



IOL (UK) Limited & Northgate Training

EXERCISES, GAMES & SIMULATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT



InBox

Time Management Exercise

Your in-tray is piled higher than the Eiffel Tower! What needs doing today? What can you delegate and what's going on in the department anyway!

Key Skills

- Time management
- Prioritisation
- Delegation
- Identifying departmental problems

Participants No limit, working individually or in small groups

Timing 1-1.5 hrs

Cost £250 plus delivery and VAT

InBox is a great participative activity for both time management courses and assessment sessions. It is very easy to use – and one of our best sellers – the scenario is particularly appealing and adds to the interest. It is essentially an in-tray exercise – with a difference. Participants are issued with a number of letters, faxes and notes. These have piled up in *Chris Bolton's in-tray*. Chris was General Manager at Connaught House Safari Park, due to retire in two weeks, but unexpectedly is now unable to return to the office. As the new General

Manager it is the participants' job to sort out the in-tray - and while they are doing this, emails keep arriving - about 10 in all – which also need dealing with.

In particular, **InBox** focuses on prioritisation and delegation (participants are not asked to *perform* the actual tasks). Can the task be delegated - and if so, to whom? If not, participants should concentrate on prioritising the tasks and choosing only those that are urgent – or important -or both.

Each team has three forms to fill. You can use one, two or all three:

Form A asks teams to note which of the 30 tasks are so important or urgent that they need doing TODAY.

Form B asks teams to list those tasks that should be left until a later date – or be delegated. If they are to be delegated, who they should be delegated to?

Form C is interesting. Teams list what they have learned about the people and systems in their department from going through the in-tray.

Participants are given just one hour to sort things out.

A unique feature is the series of incoming e-mails which teams have to manage – and which helps to simulate the realities of a busy office.

The Trainer's Notes lists all the appropriate outcomes and provides brief explanations for each – but there is no need to be too hide-bound as some issues are debatable. So sound reasoning can also be important

Above all **InBox** raises issues around time management and can lead to great improvements in terms of how individuals organise themselves back at work. The key is to have clear objectives and a system for prioritising. Efficient managers will also be able to find clues as to the effectiveness of their section by analysing the faxes, memos and communications they receive.

InBox

What to Do

- 1 Before the exercise, print off from the **CD-Rom**, a set of InBox materials - 30 items - for each team (or pair or individual).
- 2 Briefly explain the mechanics and timing of the exercise and point out that today (in the exercise) is Monday 12 February.
- 3 Divide the participants into teams and issue each with a copy of the Brief. Allow them 10 minutes to read the Brief.
- 4 Issue the InBox material and **Forms A, B & C** and allow teams one hour to work on the material.
- 5 Listen to each presentation. If you prefer, these can be informal - where groups merely state what they did and discuss key issues.
- 6 Lead a general discussion of the exercise and try to draw out of it some of the key *issues* that teams felt they had to deal with and also some key *lessons* about prioritising, time management and handling paper. The **Trainer's Notes** provide full guidance.
- 7 Reveal the 'answers' and allow teams to compare their decisions with the given ones. This usually promotes a lively discussion with plenty of disagreement.
- 8 Relate the lessons to the workplace and summarise all the key points.

InBox Recent Buyers

Working Links
Rushcliff Borough Council
Reebok UK
Lanarkshire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust
The Law Society
Astrazeneca
IMI
National Probation Service
Leeds Girls' High School
Honda UK
Travel Lodge
Strathclyde Fire Service
Krone (UK) Technique
St Mary's College
Rochman Landau

InBox

The Six Key Lessons

- ▶ Managers need to plan. They need to sit down every day and take stock.
- ▶ A priority system is useful. Write tasks down and label with an A,B,C system.
- ▶ Managers do not generally delegate enough. Delegation is not just a matter of choosing the right member of staff to do the job. Agree a deadline, a review date, a statement of the bounds of authority.
- ▶ Paperwork should be handled once.
- ▶ Decide your priorities in line with your overall objectives. Among key objectives will be the need to:
 - to develop staff (through delegation)
 - to have time for forward planning
 - to run an efficient section
 - to manage time well
 - to motivate staff
 - to prioritise work
 - to see how performance can be better.
- ▶ Analyse your in-tray to see what it tells you about your department.

InBox

Trainers' Comments

"We use **InBox** at the outset of management courses and also to introduce the concept of how management NVQs work. We use it with first line and middle managers, supervisors and team leaders. It provides a good way of starting discussion and helps establish team-working practices and consensus seeking.

L. Hindley. The People Development Company.

To Order please contact

IOL (UK) Limited

t: 01884 821870

f: 01884 829168

email: info@iol-uk.co.uk

www.iol-uk.co.uk