

# Management Assessment

Career Skills

Paul Newton



PAUL NEWTON

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# **MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT CAREER SKILLS**

Management Assessment: Career Skills

1<sup>st</sup> edition

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# PREFACE

This eBook explains what you can expect if you attend a management assessment center. These are commonly used when selecting graduates for management, developing supervisors into managers, and promoting line-managers to executive positions.

You will learn:

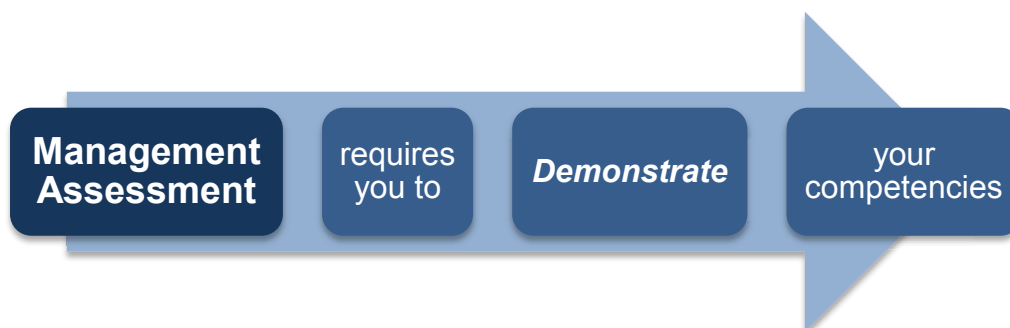
- How assessment centers are organized and how they differ depending on whether they are being used for recruitment or development.
- The human resources terminology that can help you to understand what exactly is being assessed.
- How assessors use scorecards to record how your behaviors relate to the competencies of the role.
- What research you need to do to be conversant with the jargon, processes, and issues that someone in the role would be expected to know.
- How to use the invite letter, agenda, and role specification to work out what you will be expected to do on the day.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Organizations use management assessment at key times in an individual's personal development. These include:

- Selecting graduates for management.
- Developing a group of supervisors into managers.
- Seeking executive or board members.

As a manager, you will be expected take part in management assessments as part of your organization's development program or when you are seeking a new role or a promotion.



During this type of assessment you will need to demonstrate that your competencies are appropriate for the role. This is achieved by performing a variety of exercises that are designed to assess your practical ability and to show that you operate at the appropriate level for each of the required role competencies.

Management assessments differ from interviews in that you need to ‘show’ as well as ‘tell’ those evaluating you that you have these competencies. Most organizations use an ‘assessment center’ or ‘development center’ to conduct these exercises. A management assessment center is an event rather than a place. It usually takes place over a full day at an external location. For simplicity, the term ‘assessment center’ will be used throughout this eBook as it is synonymous with the term ‘development center.’ This can be defined as:

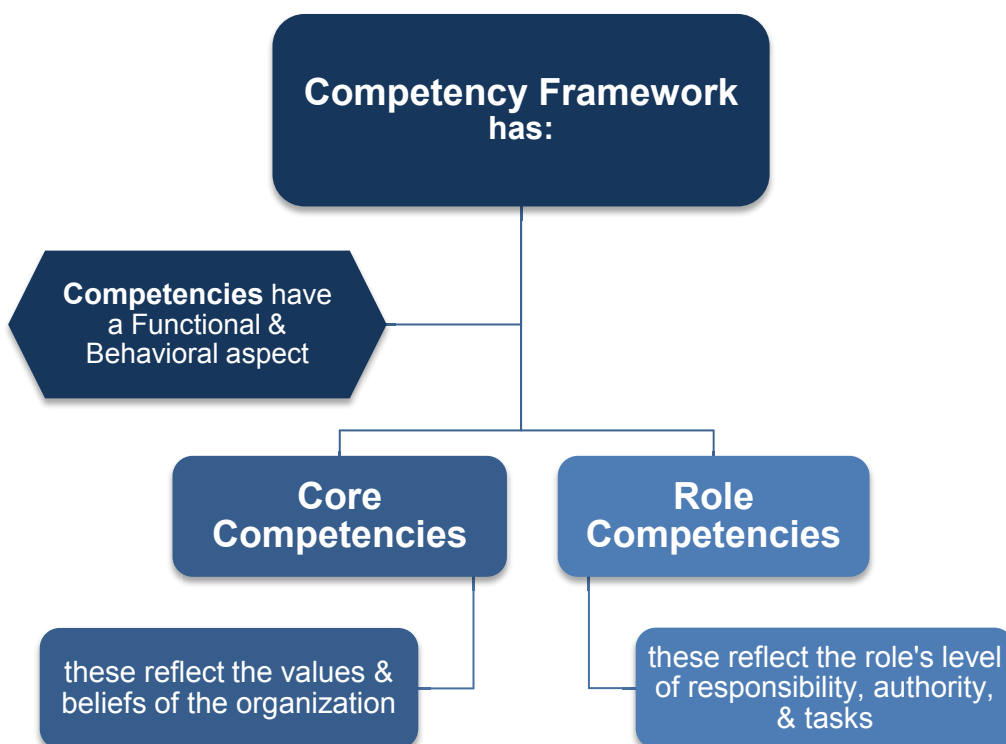
*‘A method for assessing aptitude and performance; applied to a group of participants by trained assessors using various aptitude diagnostic processes in order to obtain information about applicants’ abilities or development potential.’*

Management assessments often take place at an external location that offers several rooms suitable for these exercises. This enables the assessors, who are responsible for evaluating the group, the opportunity to properly observe each candidate demonstrate their behavior in one or more of the role's required competencies.

These events are usually a full day in duration and you will receive an agenda detailing how it is going to be structured. It is important that you use this and any other documents related to the role and organization as part of your preparation.

Each management assessment is unique because it is dependent on the culture and ethos of the organization as well as the specific requirements of the role for which candidates are being assessed. Successful organizations do all they can to ensure that their development efforts are invested in those individuals who are most likely to succeed and most closely match the culture.

Organizations that use assessment centers will have built up a '*competency framework*' that they use to assess their existing employees as well as new recruits. This framework defines which competencies are required for each role and how these alter depending on the management level and responsibilities of the role.



Each organization will also have its ‘core’ competencies that every individual must have in addition to their role competencies. For each competency in the framework there is a detailed explanation of the behaviors that are need to perform the role efficiently and effectively.

Each area of management has its own terminology and acronyms and management assessment is no exception. The following table will help you to become familiar with the terms commonly used in management assessment and throughout this eBook.

Term	Management Assessment Definition
<b>Behavior</b>	Everything you say or do that can be linked to a competency area.
<b>Competency</b>	A group of behaviors that are specific, observable, and verifiable, that can be readily and logically classified together, and that are related to job success.
<b>K.S.A.</b>	<b>K</b> nowledge, <b>S</b> kills, <b>A</b> bilities and <b>A</b> ttitudes that are required for a competency.
<b>Simulations</b>	Fictional situations in which the candidate is expected to respond from the perspective of someone in the level being sought, e.g. in-tray exercise.
<b>Assessor</b>	An individual trained to observe, record, classify, and make reliable judgments about the behaviors of those being assessed. (Usually at least one level above the level applied for.)
<i>Source: Lewis Rowe, Tina, A Preparation Guide for the Assessment Center Method (2006), Charles C. Thomas Publishers Ltd, Illinois, USA.</i>	

Management assessment is concerned with identifying which individuals are able to demonstrate the required competencies at the appropriate level for the role. Competency development is a career-long process and is part of your overall professional and personal development. If you would like to know more about how to develop your own competencies or those of people in your team then you can download our free ‘[Developing Competencies](#)’ eBook.

It is important to be clear about the difference between competencies and goals. Competencies have to do with ‘*how you perform or behave*’ when doing something. In contrast, goals are related to ‘*what you actually achieve*’ and are not concerned with how you got there.

If your management assessment is part of an organizational development program you will notice five key differences between this and one designed as part of the recruitment process:

- You will be actively involved in your own assessment.
- You will be asked to assess and feed back to other members of the group on their display of competencies.
- You will receive detailed feedback on their performance and how this affects their future development.
- You will be responsible for managing your own Continuous Professional Development (CPD).
- Those observing the exercises act as facilitators rather than assessors when judging your competencies.

The level of success you can achieve when participating in a management assessment has a strong correlation with the amount of time and effort that you put into your preparation. This will enable you to attend the management assessment with the right mindset and a clear picture of what is required.

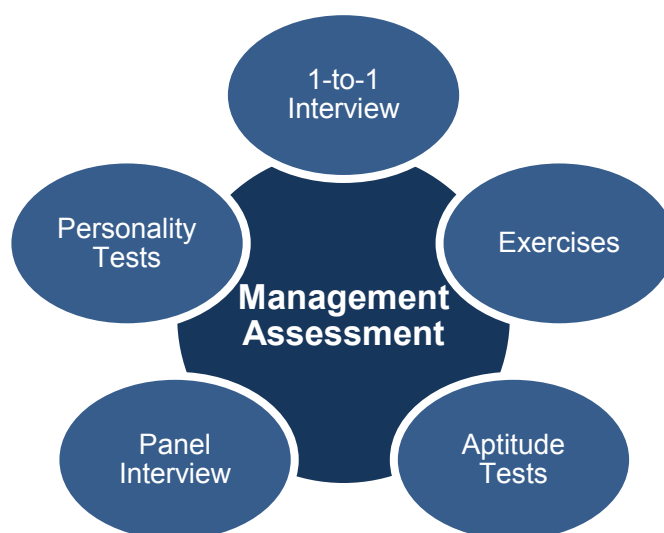
#### **Key Points**

- A management assessment center is an event rather than a place. It usually takes place over a full day at an external location.
- Organizations use them when selecting graduates for management, developing supervisors into managers, and promoting line-mangers to executive positions.
- Assessors observe each candidate and identify which individuals are able to demonstrate the required competencies at the appropriate level for the role.
- Knowing how an assessment center is organized and what the assessors are looking for will help you succeed.

## 2 MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT FORMAT

Most management assessment centers will involve a variety of activities that last a whole day. Some assessments focus solely on exercises, others include an interview as well. The interview may be one-to-one or in front of a panel.

The exact nature of your management assessment will be detailed in the agenda sent with your invitation letter so you will have some idea of what is in store for you and be able to prepare for it.

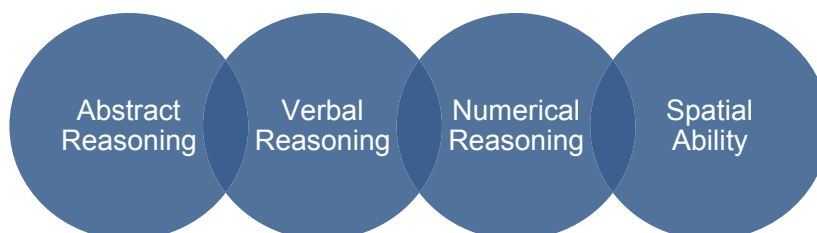


You now have to show the organization that you are the ‘best’ person for the role because your competencies offer the best fit to their core and role competencies. You only have this one chance to show the assessors you possess the competencies at the right level for the role. If you don’t show a particular competency then an assessor cannot score you for it.

Treat each exercise as a separate entity and do your best to demonstrate the appropriate competencies, regardless of the fact you may have done the same in a previous exercise. A separate scorecard or sheet will be used for each exercise and in most cases different assessors are used, further emphasizing the need to show all of the relevant competencies if you want to maximize your score.

## 2.1 APTITUDE TESTS AND PERSONALITY QUESTIONNAIRES

Aptitude tests, also known as ability tests, are used to gauge an individual's reasoning abilities. The tests focus on your numerical, verbal, and abstract reasoning skills, although certain roles may also be interested in assessing your spatial reasoning ability.



To attain a high score in these tests it is [essential to practice](#) so that you become familiar with the style and format of the questions. This enables you to build up your speed and accuracy as well as your final score. The tests are usually around 30 minutes long and consist of 20–35 multiple choice questions. If you are facing one or more aptitude tests then you can prepare by downloading our free eBook '[Preparing for Aptitude Tests](#)'.

Many organizations use personality questionnaires to assess how well a candidate's personality will fit in with their culture and values. The most popular personality questionnaires used in recruitment are the Myers-Briggs indicator (MBTI), DISC, SHL OPQ32r, and MMPI-2-RF. They generally consist of around 50–200 questions using a mixture of 2-scale, 5-scale, and 7-scale point answers.

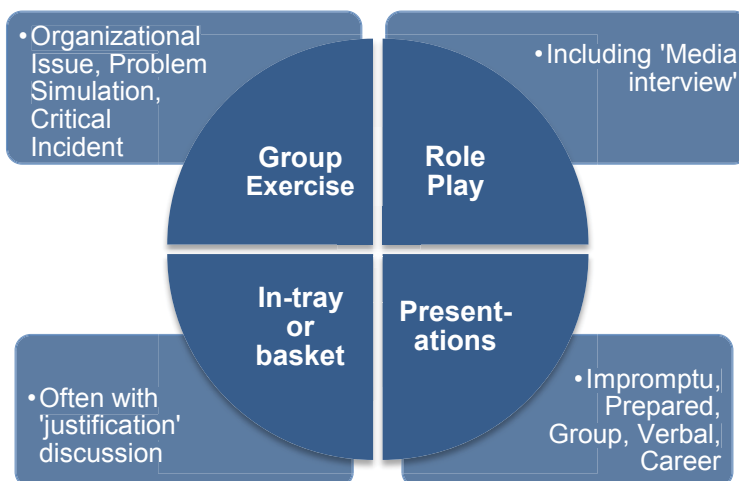
Many of the questions you will be asked are designed to measure certain desirable qualities organizations require in their managers, for example honesty, integrity, and leadership behaviors. They also aim to quantify an individual's ability to work efficiently in stressful circumstances and to control destructive emotions such as anger and negativity.



Part of your preparation for a personality questionnaire should include defining which of your behaviors make up your workplace persona and how these behaviors fit into the role. You can learn more about this in our free eBook [‘Preparing for Personality Tests’](#).

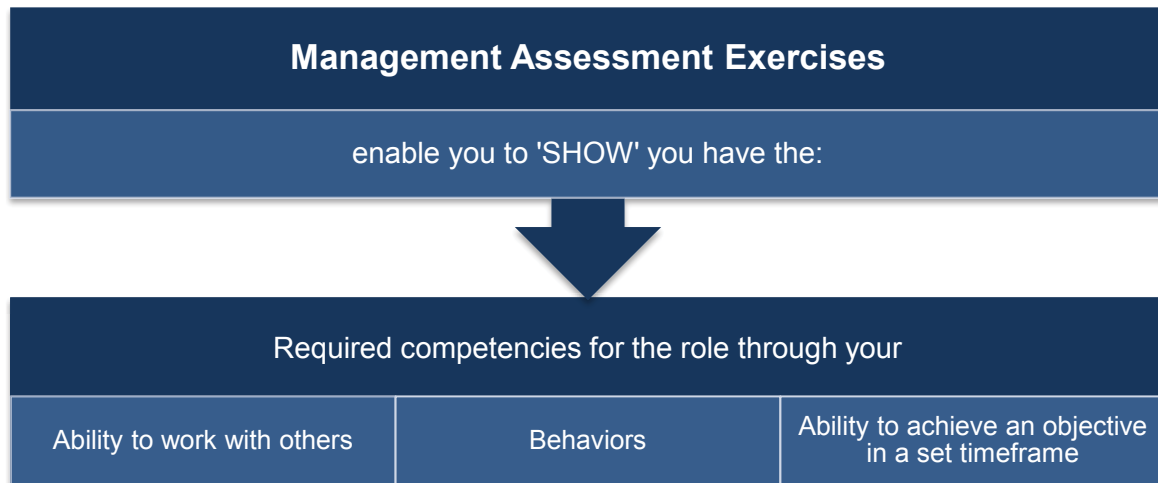
## 2.2 TYPES OF EXERCISES

The most common management exercises can be grouped under the following four headings as shown in the diagram.



These exercises provide the best opportunity for assessors to observe the candidates’ behavior, how they react to unforeseen issues, and how they communicate with others.

Whichever exercise you are asked to do, you will be supplied with an exercise brief that contains a description of the situation and any background information, your role in that situation, and the outcome you are expected to achieve in the time allocated. It is important to work within the set time limits and to stay within the parameters set by the exercise brief.

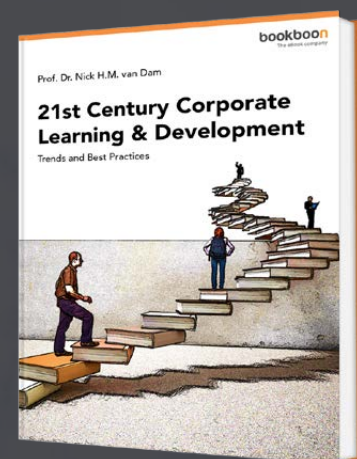


Avoid making any assumptions or exceeding the brief because this will not bring you additional marks. Assessors can only mark you according to the exercise scorecard.

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Some exercises will be observed, but many are videoed and then watched by the all of the assessors together. Whether you are being observed or videoed you need to act as if you are dealing with a 'real' situation so that you have the opportunity to show your competencies at their best. For a detailed description of each type of exercise and its associated competencies you should download our free eBook '[Interview Exercises](#)'.

Once all the exercises are complete, the assessors will meet to compare notes and finalize a score for each individual. It is not often practical to give candidates feedback on their performance but it is always a good idea to follow up your management assessment with a phone call or email asking for feedback as this can be a big help in future assessments.

#### **Key Points**

- The exact nature of your management assessment will be detailed in the agenda sent with your invitation letter.
- It could include management simulation exercises, a personality questionnaire, aptitude tests, and/or an interview.
- Management aptitude tests focus on your numerical, verbal, and abstract reasoning skills.
- Personality questionnaires are used to assess how well your personality will fit in with the organization's culture and values.
- Commonly used exercises include the in-tray, role play, group discussions, and making a presentation.
- Always ask for feedback following the assessment center, even if this is via email at a later date.

### 3 THE ASSESSORS

These are the people you have to convince that you have all of the role's competencies and can use them at the appropriate level. The only way this can be done is by you '*showing*' them these abilities in each and every exercise that makes up your management assessment.



In everything you do you must remember three things about your assessors. Firstly, they know nothing about you, so you have to show them who you are and what you can do. Secondly, they are only concerned with how you demonstrate the behaviors detailed on the scorecard. Thirdly, they can only give you a mark for the behaviors they see demonstrated, because assumptions cannot be validated or recorded.

Your assessors can vary depending on whether the assessment is for internal development or part of the recruitment process. In the former, the assessors will usually be people from at least one level of management above that of the role. They will have clear expectations of the type of person they envisage performing the role, especially if it has a direct impact on their own performance.

When the assessment forms part of the recruitment process, the assessors are likely to be a mixture of HR professionals and the organization's senior management. They will have the necessary skills to observe, classify, and record the role behaviors detailed on the scorecard. These will have been identified from the role description and specification, ensuring that assessors are consistent in the way they mark individuals.

The following scorecards will give you an appreciation of how your assessor will mark your performance for each exercise and how it relates to the competencies of the role.

In these examples the scoring goes from 1–10 with 1 being poor or unsatisfactory and 10 being totally capable and suited to role.

<b>Candidate:</b> Antonio Jiminez		<b>Assessor:</b> JN	<b>Date:</b> 9/6/XX
<b>Exercise:</b> Group Discussion		<b>Competency:</b> Influencing	
<b>COMPETENCY ROLE DEFINITIONS</b>			<b>SCORE</b>
Asks questions and listens carefully in order to understand others' needs and viewpoints. <i>Tried to ensure that all members of the group received a fair hearing and clarified their positions where necessary.</i>			7
Anticipates likely objections/risks and responses. <i>Pre-empted objections on some occasions when contributing possible solutions.</i>			5
Uses a range of tactics and/or lines of argument to persuade others. <i>Good knowledge of debating skills – summarized arguments well and kept to the point.</i>			7
Presents a balanced and reasoned case when recommending a particular decision or course of action. <i>Was aware of shortcomings of his preferred solution.</i>			7
Is constructive when faced with disagreement. <i>Always polite &amp; considerate – tried to persuade rather than undermine.</i>			8
Communicates ideas clearly, persuasively, and assertively. <i>Robust debater with well-practiced public speaking skills.</i>			7

The first sample scorecard shows you how an individual was marked for his performance in the group discussion exercise for the competency 'influencing.' The assessor's notes are shown in black italics.

The second sample shows the individual's aggregate scorecard for the competency 'influencing' for three exercises – group discussion, role play, and an impromptu presentation.

<b>Aggregate Score Card for Competency: Influencing</b>			
<b>Date:</b> 9/6/XX	<b>Candidate:</b> Antonio Jiminez	<b>Final Score: 6.5</b>	
<b>COMPETENCY ROLE DEFINITIONS</b>	<b>EXERCISE</b>	<b>ASSESSORS' SCORES</b>	<b>AGGREGATE SCORE</b>
Asks questions and listens carefully in order to understand others' needs and viewpoints.	Grp. Discussion Role Play Imp. Presentation	7, 6, 7, 8 6, 6, 5, 7 —	<b>6.5</b>
Anticipates likely objections/risks and responses.	Grp. Discussion Role Play Imp. Presentation	5, 4, 7, 6 4, 5, 5, 5 5, 6, 6, 6	<b>5.3</b>
Uses a range of tactics and/or lines of argument to persuade others.	Grp. Discussion Role Play Imp. Presentation	7, 8, 7, 7 — 5, 4, 4, 4	<b>5.6</b>
Presents a balanced and reasoned case when recommending a particular decision or course of action.	Grp. Discussion Role Play Imp. Presentation	7, 7, 6, 7 — 7, 6, 5, 7	<b>6.5</b>
Is constructive when faced with disagreement.	Grp. Discussion Role Play Imp. Presentation	8, 7, 7, 8 8, 8, 7, 7 —	<b>7.5</b>
Communicates ideas clearly, persuasively, and assertively.	Grp. Discussion Role Play Imp. Presentation	7, 6, 8, 7 — 8, 8, 8, 7	<b>7.4</b>

The final score for an individual will be the average of all of the assessors' exercise scores. Once all individuals have completed an exercise, the assessors will discuss what they have observed and agree a final score for each person. These discussions ensure that each person is judged in a fair and equitable manner and these notes provide the evidence for that decision. These notes can also be used to give feedback to individuals if necessary.

#### **Key Points**

- The assessors know nothing about you and can only give you credit for the behaviors that you demonstrate during each exercise.
- Assessors will have clear expectations of the type of person they envisage performing the role and will give marks accordingly.
- Understanding how assessors use scorecards will give you an appreciation of how your performance is recorded and how it relates to the competencies of the role.

## 4 INITIAL PREPARATION

The following four steps will ensure that you attend a management assessment with knowledge of the role and organization, as well as a clear idea of how you can ‘fit in’ and add value.



The depth and breadth of your research will vary depending on the amount of notice you have before your management assessment, but time spent on this type of preparation can have a substantial pay-off and you should aim to do as much as possible in the time available.

Where you are seeking an internal promotion you need to make sure that you have reviewed your previous appraisals and taken account of any recommendations they contain. Internal assessors will use a personnel file in the same way they would use a resume for an external candidate – that is, to form their initial impression of your capabilities.

### 4.1 STEP 1 – KNOW THE ORGANIZATION

Much of this information can be gleaned from the organization’s own website. It is amazing how much information you can gather from it to help you create a [SWOT](#) (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. This is a strategy tool that will help you to clarify the internal and external factors that affect the organization.

You can search online to establish the mission statement and identify key personnel within the organization. In some cases this includes information that can help you to appreciate the aims of the executive and how they influence priorities within the organization.

Your analysis of these priorities can be confirmed by analyzing the summaries provided by the CEO and CFO in the organization’s annual report. If you have the opportunity, it is often good to see how this data has changed over time. It also helps to see how their strategy has developed over the same period.



The financial statements contain all the basic data that you need to calculate simple performance, solvency, profitability, and investment ratios. This research helps you to piece together evidence of current policies and procedures and how they might impact the role. This often forms the basis of questions you can ask during an interview. It can also provide a strong indication of the prevailing culture, which you will need to understand if you are going to fit in.

You should also aim to put together a basic organizational chart if one is not included in the annual report or on the website. This can explain how a particular function is viewed within the organization. Is the department or division you are going to work for seen as a resource, cost, or service center?

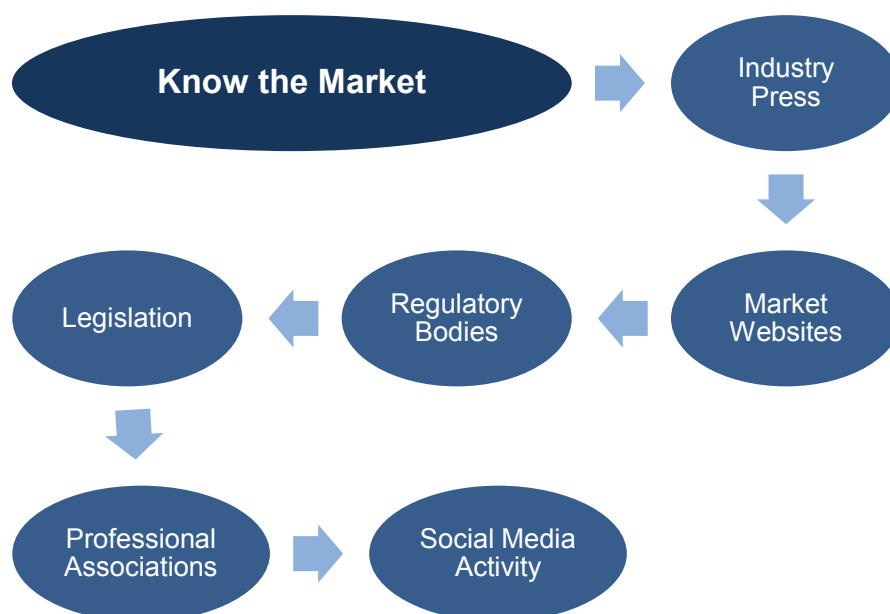
Reading press releases that contain the organization’s key messages and form the foundation of their public image can further substantiate this. Another excellent source of information to help you understand the organization is their social media activity. Which social media forums do they post to and what do these posts talk about?

All of this information can be brought together with the initial SWOT analysis to help you understand how the organization sees itself, what it considers important, and where it is going. Re-reading the job ad in the light of this information can help you to see the role in a wider context. This is important because you need to be sure that it matches your expectations and desires.

## 4.2 STEP 2 – KNOW THE MARKET

You should now have a clear picture of the organization, which is useful but needs to be extended to include the wider market that it operates in. The easiest way to do this is to read through current and back copies of the main industry press to gain an understanding of the main topics of discussion and concern. It can also be useful to look at how the national press describes the market and its main players. Although we are using terms like ‘market’ and ‘industry’ this step still applies to the nonprofit sector because even charities and NGOs are subject to external influences and operate in a market-like environment, one in which funding takes the place of profits.

Officially published information can be crosschecked with what is being said in blogs and social media comments. These sources can sometimes be at odds with more established media but tend to be ahead of the curve if something disruptive or controversial is in the offing.



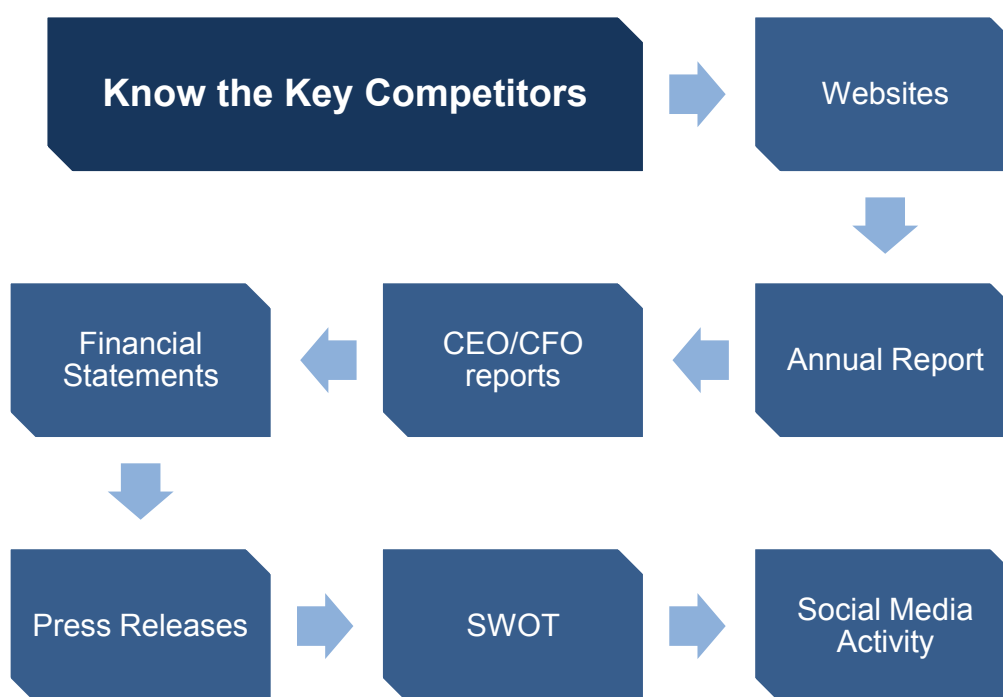
Looking into the activities of regulatory bodies and professional associations is useful in teasing out key issues that could have an impact on the market and those who operate in it. This also applies to proposed legislation the implication of which is usually discussed in depth long before being passed into law.

Each of these organizations will have websites and social media activity that can expand your knowledge base. The details you discover in this activity could be used in an interview either to answer a question or to ask one. Make sure you think carefully about your phrasing and have facts to support you otherwise it could be more damaging than helpful!

### 4.3 STEP 3 – KNOW YOUR KEY COMPETITORS

Steps one and two naturally lead onto the third step – that of learning about your key competitors. The depth of your research will vary but as a minimum you need to know the key players in the market and the same basic information about each one. This includes their status, their recent performance, and how they relate to the organization – for example a threat, potential partner, etc.

You can use the same sources of information you used previously, including websites, press coverage, social media, annual reports, etc.



Using what you find from these three steps will help you to create a basic SWOT for these key competitors and develop your understanding of the market.

If you are just breaking into management, perhaps from a technical or supervisory role, then all of the above may seem like a lot of unnecessary work. However, these three factors – the organization, the market, and competitors – are the very things that senior managers spend their time thinking about. Having a sound understanding of them and being able to talk about them with confidence makes you a far more credible candidate for a senior role.

In addition to being able to answer and ask questions from a strategic perspective, this knowledge can give you kudos and credibility with your co-workers and immediate boss. It also gives you the capability to talk to senior people informally, over lunch for example, and mark yourself out as someone who deserves to be considered for a more senior role if one becomes available.

#### 4.4 STEP 4 – KNOW YOURSELF

With all the intelligence you have gathered so far you are now ready to prepare yourself. For each opportunity you must tailor your resume and portfolio to match the needs of the role and organization. Make sure you have carefully read and highlighted any significant words or phrases used in the advertisement, role description, and job specification. It is important to use appropriate or ‘matching’ wording in your resume so that whoever reads it can see that you possess the required competencies.



It also ensures that your understanding of the role requirements is precise and can be communicated back to the assessors during the exercises and interview.

For many roles a portfolio can be an effective tool to use during the interview. This is a collection of ‘deliverables’ (all ‘all confidential items having been removed’) that you have generated in your current role. A portfolio item may be a report, photo, press cutting, design, plan, or anything else that gives you the opportunity to show how you dealt with a problem. You can also describe how and why you undertook certain CPD tasks to develop or enhance a competency to the level of the role.

As well as preparing a resume and portfolio, you can use the information from steps 1–3 to make sure that you are up to date and fully conversant with the jargon, processes, and issues that someone in the role would be expected to know.

#### Key Points

- Learn as much as possible about the organization by reading the annual report, financial statements, and any press releases you can find.
- You can gain market knowledge from the industry press as well as regulatory and legislative bodies.
- You can also gain information about key competitors from the above sources.
- If the words used in your resume do not match the job description then it will probably be discarded, so tailor your resume to match the job description.
- Use the information from your research to make sure that you are up to date and fully conversant with the jargon, processes, and issues that someone in the role would be expected to know.



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## 5 DETAILED PREPARATION

The following example works through the type of information you would receive inviting you to take part in a management assessment and how the information it contains can be used. This example includes a:

- Letter
- Agenda
- Role Specification

Using these three items you can identify key characteristics about the assessment. They also direct you to ask specific questions to help you prepare.

### Invite Letter

Dear Antonio,

#### **Assessment Center for Project Manager: Reference DF01093**

We are pleased to invite you to attend our management assessment on Monday March 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Kings Hotel Coventry. Registration and morning refreshments will be in the Neville Suite starting at 8.00am.

An agenda is attached detailing the format of the day with your first exercise at 9am. A buffet lunch is provided (please let me know any special dietary requirements).

As part of your management assessment we would like you to give a 20-minute presentation to the panel of assessors on the topic 'My Perfect Project.' There will be a flip chart, white board, projector, and PC connection provided in the room. Your presentation must include an 8-minute Q&A session.

We look forward to receiving your confirmation of attendance and meeting you on Monday March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Please email me at [ann.dale@abc.com](mailto:ann.dale@abc.com) or call me on 0800 77781 66544 if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

**Ann Dale**

Enc. Agenda & Role Specification

From the letter above you can see the following key facts that will prompt you to ask yourself certain questions that will affect your preparation:

- The management assessment starts early on a Monday morning. You'll need to arrive at 7.30am so that you have the opportunity to familiarize yourself with the location layout. Depending how long it'll take you to get to the hotel you may want:
  - *To book an overnight stay so that you arrive fresh and avoid the morning rush hour.*
- You are told lunch is included so if you have any special dietary needs you must include this in your confirmation email.
- You are asked to give a presentation (the topic has been set) as part of the assessment. You need to decide:
  - *Which of the facilities offered do you want to use?*
  - *How many individuals are likely to be on the panel and what are their backgrounds?*
  - *Do you feel a handout would be appropriate?*
- Ensure that you only use 12 of your allocated 20 minutes to present your perfect project because you have been asked to include an 8-minute Q&A session.
  - *Decide how best to handle questions asked during the 12-minute presentation and how you'll record them.*
- Knowledge of the background of each person on the panel is essential because this will dictate the level of technical detail you use and the focus of your messages.
  - *Does the panel consist of internal and external people?*
  - *Is the panel made up solely of technical or management individuals? Or is it mixed?*
  - *How do you want to handle the Q&A session? Do you want to use the flip chart or white board to record the questions?*
- With only 8 minutes for the Q&A session and a panel of people who can ask questions you must prepare carefully to ensure your behavior matches that of someone in the role. Don't forget to plan for what you will do if there are no questions, because the assessors may want to see how you respond to this situation!

Looking at the agenda you can recognize certain factors that are key to your assessment:

<b>Agenda for Project Manager Assessment</b>		<b>Date: 03/03/xx</b>
08.00	Registration	Reception
08.30	Welcome	Neville Suite
09.00	1st Exercise – 20mins	Room 1
09.30	Role play – 20mins	Room 2
10.00	Refreshments	Neville Suite
10.30	Group Exercise – 45mins	Dance Studio
11.30	2nd Exercise – Exercise 30mins & Justification – 15mins	Room 3
12.30	Presentation – 20mins	Neville Suite
13.00	Buffet Lunch	Carvery Restaurant
14.30	3rd Exercise – 20mins	Room 4
15.00	4th Exercise – 20mins	Room 5
15.30	Interview – 50mins	Lady Jane Suite
16.30	Refreshments	Neville Suite
17.00	Feedback – 20–30mins	Room 1

- The day is full on with only three opportunities for breaks and before lunch you have three different exercises.
  - *To ensure that you perform at your best throughout the day you may want to take a bottle of water and a few energy bars.*
- The role play is the second exercise you will be asked to undertake. Using the job specification you will be able to discern the ranking they give to your responsibilities and qualities they require in the person.
  - *Are contractual issues, customer relations, or a problem with the project team most likely to be the scenario?*
- The second exercise has a 15-minute justification at the end giving you the opportunity to explain your reasoning. This is something that is most often associated with 'In-tray' exercises.
  - *Decide on the best way to identify key items that you may want to use in your justification.*

- The first break provides you with an opportunity to people-watch the rest of the group prior to the group exercise.
- The group exercise takes place in the dance studio. There is also a 15-minute period at the beginning of the time allocation – this could indicate that time has been allowed for you to change clothes.
  - *You need to ask Ann Dale if casual clothes are needed. A suit is not ideal for building a human tower in!*
  - *This also gives you the opportunity to ask what the dress code for the day is so that you are dressed appropriately.*
- An hour and a half has been allocated to lunch so be aware that you are likely to be observed during this time. Ensure your behaviors match those of the role at all times.
- Your interview is the last exercise and you will need to ensure that you have easy access to your portfolio so that you can give examples of your achievements and competencies.
- Use the last break to prepare yourself for the feedback session. Be prepared to tell the assessors your impression of the day. Be honest but diplomatic if this is asked before you know whether or not you have been successful.

If you haven't already taken a personality test or aptitude tests they could be the remaining exercises. To learn more about different types of interview exercises you may encounter in a management assessment refer to our free eBook '[Interview Exercises](#)'.

One of the most useful documents you can analyze is the role specification because this gives you the best indication of the competencies and behaviors that are expected of someone performing the role. This example has four sections that you must read carefully to determine these items.

<b>Role Specification</b>	<b>Project Manager: Reference DF01093</b>	
<b>Department:</b> Nautical Engineering	<b>Salary:</b> £25–45,000 (based on skills & experience)	
<b>Location:</b> Mountford	<b>Business Areas:</b> Technical Services	<b>Agreed:</b> 02/12/xx
<p><b>The Position:</b></p> <p>Technical Services division has vacancies for project management professionals who have specialist knowledge of the engineering arena – mechanical &amp; nautical. The position will be based at our Mountford site, which works closely with other related teams from the Runcorn, Bletchley, Kildare, and Cardiff sites.</p> <p>The majority of the customers are based in the private sector with a few specialized Government contracts mainly with the Royal Navy. From our Mountford site we offer our customers a comprehensive technical consultancy and project management, including solution recommendation, design, project implementation, and technical assessments.</p>		
<p><b>Experience:</b></p> <p>The successful candidates must be able to demonstrate reasonable experience at managing and monitoring projects, both national and international. They must have the necessary skills to lead and manage a multi-disciplined team made up from within the organization's divisions and consultants.</p> <p>Expertise in running a number of projects of varying complexity will be advantageous. Our smallest projects have a budget of \$500,000 up to \$200 million.</p> <p><i>Each application will be assessed against the role objectives and person specification.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Each applicant will be judged on their ability to perform the tasks in order of their importance.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Successful applicants will be invited to a management assessment.</i></p>		
<p><b>Responsibilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of the contract and customer expectations.</li> <li>• The management of multi-disciplined technical projects.</li> <li>• Developing long-term working relationships with customers.</li> <li>• Meeting project milestones and budget requirements.</li> <li>• Compilation of all risk assessment and safety procedures.</li> <li>• Assisting with the production of business proposals and bids as part of the ongoing business growth.</li> </ul>		

**Personal Specification:**

The individual must demonstrate:

- Proven record of delivering projects on time and to budget.
- Strong project management background.
- Excellent interpersonal and conflict management skills.
- Sound knowledge of single and multi-contract management.
- Leadership qualities and good team motivation skills
- Good knowledge of mechanical and nautical engineering and current risk assessment requirements.
- Knowledge or experience of national and international projects.

- *Position section* tells you that knowledge of commercial and government contracts is required. Whilst based at Mountford you work closely with four other teams and sites. Experience of multi-site operations and matrix management would be desirable.
- *Experience section* asks for international and national project experience. You must be familiar with managing multi-disciplined teams and budgets of several millions.
- *Responsibilities & Personal sections* provide a ranked list of their requirements helping you to prioritize the role's competencies within the common framework.

In addition to those requirements you also need to ensure that your preparation clearly indicates that you have a comprehensive knowledge of competitors and the market the organization operates in.

**Key Points**

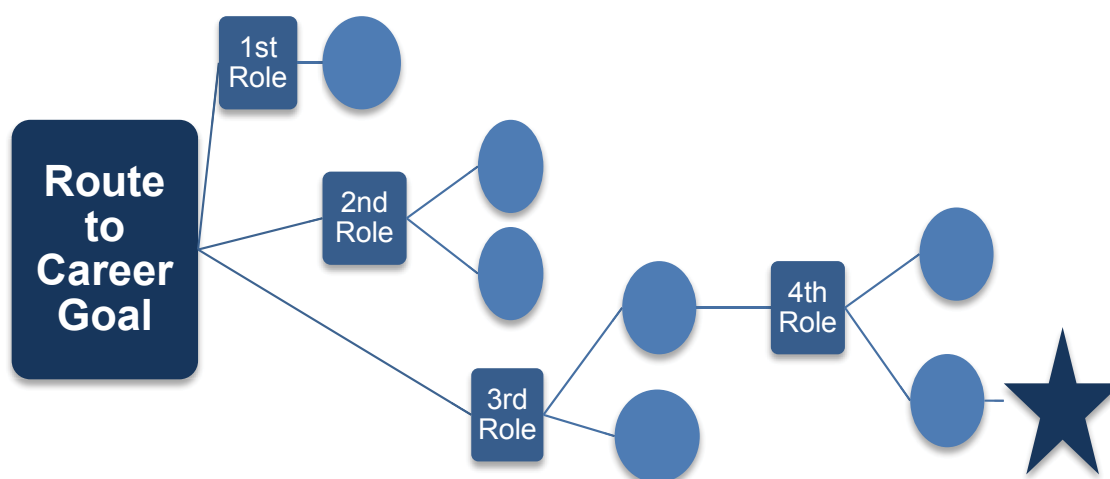
- Use the invite letter, agenda, and role specification to work out what you will be expected to do on the day.
- There are several eBooks available on this website that can help you with aptitude tests, personality questionnaires, interview exercises, and competency-based interviews.

## 6 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Each new role you apply for should fit into a long-term career plan or offer the opportunity to acquire a specific and desirable skill. To ensure that every role you perform aids your development by enabling you to acquire the right competencies you will need a long-term career plan.

Knowing your ultimate goal lets you set short-term goals or milestones so that you can seek the best opportunities to develop your competencies. These milestones should allow for flexibility, enabling you to respond to new economic and environmental factors.

Your continuous professional development (CPD) should then focus on attaining this long-term goal by exploiting short-term opportunities that bring it closer to being realized.



For example, in the simplistic diagram above it took someone four role changes to attain their career goal. Each circle leading off a role box represents the additional competencies that enabled them to be promoted or move organizations to attain the goal.

### Career Plan Map

In order to define a career goal you need to understand the competencies that are required to perform that role. You can then think about the type of roles and activities that will help you attain these competencies; these can then be used to develop a career map.



The level of detail within your map will reflect your knowledge of the market and the role you wish to pursue, and it will help guide you when considering opportunities that arise. The map will also help you maximize your CPD because it will help you to focus on what is essential rather than just desirable.

A useful feature of a career map is that by listing the competencies your ultimate role requires, you can identify key role changes. For example, a key change occurs when an individual moves from a supervisory to a management role. Supervisory behaviors focus on producing deliverables, whereas management behaviors focus more on delegation, developing others, and budgetary management.

Many people fail to move up from supervisory positions to management because they are unable to provide objective and reliable evidence that they have the right level of management competencies. This problem has become worse in the past 20 years as few organizations now have a defined career path for existing staff. This is due to cost considerations; it is obviously cheaper to bring in outsiders who already have the relevant competencies rather than to develop them internally.

The effect of this is that many people find themselves having to be more self-reliant when it comes to professional development than would have been the case in the past. This can mean taking professional qualifications in their own time and financing themselves to do so.

Another way to develop the required management behaviors is to seek out social or leisure opportunities that help you to acquire them. Offering your free time to charities, sports clubs, and schools can all be excellent ways to develop these types of skill. For example, acting as a treasurer for a sports club can provide you with the opportunity to develop budgeting and basic financial reporting competencies.

The other eBooks available in this skill set from <http://www.free-management-ebooks.com/skillscareer>:

- Interview Preparation
- Interview Questions
- Preparing for Interview Exercises
- Preparing for Aptitude Tests
- Preparing for Personality Tests
- Answering Competency-Based Questions

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The Free Management eBooks website offers you over 500 free resources for your own professional development. Our eBooks, Checklists, and Templates are designed to help you with the management issues you face every day. They can be downloaded in PDF, Kindle, ePub, or Doc formats for use on your iPhone, iPad, laptop, or desktop.

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**Templates** – Most of the day-to-day management tasks you need to do have already been done by others many times in the past. Our management templates will save you from wasting your valuable time re-inventing the wheel.

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