

Role Play Exercise

What is it?

- A fictional scenario in which you have to assume a role to respond to a situation, a person or persons. The scenarios can be difficult or awkward, but is usually relevant to the job you are applying for.
- You will be provided a brief on your role, the situation, and your desired outcome.
- An assessor might be at hand to observe how you react and respond as the scenario plays out, or the entire session may be recorded.

These scenarios may include but are not limited to:

- o Dealing with a difficult/ angry customer or colleague
- o Disciplining or appraising a staff member
- o Bargaining for a pricing position
- o Negotiating a contract or project delivery with a stakeholder

What is being tested

- A mix of strategic thinking and people skills
- Can you create a solution that support the needs of your customer or stakeholder while also serving the needs of your company?
- Do you actually understand what your customer or stakeholder really need, over and above what they are saying?
- Can you stay calm and collected under pressure?
- How adaptable are you as new developments unfold?

How to prepare for it

Before the role-play, familiarize yourself with the organization and job you are applying for. Note the key competencies or skills stated in the job description. This will give you clues to what behaviours you will most likely be tested on.

At the start of the role-play, read through the brief thoroughly and think about the strategic outcome that you are supposed to achieve. The brief is usually kept short so that you should focus more on your reaction and not on analyzing the causes of issues. Pre-empt the possible arguments that the role player may throw at you, and consider your possible responses.

Start the role play with positivity and enthusiasm, project understanding and empathy towards the role player, and maintain amicable throughout the conversation. Be firm by summarising the follow-up actions and your outcomes at the end. Also, be mindful that assessors will be evaluating your ability to defuse a situation or negotiate a positive outcome, not your acting skills.

Who uses it

You will likely encounter this assessment method if you are applying for the following roles:

- Customer engagement or relationship management
- Procurement and liaison with either internal or external stakeholders (e.g. government relations)
- Corporate communications or media relations