



Office Moves: Exercise Description

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Office Moves

Background

This exercise has been designed to investigate how participants behave in a group discussion to reach agreement on a draft accommodation plan that entails the permanent relocation of some staff and the potential closure of unwanted office space. It is suitable for graduate to middle managers. The exercise is an 'assigned role' group exercise where each of the participants has a specific brief with information about their own and other offices. Participants need to take account of factors such as staffing levels, the need for refurbishment, newly available space, etc.

The exercise tests the capacity of candidates to quickly assimilate information to form and then communicate good arguments, whilst working cooperatively to achieve an agreed consensus. Although set in a regional group of a government service this exercise can be used more broadly for assessment in other settings.

The competencies that are relevant to this exercise and can be used as rating dimensions are as follows:

Team Orientation
Leadership
Business Awareness
Results Orientation

Users may substitute versions of the competencies above from their own existing competency framework as desired.

A five minute briefing is required in which candidates are provided with their materials and assigned their role as operations manager of a regional office. This is followed by a 10 minute 'silent reading' period. Following this the discussion is started with a 35 minute time limit within which the participants must debate and reach agreement about their plan. This exercise is suitable to be run with four participants.

Exercise Content

The 9 page participant brief contains an instruction email from the area manager, and background information and synopses for each of the 4 operation managers' (i.e. the participants) proposals for allocation of refurbishment funding. Each participant is also provided with some further information about their own situation. The task includes:

“devising a draft accommodation plan (prior to wider consultation) taking into account The plan must enable minimal disruption to the workflow so that the group’s targets will not be affected. This will necessarily entail some relocation of staff ...” etc.

An extract from the Service’s intended accommodation policy provides guidance for decision strategies and strategic goals that cover, for example:

1. Questions to determine whether accommodation assets should be enhanced (by capital investment), maintained, or disposed of.
2. Expected efficiencies resulting from planning accommodation.
3. ... etc.

The synopses for each office cover basic information (such as location, size, refurbishment costing etc.) and for the participant’s own office, additional information is provided.

Assessor Brief

The Assessor Brief provides an overview of the task including information about the group’s existing offices extracted from the participant brief that provides the rationale for undertaking the accommodation planning exercise. Information in a table format for each office location is presented showing the statistics from the refurbishment scenarios and pros and cons for each office option. Finally there is guidance about areas of discussion that participants could cover and what should be achieved during the exercise.

A separate full set of Administration Instructions gives details of timing and practical arrangements and a Rating Form provides suggested examples of positive and negative behaviours against the relevant competencies.

Quantities

The Administration Pack contains the following items:

- 12 Participant Briefs
- 2 sets of Admin Instructions
- 12 Observation Sheets
- 12 Rating Forms
- 4 Assessor Briefs

After initial purchase of the Admin Pack, a Refill Pack may be purchased which contains the following consumable items:

- 12 Participant Briefs
- 12 Observation Sheets
- 12 Rating Forms

Current pricing can be determined by reference to <http://www.sr-associates.com/pricing.html>

If desired, further queries as to the exercise demands and content can be made to:

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