

## SUPERVISORY TEST BATTERY

The Supervisory Test Battery (STB) is a computer-administered examination that is designed to simulate a “day-in-the-life” of a supervisor. Candidates are asked to assume the role of a supervisor in a fictitious organization and to handle a variety of situations that a supervisor is likely to face. No special knowledge regarding the work of this fictitious organization is required in advance. Candidates are provided background information about this organization at the time of the test, along with a various in-basket items (e.g., memos and letters) that a typical supervisor might receive. They are given a maximum of 50 minutes to review this material prior to the start of the test. However, candidates also will have access to this background material throughout the test for reference purposes.

Most candidates find the process of taking the test on the computer fairly simple. For example, when answering test questions, candidates simply use the computer mouse to point to their answer selection on the computer screen. The computer screen also presents a count-down clock so that candidates can keep track of their time. While other information and instructions are provided at the time of the test, please be aware that candidates may not “skip” over test questions that are presented on the computer. That is, they must choose an answer to each question before they can move forward to answer another question. Also, candidates may not go backwards to return to a test question and change an answer they previously selected.

Questions will deal with issues, tasks, situations, decisions, etc., that the candidate, assuming the role of a supervisor, will be required to handle. Since in real life there may be more than one way to appropriately address a situation, some questions may contain more than one acceptable answer. Also, candidates may receive partial credit for certain answer choices based on the relative value or “degree of correctness” of a given answer option. The STB presents candidates with 120 test questions to answer. Candidates are given a maximum of 2 hours and 30 minutes to complete the test. Test scores are presented to candidates immediately upon completion of the examination.

The STB has been reviewed extensively by supervisors and managers from various occupations and agencies and the test content has been determined to accurately assess the major competencies that are common to a wide variety of supervisory positions. Since this standardized examination is used on a continuous basis, candidates are not permitted to review its content (i.e., the test questions and/or answers) following test administration.

Upon completion of the STB, a candidate’s test score is automatically banked for up to three years and may be used for future job announcements. That is, should a candidate apply and be eligible for another announcement involving another supervisory title sometime during this three-year period, his/her STB score will be applied to that announcement. Candidates do have the option, however, to retake the STB after one year but only if they are eligible for future announcement for which the STB is used.

Below is a list of some of the major competency areas that the STB is designed to assess. Based on extensive research and job analyses, these competency areas have been found to be important to the success of a supervisor.

**PROBLEM SOLVING** – Identifies and analyzes problems; uses sound reasoning to arrive at conclusions; finds alternative solutions to complex problems; distinguishes between relevant and irrelevant information to make logical judgments.

**LEADERSHIP** – Inspires, motivates, guides and directs others toward goal accomplishment; coaches, supports, mentors, and challenges subordinates. Adapts leadership styles to a variety of situations. Inspires others by modeling high standards of behavior (e.g., courage, honesty, trust, openness, and respect for others) and by applying these values to daily behaviors.

**DECISION-MAKING** – Makes sound and well-informed decisions; perceives the impact and implications of decisions; commits to action and causes change, even in uncertain situations, in order to accomplish organizational goals.

**INTERPERSONAL SKILL** - Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of others; adjusts approaches to suit different people and situations. Develops and maintains collaborative and effective working relationships with others.

**HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT** - Empowers people by sharing power and authority; develops lower levels of leadership by pushing authority downward and outward throughout the organization; shares rewards for achievement with employees; ensures that staff are appropriately selected, utilized, appraised, and developed and that they are treated in a fair and equitable manner.

**COMMUNICATION** – Expresses facts and ideas both orally and in writing in a succinct, clear, accurate, thorough, organized and effective manner. Reviews, proofreads and edits written work to correct errors involving sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, syntax, etc. Presents facts to individuals or groups effectively; listens to others; facilitates an open exchange of ideas.

**TEAM BUILDING** – Manages group processes; encourages and facilitates cooperation, pride, trust, and group identity; fosters commitment and team spirit; works with others to achieve goals.

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT** – Manages and resolves conflicts, confrontations, and disagreements in a positive and constructive manner to minimize negative personal impact.

Candidates often ask whether there are certain books or references that they should read to help them prepare for this examination. In reply, any text or book on general supervisory principles and practices is probably useful in this regard. However, no particular reference is “required” reading and it is certainly possible to do well on this examination without reading such materials. However, that being said, the following booklist is suggested should a candidate seek assistance in identifying texts that might be helpful for purposes of test preparation.

1. Conflict Resolution by Daniel Dana
2. Effective Coaching by Marshall Cook
3. Elements of Style (4th edition) by William Strunk, E. B. White
4. Essential Managers: Essential Manager's Manual by Robert Heller, Tim Hindle
5. Essential Managers: Managing Teams by Robert Heller, Tim Hindle
6. Supervisor's Portable Answer Book by George T. Fuller
7. Supervisor's Survival Kit: Your First Step into Management by Elwood N. N. Chapman and Cliff Goodwin