

The In-Tray simulation puts teams and individuals into a "real-world" scenario where they are forced to sift through a complex mountain of information and make difficult decisions under pressure. The simulation focuses on a fictitious company called Imperial Plc.

# Imperial PLC

## IN TRAY EXERCISE

### **Sample Extract**

In this sample extract we provide examples of the in-tray documents provided to the candidate, together with a sample question and answer.

# In Tray Exercise



## Managing People “In Tray” Exercise

### Introduction

This Simulation set in a modern commercial office and is designed to test the managerial competency of candidates for a senior role. Participants play the role of Brian Harris, the new office manager in the Manchester office of Imperial plc.

Participants have to sort through Brian Harris' in tray and then answer 16 questions that require them to prioritise, make difficult decisions and prove leadership under fire, in each case selecting from a range of alternative actions offered.

In an assessment centre situation candidates should be allowed an hour to read the material and answer the questions. If the exercise is being used as part of a course then the trainer may choose to allow a little longer for completion of the exercise and then schedule a further hour of debate around the answers.

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The In-Tray Exercise is accompanied by an introduction, instructions, a set of questions and answers, a sheet for candidates to write their answers and a trainers guide for evaluation.

## SECTION II – Brian Harris "In tray"

### Calendars for the Months of July, August, and September

JULY							AUGUST							SEPTEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5						1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30				
							31													

## Imperial PLC

### Manchester Office Team Breakdown/Brian Harris' Team

Name	Title	Years Professional Experience
Diana Stepmore	Senior Executive	12
Alex Johnson	Senior Executive	15
Barry Rose	Executive	10
Maria Branston	Executive	8
Darren Wood	Executive	4
Barbara Lewin	Executive	10
Susan Connor	Administrator	15

The In-Tray Exercise consists of materials that would be found in a real life office. Examples shown here are a calendar, a chart of who works in the office and a memo sent to "Brian Harris". The information provided in the exercise holds the answers to the questions, enabling interviewers and individuals to test how well they can sift through a lot of material and extract information under pressure.

## Memo

**To:** Brian Harris  
**From:** Barbara Lewin  
**Date:** August 1  
**Re:** Who's Who

I am looking forward to welcoming you to our team. I realise that Richard Peters' decision to ask you to join us puts you in an awkward position. I, therefore, have taken the liberty of putting together a who's who matrix for your review. Needless to say, I will be eager to discuss the team and personnel in more detail once you have arrived. I am looking forward to sorting out our responsibilities so that we can work as a team.

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### A Sample Question

11. Richard Peters asked that you prepare a bulleted memo for your initial meeting with him (Item 11). For which one of the following would you want a detailed discussion with Richard?
- A. Instituting a policy that staff meetings be attended by all staff
  - B. The issue with the landlord in the cargo inspection station
  - C. Barry Rose's conduct
  - D. The partnership with Galactical's

There are 16 multiple choice questions in this exercise. As the answers can only be found from the material supplied with the In-Tray, candidates should not be able to seek outside help from other people or resources.

6. **Answer: B.** Susan seemed urgent about this getting done and mentioned that Barbara had not yet handled it. Brian should handle it personally. B is correct because the results would best serve the needs of the particular situation, as Items 9 and 22 indicate she has made a valuable contribution to the office.

Trainers are provided with full answers to all the questions. Each answer explains where the answer was within the In-tray documents. The answers also provide the trainer with insights into how well the candidate has done and the skills needed to answer the question correctly.