

How to Pass Group Exercise

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The cabin crew assessment day group exercise can be a dreaded part of the process. The big question here is why the group exercise is part of the assessment day?

The exercise is designed to identify specific skills required for the cabin crew position.

The job requires you to work in group, deal with various scenarios (there are no two flights the same), be pressured by time, weather or other stress factors, communicate clearly with people of various backgrounds and positions, listen to instructions or complaints and make quick decisions. The assessors need to see that you are capable of doing all of this.

You will be facing a complex task in a group of 8-12 people. All the applicants will display their own personality: some will be very loud and dominating, while others are shy and reserved. The group dynamic will reveal each candidate's individual personality and behavior, and this is how the assessors can predict how each candidate is likely to behave in their future work environment. Also, they can predict how you are likely to react in specific situations.

You will be assessed on your the following competencies:

- Teamwork
- Time-management
- Listening
- Initiative
- Motivation and enthusiasm
- Creativity
- Decision-making

What makes a good team that will be efficient?

- Everyone understands the task and helps each other.
- There is a balance between “what do we need to do” vs. “how do we achieve this”.
- Group members listen to each other and everyone's idea is heard.
- There is a supportive atmosphere where group members feel comfortable to say what they think.
- The group has a range of individuals that contribute in different ways and complement each other: leaders, planners, creators, etc.

What makes a team ineffective?

- People talk more than they listen, so not all group members can contribute.
- Roles are not delegated to members of the team.
- Arguments between group members.
- Lack of trust and helpfulness.
- One or two members dominate the entire group and make all the decisions.

Here are some tips that will make the group exercise a success for you:

Tip #1 – Use the names of your colleagues

Everybody wears a name tag. Use it when you address somebody. This will show that you are courteous and have good manners, but also that you pay attention to details.

Tip #2 – Take initiative

Volunteer to read the task, write the notes or keep the time. However, if you take responsibility for a task, make sure it is completed. If you are responsible to keep the time, then do not be afraid to alert your team members that you only have 5 minutes left. It will work against you if the team fails due to the area you've taken responsibility for.

Tip #3 – Be active in the group

Speak up and be a prominent part in the exercise. Try to be a person that contributes, not only reacts to what others are discussing or asking. In the same time, listen to others as well and do not be the only one that talks or has ideas.

Tip #4 – Have a watch and use it

Time is the biggest constraint in a group exercise. Always keep an eye on the time while you are working.

Tip #5 – Quality vs quantity

Do not talk just for the sake of talking. Try to move your group forward by your contributions. The main point of the assessment is not to get the correct answer but how you interact with others to get to that answer.

Tip #6 – Be yourself

You are not being assessed on what you know, but on how you think. Don't try to put a mask and pretend to be someone else. The day is long and you will get tired of pretending and your true self will eventually come out.

Tip #7 – Have fun

Keep the atmosphere light and breezy, and do not make a big deal if an idea your group discussed for 5 minutes turns unproductive. Smile often and have a blast!

Here are some examples of group exercises:

Example 1

You are 12 people on a sinking ship. There is an escape boat, however only 8 people fit in it. Your group has to discuss who will be saved. You have 15 minutes to make an unanimous decision.

Example 2

Your ship makes an emergency landing on the moon. You have the following equipment with you:

- Flashlight

- Parachute
- Water
- Compass etc.

Choose 5 priority items that you would take with you from the ship. When you are unanimous, write them down on the whiteboard. You have 15 minutes to complete the task.

Example 3

You have the following group of cabin crew:

- Yusuki – 22 – Japan – smoker
- Maria – 24 – US – smoker
- Anna – 29 – Kenya – non-smoker
- Najir – 27 – Nepal – non-smoker
- Sofia – 25 – Egypt – smoker
- Yen – 22 – China – non-smoker

Your group is the accommodation department that decides which crew gets paired up in 2 bedroom apartments. You will present your decision and explain your criteria of selection in 15 minutes.

Example 4

You are working the London-Dubai sector, and you have the following complaints in the aircraft:

- 1A – Mr. Smith – frequent traveler complains that he did not get a seat with leg room
- 10 C – Mrs. Jones traveling with a child and an infant did not receive a toy for her child
- 12H – Mr. Rogers TV doesn't work
- 14K – Mr. Ford did not get his diabetic meal.

What is your order of priorities in solving these complaints and what solutions would you offer. (The group has 20 minutes to decide.)

These are just a few examples of tasks that you will be required to fulfill during your cabin crew assessment day.

Now that you know what to expect from your group exercise, ask yourself the following questions:

- ‘What is my role in groups?’
- ‘Am I a player or an observer?’
- ‘Am I a dominant personality?’
- ‘Should I contribute more?’
- ‘Should I take a more active role?’
- ‘Should I encourage others to contribute?’

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