Part 2 - Methods to solve SJTs
Content

The objectives of the document are to explain in detail the Situational Judgment Tests used in recruitment procedures. It will help you to have a full understanding, but also learn some methods to succeed them.

1. Why a preparation is recommended for SJTs?
2. The core competencies and the business principles
3. Methods to solve Situational Judgment Tests
4. Success depends on you

“Through our books and articles, we will share what we know and what we learn about aptitude tests and define the actions that can ensure your success!”
Why a preparation is recommended for SJTs?

Do I need a preparation?

YES. It is vital to prepare SJTs in order to increase your chances of success for these tests.

Even if no particular knowledge is required to take a SJT, recruiters are using SJTs to assess soft-skills, non-academic behaviors and practical intelligence to make a selection between candidates. A candidate will interpret the situation based on his understanding, his perception and his experience. There is a part of subjectivity in these tests as each judgment can be different.

This why a preparation is strongly recommended for SJTs! It will decrease this part of subjectivity. They are also generally considered as the most difficult aptitude tests, compared to verbal, numerical or abstract reasoning. Having a strong preparation and practicing will help you to master these tests.

How to prepare SJTs?

The preparation has to be done on three dimensions:

1. **Knowledge of the core competencies and business principles** - Have an excellent and complete understanding on the core competencies: definition, aptitudes linked to each competency… Organizations are also respecting values and business principles that are can also be assessed in SJTs.

2. **Methods to solve SJTs** - There are several methods that can help you to solve questions of SJTs: analyze the components and constraints, logical analysis…

3. **Practicing SJTs as many as you can** – the more you practice, higher will be your knowledge on these tests. You will face many examples and it will increase the understanding of these tests. To practice in a realistic environment, go on our website www.abilitus.com and select the package level you want.
The core competencies and the business principles

Get information on the organization

To start the preparation, you should gather information on the job and organization in which you apply.

- **Information on the job description** – What is the role description? What are the responsibilities? In which department? In which team? You should also pay attention to the profile there are looking (education level or experience level). Compare also several job descriptions of the same organization.

- **Information on the organization** – What is the size? What is the internal structure? What is the reputation? The organization’s website has many interesting information (values, mission, structure,...)

- **Information on the recruitment procedure** – What are the steps of the recruitment procedure? How many steps? What are the assessment tools?

Gathering this information is really important. Private and public organizations are building their competency-based system on these elements. If you can have good understanding of the jobs and organization, you will know which competencies are assessed and adapt your preparation to it.

Business principles and values followed by organizations

All organizations have defined and are following business principles and values (often described in a Code of Conduct). Recruiters are not only searching for candidates matching the core competencies, but also candidates that can adopt a professional behavior in all situations, with any third party (colleague, manager, customer, external people...).

In the list below, you have the values and business principles which are the most common in the European organizations (public and private).

- **Integrity** – The trust to act with honesty and treat all stakeholders (employee, external people...) fairly and equitably, using open and transparent procedures.

- **Diversity** – Diversity of the teams and take the best from people with different backgrounds to achieve the common goal of the organization.

- **Equal opportunities** – Everyone should be treated following a policy of equal opportunities, without discrimination on any grounds such as sex, race, color, ethnic, social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political view, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation.

- **Respect** – Equal treatment of all people working in the organization, following the rules and procedures.

- **Ambition** – Organizations strives to constantly improve and obtain positive results. People have to be innovative, dynamic and committed to achieve their full potential.

- **Professionalism** – At any time, people should adopt a professional behavior; treat file and people in a fair and efficient manner, using best practices and ensuring quality and stakeholders’ satisfaction.

- **Quality** – Organizations want to provide the best service to the clients in timely manner.

- **Flexibility** – People should be open to flexibility and have the ability to adapt to working environment depending the situation, the evolution of the organization and/or the external environment (politic, economic...).
- **Fight against harassment** – Any forms of harassment (sexual, physical or mental) is strictly prohibited. Each person has the right to work in a safe and secure environment.
- **Transparency** – For public organizations, the procedures should be transparent and open.

### The most common core competencies

Each organization can have its own core competencies. However in most cases, they are aligned on the standard core competencies defined by Human Resources Management standards. The SJTs available on ABILITUS are following a model with 8 core competencies. The definitions are:

- **Communication**
  Communicate clearly and precisely both orally and in writing.

- **Analysis and Problem Solving**
  Identify the critical facts in complex situations and develop creative/practical solutions.

- **Priority and Organizing**
  Prioritize the tasks, flexibility to adapt the work and organize the workload.

- **Quality and Results**
  Take personal responsibility and initiative for delivering work to a high standard of quality within the rules and procedures.

- **Learning and Development**
  Develop and improve personal skills and knowledge of the job, the organization and its environment.

- **Resilience**
  Remain effective under pressure, handle stressful situations, organization changes positively or adapts to changing work environments.

- **Leadership**
  Manage, develop and motivate people to achieve results. Be proactive and assertive in your job.

- **Working with Others**
  Work co-operatively with people, in a team and across organizational boundaries. Respect the differences between people.

Behind each competency, you have a list of aptitudes. On the next page, there is the competencies star that ABILITUS has defined (summary of several competency-based system). Each core-competency is linked to specific aptitudes. For your preparation, you should read it closely and study it. It will help you to solve SJTs, but also for the interview step with recruiters.
- Critical thinking
- Creativity and reasoning attitude
- Adaptability to a situation
- Use knowledge, past experiences
- Integrate relevant information
- Identify/Understand the blocking points
- Analytical skills – Diagnose, Analyze, Conceptualize, Reformulate
- Innovative problem-solver
- Evaluate the relevance of the solutions
- Use resources and information available
- Decision making skills
- Identify, improve complex works/processes
- Quantify, Compare, Evaluate the solutions
- Implement solutions identified
- Strong communication: oral and written
- Ability to communicate
- Clear, structured, concise communication
- Corporal attitude
- Active listening skills
- Express your views, opinion, ideas
- Discuss, Negotiate, Convince, Persuade
- Share your knowledge
- Diplomacy skills
- Presentation skills
- Quick learning skills
- Ability to auto-development
- Looking for permanent feedback
- Implication in the team/organization
- Be autonomous and independent
- Self-confident in your job/field
- Manage your own development plan
- Get inform and stay updated
- React on feedback
- Evolve, Develop, Train, Reinforce your skills and knowledge
- Be assertive, be proactive, be innovative
- High level of energy and positive thinking
- Be honest, just and partial
- Self-motivated, Self-sufficient
- Dynamic attitude (‘Go for it’)
- Be a source of development for others
- Influence, Lead, Inspire, Motivate, Mobilize, Coach
- Define, develop, promote a vision
- Cause confidence
- Perspicacity, Flexibility, Adaptability
- Take initiatives
- People management skills
- Fix objectives

- Planning and organizing - Organize, Order, Plan, Prepare and Program
- Efficient organization of your time and work
- Multi-tasking
- Define, implement, follow a working plan
- Respect time frame and deadlines
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Be able to define priorities
- Ability to manage workload of a team
- Ability to find organizational solution for heavy workload or short deadlines
- Use resource/support around you
- Goals/Objectives driven attitude
- Meet objectives and expectations
- Focus on results and quality
- Execute your work
- Determination to succeed, achieve
- Take initiatives to achieve, get results
- Take ownership and responsibilities
- Respect deadlines, processes, rules, ethics
- Develop strategic perspectives
- Manage your work
- Be rigorous, be reliable
- Accuracy and attention to details
- Work on multi-disciplinary projects
- Team spirit attitude
- Build trusting relationship
- Collaborate with people
- Connect people together
- Coach, Support, Advice others
- Listen, Communication, React in a group
- Be flexible and tolerant to situations/people
- People management skills – Manage, Communicate, Take decisions, Fix objective
- Ability to successfully train others
- Conflict resolution skills between people
- Respect others
- Professionalism, integrity

- Remain calm, open and clear
- Ability to react and not being destabilize
- Tolerant to stressful situations
- Ability to remain efficient in a stressed and/or complicated situation
- Be ready to provide a stronger implication for a limited period
- Stress-management
- Ability to adapt yourself to a situation
- Have a positive to overcome hurdles and challenges
- Be able to remain calm, open and clear

Competencies Star
www.abilitus.com
Methods to solve Situational Judgment Tests

This chapter will present several methods that can be used to solve SJTs in a quick and effective way. Mastering all the methods and use them during practice tests will significantly increase your chances to succeed SJTs by recruiters. All methods are complementary and can be used together to solve a question.

Method 1 - Deep analysis of the question and scenario

This method can help you to analyze all the components of the situation, to understand it correctly before selecting the ‘most’/’least’ effective answers. How to do?

1. **Identify the main problem stated in the question**
2. **Identify the secondary constraints** – To identify the constraints, you should answer to one or several statements: What? Why (reasons of the issue)? When (time pressure, urgency, deadline...)? How (how to do, which action, behavior)? Who (colleague, team leader, head of unit, external...)?

Based on this analysis, the *most effective solution is the one aiming at solving the main problem while complying with the secondary constraints.*

### QUESTION:

You are Team Leader. Your team is under pressure with a heavy workload. A training session is planned for the entire team to improve the speed of treatment. One of your Team Members tells you that he does not wish to follow the training, citing his heavy workload.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Effective</th>
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<tr>
<td>Indicate to your Team Member that the training is mandatory and that he must attend it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go through his workload and indicate which files are less priority so he can attend the training.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer some of the files to another Team Member so he can attend the training.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You empower him on the importance of the training in his job and let him take the final decision on his participation to the training.</td>
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**If we analyze the situation based on the method, we have:**

- **Main problem stated:** A Team Member does not want to follow a training for the team
- **Constraints ‘Why’:** Cannot attend due to heavy workload
- **Constraints ‘What’:** Should attend to improve the productivity of the team

**Relevance of each answer:**

- **Answer 1:** Confirming your authority for the team is important, but as a leader you should help your team members if they mentioned that they have an issue. In this solution, you don’t listen to your team member. *It is a NEUTRAL ANSWER*
- **Answer 2:** This solution should solve the issue about the workload, as you will review it and indicate the priority to free up some time for your Team Member. *It is the MOST EFFECTIVE ANSWER*
- **Answer 3:** The solution can help the Team Member to have the time to follow the training. But it can report the issue on another Team Member. *It is a NEUTRAL ANSWER*
- **Answer 4:** The idea of empowering the Team Member is good so the team member has the responsibility to take the decision. But in this scenario, the training is important for the team, and as a Team Leader, you have to take the direction for your team and decide what is good for the results. *It is the LEAST EFFECTIVE ANSWERS*
Method 2 – Identify Comparable Intermediary Responses

This is a famous method that can be used in many multiple choice questionnaires (MCQ). The best way to use this method is when you are blocked on a question, and you identify which are the right answers. It can be used for Situational Judgment Tests.

How to use this method in a SJT? Sometime one of the statements clearly stands out (for the most or the least effective answer), while it is very difficult to differentiate the relevance of the other possible answers. A way to solve is to identify the two intermediary and comparable actions. In many case, these actions cannot be considered as the most/least effective solutions.

**QUESTION:**
You are appointed to lead a new project. In your responsibilities, you have to identify and select two persons with the required skills. The two people that you have selected don’t want to work together, due to an old conflict between them.

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<td>Select the two people and follow closely the evolution of the project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meet each worker individually and explain why they are important on the project.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organize work on the project individually for each person and so as to reduce as much as possible the interactions between them.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Select one person to work on the project and find someone else less skilled for the second position.</td>
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**Analysis of the answers**

- The answer 4) clearly stands out as THE LEAST EFFECTIVE, because you are making a compromise that can have an impact on your results as you don’t select the two persons with the right/best skills for your project.
- The 3 others answers are similar as you decide to select both persons. But when looking closely, the answers 1) and 3) are very similar. In both answers, you are adapting the workload of the persons so they can work on the project. The answer 2) is THE MOST EFFECTIVE as you explain the interest of your organization through the project, and the two employees have to solve their issue to work. Personal interests should not be against collective interests.
Method 3 – The WIN-WIN approach

This method is combining two approaches:

1. **The Win-Win approach** – It is a technique used in many fields, but mainly in negotiation and conflict resolution. It is helping to identify the opportunity to come to a mutually beneficial result for all parties involved. Each possible solutions/agreements is evaluated based on the parties’ interests.

2. **Life Position Strategy** – In the 1950s, the psychiatrist Eric Berne has developed a model called Transactional Analysis for psychology purposes. The model is analyzing the interactions between people, and can be used in many fields: family, business, games, sports... Using the model can help to identify which behavior/action to take in a particular situation.

To solve questions in SJT, these two approaches can be used and help candidates to find the right answers (most and least effective actions). The most effective action will be the answer that is combining your individual interest together with the collective interest.

The graph below is detailing the approach and is composed of several dimensions:

- Two positions: YOU (or individual interest) ‘versus’ OTHERS/ORGANIZATION (or collective interest)
- For each position, the interest can have two values: WIN (or +) and LOSE (or –)
- Then there are 4 areas. Each area has some behaviors that can define/represent the position

You (Individual Interests) is **WIN**

- **WIN / WIN (+ / +)**
  - « I’m OK, they are OK »
  - The action is serving your individual interests AND the collective/others interests
  - Type of behaviors/actions from YOU:
    - Reach objectives, long term benefits
    - Take initiatives, lead, motivate, positivity
    - Stimulate/promote people and team
    - Achieve concrete and strong results
    - Good communication

You (Individual Interests) is **LOSE**

- **LOSE / LOSE (- / -)**
  - « I’m NOK OK, they are NOT OK »
  - The action is not helping to serve individual or collective/others interests
  - Type of behaviors/actions from YOU:
    - No self-confidence on your abilities
    - Wait and see approach
    - Relational conflict
    - Not helping to reach targets or do the work
    - Put yourself in danger

Others / Collective Interests is **WIN**

- **WIN / LOSE (+ / -)**
  - « I’m OK, they are NOT OK »
  - The action is serving only your individual interests at the expense of the collective/others interests
  - Type of behaviors/actions from YOU:
    - Defensive strategies (critics, control)
    - No support to the team, only you
    - Dominant/dominant position with people

Others / Collective Interests is **LOSE**

- **LOSE / WIN (- / +)**
  - « I’m NOK OK, they are OK »
  - The action is only serving collective/others interests at the expense of your individual interests
  - Type of behaviors/actions from YOU:
    - Lack of personality or initiative
    - Victimization behavior
    - Avoid exposure or no reaction for decisions
    - Influence of others on you and in your work
To define if an action is WIN (+) or LOSE (-), you have some behaviors/aptitudes that can help.

**ACTION IS WIN (+)**

- Take initiative linked to your job positions and responsibilities. Lead, inspire, achieve results and respect constraints

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Professional behavior is all situations toward the people and organization. Positive, Integrity, Respect, Ambition

**BEHAVIOR**

- Respecting the processes, but also involved and provided feedback when needed, even if it is not ask (when organization changes)

**PROCESSES**

- Team spirit when working with people. Assertiveness, good communication

**INTERACTION**

- Adaptation to all situations to get the results (quality and quantity), respecting the constraints and resources

**RESULTS**

**ACTION IS LOSE (-)**

- No initiative to support a colleague or a team member. No implication to find solution or respect deadlines

- Emotional reaction, resistance to change, aggressiveness, harassment. Not contributing to find solution.

- Not following the rules or processes in place in the organization/team. No reaction on faults or errors made.

- No cooperation with people, individual behavior

- Passiveness, wait and see approach or avoidance strategy. Increase individual workload by impact on quality/quantity

This approach can help you to solve many questions in SJT, as it will help you to identify the relevance of each action for the situation, and identify the MOST/LEAST effective actions. Bear in mind that in some questions, you don’t always have all the positions. Sometimes, the LOSE/LOSE is not clearly in the possible answers, you can have two actions WIN/LOSE or LOSE/WIN.

This method does not have to be followed to strictly, but it should provide you indication to identify the most/least effective answers. It can also be used as complementary with the other methods describe above.

**QUESTION:**

You are appointed to lead a new project. In your responsibilities, you have to identify and select two persons with the required skills. The two people that you have selected don’t want to work together, due to an old conflict between them.

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**Analysis of the answers**

- Answer 1) is WIN/LOSE : Selecting both persons will help you to achieve your objective. But without actions on solving the conflict between can have a negative impact on the results of the project. It is an action that will help you on short term, but on long term the success is not guaranteed.

- Answer 2) is WIN/WIN : You select the right persons for your project, and having a discussion with each person will empower them and they will understand that they have to solve the conflict to serve the interests of the organization.

- Answer 3) is LOSE/WIN : It also seems to be a good action so you can achieve your objective, but it will force you to do more effort to get the work done as you need to adapt the plan for each person. The way to work is not efficient and optimal.

- Answer 4) is LOSE/LOSE : You do a compromise by only selecting one person. It is not serving your interest as you don’t have the right resources to work on your project. And it is not serving the collective interests, because the results (quality and quantity) could be impacted by this decision.
Success depends on you

As we mentioned several time, preparation is key to succeed SJTs in recruitment procedure. With this e-book, you have all the tools and methods to prepare yourself and master SJT. It is really important to understand, learn all the concepts to increase your chances of success.

But the theory is never enough to be fully prepared. The second step is to practice SJTs. ABILITUS is offering an interactive platform with practice tests to help you on SJT. It will put you under realistic conditions to practice these tests.

Remember that the success does not only depend on the knowledge, but also your mindset. A preparation will help you to be confident with these tests. Having a positive mindset and be self-confident are probably the most important elements to succeed a recruitment procedure.

Good luck!
Questions?

Thank you for choosing AbilitUs! Our team is dedicated to answer you quickly and support your preparation.

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contact@abilitus.com