



INTRODUCTION TO SELECTION PROCESSES AT THE EX LEVEL

2010

**EXECUTIVE COUNSELLING SERVICES
PERSONNEL PSYCHOLOGY CENTRE**







MODULES

- ◆ 1. Leadership model: competencies
- ◆ 2. Preparation : thinking time
- ◆ 3. EX interview: expectations, interview structure, types of questions



LEADERSHIP MODEL: COMPETENCIES

Module 1



THE SELECTION PROCESS AT THE EX LEVEL

◆ **FOCUS: leadership competencies**

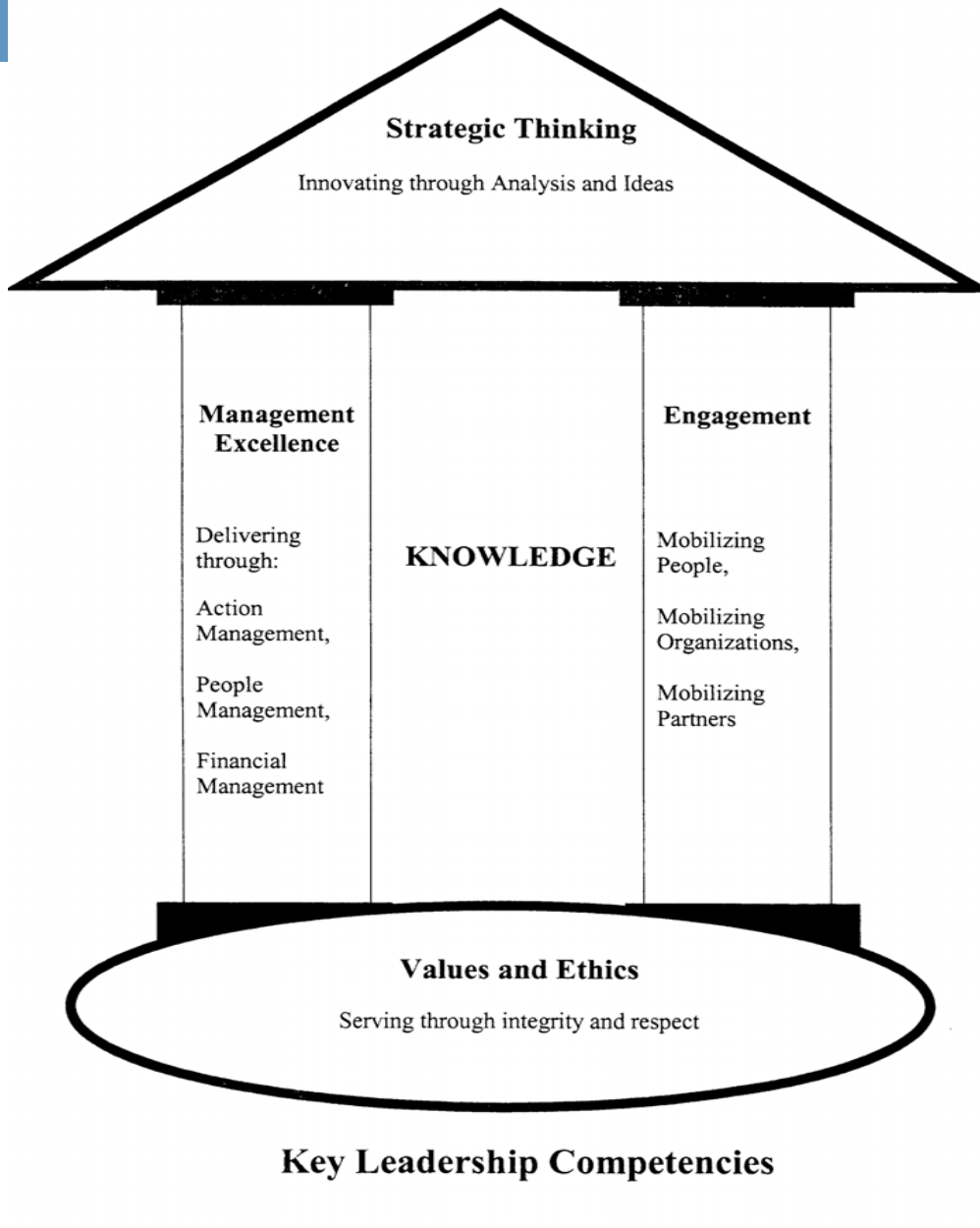


Model

Key leadership competencies

Working from a foundation of values and ethics, public service (PS) leaders deliver results through strategic thinking, engagement and management excellence.





Definitions

Key leadership competencies

Strategic Thinking: *Analysis and Ideas*

PS leaders advise and plan based on an analysis of issues and trends, and how these link to the responsibilities, capabilities, and potential of their organization. They scan an ever-changing, complex environment in anticipation of emerging crises and opportunities. They develop well-informed advice and strategies that are sensitive to the various needs of multiple stakeholders and partners, reflect the strategic direction of the PS, and position the organization for success.

Values and Ethics: *Integrity and Respect*

PS leaders serve Canadians, ensure integrity in personal and organizational practices, and respect people and PS principles, including democratic, professional, ethical, and people values. They build respectful, bilingual, diverse and inclusive workplaces in which decisions and transactions are transparent and fair. They hold themselves, their employees and their organizations accountable for their actions.



Definitions Key leadership competencies

Engagement: *People, organizations and partners*

PS leaders engage people, organizations partners in developing goals, executing plans and delivering results. They lay the groundwork by building coalitions with key players. They mobilize teams, build momentum to get things done by communicating clearly and consistently, and invest time and energy to engage the whole organization. They use their negotiation skills and adaptability to encourage collaboration and recognition of joint concerns, and to influence the success of outcomes. They follow and lead across boundaries to engage a wide variety of stakeholders, partners and constituencies in a shared agenda and strategy.

Management Excellence: *Action management, people management and financial management*

PS leaders deliver results by maximizing organizational effectiveness and sustainability. They ensure that people have the support and tools they need and that the workforce as a whole has the capacity and diversity to meet current and longer-term organizational objectives. They align people, work and systems with the business strategy to harmonize how they work and what they do. They implement rigorous and comprehensive human and financial resources accountability systems consistent with the Management Accountability Framework (MAF). They ensure that the integrity and management of information and knowledge are a responsibility at all levels and a key factor in the design and execution of all policies and programs.



Director General

Effective behaviours

VALUES AND ETHICS — *Serving through integrity and respect*

- Demonstrates values and ethics, including compliance with the *Values and Ethics Code for the Public Service (Code)*, in personal behaviour
- Integrates values and ethics, including the Code, into directorate practices
- Builds departmental values into directorate policies and programs
- Reflects a commitment to citizens and clients in own and directorate activities
- Builds and promotes a safe and healthy, respectful directorate, free of harassment and discrimination
- Promotes transparency and fairness
- Creates opportunities for and encourages bilingualism and diversity in the directorate, based on OL and EE policies

STRATEGIC THINKING — *Innovating through analysis and ideas*

Analysis

- Frames questions and analyses with a thorough understanding of sectoral and policy issues
- Seeks clarification and direction from the ADM
- Conducts strategic analysis of trends within the directorate, organization and external environment
- Integrates multiple domains of information and identifies the links
- Seeks broad perspectives and expertise
- Tracks changing organizational dynamics
- **Analyzes setbacks and seeks honest feedback to learn from mistakes**

Ideas

- Identifies key elements of the vision and implications for the directorate
- Translates vision and policy into concrete direction and plans
- Links directorate programs and services to department and branch policies
- Makes effective recommendations to the ADM
- Seeks input of staff to create plans and solutions
- Encourages constructive questioning of practices
- Encourages experimentation to maximize potential for innovation
- Identifies solutions, alternatives and consequences
- Teaches and learns from others

ENGAGEMENT — *Mobilizing people, organizations and partners*

- Implements inclusive, cooperative approaches with peers, staff, and superiors
- Fosters an inclusive and sensitive interpersonal climate
- Promotes consensus across diverse groups, interests and opinions
- Solicits and listens to ideas and concerns of staff, unions and other stakeholders
- Mobilizes the team to achieve directorate and departmental goals
- Communicates and supports corporate decisions
- Fosters enthusiasm and common purpose
- Shares information with staff regularly as it becomes available
- Follows through on commitments
- Communicates vision and information with clarity and commitment
- Manages relationships among stakeholders



Director General

Effective behaviours

MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE — *Delivering through action management, people management and financial management*

Action Management — *Design and Execution*

- Identifies and communicates priorities, milestones, timelines, performance measures, clear accountabilities and performance agreements for directors
- Coordinates and manages across multiple directorate programs and projects
- Ensures necessary resources, processes and systems are in place
- Develops process with management team to set priorities and make decisions
- Performs risk analysis to assess viability of opportunities
- Coordinates activities within directorate to assign accountability and avoid duplication
- Seeks and heeds early warning signs, adapting plans and strategies as required
- Follows through on the directorate
- Integrates comptrollership, MAF, federal legislation, regulations and policies into directorate practices**
- Manages own and others' work-life balance
- Responds decisively and quickly to emerging opportunities or risks
- Maintains sound judgment and decision making in demanding or stressful situations

People Management — *Individuals and Workforce*

- Implements HR strategy to ensure workforce capacity and diversity to meet current and future directorate needs
- Coaches, challenges and provides opportunities for growth
- Sets clear expectations and provides clear direction
- Manages staff workload
- Builds complementary teams
- Provides honest, straightforward feedback and manages non-performance
- Recognizes and acknowledges good work
- Acts as a role model for directors
- Develops strategies to reduce stress within the directorate
- Secures funding for OL and other training
- Implements rigorous HR practices and fulfils obligations of HRM accountabilities

Financial Management — *Budgets and Assets*

- Allocates and manages directorate resources transparently
- Implements strategies to achieve operational efficiencies and value for money
- Operates and monitors rigorous systems for financial information management, internal audit and evaluation
- Fulfills obligations of accountabilities for directorate finance and assets management
- Acts on audit, evaluation and other objective performance information related to directorate



Director

Effective behaviours

VALUES AND ETHICS — *Serving through integrity and respect*

- Demonstrates values and ethics, including compliance with the Code, in personal behaviour
- Integrates values and ethics, including the Code, into division practices
- Reflects a commitment to citizens and clients in own and division activities
- Fosters a climate of transparency, trust, and respect within the division and in partnerships
- Incorporates equitable practices into HR planning
- Creates opportunities for and encourages bilingualism and diversity in the division, based on OL and EE policies
- Builds and promotes a safe, healthy and respectful division, free of harassment and discrimination
- Practises transparency and fairness in all transactions, including staffing, contracting and day-to-day activities

STRATEGIC THINKING — *Innovating through Analysis and Ideas*

Analysis

- Frames division direction with a thorough understanding of the directorate's priorities
- Seeks clarification and direction from the DG, as required
- Integrates information from multiple sources to form a comprehensive perspective
- Identifies interdependencies in cross-functional projects
- **Analyzes setbacks and seeks honest feedback to learn from mistakes**

Ideas

Translates vision and policy into concrete work activities

- Develops division strategies, based on the departmental vision and the DG's direction
- Designs initiatives to enhance operational efficiency
- Encourages and incorporates diverse initiatives and perspectives
- Redesigns the division's work activities to meet changing departmental needs
- Makes effective recommendations to the DG
- Teaches and learns from others

ENGAGEMENT — *Mobilizing people, organizations, partners*

- Shares information vertically and horizontally
- Promotes collaboration among managers
- Uses persuasion to gain support for initiatives
- Negotiates compromises
- Adapts communications to audience and forum
- Communicates regularly and openly with unions and other stakeholders
- Demonstrates understanding of and respect for stakeholders' views
- Follows through on commitments
- Solicits input from and listens to staff, partners and stakeholders
- Communicates vision and division plans with clarity and commitment
- Establishes regular and comprehensive exchanges of ideas
- Promotes and funds team building



Director

Effective behaviours

MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE — *Delivering through action management, people management and financial management*

Action management — Design and Execution

- Designs division work plans based on the big picture
- Guides division projects and resources to avoid obstacles
- Delegates appropriately to managers
- Manages resources to maximize output
- Sets realistic timelines and clear accountabilities for managers
- Provides structure and momentum for division work activities
- Sets challenging but realistic goals
- Identifies division limits and resource requirements for workload
- Manages the division's workload through prudent resource planning and prioritizing
- Shifts priorities and adapts division work plans, as required
- Heeds early warning signals and advises the DG and others, as needed
- Follows through on the division's business plan, from planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating to reporting
- **Integrates comptrollership, MAF, federal legislation, regulations and policies into division practices**
- Manages own and others' work-life balance
- Responds decisively and quickly to emerging opportunities or risks
- Maintains composure in adverse situations to alleviate pressure and maintain momentum

People Management — Individuals and Workforce

- Works one-on-one with managers
- Deals with ineffective performance
- Provides regular feedback, acknowledges success and the need for improvement
- Coaches, challenges and provides opportunities for growth
- Resolves labour relations problems
- Secures mediation, if required
- Balances the needs of employees and the organization
- Monitors and addresses workplace well-being
- Develops and supports career plans and learning opportunities
- Develops an HR strategy for division succession planning
- Secures funding for OL and other training
- Manages workload
- Implements rigorous HR practices and fulfills obligations of HRM accountabilities

Financial Management — Budgets and Assets

- Allocates and manages division resources transparently
- Implements strategies to achieve operational efficiencies and value for money
- Applies and monitors rigorous systems for financial information management, internal audit and evaluation
- Fulfills obligations of accountabilities for division finance and assets management
- Acts on audit, evaluation, and other objective performance information related to the division



All levels

Ineffective behaviours

VALUES AND ETHICS — *Serving through integrity and respect*

- Attempts to cover up mistakes
- Avoids speaking truth to power
- Lays blame on individuals or previous regimes
- Shows little respect for diverse opinions or beliefs
- Mistreats others
- Abuses power
- Tolerates abusive behaviour by others
- Demotivates or offends others through cynicism or aggression
- Shows favouritism or bias
- Places personal or organizational goals ahead of Government of Canada objectives
- Allows emotions to sway ethical judgment

STRATEGIC THINKING — *Innovating through Analysis and Ideas*

Analysis

- Depends on a narrow range of expertise and opinion
- Excludes other levels or partners in framing strategy
- Ignores new information or changing circumstances
- Demonstrates insensitivity to national, regional, or PS context
- Does not analyze own strengths and weaknesses or listen to feedback

Ideas

- Abdicates responsibility for guiding or contributing to the departmental vision
- Designs response to short-term pressure without consideration of long-term implications
- Designs long-term plans without consideration of short-term implications
- Provides a vision, strategy or advice that is not in line with the mandate
- Ignores the impact of strategies on stakeholders and partners
- Develops or promotes strategies or plans that are too detail-oriented or too abstract

ENGAGEMENT — *Mobilizing people, organizations, partners*

- Acts as sole decision maker or stakeholder
- Hoards information
- Abdicates communication responsibilities to other levels
- Fails to work horizontally with key partners
- Fails to build behind-the-scenes support
- Alienates others through anger, aggression, overconfidence or lack of self-awareness
- Refuses to consider and incorporate the views of others
- Avoids dealing with contentious issues



All levels

Ineffective behaviours

MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE — *Delivering through action management, people management and financial management*

Action Management — Design and Execution

- Develops an ineffective plan to achieve goals
- Retains ineffective structures, systems or programs
- Hesitates to make decisions or take required action
- Provides insufficient, abstract or sporadic direction
- Refuses to acknowledge poor results
- Deals ineffectively with own stress
- Focuses on one file or activity to the detriment of others
- Backs down in the face of obstacles or challenges
- Focuses solely on crisis management and the short term
- Acts impulsively
- Focuses on turf building rather than organizational stewardship
- Conducts superfluous consultation or analysis to avoid taking action or responsibility
- Micromanages

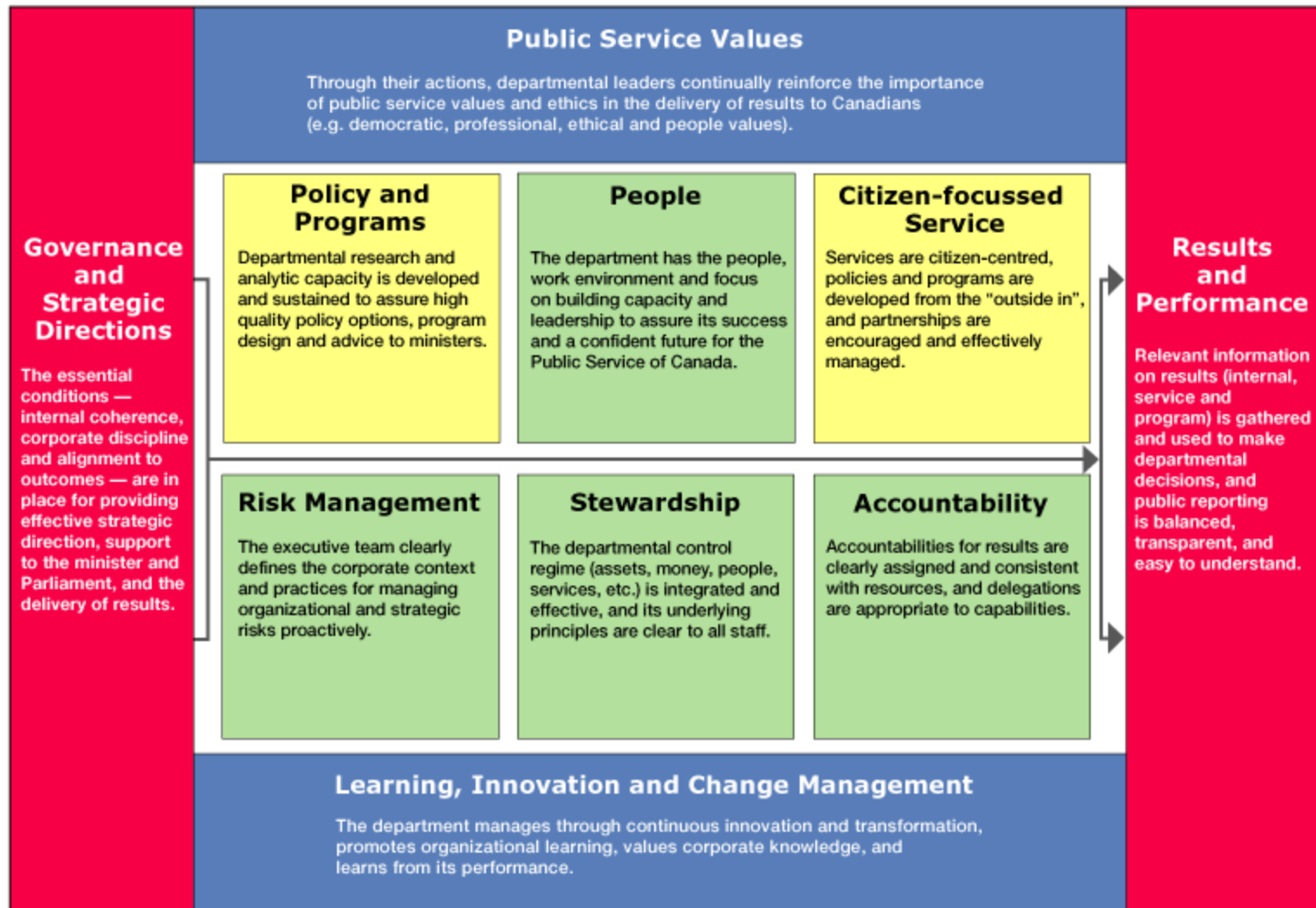
People Management — Individuals and Workforce

- Fails to provide staff with the tools they need to work and develop
- Fails to acknowledge contributions and successes
- Dwells on mistakes and failures
- Fails to deal with conflict
- Builds insufficient workforce capacity
- Abdicates responsibility for HR planning
- Does not deliver the hard messages when giving feedback
- Fails to deal with ineffective staff
- Fails to ensure complementary strengths in teams and workforce
- Designs workforce exclusively for short-term needs

Financial Management — Budgets and Assets

- Continues to invest resources in an unsuccessful course of action
- Fails to integrate financial and management information
- Ignores audit or evaluation results
- Fails to ensure integrity of information, analysis and reporting
- Fails to practise rigorous financial management
- Fails to ensure sufficient capacity for sound financial practices





Preparation: establishing your knowledge base

Knowledge of position

- role
- team
- mandate
- history

Self-knowledge

- personal values and ethics
- strengths and areas for development
- experience
- goals
- leadership style

Knowledge of the organization

- organizational culture
- strategic objectives
- mandates
- issues
- organization's values



PREPARATION TIME: THINKING TIME

Module 2



PREPARATION: knowledge of the organization

- ◆ **Government priorities**
- ◆ **Departmental priorities**
- ◆ **Auditor General's reports**
- ◆ **Press clippings**
- ◆ **Organizational culture**
- ◆ **Main issues and challenges**



EXERCISE: Knowledge of the organization

- ◆ **In your opinion, what are the main issues facing your organization?**



Organizational Lenses

- Factory lens
- Family lens
- Jungle Lens
- Temple (brand) lens
- Inverse relationship between Jungle lens and Factory lens



PREPARATION: knowledge of the position

- ◆ **Statement of merit criteria**
- ◆ **Job description**
- ◆ **Significant characteristics**
- ◆ **Organizational context**
- ◆ **Major issues and challenges**
- ◆ **Knowledge and background required**
- ◆ **Competencies required**
- ◆ **Measures of success**



KEY LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES AND STORIES GRID

	Values and Ethics	Strategic Reflexion	Engagement	Management Excellence
Merit Criteria				
Knowledge 1	Story 5			
Knowledge 2	Story 2	Story 3		
Knowledge 3		Story 6		Story 9
Knowledge 4			Story 4	
Experience 1	Story 1			
Experience 2		Story 8		
Experience 3				Story 7



People to consult to get some of this information

- ◆ Use judgment
- ◆ DGs, ADMs
- ◆ Colleagues
- ◆ People who have been through process
- ◆ Knowledgeable program staff



PREPARATION: Self-knowledge

- ◆ How does this fit into my career plan?
- ◆ What is *my* competency profile?
- ◆ What do I know from previous tests?
- ◆ How do I measure success for myself?
- ◆ My leadership/management style
- ◆ Creating my “library of experiences”



Prepare my stories

- ◆ Step 1. Think of 10 significant career-related moments: prepare a list.
- ◆ Step 2. Write vignettes (newspaper article format): What the situation was: 5 Ws (who, what, where, when, why)
- ◆ Step 3. What were the high level issues/challenges, problems?
- ◆ Step 4. Process *Your role* : (*What* I did as a leader, *how* I did it and *why* I did it): moving from “we” to “I.”
- ◆ Step 5. Results or outcomes
- ◆ Step 6. Lessons learned : What I would do differently now



Exercise 2. Tell us about a time when you...

- ◆ resolved a significant ethical dilemma that may have had a negative impact on the organization
- ◆ used creativity to move an issue forward
- ◆ established / managed a complex partnership
- ◆ handled multiple issues in a dysfunctional team context
- ◆ made progress on a controversial file despite strong obstacles and tight deadlines.
- ◆ used organizational awareness to seize an opportunity and benefit from it.



INTERVIEW: EXPECTATIONS, RESPONSE STRUCTURE, TYPES OF QUESTIONS

Module 3





Commission de la fonction publique
du Canada

Public Service Commission
of Canada

Canada

Expectations of EX Boards

- ◆ Big picture perspective
- ◆ Synthesis of knowledge
- ◆ Organizational awareness
- ◆ Original opinions and ideas
- ◆ Leadership style



General Board Strategies

- ◆ arrive relaxed and on time
- ◆ be myself
- ◆ manage my time
- ◆ structure my answers
- ◆ focus on competencies
- ◆ examples, examples, examples
- ◆ be strategic
- ◆ answer as if I have the job
- ◆ judicious use of “I” vs. “We”



INTERVIEW: general format

- ◆ duration: 45 minutes
- ◆ number of questions: 6
- ◆ preparation time: 30 minutes
- ◆ manage your time
- ◆ dedicate an equal amount of time to each question



FIVE READINGS STRATEGY

1. Read each question out loud.
2. Silently read slowly for content only – look for knowledge and experience elements in the question
3. Ask yourself which Key Leadership competencies best speak to this question?
4. What type of question is this? Warm up? Strategic or conceptual? Directly related to area of responsibility? Track record? Situational? Personal Qualities? Focus on your Communications Cross.
5. Which Leadership style would best speak to the key issues addressed by this question?



KEY LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

	Values and Ethics	Strategic Reflexion	Engagement	Management Excellence
Questions				
Question 1	Story 5		Story 4	Story 7
Question 2	Story 2	Story 3		
Question 3		Story 6		Story 9
Question 4			Story 4	
Question 5	Story 1			Story 7
Question 6		Story 8		



Basic Response Structure

- ◆ **Introduction: giving the context**
- ◆ **Key points: limit yourself to three or four points**
- ◆ **Conclusion: summarize, repeat, emphasize**



Basic Response Structure

- ◆ **Introduction: giving the context**
 - identify elements or issues
 - give personal views on issues related to question
 - why this is important to you



Basic Response Structure

- ◆ **Body: discuss each issue or element**
 - introduce the issue
 - link with other issues
 - stress on *HOW* you would or did resolve
 - demonstrate by linking to personal experience/stories
 - “I” vs. “we”
 - summarize



Basic Response Structure

◆ Conclusion

- **overall summary**
- **link with desired position**
- **external confirmation of success**
- **lessons learned**



TYPES OF QUESTIONS

- ◆ traditional marketing questions
- ◆ strategic questions
- ◆ knowledge-based questions
- ◆ behavioural event questions
- ◆ situational questions
- ◆ personally focused questions
- ◆ *probes*



Traditional “Marketing” Questions

- ◆ based on analysis of job’s main challenges
- ◆ my background, experience, personal abilities and personal qualities
- ◆ create a lasting impression
- ◆ be concise, creative and interesting
- ◆ highlights only



Strategic Questions

- ◆ focus on strategic, conceptual and priority issues
- ◆ macro-level viewpoint.
- ◆ link up to government priorities
- ◆ link down to position responsibilities
- ◆ constructive criticism
- ◆ significant contributions



Knowledge-based Questions

- ◆ **examine required knowledge and skills.**
- ◆ **could be directed to various frameworks, processes, strategies, documents or initiatives**
- ◆ **opportunity to demonstrate other competencies**
- ◆ **be rational, clear and relevant**
- ◆ **link with personal experience / story**



Behavioural Questions

- ◆ you are asked about the past
- ◆ “Tell us about a time when...”
- ◆ focus on required competencies
- ◆ structure my response
- ◆ use my “Library of Personal Experiences”
- ◆ use of “I” or “We”



Situational Questions

- ◆ you are asked about the future
- ◆ describe a hypothetical work situation
- ◆ usually broad questions
- ◆ make and state assumptions
- ◆ suggest best and alternative scenarios
- ◆ share action plan
- ◆ explain your actions
- ◆ *link with experience*



Personally Focused Questions

- ◆ focus is on personal qualities
- ◆ strengths and areas for improvement
- ◆ leadership aspirations
- ◆ use of 360-degree feedback exercises
- ◆ personal plans and assessments
- ◆ *link with personal experience*



Probes

- ◆ Should I expect probes?
- ◆ What do probes mean?
- ◆ Listen carefully, think and respond.
- ◆ Continue to be mindful of the time.



Sample question

- ◆ **Question 1. How have your qualifications and training prepared you to take on the role of Director in the Public Service? What particular qualities do you bring? What would you need to improve?**



Sample Question

◆ **Question 2. What do you think it takes to be successful a leader at the executive level in the public service?**

How does your personal leadership style compare?



Sample Question

- ◆ **Question 3. Describe a situation where your values and ethics were put to the test. What were your actions?**



Sample Question

- ◆ **Question 5. You are a new director. One of your managers has a history of creativity, energy and solid team effort. Up to your arrival, she was acting in the director position and had applied for the position but was not successful. Since your arrival, she has been less productive and appears to be withdrawn. What would you do in this situation?**



Sample question

- ◆ **Question 6. Describe a successful partnership you were involved in. What were the issues, what was your contribution, and what did you learn?**



CONCLUSION

CREDIBILITY

- ◆ Are you competent?
- ◆ Are you motivated?
- ◆ Can you be trusted?



CONCLUSION

A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN. IT IS THE RESULT OF THOROUGH PREPARATION

Thorough preparation will transform the interview into an opportunity for you to say what contribution you can make to the organization.



CONCLUSION

FINAL WORD:

*While thorough preparation will help you perform well at the interview, other factors **over which you have no control** will also be at play (for example, the quality of the other candidates, the preferences of the board, and the organizational culture).*

Be prepared to face the possibility that the board may choose another candidate, despite an outstanding interview performance on your part.



Executive Counselling Services

- ◆ Call us at 613-943-1195 if you need additional clarification on the material presented.
- ◆ Our **Web site:**

www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/ppc/executive_counselling_services_e.htm

