

IN-BASKET SIMULATION

Learning and Insights



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IN-BASKET SIMULATION

DESCRIPTION OF THE IN-BASKET SIMULATION

The Envisia Learning In-Basket exercise simulates the administrative and supervisory problems of a typical manager. With the aid of background information on a fictitious organization, the participant assumes the role of a new manager and is asked to respond to 23 specific letters, memos, reports, requests, and problems that have accumulated on a predecessor's desk.

The participant must make decisions, take actions, delegate responsibility, write letters, initiate meetings, assign work, plan, organize, and schedule activities based on the material in the In-Basket exercise.

IN-BASKET COMPETENCIES

The In-Basket provides feedback on eight job-related supervisory and management competencies:

- τ Initiative
- τ Interpersonal Sensitivity
- τ Planning & Organizing
- τ Follow-Up/Administrative Control
- τ Delegation
- τ Problem Analysis
- τ Judgment
- τ Decisiveness

PARTICIPANT INSIGHTS AND LEARNINGS INITIATIVE

RELEVANT INSIGHTS AND LEARNINGS

Being proactive and taking initiative is easier when we are familiar with our job, understand our tasks and assignments, and know what is expected from our supervisor. In this exercise you were asked to respond to a number of challenging situations, requests, and problems under time pressure. *A low score does not suggest that you don't take initiative on the job but does imply that under time pressure you did not express and display a high level.*

- What does this exercise tell you about the amount of *initiative you tend to take* under time pressure?
- How much initiative do you typically take in your current position?
- What insights and learning about your initiative skills did you get from this exercise?
- Under which circumstances could you take more initiative in your current position?
- What developmental activities and action steps can you take to continue to enhance your effectiveness in taking initiative on the job? (Example: Think of situations you need to put an action in place to follow-up and/or investigate problems)
- How could you use this insight on initiative to *coach and mentor others*?

PARTICIPANT INSIGHTS AND LEARNINGS

INTERPERSONAL SENSITIVITY

RELEVANT INSIGHTS AND LEARNINGS

This exercise involved many opportunities to respond to both internal and external clients in a direct, prompt, courteous, and customer service oriented manner. Although interpersonal sensitivity was expressed in this exercise through written correspondence, it provides a measure of sensitivity under time pressure. *A low score* does not suggest you are insensitive in your dealings with others on the job but does suggest a task orientation under pressure that may be perceived as less caring, empathetic and customer service oriented.

- What does this exercise tell you about how sensitive you typically are *under time pressure*?
- What insights and learning about your sensitivity skills did you get from this exercise?
- Under which circumstances could you express greater sensitivity towards others in your current position?
- What developmental activities and action steps can you take to continue to enhance your interpersonal sensitivity on the job?
Example: International settings or new relationships require extra attention to sensitive communications

PARTICIPANT INSIGHTS AND LEARNINGS PLANNING AND SCHEDULING

RELEVANT INSIGHTS AND LEARNINGS

The In-Basket simulation presented an opportunity to integrate a great deal of information under time pressure. How you approached the exercise (e.g., working the items in order or prioritizing them) tells you something important about your planning and scheduling skills under time pressure. You were challenged to identify numerous scheduling and meeting conflicts throughout the exercise. A *low score* does not suggest that you possess poor planning and scheduling skills on the job but does imply that under time pressure you did not express and display a high level. The following questions will help you to enhance your development in the planning and organizing competency area:

- What does this exercise tell you about your planning and scheduling skills under time pressure?

- How do you typically approach planning, organizing and scheduling tasks, assignments, and projects in your current position?

- What insights and learning about your planning skills did you get from this exercise?

- Under which circumstances could you improve your planning and organizing skills in your current position?

- What developmental activities and action steps can you take to continue to enhance your effectiveness in planning, organizing and scheduling skills on the job?

PARTICIPANT INSIGHTS AND LEARNINGS DELEGATION

RELEVANT INSIGHTS AND LEARNINGS

This exercise challenged you to figure out how to effectively respond and handle a wide variety of demands and situations that had obviously preceded you. Under time pressure all of us choose to rely on our own experience and skills as well as those we have confidence in. Many opportunities existed in this exercise to delegate specific tasks and assignments such as attending important meetings, investigating situations or responding to others in a prompt and responsive manner. Whether you fully utilized the employees that were available to you, despite some indications that not all of your staff was equally competent will tell you something about your willingness to delegate under new and ambiguous circumstances. Did you trust your direct reports and were confident in them or did you take the approach that you had to do everything yourself when you got back from the business trip? A low score may not mean you are poor at delegating, but it does suggest that under time pressure you may take too much on yourself, particularly when you lack confidence in your team or direct reports. The following questions will help you to enhance your development in the delegation competency area:

- What does this exercise tell you about your tendency to delegate under time pressure?
- How effectively do you use your internal resources in your current position?
- What insights and learning about your delegation skills did you get from this exercise?
- Under which circumstances could you delegate more effectively in your current position?
- What developmental activities and action steps can you take to continue to enhance your effectiveness in delegation skills on the job?

PARTICIPANT INSIGHTS AND LEARNINGS FOLLOW-UP/ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL

RELEVANT INSIGHTS AND LEARNINGS

A number of situations in the In-Basket exercise required follow-up with others. Under time pressure it is easy to be very task focused and think only about reacting to the situation or problem at hand. It is also possible to fall into the trap of not following up because you trust people too much (this may be appropriate when you know your direct reports well, but not in a new situation like the one experienced in the In-Basket). Explicitly scheduling time to follow-up with specific individuals, direct reports, and others was expected during this exercise. Memos, notes, or notations on the Planning Calendar suggesting future meetings with others demonstrated administrative control during the In-Basket simulation. A low score suggests a tendency to delegate, plan, and take actions without much thought to follow-up during time pressure. The following questions will help you to enhance your development in the administrative control/follow-up competency area:

- What does this exercise tell you about your tendency to track/monitor tasks and follow-up with others under time pressure?
- How do you typically track/monitor work and follow-up with others in your current position?
- What insights and learning about your follow-up skills did you get from this exercise?
- Under which circumstances could you do more to follow-up with others in your current position?
- What developmental activities and action steps can you take to continue to enhance your administrative control/follow-up skills on the job?

PARTICIPANT INSIGHTS AND LEARNINGS PROBLEM ANALYSIS

RELEVANT INSIGHTS AND LEARNINGS

Throughout the In-Basket exercise you were challenged to see and understand interrelationships among items. Items were purposely linked together and placed strategically in the In-Basket envelope. Many items required additional information or further investigation to fully understand the most prudent course of action. High scores on this scale indicate the ability to group and address linked items together and the insight to gather additional information when required. A low score does not suggest your problem analysis skills are poor but it does imply a strong “action orientation” under time pressure. The following questions will help you to enhance your development in the problem analysis competency area:

- What does this exercise tell you about your problem analysis skills under time pressure?
- How do you typically approach analyzing and solving problems in your current position?
- What insights and learning about your problem analysis skills did you get from this exercise?
- Under which circumstances could you take more time to gather more information and analyze things more thoroughly in your current position?
- What developmental activities and action steps can you take to continue to enhance your effectiveness in problem solving on the job?

PARTICIPANT INSIGHTS AND LEARNINGS JUDGMENT

RELEVANT INSIGHTS AND LEARNINGS

You were challenged in the In-Basket simulation under time pressure to take specific actions and make decisions with ambiguous information available to you. Given the facts presented to you, certain actions and decisions were more desirable than others. Many of these actions and decisions may have multiple solutions that are acceptable, but the most effective managers tend to follow the ones included in the scoring key. It is important to keep in mind that your approach to this exercise (e.g., whether you prioritized the items) may have affected your actions and decisions. A low score suggests that some of your actions and decisions could be challenged under time pressure. The following questions will help you to enhance your development in the judgment competency area:

- What does this exercise tell you about the judgments you make under time pressure?
- What insights and learning about your judgment skills did you get from this exercise? (For Example: Do you spend too much time analyzing information and not making decisions?)
- Under which circumstances could you be more careful and analytical in your current position? (For Example: Do you perceive data problems but not people problems?)
- What developmental activities and action steps can you take to continue to enhance your effectiveness in making decisions and solving problems on the job? Example: Commit to making decisions on tough issues without analysis paralysis.

PARTICIPANT INSIGHTS AND LEARNINGS

DECISIVENESS

RELEVANT INSIGHTS AND LEARNINGS

Taking actions and making decisions were expected given the facts and requests of the In-Basket simulation. Although many situations and problems required additional information or further research, most In-Basket items had specific deadlines and responses that required immediate actions and decisions. This scale did not evaluate the “quality” of the decisions (i.e., whether the decisions were the best ones for the given situation—this is measured in the *Judgment* scale). Low scores in this exercise are typically observed in respondents who wait to handle many situations upon their return from the scheduled business trip. Think about how rapidly you tend to make decisions, particularly under time pressure. The following questions will help you to enhance your development in the decision-making competency area:

- What does this exercise tell you about your decision-making skills under time pressure?
- Do you typically spend too much time analyzing and not making decisions in your current job? Can you make the “tough” decisions when required?
- What insights and learning about your decision-making skills did you get from this exercise?
- Under which circumstances could you be more decisive in your current position?
- What developmental activities and action steps can you take to continue to enhance your effectiveness in making decisions on the job?

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In-Basket Competency:	
Development Activities:	Target Dates:
Support/Resources Required:	
Measures of Success:	
Results/Outcomes:	