the local chapter of the International Society of Performance Improvement, the Midwest Academy of Management, the Minnesota OD Network, and the Twin Cities Personnel Association. Feel free to send me names of others who might be interested in joining. We will be glad to send them an invitation.

See you on the 18th!



A Reminder... that we're in a new location this month. We'll be holding meetings for the rest of this year (until May 2005) in the new Continuing Education and Conference Center on the St. Paul campus of the U of M. Complete directions can be found on page 3 of this newsletter.

October Presentation

Summary prepared by Jenny Merriam, Co-Secretary

RASCH Modeling: I/O Psychology Applications

John Kulas, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychology,
Saint Cloud State University

The presenter for the October MPPAW program was Dr. John Kulas from St. Cloud State University. Dr. Kulas presented an overview of RASCH measurement and the different benefits associated with using this model. He also discussed different applications for the model and ways he has used RASCH in his research.

The RASCH Measurement Model is based on the premises that (a) a person with higher ability always has a higher probability of correctly answering an item than a person with lower ability; (b) a more difficult item always has a lower probability of endorsement than a less difficult item, regardless of a person's ability; and (c) comparisons between any two people should be independent of the items used.

Some of the benefits to using the RASCH model are that: it places person and item estimates on a common scale (called a logit scale); it transforms ordinal-level scores into interval-level measures; it presents goodness of fit indices; it offers different perspectives on common questions (SEM, rater effects, and data screening for example); it doesn't require as large of samples as do IRT models; and there are user-friendly software programs. In testing applications, RASCH gives researchers an estimate of person separation, which is useful for norm-referencing. It can also identify strata of ability (basically reliable bands of similar/dissimilar abilities), which can help determine cut or critical scores.



An example of how the RASCH Model could be used post-hoc (by someone who hasn't used the RASCH perspective in the development of their assessments) is to: 1) select the RASCH Model appropriate to your situation; 2) run the appropriate software; 3) look through misfit indices to determine which items or persons are not behaving in an expected manner; 4) examine the functioning of your scales; 5) rerun analyses iteratively until achieving an acceptable level of fit; and finally 6) make assessment adjustments (re-administer and cross-validate). This will give the researcher an indication of items or persons that are acting in an unlikely way which can improve the validity of ones assessment-based inferences.

Dr. Kulas discussed how he has used RASCH Modeling in his research. First, he described how RASCH was applied to 360 data to investigate response scale functioning and item targeting. He found discrepancies between the distributions of item difficulties and person ability estimates. This means that 360 items aren't properly "targeting" managers. Managers tend to be of a higher ability than the difficulty of the items (it's possible to look at these types of comparisons because person and item estimates are on the same logit scale). He suggests that ceiling effects may be attributable to item "difficulties" as well as rater leniency and recommends using more difficult items to address this issue.

The functioning of the "neutral" response option in Likert-type assessments has also been an area of research for Dr. Kulas. One of the key questions he asks in regard to the use of the "neutral" response category is "how is it interpreted and is it necessary?" Initial research of his suggests that test takers tend to use this category as a "dumping ground" for unsure responses. Also, the

RASCH modeling procedure indicates that this "neutral" category violates a basic premise of rating-scale logic – that categories progress along a linear continuum of measurement.

Suggesting some further areas of investigation for I/O Psychologists, Dr. Kulas stated that the RASCH Measurement Model could be used to: 1) identify respondent misfit indices in concurrent vs. predictive validation designs; 2) locate specific sources of random and systematic error variance; 3) estimate person abilities when assessments have multiple response option formats; 4) determine cut/critical-scores; 5) develop new scoring options in situational judgment tests; and 6) identify training effectiveness and future training needs. If interested in learning more about the RASCH perspective, Dr. Kulas recommends the following resources:

- Journal of Applied Measurement
- Introduction to RASCH Measurement (Smith & Smith, 2004)
- www.winsteps.com

Member Profiles

by Megan Pavot, Co-Secretary

The Spotlight is on...

Steven W. Salmi, Ph.D., LP,
Swanson Kirkpatrick Salmi
Consulting Psychologists



Throughout his career, Steve Salmi has noticed that every person has a unique story about how they ended up where they are. He has also discovered, through his own experience, that interests evolve and expected career paths change, sometimes suddenly.

Steve began his studies at the University of Wisconsin – Steven's Point, with aspirations of having a career in medical research. While attending school, he had the opportunity to be employed as a resident assistant on campus. The experience of working in student development, coupled with a required course in developmental psychology, led him down a different path than he originally expected. Instead of graduating with a biology degree, Steve acquired his B.S. in Psychology. He quickly decided graduate school would be the best avenue for him to acquire enough resources to be employed in the field. As a result, he attended Ohio State University where he received his Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology in 1992. As part of his training there, he gained applied experience while working in a variety of areas including administration, counseling, research, and teaching.

After graduation, Steve was employed in the Counseling and Career Services office at the University of St. Thomas. Though he thoroughly enjoyed counseling, he was still drawn to the field of business. Consequently, he attended classes in management and business at St. Thomas during his three-and-a-half year stint there. Steve left St. Thomas to join the consulting world via employment at Martin-McAllister. For the year and one-half he was there, he was able to combine the skills he garnered in assessment and career development with his interest in business.

Steve currently conducts assessment and development activities for Swanson Kirkpatrick Salmi, where he is also an executive coach, and assists organizations with succession planning. He enjoys the investigative aspects of his work, and especially enjoys using new technology to better meet the needs of clients. One of Steve's strengths as a consultant is his ability to interview clients and understand their needs. He places great importance on developing long-term relationships with clients, and being a trusted

advisor. He enjoys being a part of helping an organization be successful, and knowing his work helps clients achieve their goals.

Steve has had many wonderful mentors throughout his career, but he credits his family as being the most influential force in his life. He and his wife, Susan, have three daughters, a three-and-a-half year old and twin six-month old girls, as well as two cats. They definitely have their hands full, but Steve remarks that they are fortunate enough to have children who have mild temperaments. He enjoys spending time with his family and also remains involved in the community. The Chamber of Commerce and the United Way are two of the organizations that he spends his time supporting. Steve has been a member of MPPAW since it began, and he enjoys the professional development opportunities and collegiality of the organization.

Format of Meetings

Meetings begin at 5:30 p.m. with a social hour, followed by the presentation at 6:20 p.m. The meeting will conclude at 8:00 p.m. A fee of \$10.00 per MPPAW member and \$20.00 per non-member (\$5.00 and \$15.00 for students) covers food at the social hour, as well as the costs associated with the presentation that evening.

Announcements



Continuing Education Credits. For Licensed Psychologists needing to meet the CEU requirements of the Minnesota Board of Psychology, attendance at each MPPAW event counts as 1.5 hours of CEU credit. And only \$10 added to your membership dues covers all the expenses for the MPPAW year, up to 10.5 CEU credits!

We've Moved!

Our new location is the brand new Continuing Education and Conference Center on the St. Paul campus of the University of Minnesota! **We will be in room 83** which is on the same floor where you enter from the parking lot.

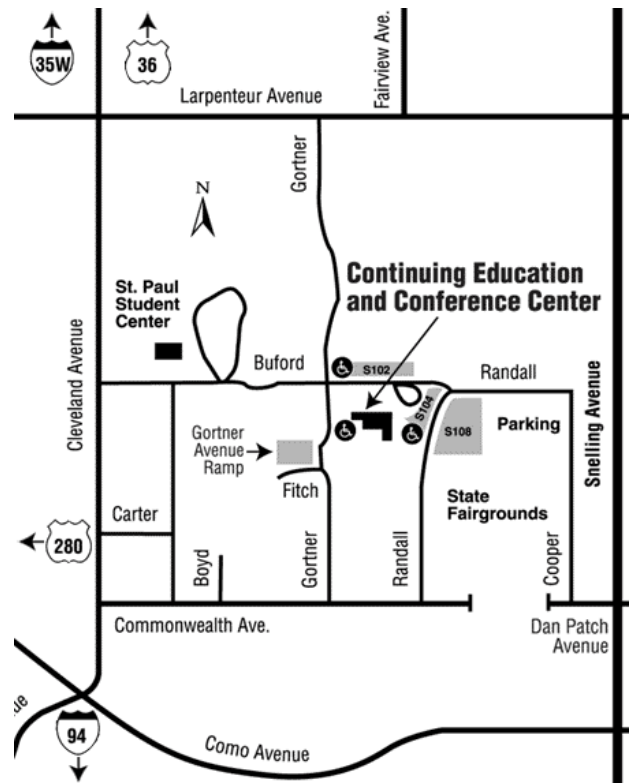
Driving directions and map to the Continuing Education and Conference Center

From I-694 take 35W south to the Cleveland Avenue exit (Note: exit to the left). Follow Cleveland Avenue to Larpenteur Avenue. Go east (left) on Larpenteur to Gortner, turn south (right) on Gortner and go to Buford Avenue. Turn east (left) on Buford Avenue to the parking area.

From I-35W take the Highway 36 exit and turn south on Cleveland Avenue to Larpenteur Avenue. Go east (left) on Larpenteur to Gortner, turn south (right) on Gortner and go to Buford Avenue. Turn east (left) on Buford Avenue to the parking area.

From downtown St. Paul: Go west on I-94 to Snelling Ave. Go north on Snelling Ave. to Larpenteur Avenue. Go west (left) on Larpenteur to Gortner, turn south (left) on Gortner and go to Buford Avenue. Turn east (left) on Buford Avenue to the parking area.

From downtown Minneapolis: Go east on I-94 to MN-280, exit number 236. (Note: exit to the left). Merge onto MN-280 north. Exit at Larpenteur Ave. Take Larpenteur east (right) to Gortner (3rd traffic light). Turn south (right) on Gortner and go to Buford Avenue. Turn east (left) on Buford Avenue to the parking area.



MPPAW Officers and Key Committee Members

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MPPAW Website: www.mppaw.org

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