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Free Principles of Supervision DSST Practice Test

10 questions from InstantCert's 363-card Principles of Supervision study guide

How to use this PDF

Each of these questions is a sentence with one blank and four choices. Pick the best answer, mark it, and keep going. The answer key with explanations starts after question 10, so do all 10 before you look. No timer. On the real exam you get 72 seconds per question, so if you want a challenge, give yourself 12 minutes for the set. This set has 5 Management Functions questions, 3 from Organizational Environment, and 2 from Roles and Responsibilities, close to the real weights. It does not cover communication, unions, organizational culture, or business ethics.

What your score means

0 to 4 correct

The exam runs on textbook names for everyday supervising, and a score in this range usually means those names are not there yet. Ten questions is a sample, not a diagnosis. Read the explanations all the way through, then take Round 2 on the page linked at the end.

5 to 7 correct

Right in the middle. Close enough to the line to be worth studying for, and not close enough to walk in cold. The FY25 DSST pass rate for this exam is 72%, so more than 1 in 4 test takers did not pass. Take Round 2 and see if the number holds.

8 to 10 correct

You did well. Keep in mind that ten questions with no clock is a sample, that the real exam is 100 questions at 72 seconds each, and that this set skips communication, unions, organizational culture, and business ethics. Take Round 2, then read the explanation on anything you missed.

Questions

QUESTION 1 OF 10 | MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

_____ is best remembered for his Theory-X and Theory-Y descriptions of management leadership.

A. Henry Gantt
B. Douglas McGregor
C. Victor Vroom
D. Frederick Herzberg

QUESTION 2 OF 10 | ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

_____ based management recognizes that there is no one best way to manage.

A. Systems
B. Bureaucratic
C. Contingency
D. Classical

QUESTION 3 OF 10 | ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

_____ managers concentrate on problem prevention through planning.

A. Reactive
B. Passive
C. Invective
D. Proactive

QUESTION 4 OF 10 | MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

Management by _____ is a results-oriented employee involvement philosophy of management.

A. objectives
B. priorities
C. procedures
D. exception

QUESTION 5 OF 10 | MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

Interviewing style is a matter of personal preference since there is no one best way to interview. The _____ interview is usually easier for the beginning interviewer because questions are prepared in advance.

A. unstructured
B. phone
C. structured
D. panel

QUESTION 6 OF 10 | MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

The major components of _____ include labor and materials. Labor is usually separated into direct labor and indirect labor.

A. production
B. profit
C. cost
D. business

QUESTION 7 OF 10 | MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

_____ occurs when members of a group think similarly and conform to each other's views, often at the expense of ignoring reality.

A. Groupthink
B. Doublethink
C. Consensus
D. Brainstorming

QUESTION 8 OF 10 | ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Businesses must attempt to _____ accommodate an employee's or applicant's special conditions.

A. unconditionally
B. reasonably
C. wholeheartedly
D. without reservation

QUESTION 9 OF 10 | ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

_____ involves giving a problem to others to solve.

A. Projection
B. Rationalization
C. Transference
D. Avoidance

QUESTION 10 OF 10 | ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

To avoid _____, see and treat people as individuals.

A. legal action
B. responsibility
C. making waves
D. stereotyping

Answer Key

1. B Douglas McGregor

McGregor demonstrated that management style is determined to a large extent by assumptions managers make about employees. He says that Theory-X managers assume employees are naturally lazy, irresponsible, and work only for pay and that they must be motivated by prodding, special rewards, and fear. McGregor says that Theory-Y managers see work as a natural human activity and believe that properly trained and encouraged employees seek responsibility, want to contribute to their organization, prefer challenges to idleness, and control their own behavior.

2. C Contingency

Forces in the manager, employees, and conditions of work determine appropriate management approaches. On a construction site or in a factory, for example, employees expect and usually respond to a directive type of management. On the other hand, professional employees, such as engineers, marketing experts, accountants, teachers, and purchasing agents, usually make their own decisions about what is needed and inform higher levels of management of potential problems, lengths of time required to complete a general assignment, and potential solutions for existing difficulties. Appropriate management style is therefore contingent on the situation.

3. D Proactive

Proactive managers know that problem prevention is far better than problem correction. Planning is the key ingredient in achieving success. Experienced supervisors realize that unless everyone in their work unit fully understands the steps necessary to complete a given job, no plan will work. Just as long-range strategic planning is a fundamental top management concern, proactive supervisors plan the operations of their work units.

4. A objectives

Management by objectives (MBO) is a process that calls for the supervisor and the employees to meet to determine each person's specific objectives, the action plan to follow to reach these objectives, the level of performance expected, and how performance will be measured. MBO is used by many organizations, but it is a difficult system to make work because it requires an open communication system.

5. C structured

A set sequence is followed for all interviewees. Besides setting the sequence of the interview, the interview form lists some helpful ways to interpret the significance of the responses. Because all candidates are asked essentially the same questions and in the same order, it is possible to compare candidates against one another.

6. C cost

Direct labor costs are those expenses associated with the manufacture of a product or the delivery of a service. For example, direct labor costs at a hospital would include the expenses of the doctors and nurses who diagnose and treat the patients. Indirect labor costs include the expenses for employees who support the doctors and nurses such as admissions and records people, housekeeping, billing, and personnel.

7. A Groupthink

The answer is Groupthink. It usually results in decisions being made from a narrow point of view. Members with doubts and alternate ideas do not speak out because dissenting opinions are not tolerated.

8. B reasonably

Over the years since the Civil Rights Act was enacted, the courts have ruled that businesses must not set up artificial barriers to employment. One of the most famous rulings affecting reasonable accommodation involved a Trans World Airlines flight attendant named Hardison. Her religion forbade her working on Saturday. This made it impossible to schedule Hardison on Saturday flights, one of the airline's busiest days. TWA attempted to accommodate Hardison by reassigning her to a non-flying job, but she refused. In a landmark decision, the Supreme Court stated that TWA had attempted to reasonably accommodate Hardison.

9. C Transference

Transference is another type of adjustive reaction designed to protect self-esteem by literally giving a personal problem to someone else to solve. Over 60 years ago, Sigmund Freud recognized transference as a means of relieving tension. Although a poor practice, supervisors often allow employees to transfer their problems to them. Employees, like all people, must learn to deal with their own problems because supervisors are not trained clinical psychologists.

10. D stereotyping

Don't look on anyone as a member of a group, whose members are assumed to be alike. Stereotyping employees works both ways, negatively and positively. A group can be judged inferior and, as a result of this judgment, people in the group are treated as inferior. But the opposite situation can also exist. If people are from "high status" cultures they tend to get favorable treatment from supervisors and co-workers. The high status is a perception rather than an objective fact.

Want 10 more? Take Round 2 online

Round 2 is 10 more questions from the same 363 cards. It covers job design, motivation theory, training, quality control, workplace stress, pay plans, performance reviews, and employee rights. Take Round 1 on the page below, enter your email on the score screen, and the Round 2 link follows.

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