



## **LIFEBOAT**

### **WHAT MAKES A GOOD LEADER?**

You have information on six candidates: photo, name, age, occupation and two personality profiles. One profile is supplied by the candidate and one by a close friend or relative. All details are real, though names are changed.

Rank the six candidates according to who is best suited to lead you in the strange situation you find yourselves in: survivors of a shipwreck - thrown together in a lifeboat.

Lifeboat is a group exercise that focuses on people and the leadership role. It can be used in a number of ways.

- an examination of situational leadership. What qualities are required? What attributes of a person's personality and skills demonstrate leadership qualities?
- to aid the recruitment and selection process in terms of job descriptions and potential predictability of interviews.
- And finally, Lifeboat is a consensus decision-making exercise ideal for comparing individual and group views. It has also been used itself as an assessment tool to see how teams reach joint decisions.

#### **Skill Focus:**

- Leadership
- Consensus decision making
- Teamwork
- Resolving conflict
- Selection Procedures

#### **Numbers:**

- Up to four teams, ideally with between 3 and 6 in each team

#### **Target Audience:**

- Can be used at any level

#### **Timing:**

- 1 hour + debrief

#### **Cost :**

£199 (plus delivery & VAT)

## How It Works

- 1 Divide participants into teams of 3-6. Issue each group with a set of six different Briefs.
- 2 Issue each group with a copy of the Ranking Form.
- 3 Explain the purpose of the exercise and that each team needs to study the six Briefs and then rank the individuals on the Briefs on the Ranking Form. The ranking should reflect participants' choice of the right person to be in charge of a lifeboat following a sinking at sea.
- 4 There is no question of anyone not being saved. The task is merely to select those people with high levels of potential leadership qualities.
- 5 Teams can either do an individual ranking first with each team member making a list and then do a team ranking, or they can just do a group ranking from the start.
- 6 List each group's ranking on a flipchart and lead a discussion on the exercise.

## Recruitment

Lifeboat can throw some interesting light on the recruitment process.

Some of the issues that might come up include the following:

- Did groups formulate a job description or job profile and then seek to match up the candidates with the profile?
- If a job description was not drawn up, on what basis was selection made?
- Did groups use a particular agreed set of criteria against which to make their decision?
- What attributes were valued most?
- How did groups resolve conflict and disagreement within the group?
- Did the photographs have a major influence on selection?
- Did the groups consciously look for evidence of particular skills?
- Were groups aware of any prejudice in their minds as they studied the sheets?

## Debrief

This will differ depending on the objectives of the session. If Lifeboat is to be used as an exercise in examining leadership then here are some of the key issues:

- What are the skills required of a leader in this situation?
- How can we be sure the individuals have these skills?
- Which is more reliable - what an individual says about themselves or what others say about them?
- Are various qualities transferable in different situations?

Did groups consider the person's ability to organise and motivate others, and their interaction and communication skills, as well as their ability to lead and make decisions?

## Pack Contents:

- Trainer's guide
- Briefing sheets
- Ranking pad

**TO ORDER "LIFEBOAT"  
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