apricot
amplifying leadership

Building Trust in AI-Led Competency Assessment:

The Science Behind ApriCOT

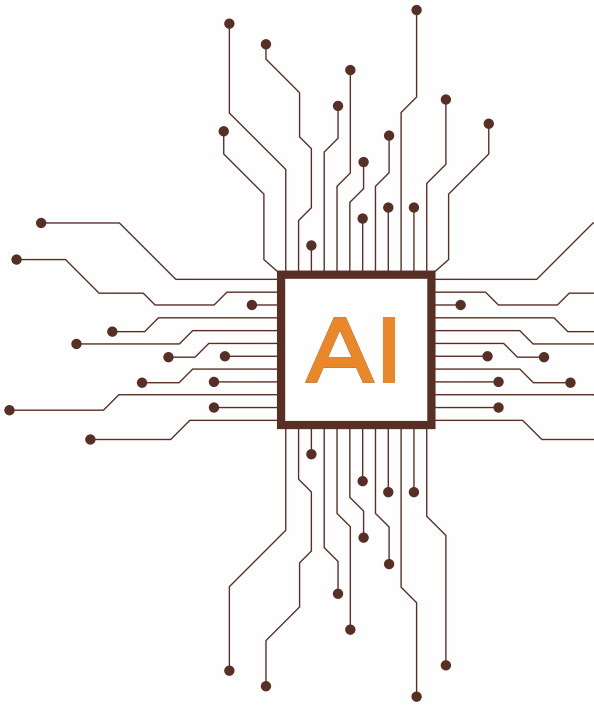
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PEOPLEWIZ CONSULTING

01

Executive Summary

As organizations adopt AI-led tools in talent decisions, a fundamental question arises: *Can we trust these systems to evaluate human capability fairly and accurately?*



ApriCOT by PeopleWiz has been designed with this question at its core. Rather than replacing established assessment science, it builds on it— combining proven methodologies with AI's scalability and consistency. The result is a system that evaluates competencies in a structured, behaviorally grounded, and continuously validated manner.

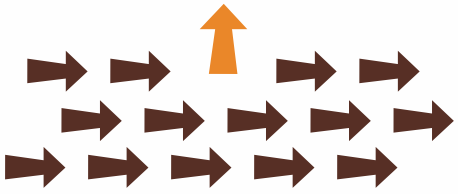
This paper outlines the scientific foundation of ApriCOT, how it generates competency scores, and the mechanisms in place to ensure those scores are valid, reliable, and meaningful in real-world contexts.

02

The Scientific Foundation

ApriCOT is rooted in Situational Judgment Tests (SJTs), a widely accepted methodology used in assessment centers and leadership evaluations across industries.

SJTs are designed to assess how individuals respond to realistic workplace scenarios, making them particularly effective in evaluating applied judgment rather than theoretical knowledge. Because they simulate real decisions, they are known to be strong predictors of on-the-job behavior and leadership effectiveness.



Building on this foundation, ApriCOT uses the **Capital Competency Framework,** which has been developed through an extensive study of more than 500 published leadership competency models. This synthesis ensures that the framework is not tied to a single organization or theory, but instead reflects a broad, research-backed understanding of what effective leadership looks like.

Each competency within the framework is defined across progressive proficiency levels. These levels are not abstract—they are anchored in clearly articulated behavioral cues that describe what performance looks like in practice. This allows the system to evaluate responses in a way that mirrors how trained human assessors interpret behavior in traditional assessment centers.

03

How ApriCOT Works

At a high level, ApriCOT engage candidates through role-relevant scenarios such as Role-Plays and In-Basket simulations. These scenarios are designed to reflect the kinds of challenges individuals are likely to face in their roles, ensuring contextual relevance.

As candidates respond, the system evaluates their inputs against predefined behavioral cues associated with each competency. These cues act as a bridge between qualitative responses and structured evaluation, allowing the system to interpret not just what was said, but how it aligns with effective behavior.

ApriCOT combines proven assessment science with AI-powered analysis to deliver objective, consistent and insightful competency evaluation.

1



Scenario Delivery

Role-relevant scenarios such as role plays or inbox exercises are delivered to candidates, simulating real workplace challenges.

2



Response Capture

Candidates respond in their own words through text or structured inputs, expressing how they would think and act

3



Behavioral Mapping

AI analyzes responses and maps them to predefined behavioral cues for each competency, identifying evidence of effective (or less effective) behaviors.

4



Score Calibration

The mapped evidence is calibrated against expert-defined proficiency levels in the Capital Competency Framework to generate competency scores.

5



Insight Generation

ApriCOT generates a comprehensive profile with competency scores, strengths, development areas and actionable feedback.

6



Actionable Outcomes

Insights power talent decisions, development plans, and learning journeys to drive performance and growth.

The Foundation Behind ApriCOT



Situational Judgment Tests (SJTs)

A proven methodology used in assessment centers worldwide to predict behavior in real contexts



Capital Competency Framework

Built from the study of 500+ published leadership competency models with clear behavioral cues at each proficiency level.



Expert Designed

Scenarios, behavioral cues and evaluation logic are defined by assessment and competency experts



AI Powered Evaluation

Advanced language understanding models combined with expert defined logic ensure consistent and scalable assessment.

Continuous Validation & Improvement



Hybrid Validation

AI scores are reviewed by certified human assessors in hybrid assessments



Deviation Analysis

Differences between AI and human scores are captured and analyzed



Model Refinement

Insights are used to refine prompts, cues and scoring logic



Better Outcomes

Each cycle makes ApriCOT smarter, more accurate and more reliable



ApriCOT brings together the power of AI and the wisdom of human expertise to deliver assessments that are scientifically grounded, consistently scored, and trusted by organizations.

The scoring process is guided by a combination of AI-driven analysis and expert-defined evaluation logic. Rather than relying on generic models, ApriCOT uses prompts and structures that are informed by deep expertise in assessment center methodology and competency evaluation. This ensures that the technology remains grounded in domain knowledge, rather than operating as a black box.

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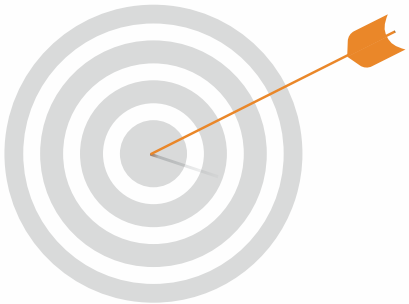
Validity, Reliability, and Accuracy

For any assessment system to be trusted, it must demonstrate that it measures the right things, does so consistently, and produces results that reflect real capability.

ApriCOT addresses validity by aligning every component of the assessment—from scenario design to scoring logic—with established principles of behavioral assessment. The use of SJTs ensures strong content relevance, while the competency framework ensures that what is being measured reflects widely accepted constructs in leadership and organizational effectiveness.

Reliability is strengthened through standardization. Traditional assessment centers often rely on multiple assessors whose judgments can vary due to fatigue, differing interpretations, or contextual bias. ApriCOT reduces this variability by applying consistent evaluation criteria across all responses. Every candidate is assessed against the same behavioral anchors, ensuring uniformity at scale.

Accuracy has been a central focus since launch. Over the past year, ApriCOT has been used in close to 600 assessments, many of which were conducted in a hybrid model in which AI-generated scores were reviewed by certified, experienced human assessors. These comparisons have provided a rich dataset for validation. Any deviations between human and AI scoring are systematically analyzed, and the insights are used to further refine the system. This ongoing calibration ensures that the output remains closely aligned with expert judgment.





05

Continuous Validation and Improvement

A key principle behind ApriCOT is that trust is built over time through continuous validation. The system is not treated as static; instead, it evolves with every assessment.

A dedicated research team, including experts in organizational behavior and psychology, works alongside the product to evaluate outputs, refine scoring logic, and ensure alignment with real-world performance indicators. As new features are introduced —such as scenario builders, development planning tools, and learning integrations—each is subjected to the same level of validation rigor.

This commitment reflects an understanding that assessment quality is not achieved through a one-time design, but through sustained investment in research, feedback, and iteration comparisons have provided a rich dataset for validation. Any deviations between human and AI scoring are systematically analyzed, and the insights are used to further refine the system.

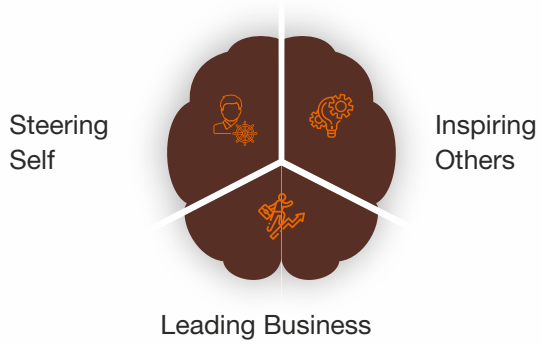
06

Reimagining Assessment at Scale

Traditional assessment centers have long been considered the gold standard for evaluating competencies, but they come with inherent limitations. They are resource-intensive, difficult to scale, and often subject to inconsistencies arising from human factors.

ApriCOT addresses these challenges while preserving the strengths of the methodology.

By digitizing scenario-based assessments and embedding structured evaluation logic, it enables organizations to conduct high-quality assessments at scale, without compromising on rigor. At the same time, it reduces the risk of assessor fatigue and bias, while offering a more engaging and accessible experience for participants.



07

The Human + AI Advantage

At its core, ApriCOT is not about replacing human judgment—it is about augmenting it.

The system brings together consistency and scalability of AI with the depth and nuance of human expertise. Behavioral science informs the design, experts define the evaluation logic, and AI enables the system to operate efficiently and at scale. The result is an assessment approach that is both modern and methodologically sound.

08

Conclusion

Trust in any assessment system must be earned. It depends not only on outcomes, but on the transparency of the methodology and the rigor of validation.

ApriCOT has been built with this responsibility in mind. By grounding itself in established science, validating its output against experienced assessors, and continuously improving through data and research; it offers organizations a credible and future-ready approach to competency assessment.

For organizations looking to balance scale with precision, and innovation with trust, ApriCOT represents a meaningful step forward.

ApriCOT by PEOPLEWIZ CONSULTING

Let's reimagine
leadership—together!

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