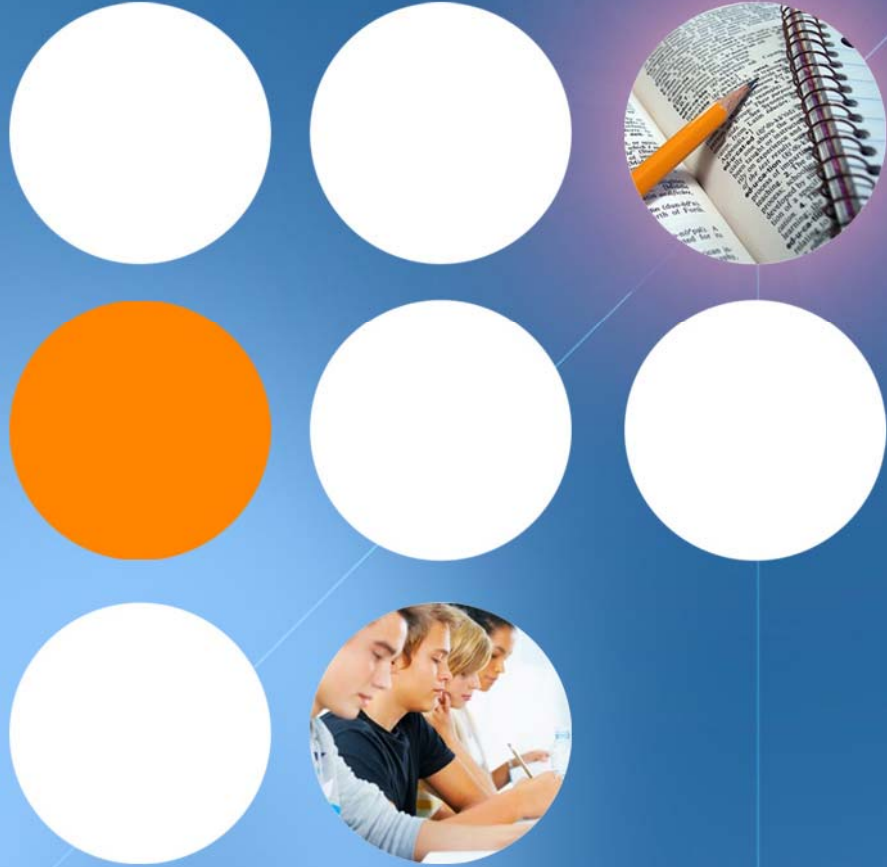




phr- sphr

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Professional in Human Resources Certification Study Guide

- Peter Aquino -

MAY 2010

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DISCLAIMER AND LEGAL NOTICE

Hello and welcome to the PHR / SPHR Study Guide.

Let's get on with the standard disclaimers so we can get on to the meat of this study guide.

First of all, this is a completely FREE study guide which gives you only personal rights to it. You may not sell, edit, give away or share this guide unless explicitly allowed by me.

Second, this is an **UNOFFICIAL** guide to the PHR/SPHR exam and is not in any way endorsed by the administrating body. For further improvement of this eBook, I encourage you to send me your suggestions or corrections at:

<http://www.phrsphrlounge.com/contact-us/>

Third, I am an ordinary HR Professional who just wants to help out my fellow HR practitioners. The information contained in this guide is for informational purposes only. Tips and advice you can find in this study guide are based on my opinion, personal experience, and research.

Fourth, going through this guide is not any guarantee that you will pass. That is entirely out of my hands. I am merely showing you a suggested path that has worked for me and for others and which may or may not work for you. In short, proceed prudently with caution—you are advised to do your own due diligence when it comes to making review preparation and decisions.

Fifth, by reading this study guide, you agree that I am not responsible for the success or failure of your review preparation decisions relating to the information presented in this guide.

Last and most certainly not the least, this guide is a freebie on my site:

<HTTP://WWW.PHRSPHRLOUNGE.COM/>

You can get a lot more information and tips from there so be sure to visit. I guess that's about it so let's proceed and begin our study session.

INTRODUCTION

A HISTORY OF THE HR CERTIFICATION INSTITUTE

The HR Certification Institute has been around since 1973 and the trip from a startup accreditation firm to what is now recognized to be the authority for certifying HR professionals.

Here is the history of the HRCI, as related on their website

[[HTTP://WWW.HRCI.ORG/ABOUTUS/HISTORY/?HISTORY-OF-HR-CERTIFICATION-INSTITUTE](http://www.hrci.org/aboutus/history/?history-of-hr-certification-institute)]

while what is now known as the HR Certification Institute began certifying HR professionals in 1976, it truly got its start in September of 1973, when the board of directors of what was then called the American Society for Personnel Administration (ASPA) voted to approve the creation of a professional accreditation program for human resource managers.

The steps toward building a national certification program for HR professionals began more than 50 years ago, as personnel managers worked to create a national association for their profession. In the fall of 1948, as organizational meetings for ASPA were being held, Herbert Heneman, Jr., Ph.D., published the article, "Qualifying the Professional Industrial Relations Worker," which focused on the need for certifying personnel professionals. Heneman, a professor of industrial relations at the University of Minnesota, wrote that the keys to starting a certification program were:

- A code of ethics.
- An objective measure of technical competence.

In 1948, the debate had just begun on the professional nature of HR management and how to measure skill levels in the profession. The debate centered on three key questions:

What body of knowledge must personnel professionals know?

Who defines that body of knowledge?

How do you objectively measure it?

It would take more than 25 years for these questions to be answered.

Small Steps Toward Certification

In 1967, ASPA and the School of Industrial Relations at Cornell University cosponsored a three-day conference to discuss definitions of the HR profession and its common body of knowledge. Some conference participants saw the Cornell conference as an important stepping stone toward establishing a certification program.

A follow-up meeting was held a year later in New York City. It focused on a recent study by Cornell University on HR management as a profession. The discussion focused on professionalism within a corporate framework rather than the traditional individual concept. The participants agreed that while HR managers could borrow concepts from established professions such as medicine, law and education to help define professionalism, they would also have to adapt and modify the concept.

The meeting's attendees agreed that the following five characteristics defined a profession:

1. A profession must be full-time.
2. Schools and curricula must be aimed specifically at teaching the basic ideas of the profession, and there must be a defined common body of knowledge.
3. A profession must have a national professional association.
4. A profession must have a certification program.
5. A profession must have a code of ethics.

"We met all the criteria except the defined body of knowledge and the certification program. To really be considered a profession, ASPA had to establish a certification program," said Drew Young, one of the participants in the meetings, who later served as the president of ASPA.

The Body of Knowledge

Early in the 1970s, the ASPA board of directors began serious discussions about creating a national certification program, but the board shied away from using the term "certification." The program could only test people on their level of knowledge, but there was a fear that people might equate "certification" with competency.

In 1972, the board established the ASPA Task Force on Accreditation and named Gordon R. Scott, vice president of personnel for Fisher Scientific Co. of Pittsburgh, to head the task force. Under Scott's leadership, the task force completed its study in less than a year and recommended that ASPA support an accreditation program. At its annual fall meeting in September 1973, the ASPA board endorsed the task force's recommendation, and the ASPA Accreditation Program was born.

The group faced the formidable task of building a national program from scratch. The job required a remarkable amount of dedication, hard work and stamina. By June 1975, the accreditation task force dissolved and the ASPA Accreditation Institute (AAI) was incorporated. One of its first steps was to create six functional standards committees. These committees were essential in defining the body of knowledge within the following functional areas:

- Employment, placement and personnel planning.
- Training and development.
- Compensation and benefits.
- Health, safety and security.
- Employee and labor relations.
- Personnel research.

The personnel research committee eventually was dropped from the committees, and management practices were added. Each committee developed a separate exam designed specifically for its functional area. The idea was that the exams would fill the needs of both generalists and specialists.

A Mixed Bag

To add to the confusion of separate exams, the new Institute devised two levels of designations for both generalists and specialists. The senior-level designations were the Accredited Personnel Diplomat (specialist) and the Accredited Executive in Personnel (generalist). The basic-level categories were the Accredited Personnel Specialist and the Accredited Personnel Manager.

By the end of 1975, AAI was ready to start accrediting human resource professionals. Test exemptions, however, had become a controversial issue for the AAI board. They wanted to attract senior-level HR managers, but they also knew that senior-level managers wouldn't sit for exams.

The board hammered out standards for test exemptions and asked HR professionals to submit their resumes and credentials. Any professional who met the standards would receive accreditation.

"The exemptions served two purposes," said Young. "First, we received support and recognition from top-level HR managers. Secondly, we needed the money that applications for exemptions would bring in. We automatically invested the money into bonds, and that's really what kept the program afloat for the first couple of years."

The Institute also received a grant of "seed money" from the ASPA Foundation, which would eventually be repaid in huge dividends for the Foundation.

The first person to apply for accreditation was Herbert Heneman, Jr. His application was approved, and on Feb. 18, 1976, Heneman became the first human resource professional to be accredited by the Institute. During 1976, AAI received more than 2,500 applications for exemptions, and approximately 2,100 HR professionals were accredited through the process.

The first accreditation exams were given on April 24, 1976. Concern over the professional quality of the exams caused the training and development exam to be canceled. Only four people had registered, and they were rescheduled to take the exam later that year. This minor incident illustrated the dedication of the Institute's board to quality and professional integrity.

Building a Reputation

The Institute was off to a good start, but within a couple of years the road had become a little bumpy.

"We fully expected the tough times though," Young said. "A professor from Michigan State University did a study on credentialing programs. His study showed that these programs all had similar patterns: They would start off great guns and then fade. Then after several years, they would rebound and eventually take off. Certification programs that had the support of the national association were the ones that survived and had the most success."

In July 1979, AAI was renamed the Personnel Accreditation Institute (PAI). Confusion over the roles of ASPA and the ASPA Institute was the primary reason for the name change. That same year, PAI offered the first comprehensive generalist exam for HR professionals, which signaled the ultimate direction of the certification program. Also that year, the Institute began its first practice analysis study. The study involved contacting more than 1,000 HR experts and asking them to identify and catalog information that HR professionals should know—thereby updating the profession's body of knowledge. In keeping with best practice in the certification field, practice analysis studies are conducted for all the HR Certification Institute's exams every three to five years.

The Generalist's Choice

After several years of accrediting HR professionals, the Institute noticed that more than 80 percent of certification applicants requested the generalist exam. So in 1988, PAI decided to discontinue certifying specialists. It also eliminated the confusing four-category system by creating only two certification designations: Professional in Human Resources (PHR) and the Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR).

In 1989, in conjunction with ASPA changing its name to the Society for Human Resource Management, PAI made its final name change – to the Human Resource Certification Institute, better reflecting the critical role the organization played in the HR community.

Focusing on growing trends and business needs, the HR Certification Institute began the development of the Global Professional in Human Resources (GPHR) designation in 2002. The GPHR certification exam was first administered in 2004. In 2008, the Institute awarded its 1,000th GPHR credential. In the certification field, the 1,000th certificant is considered a milestone in the viability and sustainability of a certification program.

In 2004, the HR Certification Institute began offering the exams via computer-based testing (CBT). This allowed certificants to take the exams at testing facilities across the United States and throughout the world. Prior to moving to CBT, the exams had been offered only in paper-and-pencil format twice per year in various cities across the U.S. and at the SHRM Annual and Leadership conferences each year. With the advent of CBT, applicants were now able to sit for the exams during two, two-month testing windows: one in the spring and the other in the winter and obtain immediate preliminary exam results.

To address the diverse demographics that employers face when working in the state of California, and the state's unique legal compliance and practice requirements, the HR Certification Institute began offering a California state-specific certification in 2007. HR professionals must hold a current PHR or SPHR to sit for this exam. As of 2009, there are more than 300 HR professionals with a PHR-CA or SPHR-CA credential.

The certification program for HR professionals has finally taken hold. As of January 2009, more than 250,000 HR professionals have been certified. During the first few years, the numbers of applicants for the certification exams was in the hundreds rather than the thousands, and by the end of 1978, only 753 people had taken the accreditation exam. In contrast, in 2009 there are more than 100,000 HR professionals with the PHR, SPHR or GPHR designation. And, in 2008 more than 32,280 applied for one of the examinations—an unrivaled symbol of professional achievement.

About this article:

This article was originally written in 1998 by HR Magazine's senior writer Bill Leonard as part of the Society for Human Resource Management's 50th anniversary. It has been updated periodically since that time.

WHY DO I NEED TO BE CERTIFIED?

In June 2008, the HRCI released the following press release entitled “The Value of Certification Survey” and the following information taken from that press release, are illustrative of why certification is extremely important to the HR professional.

For instance, in “The Impact of Certification on Organizations Section” these were the results:

Three-fourths of certified respondents agreed that having HR certified professionals in an organization results in greater trust and confidence in the HR department/function compared to 46% of non-certified respondents.

Then in “The Value of Certification Question”, the results were as follows:

Nearly two-thirds of certified respondents (64%) rated certification as “very valuable” or “valuable” for being successful in day-to-day business operations, compared to 41% of non-certified respondents.

In addition, when asked whether they would do it all over again, 97% of certified HR professionals said “yes”.

For those who want to see the results in depth, here is the link to the PDF press release on the HRCI site:

http://www.hrci.org/hrci_files/_items/hrci-mr-tab1-1401/docs/value%20of%20certification%20survey.pdf

WHAT ARE THESE EXAMS ANYWAY?

The PHR and SPHR exams are created using the following PHR and SPHR Body of Knowledge, which outlines the responsibilities and knowledge needed to be a viable HR professional.

The HR Certification Institute administers four exams:

- **Professional in Human Resources (PHR)**—designed for HR professionals whose primary responsibilities are tactical rather than strategic, who focus on HR program implementation rather than creation and who function primarily within the HR department rather than organization wide.
- **Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR)**—Designed for HR professionals whose primary responsibilities involve designing and planning HR policies and practices, and whose decisions have an impact both within and outside the organization.
- **Global Professional in Human Resources (GPHR)**—Designed for HR professionals with cross-border responsibilities who develop and implement international HR strategies that affect international HR assignments and operations.
- **PHR-CA and SPHR-CA**—Designed for HR professionals with job responsibilities in the state of California. Applicants must have a current PHR or SPHR to qualify (see www.hrci.org for more information).

ARE THERE ANY REQUIREMENTS FOR TAKING THE EXAM?

For May to June 2011, there are new eligibility requirements as posted on the HRCI site as follows:

What are the new eligibility requirements?		
PHR Eligibility	SPHR Eligibility	GPHR Eligibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 year of demonstrated exempt-level HR experience with a Master's degree or higher • 2 years of demonstrated exempt-level HR experience with a Bachelor's degree • 4 years of demonstrated exempt-level HR experience with less than a Bachelor's degree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 years of demonstrated exempt-level HR experience with a Master's degree or higher • 5 years of demonstrated exempt-level HR experience with a Bachelor's degree • 7 years of demonstrated exempt-level HR experience with less than a Bachelor's degree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 years of demonstrated global exempt-level HR experience with a Master's degree or higher • 3 years of demonstrated exempt-level HR experience (with 2 of the 3 being global HR experience) with a Bachelor's degree • 4 years of demonstrated exempt-level HR experience (with 2 of the 4 being global HR experience) with less than a Bachelor's degree

For additional information, please visit [HRCI site](#).

HOW HARD IS THE EXAM?

To give you an idea about how hard the exam is, here is a table showing the passing rates over a long period of time.

This table and other statistics can be seen directly on the HRCI at this link:

<http://www.hrci.org/certification/stat/?Statistics>

Pass Rates

The following are pass rates for certification candidates during the past several administrations of the exam.

Exam Date/Window	PHR Pass Rate	SPHR Pass Rate	GPHR Pass Rate	PHR-CA/SPHR-CA Pass Rate
December 2001	67%	57%	N/A	N/A
May 2002	65%	53%	N/A	N/A
May 2003	65%	58%	N/A	N/A
December 2003	65%	57%	N/A	N/A
May - June 2004	67%	59%	N/A	N/A
November-December 2004	67%	60%	68%	N/A
May-June 2005	67%	58%	65%	N/A
December 2005-January 2006	64%	56%	69%	N/A
May-June 2006	64%	58%	70%	N/A
December 2006-January 2007	63%	55%	56%	N/A
May- June 2007	61%	58%	53%	N/A
California April & June 2007	N/A	N/A	N/A	71%
December 2007-January 2008	63%	57%	56%	72%
May-June 2008	60%	54%	64%	74%
December 2008-January 2009	59%	54%	66%	52%
May-June 2009	59%	52%	57%	53%
December 2009-January 2010	60%	53%	57%	61%

I THE CORE KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

Each exam measures a candidate's mastery of a specific HR body of knowledge.

The PHR and SPHR Body of Knowledge is created by HR subject matter experts through a rigorous practice analysis study and then validated by HR professionals working in the field through an extensive survey instrument.

The PHR and SPHR Body of Knowledge are periodically updated to ensure that it is consistent with current practices in the HR field. All questions appearing on the exams are linked to the responsibility and knowledge statements outlined below.

The percentages that follow each functional area heading are the PHR and SPHR percentages, respectively.

01 STRATEGIC BUSINESS MANAGEMENT (12%, 29%)

Developing, contributing to and supporting the organization's mission, vision, values, strategic goals and objectives; formulating policies; guiding and leading the change process; and evaluating HR's contributions to organizational effectiveness.

ROLE OF HR IN ORGANIZATIONS

HR Competencies

HR Functions

HR Generalist and HR Specialist Roles

HR Policies and Procedures

HR Roles

HR CONTROL AND EVALUATION

Effects of HR Practices on Business Performance

HR Budgeting Process

HR Metrics: Evaluating HR Effectiveness

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

Outsourcing the HR function

HR RESEARCH

Quantitative Analysis

Qualitative Research

Research Design and Methodology

THE ROLE OF HR IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Communication and Language Problems

Managerial Styles

Social Impact on Local Country

Stages of International HR Management

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT THEORIES

Effect of Leadership in Organizations

Leadership Theories

Leadership Training

ETHICS

Defining Morality

Ethical Issues

Establishing Ethical Behavior in the Organization

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY

Analyzing the Environment
Analyzing the Firm
Defining the Organization's Mission
Selecting a Strategy

ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

Aligning HR Functions with Organizational Contexts
Environmental Scanning
Environmental Sectors
Influencing Legislation

ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Centralized Versus Decentralized Decision Making
Division of Labor
Evaluating the Effectiveness of an Organization's Structure
Formal versus Informal Rules and Control Mechanisms
Functional Versus Product Departmentalization
Matrix Structures
Span of Control

AREAS FOR SPECIAL FOCUS

CAREER PLANNING

- Balancing work and life
- Career management systems
- Company policies to accommodate work and non-work

- Coping with job loss
- Definition of a career
- Plateauing
- Skills obsolescence

HR MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS

- Assimilating HR systems
- Conducting HR due diligence
- Cultural compatibility: address cultural differences, degree of internal integration, autonomy, adaptability, employee trust, diversity
- Integrating HR systems
- Integrating compensation and benefits structures
- Integrating performance management systems
- Integration: communication, employee anxiety, rumors, redundancy, downsizing, morale
- Merging workplace cultures

HR AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY

- Competitive advantage
- Competitive strategy
- Enhancing firm competitiveness
- Ethics
- Internal consulting
- Linking HR strategy to organizational strategy
- Mission and Vision

- Organizational effectiveness
- Quality management
- Strategic management
- Strategy formulation
- Strategy implementation
- Sustainability/corporate social responsibility
- Trends in HR

HR INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- Conducting system needs assessments
- Determining system specifications
- Issues to consider when selecting HRIS software
- Selecting an HR information system
- Using HR data for enterprise management

MEASURING HR OUTCOMES: METRICS AND THE BOTTOM LINE

- Analyzing and interpreting metrics
- Balanced scorecard: HR and organization level
- Benchmarking
- Calculating and interpreting yield ratios
- Economic value added
- Forecasting
- HR scorecard
- Measuring absenteeism
- Measuring turnover
- Organizational scorecard
- Quantitative analysis

- Return on investment (ROI)
- Trend and ration analysis projections

LEADERSHIP

- Authentic leadership
- Change management
- Contingency theory
- Ethical decision making
- Leader member exchange theory
- Path-goal theory
- Situational approach
- Skills approach
- Style approach
- Team leadership
- Trait approach
- Transformational leadership

02 WORKFORCE PLANNING AND EMPLOYMENT (26%, 17%)

Developing, implementing and evaluating sourcing, recruitment, hiring, orientation, succession planning, retention, and organizational exit programs necessary to ensure the workforce's ability to achieve the organization's goals and objectives.

EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION

Affirmative Action Plans

Age Discrimination in Employment Act (1967) as Amended

Civil Rights Acts

Disability Discrimination

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Equal Employment Opportunity Compliance

Hiring Non-immigrants: Visa Requirements

Immigration Reform and Control Act (1986) as Amended (1990)

Uniformed Services Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act (USERRA) (1994)

HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING

Alignment between Business and Human Resource Planning

Analysis of Present Employees

Forecasting Employment Needs

Implementing Human Resource Plans

Strategic Planning Model

JOB ANALYSIS, JOB DESCRIPTION, AND JOB SPECIFICATION

Job Analysis

Job Descriptions

Job Specifications

Job Identification: DOT (Dictionary of Occupational Titles)

Methods of Job Analysis

Uses of Job Analysis

RECRUITMENT

Determining Recruitment Needs and Objectives

External Recruiting Sources

Evaluating Recruiting Effectiveness

Internal Recruiting Sources

SELECTION

Application Forms

Application Process

Applicant Notification

Background Investigations

Interviewing

Medical Examinations

Pre-employment Testing

Reliability

Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures

Validity

Validation and Evaluation of a Selection Process

ORGANIZATIONAL EXIT

General Issues

Layoffs and Reductions-in-Force

Termination Interviews

Retirement

Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (1988)

INTERNATIONAL HR MANAGEMENT

Hiring Local versus Expatriate Managers

Labor Force Comparisons

Selection of Expatriates

AREAS FOR SPECIAL FOCUS

EMPLOYMENT LAW

- Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA)
- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA)
- Agency relationships / quasi contracts
- Contractual and tort theories
- Disparate impact
- Disparate treatment
- Employment contracts
- Employment-at-will doctrine
- Employee privacy
- Employer unfair labor practices
- Enforcement agencies (EEOC, OFCCP)
- Executive Order 11246 (1965)
- Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (INA)

- Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA)
- The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and as amended in 2008
- The Equal Pay Act of 1963
- The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978
- The Employer Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA)
- The Fair Labor Standards of 1938 (FLSA)
- The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA)
- The Rehabilitation Act (1973)
- The Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 (LMRDA)
- The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 (NLRA)
- The Labor Management Relations Act of 1947 (LMRA)
- The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSHA)
- The Railway Labor Act of 1926 (RLA)
- The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994
- The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act of 1988 (WARN)
- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1991
- Professional liability
- Unlawful harassment, sexual, religious, disability, race, color, nation of origin
- Whistle blowing/retaliation
- Reasonable accommodation: ADA, religious
- Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009
- The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA)
- Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA)
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)
- Negligent hiring
- Patient Protection and Affordable Healthcare Act or Obamacare

HR AND GLOBALIZATION

- Cross border HR management
- Cross-cultural effectiveness
- Global security and terrorism
- Global labor markets
- In-shoring
- Managing expatriates in global markets
- Off-shoring
- Repatriating employees post international assignment

MANAGING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

- Affirmative action
- Aging workforce
- Business case for diversity
- Cultural competence
- Equal Opportunity Employment (EEO)
- GLBT/sexual orientation issues
- Individuals with disabilities
- Language issues
- Racial/ethnic diversity
- Religion
- Reverse discrimination
- Sex/gender issues
- The glass ceiling

STAFFING: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- Ability/job knowledge tests, assessment centers
- Bona Fide Occupational Qualifications (BFOQs)
- Contingent assessment methods: drug testing, medical exams
- Discretionary assessment methods
- External influences on staffing: labor markets, unions, economic conditions, technology
- External recruitment: recruiters, open vs. targeted recruitment, recruitment sources, applicant reactions, medium (electronic, advertisement), fraud/misrepresentation
- Internal recruitment: timing, open/closed/targeted recruitment, bona fide seniority systems
- Internal recruitment: promotability ratings, managerial sponsorship, self/peer assessments, panels/review boards
- Initial assessment methods: resumes, cover letters, application blanks, biographical information, reference/background checks, genetic screening, initial interviews, minimum qualifications
- Job offers: employment-at-will, contracts, authorization to work
- Measurement concepts: predictors/criteria, reliability, validity
- Non-cognitive assessments (e.g. personality assessments, integrity tests, situational judgment tests, interest inventories)
- Structures interviews
- Selection decisions: ranking, grouping/banding, random selection
- The employment relationship: employees, contractors, temporary workers
- The employment brand

WORKFORCE PLANNING AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

- Downsizing/rightsizing
- Labor supply and demand
- Planning: forecasting requirements and availabilities, gap analysis, action planning, core flexible workforce
- Retention: involuntary turnover, outplacement counseling, alternative dispute resolution
- Retention: voluntary turnover, job satisfaction, withdrawal, alternatives
- Retention: measurement
- Succession planning

03 HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (17%, 17%)

Developing, implementing and evaluating activities and programs that address employee training and development, performance appraisal, talent and performance management, and the unique needs of employees to ensure that the knowledge, skills, abilities and performance of the workforce meet current and future organizational and individual needs.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE ORGANIZATION

Assessing Training Needs

Learning Organizations

Strategic Alignment of Training and Development

Systems Model of Training

PRINCIPLES OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Theories of Learning

Principles of Learning

Learning

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES

Developing Training Objectives

Training Methods and Processes

On-the-job Training Methods

Off-the-job Training Methods

On-the-job Versus Off-the-job Training

PRESENTING THE TRAINING

Facilities Planning

Training Materials

EVALUATION OF TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS

Comparison of Training Techniques

Criteria for Evaluating Training

Sources of Data

Research Methods for Evaluation

TRAINING PROGRAMS

Career Planning and Development

Employee Development

Expatriate Training

Orientation Training

O Talent Management

SHA Mandated Training

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Appraisers

Appraisal Interview

Behaviorally-based Appraisal Methods: MBO, BARS, BOS

Criterion Problems

Evaluation Procedures

Linking Appraisals to Employment Decisions

Legal Constraints on Performance Appraisal

Performance Evaluation

Performance Criteria

Rating Errors

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Action Research Model
Change Agent Role
Evaluating Organizational Development (OD)
Forces of Change
Organizational Change
Re-energizing the Mature Organization
Targets of Change
Theories of Change
Transfer and Diffusion of Change

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (OD) INTERVENTIONS

Group Interventions
Interpersonal Interventions
Intergroup Interventions
Organizational Interventions

AREAS FOR SPECIAL FOCUS

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- Appraisal feedback
- Diagnosing problems
- Electronic monitoring
- Identifying and measuring employee performance

- Rater errors in performance measurement
- Performance appraisals
- Managing performance
- Performance improvement programs
- Sources of information (e.g. managers, peers, clients)

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Competency models
- Determining return on investment (ROI)
- Employee development: formal education, experience, assessment
- E-Learning and use of technology in training
- Human/intellectual capital
- Learning theories: behaviorism, constructivism, cognitive models, adult learning, knowledge management
- Needs assessment
- On-the-job training (OJT)
- Training evaluation: Kirkpatrick's model
- Transfer of training: design issues, facilitating transfer
- Training's role in succession planning

04 TOTAL REWARDS (16%, 12%)

Developing/selecting, implementing/administering and evaluating compensation and benefits programs for all employee groups that support the organization's strategic goals, objectives and values.

TOTAL REWARDS: FINANCIAL AND NON-FINANCIAL

Compensation within Different Labor Markets

Determinants of Pay

Ethical Considerations in Compensation

Strategic Objectives of Compensation

Three Wage Decisions

THE WAGE-LEVEL DECISION

Establishing the Wage Level

Factors Influencing the Wage-level Decision

Survey Methods

Wage Surveys

JOB EVALUATION METHODS

Classification/Grading Method

Factor Comparison Method

Guide Chart-Profile Method (Hay method)

Point Method

Ranking Method

JOB PRICING AND PAY RATE ADMINISTRATION

Adjustments for Inflation
Establishing Administrative Controls
Individual Pay Rate Determination
Pay Grades and Pay Ranges
Red-circle Job Rates
Reflecting Geographic Influences in Pay Structures
Two-tier Wage Systems

ECONOMIC FACTORS AFFECTING COMPENSATION

Demographic Trends
Economic Growth
Foreign Competition
Inflation
Interest Rates
Industry Competition

INCENTIVE COMPENSATION SYSTEMS

Differential Pay
Employee Stock Ownership Plans
Executive Compensation
Group and Team Incentives
Individual Incentives

Money and Motivation Theories

Organization-wide Programs: Profit Sharing and Gainsharing

Skill and Knowledge Based Pay

Strategic Alignment of Base Pay and Incentive Pay

EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PROGRAMS

Consumer-directed Health Care

Employee Services

Health and Accident Insurance

Income Replacement

Pay for Time Not Worked

Pensions

Recognition and Achievement Awards

Social Security

Workers' Compensation

Unemployment Compensation

MANAGING EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PROGRAMS

Cost-Benefit Analysis and Cost Management

Communicating Benefit Programs

Employee Benefits Philosophy, Planning, and Strategy

Employee Preference Assessment: Surveys

Legal Compliance of Benefits Programs

Managed Health Care

COMPENSATION LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Davis-Bacon Act

Copeland Act and Anti-Kickback Law

Walsh-Healey Act

Fair Labor Standards Act (1938) as amended

COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (1990)

Equal Pay Act (1963)

Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), 1974

Pregnancy Discrimination in Employment Act (1978)

Family and Medical Leave Act

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), 1996

Small Business Job Protection Act (SBJPA), 1996

Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (1993)

FASB Regulations

IRS Regulations

Wage Garnishment (1968)

EVALUATING TOTAL COMPENSATION STRATEGY & PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Assessment of Methods and Processes

Budgeting

INTERNATIONAL HR COMPENSATION ISSUES

Compensation and Benefits for Foreign Nationals and Expatriates

AREAS FOR SPECIAL FOCUS

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

- Disability insurance
- Educational benefits
- Employee assistance/wellness programs
- Federal insurance programs (Old-Age, Survivor and Disability Insurance (OASDI), Medicare)
- Family oriented benefits
- Global employee benefits
- Life insurance
- Nonqualified plans for highly paid and executive employees
- Regulation of health insurance programs (COBRA, HIPAA, Health Maintenance Organization Act of 1973)
- Statutory vs. voluntary benefits
- Types of retirement plans (FLSA, ERISA, Pension Protection Act of 2006)
- Types of health care plans (multiple payer, universal health care systems, HMOs, PPOs, fee for service, consumer directed)
- Time-off and other benefits
- Unemployment insurance
- Wellness programs

- Financial benefits (gainsharing, group incentives, team awards, merit pay/bonuses)
- Managing employee benefits (cost control, monitoring future obligations, action planning, strategic planning)
- Domestic partner benefits
- Paid leave plans
- Workers compensation

TOTAL REWARDS

- Compensation of special groups (e.g. executives, sales, contingent workers, management)
- Development of a base pay system
- Developing pay levels
- Determining pay increases
- External competitiveness strategies
- Internal alignment strategies
- Legal constraints in pay issues
- Monitoring compensation costs
- Minimum wage/overtime
- Motivation theories: equity theory, reinforcement
- Role of job analysis/job design/job descriptions in determining compensation
- Pay programs: merit pay, pay-for-performance, incentives/bonuses, profit sharing, group incentives/gain sharing, balanced scorecard
- Pay discrimination and dissimilar jobs
- Prevailing wage
- Union role in wage and salary administration

05 EMPLOYEE AND LABOR RELATIONS (22%, 18%)

Analyzing, developing, implementing/administering and evaluating the workplace relationship between employer and employee, in order to maintain relationships and working conditions that balance employer and employee needs and rights in support of the organization's strategic goals, objectives and values.

EARLY LABOR MOVEMENT

Anti-union Weapons

Federal Anti-Injunction (Norris-LaGuardia) Act (1932)

Labor Management Relations (Taft-Hartley) Act (1947)

Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure (Landrum-Griffin) Act (1959)

National Labor Relations (Wagner) Act (1935)

UNION REPRESENTATION OF EMPLOYEES

Election Campaign

National Labor Relations Board

Organizing a Union

The Structure of Union Organizations

Union Security

EMPLOYER UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICES

Domination and Unlawful Support of Labor Organizations

Procedures for Processing Unfair Labor Practice

Unfair Labor Practices

Remedies

UNION UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICES, STRIKES, AND BOYCOTTS

Duty of Fair Representation
Discrimination and Internal Union Affairs
Responsibility for Acts of Union Agents
Strikes and Secondary Boycotts
Strike Preparation
Union Restraint or Coercion

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Bargaining Issues and Concepts
Bargaining Structures
Duty to Successors: Buyouts, Mergers, or Bankruptcy
Good Faith Requirements
Mediation and Conciliation
Negotiation Strategies
National Emergency Strikes
The Labor Agreement
Unilateral Changes in Terms of Employment

MAINTAINING NONUNION STATUS

Reasons Why People Join Unions
Reasons Why People Do Not Join Unions
Strategies for Maintaining Nonunion Status

GRIEVANCE SYSTEMS

Arbitration
Effective Grievance Procedures
Grievance Procedures in Nonunion Organizations
Legal Endorsement of Arbitration
Union Grievance Procedures

EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE SYSTEMS

Approaches to Discipline
Administrative Justice: Due Process and Just Cause
Progressive Discipline

INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

Constructive Discharge
Common Law Tort Theories
Employee Handbooks
Employment-At-Will Doctrine
Non-Compete Agreements

WORKFORCE BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

Absenteeism and Turnover
Drug and Alcohol Use
Illegal or Dishonest Acts
Off-Duty Conduct

Sexual Harassment

Rule Violations

Unsatisfactory Performance

PUBLIC SECTOR LABOR RELATIONS

Federal Labor Relations Council

Limitations on Strikes

Mediation and Conciliation

Right to Organize

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES

Alternative Work Schedules

Employee Ownership/ESOPs

Employee Suggestion System

Job Design and Redesign

Quality Circles

Participative Management

Self-directed Work Teams

EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES AND SATISFACTION

Job Satisfaction Theories

Measuring Job Satisfaction

Satisfaction and Productivity

Using Satisfaction Surveys

INTERNATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS

North American Free Trade Act

Union Membership

Workers' Rights in Other Countries

SPECIAL FOCUS ON THESE AREAS

EMPLOYEE AND LABOR RELATIONS

- Alternative dispute resolution
- Attendance
- Collective bargaining issues
- Collective bargaining process
- Conflict management
- Disciplinary actions: demotion, disciplinary termination
- Employee engagement
- Employee retention
- Grievance management
- Managing/ creating a positive organizational culture
- Managing teams
- Strikes, boycotts and work stoppages
- Union membership
- Union-related labor laws
- Union/management relations
- Union decertification and deauthorization
- Unfair labor practices
- Managing union organizing
- Policies and handbooks

- Attitude surveys
- Investigations
- Posting requirements
- Promotion
- Recognition
- Service awards
- Employee records

NEGOTIATION SKILLS

- Alternative dispute resolution: negotiation, mediation and arbitration
- Cognitive biases
- Communication
- Conflict
- Contract negotiation
- Distributive bargaining
- Framing
- Integrative negotiation
- International negotiation
- Interdependence
- Mutual adjustment
- Value claiming
- Value creation

06. RISK MANAGEMENT (7%, 7%)

Developing, implementing/administering and evaluating programs, plans and policies that provide a safe and secure working environment and protect the organization from liability.

SAFETY

Occupational Safety and Health Act (1970)
Drug-Free Workplace Act (1988)
Hazard Communication Standards (1986)
Establishing Safety Rules
Safety Statistics
OSHA Safety Standards
Effective Safety Programs
Evaluation of OSHA
Human Factors Engineering
Workers' Compensation

HEALTH

Employee Assistance Programs
Employee Wellness Programs
Reproductive Health Policies
Chemical Dependency
Communicable Diseases in the Workplace
Environmental Health Hazards

Stress Management
On-site Medical Clinics
Smoking Policies

SECURITY

Organization of Security
Control Systems
Privacy Protection
Protection of Proprietary Information
Crisis Management and Contingency Planning
Theft and Fraud
Unemployment Compensation
Investigations and Preventive Corrections

AREAS FOR SPECIAL FOCUS

RISK MANAGEMENT: OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Occupational Safety and Health Act
- Citations and penalties
- Disaster preparation, continuity and recovery planning
- Employee health
- Inspection
- Protection from retaliation
- Safety management
- Security concerns at work
- Communicable diseases

- Data security
- Testing for substance abuse
- Ergonomics
- Monitoring, surveillance, privacy

CORE KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY HR PROFESSIONALS

- a) Needs assessment and analysis
- b) Third-party contract negotiation and management, including development of requests for proposals (RFPs)
- c) Communication skills and strategies (for example, presentation, collaboration, influencing, diplomacy, sensitivity)
- d) Organizational documentation requirements to meet federal and state requirements
- e) Adult learning processes
- f) Motivation concepts and applications
- g) Training techniques (for example, computer based, classroom, on-the-job)
- h) Leadership concepts and applications
- i) Project management concepts and applications
- j) Diversity concepts and applications
- k) Human relations concepts and applications (for example, interpersonal and organizational behavior)
- l) HR ethics and professional standards
- m) Technology to support HR activities (for example, HRIS, employee self-service, e-learning, ATS)
- n) Qualitative and quantitative methods and tools for analysis, interpretation, and decision-making purposes (for example, metrics and measurements, cost/benefit analysis, financial statement analysis)
- o) Change management methods

- p) Job analysis and job description methods
- q) Employee records management (for example, electronic/paper, retention, and disposal)
- r) The interrelationships among HR activities and programs across functional areas
- s) Types of organizational structures (for example, matrix, hierarchy)
- t) Environmental scanning concepts and applications.
- u) Methods for assessing employee attitudes, opinions, and satisfaction (for example, opinion surveys, attitude surveys, focus groups/panels)
- v) Basic budgeting and accounting concepts
- w) Risk management techniques

SUGGESTED STUDY SCHEDULE

12 WEEK STUDY SCHEDULE

Week	Planned Activity
1	Preparation, planning, first assessment
2	Strategic Management
3	Workforce Planning and Employment (Part 1)
4	Workforce Planning and Employment (Part 2)
5	Human Resource Development
6	Total Rewards (Part 1)
7	Total Rewards (Part 2)
8	Labor Relations (Part 1)
9	Labor Relations (Part 2)
10	Risk Management
11	Practice, second assessment, and refocus
12	Redo every practice question. Take exam. Pass. Rejoice.

A COLLECTION OF TIPS AND SECRETS FOR SUCCESSFUL EXAM TAKING

TAKE A PREP CLASS OR SELF STUDY?

There are advantages and disadvantages to each approach. For many people, the decision comes down to time and/or money, but there are other things to consider. Here are some of the benefits of each:

BENEFITS OF GROUP-STUDY:

Generally the instructor will have had experience preparing others for the HRCI exams.

The instructor's knowledge or expertise may exceed my own in some areas.

Other group members may have knowledge or expertise that may exceed my own.

Group members can provide support and encouragement to each other.

The externally-imposed study schedule might help keep me on track better than my own schedule.

BENEFITS OF SELF-STUDY:

Self-study will almost always cost less than group study (unless it's a free study group and materials are shared).

I can create a study schedule to fit my situation rather than have a schedule imposed on me.

I can spend more time focusing on the areas where I am weak and less on the areas I already know well.

Instead of spending time traveling to a group class, I can study.

TEST-TAKING TIPS FROM THE HRCI

- Trust your first impression. There is a correct answer to each question. It is widely believed that one's first impression of the correct answer will be a better choice.
- Choose the best answer to the question. Some questions may appear to have more than one technically correct answer. These questions are deliberately designed that way to assess your knowledge of HR.
- Don't base your answer on your organization/company's policies or your individual experience. Instead, focus on generally accepted HR practices.
- If you are uncertain about an answer, use the "mark question for review" feature and return to it later.
- Don't stop. If you are stumped by a question, continue to the next one or you may lose valuable time. Use the "mark the question for review" feature and return to the question later.
- Use the "strike through" feature to narrow down your options by striking through the answers that you believe to be incorrect. This helps the most if you are considering two answers and want to come back to the question later.
- Use "educated guesses." If you still cannot decide on a correct answer after eliminating one or two choices, choose one anyway. There is no penalty for guessing on the exam.
- Don't look for answer patterns. The psychometric testing process used by the HR Certification Institute prevents questions from falling into patterns. Despite what you may have heard, "C" is not necessarily the most frequent answer.

- Try to determine the answer before you read the choices. By doing this, you will more likely have one answer stand out as being correct.
- Review your answers. After going through all the questions on the exam, go back and answer the questions left unanswered the first time. Also, be sure that you answered all questions.
- Don't rush. There are no points for finishing early. Use the remaining time to review and check your answers.
- Use the provided computer-based calculator as needed.
- You may bring a set of sealed, disposable ear plugs that will be inspected by the test site administrator prior to the exam.

NINE SECRETS FOR SUCCESSFUL EXAM TAKING

SECRET 1: EFFICIENT TIME MANAGEMENT AND TIMELY PREPARATION

TIME MANAGEMENT BEFORE THE EXAM

Time management begins way before you even take the exam. In the course of preparing for your exam, you must ensure that you manage your time properly in order to devote the optimal amount of time needed to properly absorb the material. The key is to NEVER CRAM. The way to absorb knowledge is through an unhurried (but not leisurely) study which imparts a true feeling of subject mastery.

The best way to prepare is in a systematic manner wherein you list the things you need to study and organize them according to sequence, then according to time. Create a study plan where you arrange your study schedule as short term, medium term and long term. That way

you can determine the proper amount of time that needs to be allocated to a certain review topic.

There are 3 types of preparation that you must do:

- **Mental Preparation** – this refers to preparing your mind for the exam. Knowing well in advance what you need to learn. Getting tips from people who took the exam in the past. Ensuring that all the knowledge needed has been absorbed well before the exam. Proper mental preparation means that you must have finished reviewing the gist of the exam coverage well in advance. That way, you can use the last week before the exam as a refresher course.
- **Physical Preparation** – refers to preparing physically for the exam. This means ensuring that come the day of the exam, you are well rested, alert, calm and free from any emotional or mental concerns. All personal, work and other problems must be left at the door to exam room. The duration of the exam is the worst time you can pick for pondering over your problems.
- **Functional Preparation** – this means getting materials needed for the exam all prepared and ready. Exams have prerequisites and forms that need to be accomplished. Get all these done and accomplished as soon as you have decided to take the exam. This ensures that you will not be wasting your time reviewing for an exam you cannot take due to a missing prerequisite or other documentary requirements. You should also prepare the materials you need for the exam day, like pens, pencils, paper, calculators, permits and other things, way ahead of exam day. Put them inside one container – a folder or bag and check them one last time a few hours before you need to leave for the exam.

TIME MANAGEMENT DURING THE EXAM

- If you have trouble with a question, go on to the next one and come back to it later, if possible. This is all about saving time. Besides, the questions in the latter portions may contain the answer or key needed for that question so if you're stumped, mark it then move on. Then when everything else is done, or you had an "aha" moment where the answer presented itself, go back and answer it.

SECRET 2: TOP TIPS FOR BREEZING THROUGH OBJECTIVE EXAMS

TIPS FOR MULTIPLE CHOICE TESTS

- **Anticipate the answer**
Read the question and try to answer it in your mind without looking at the choices. That way, you are able to prime your brain in such a way that it will recognize the answer when it sees it. If the answer in your mind appears in the list of choices then chances are it is the right answer.
- **Consider ALL the answers.**
While immediate recognition is good, it is still best to survey the rest of the answers in case there is a better answer around. A good number of exams have trick questions in the multiple choice section so be sure you don't fall prey to them. Check out all the answers.
- **Try rephrasing the question.**
In your mind, try to say the question in another way. Sometimes you don't get the question because you are used to hearing it in another way. By changing the words and the order, you may be able to recognize the question.
- **If you are unsure of the answer, first eliminate the wrong or unlikely choices.**
For question where you are unsure about the answer, you may want to try eliminating the answers which you know to be wrong. This will narrow down the choices, eliminating static so to speak, which can facilitate recognizing the correct answer.

- Look for the all-or-nothing words in the sentence.
Trick questions make good use of a class of words called qualifiers. Examples of qualifiers are most, all, some, none or no, least, greatest, maximum, best, highest, lowest, etc. The presence of these words can make a big difference in a sentence so be sure to read the answer well, noting the effects of these qualifiers.
- Look to the middle with numbers.
Some multiple choice questions deal with a range of numbers. If you are in doubt about the correct answer then the safest range would be the mid range numbers. The reason for this is that it is common practice to put choices on the extreme ends of the number range.
- Understand and recognize balance phrasing.
This is another method of creating trick questions. In this case, the correct answer and its functional opposite would be added to the list of choices. Generally when you see balance phrases in a multiple choice question, it is almost certain that the correct answer is one of them.
- The Cs and Ds have it!
This is what may be considered as a last resort. If you have absolutely no idea what the correct answer is and all the other techniques failed to help plus you are running out of time then you have no choice but to put an answer.
- Some studies have shown that C and D's are more often than not, the correct answer so just choose one of them if you have to choose just about any answer.
- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** The Official SPHR Study Guide explicitly states that their tests no longer favor any one letter over the other (there used to be a popular belief that answers were all C's) due to the use of a computer to randomize the answer. Having said that, if you need to make a random answer anyway, it may still be best to use C or D if only because of the law of averages.

SECRET 3: MASTERING YOUR STUDY ENVIRONMENT

When you are preparing for your exam, the most important consideration should be studying. This is, after all, the key to being able get the best marks possible. More than any other factor, the quality of your studying directly affects the grade of your exams.

This is why your study environment is extremely important. The way it is structured has a direct effect on the quality of your studying.

ACTIVE STUDY TIME

The key to making the most of your studying is to make your study time active. While most people view studying as merely absorbing knowledge, much like a sponge absorbs water, the optimal way to study is to be active and to take an active role in your learning activities. The reason why this is so important is because active studying and enthusiasm go hand and hand. When you are enthusiastic about something, your attention span, and the amount of knowledge you absorb are much higher than what you would absorb if your study time was merely passive.

Here are some of the ways by which you can make your study more active and less passive:

- Go beyond your tests and research the mistakes as well as the unknowns.
- Set up goals and waypoints for your studies to ensure you are on track.
- Create a study plan and implement it.
- don't hesitate to ask questions

- look into the additional resources listed and make use of them
- Expand your brain and brainstorm other possible solutions and ideas.
- Create well organized notes.

NURTURE CONCENTRATION

Imagine being able to focus your thoughts and energies in a manner that mimics laser light. This is well within the reach of most people but oftentimes, people revert to a shotgun approach to studying.

The way to do this is to ensure that there are minimal distractions and a strong resolve to stay focused on the agenda.

Here are a few tips that will assist you in nurturing your concentration:

1. Create a space that is specifically for studying.
2. When setting objectives for a study session, keep the objective small and attainable within your study period. Mastery should be your focus, not speed.
3. Ensure that all the necessary materials are in your study spot.

4. Don't forget to take breaks. When you do, leave your study place and relax somewhere else.
5. Start with short study periods then increase them as your capacity for concentration and absorption increases as well.

SECRET 4: DISCOVERING YOUR LEARNING STYLE

There are different ways of studying and people study best when they are able to fit their studying to their style of learning. Here are the nine different type of intelligence in people and the optimal learning style for that type.

THE NINE TYPES OF INTELLIGENCE

1. Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence: Proficiency with words

People who are high in this:

- have a rich vocabulary and a sensitivity to the meanings of words
- like to tell, write, and listen to stories
- enjoy listening and talking to people
- like word games, word play, jokes, and puzzles
- sort information through your listening and repeating skills

If this is you, then:

- capitalize on your proficiency in reading, writing and listening
- make use of your excellent note-taking skills
- you benefit a lot from studying with a partner

2. Logical/Mathematical Intelligence: Proficiency with numbers

People who are high in this:

- have a strong curiosity about how things work
- like to ask questions and investigate
- use numbers wisely and enjoy solving problems
- have the ability to understand logical patterns, categories and relationships and causes and effects
- enjoy strategy games, logic puzzles, and experiments
- like to use computers

If this is you, then:

- Maximize your skill at structuring and organizing things
- Make outlines to help align your thinking
- Devise question-and-answer sessions for your study group.

3. Visual/Spatial Intelligence: Thinking in Images

People who are high in this:

- Easily visualize three-dimensional objects
- take information and translate it into images and pictures in your mind
- retrieve information through images and pictures you have stored earlier
- enjoy geometry and recognize the relationships of objects in space
- like to look at or create drawings, sculptures, or crafts
- get called a “daydreamer”

If this is you, then:

- Keep in mind that you understand things better when you can see the big picture
- Utilize your proficiency at manipulating images in your mind
- Use your talents in image recall for retaining key knowledge

4. Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence: Proficiency In Musical Expression

People who are high in this:

- have the ability to hear and recognize tones, rhythms, and musical patterns
- show sensitivity to nonverbal sounds in the environment
- play an instrument or belong to a choir
- remember and repeat a melody after listening to it once
- enjoy listening to music and singing to themselves

If this is you, then:

You study best with music

You learn best when hearing or listening to your study matter

Use audio books and podcasts extensively in your studies

5. Body/Kinesthetic Intelligence: Excellence In Body Movement

People who are high in this:

- need to touch and manipulate things
- tend to move, jump, hop around, and fidget
- learn better when doing hands-on work, such as a science experiment or building a model
- like participating in or watching games, sports, acrobatics, or acting

If this is you, then:

- You are more successful in learning if you can touch, manipulate, and move or feel whatever you are learning.

- Study by moving. Stop and write down thoughts on what you studied as they come to mind.
- make good use of interactive media on the computer
- Use videos for learning.

6. Interpersonal Intelligence: Art Of Relationships

People who are high in this:

- understand and care about other people's feelings
- notice facial expressions, gestures, and voices
- recognize differences among people and value their points of view with sensitivity to their motives, moods, and intentions
- have a lot of friends
- maintain good relationships with family and friends

If this is you, then:

- Study and review with others, bouncing ideas off of them.
- When working with a study buddy, you can discuss or debate the topic you are studying.
- Brainstorm and problem-solve with friends, do practice tests, and discuss class notes together.

7. Intrapersonal Intelligence: Personal Awareness

People who are high in this:

- have an awareness of your own strengths, weaknesses, feelings, and moods
- prefer to study and play alone
- use your self-knowledge and self-discipline to reach your goals
- monitor your thoughts and feelings and control them pretty well
- learn best through observing and listening

If this is you, then:

- Use your self-knowledge to set up the best study plan for your goals.
- Design a quiet, private space for studying and ask for cooperation from your family.
- Talk to yourself as you review materials from a tape, notes, or a reading.

8. Naturalist Intelligence: One With Nature

People who are high in this:

- Care about plants, animals, the environment, and endangered species
- like to collect rocks, flowers, or seeds
- show strong interest in natural sciences such as biology, astronomy, meteorology, and zoology
- examine and notice patterns and characteristics in nature
- enjoy outdoor activities, such as hiking and camping
- like to read or watch shows about animals and plants and the environment

If this is you, then:

- Read and study for tests while walking or sitting outside.

9. Existential Intelligence

Some scientists have suggested including a ninth intelligence to include people who enjoy thinking and questioning and are curious about deep unknowns such as life and death, space, time, and truth. This category would include thinkers like Aristotle, Plato, Confucius, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Albert Einstein, and Margaret Mead. Students with this intelligence might pose and ponder questions such as “Why are we here on Earth?”, “Is there life on other planets?”, “Where do living things go after they die?”, and “Who were the famous philosophers and what did they conclude?”

SECRET 5: CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING A STUDY PLAN

FIVE STEPS TO CREATING A SUCCESSFUL STUDY PLAN:

1. Get the correct information.
2. Find out what you already know and what you need to learn.
3. Set a time frame.
4. Break your studying into small chunks that will lead you to your goal step by step.
5. Stick to your plan.

HOW TO STICK TO YOUR STUDY PLAN

Some tips to help you stick to your study plan:

- Always refer to your study plan and attempt to stay on schedule.
- Practice, practice, practice.
- Keep a list of key topics and major concepts.
- Selectively review your texts.

SECRET 6: GETTING THE MOST OUT OF REVIEW CLASSES

If you opt to attend review classes then try to get the most mileage out of them. Here are some tips and strategies that can allow you to extract the most value from these classes.

LISTENING TO A LECTURE

In a review class when a lecture is involved, you need to take on the role of an active listener.

It is important to be involved with what you are hearing and there are four steps you must take to be able to accomplish this.

So during a lecture, an active listener is:

1. Absorbing all the information provided
2. Analyzing and determining the important points to remember or study further
3. Organizing the concepts and ideas presented
4. Writing down or illustrating the information provided so they can be studied at a future date.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR LISTENING STYLE

Many people are surprised to learn that there is such a thing as listening style. Well there is, and understanding your listening style is key to making the most out of reviews where a lecture or presentation is involved.

Style 1- You learn best by hearing

If this is your style, you may discover that taking notes while listening will distract you from what you are supposed to hear. In order to establish if this is your style, listen to a talk show *without* taking notes; then, on another day, listen to a talk show *while* taking notes.

Evaluate what you absorbed on each occasion and determine from there which worked better for you. Either way, don't give up writing down questions that come to mind and noting key words which might facilitate recall.

Style 2 - You learn best with images

You are able to absorb knowledge better using visual aids. Hence doodling, drawing pictures, maps, timelines and other symbolic representation of what the lecturer is saying is your way to retain knowledge better. Go a step further and use different colored markers to highlight your notes.

Style 3 - You learn best by using order

People with this style need to feel a clear order of events during a lecture. To facilitate this, it is best to make lists and timelines of what the lecturer is saying. Make sure that you create an outline of the lecture or at least insert number points in the margins.

Style 4 - You learn best by doing and moving

This is a bit tricky to optimize because most people keep still during lectures. However listening does work best for you if the sensation exists where you can actually experience what the concept is all about.

Try different ways of doing this.

For **doing**, it may be helpful to pretend you are a reporter covering the lecture for a newspaper which makes it necessary to note the important details.

For **moving**, this may require a bit more ingenuity but it may facilitate your understanding if you write every word of the lecture and/or swing your feet or tap your leg to the rhythm of the lecture.

SECRET 7: MASTERING THE MATERIALS

It might sound as though its one big secret but in reality, doing well in an exam really requires one simple accomplishment. This is mastery of the subject matter. It's a short secret but it's one with a lot of implications.

In this secret, we share with you the aspects involved in mastery of your materials.

READING THE MATERIALS PROVIDED

This is one technique many people learn early in school because the benefits far outweigh the work involved. Some strategies that may help are as follows:

Skim ahead. Preview the forthcoming sections and note the important ideas and details. Take special note of items that are underlined, boxed, highlighted or bulleted.

Review previous lessons. Reviewing past lessons or just reading back a few pages to survey a new concept is a great way to master your materials. Keep in mind that you don't have to wait till the end of the section to review. In fact, it's one of the best things to do when you are feeling overwhelmed at the concepts you are trying to absorb. Should you feel this happening, try pausing, reading back and absorbing the material again?

Ask questions. Whatever it is that you are reading there will be some events, consequences, conclusions or some other action / reaction. In order to facilitate your understanding, try to find some questions or determine why a certain event occurred. The reasons and concepts must be clear to you or else future sections that will rely on these concepts will seem like gibberish.

Get involved. This is always the key to understanding something. Whether it's a book, lesson, a job, or lecture, getting yourself deep into the subject matter means being more interested and inquisitive. When this is your attitude, then a deeper knowledge of the subject matter will emerge.

MAKE GOOD USE OF THE GRAPHICAL AIDS

Graphical aids such as photos, graphs, illustrations, tables, maps, timelines and other visual aids are great ways to enhance the understanding of the matter at hand. In fact, certain concepts benefit more from graphical aids compared to text based explanations.

UTILIZE AND SOLVE PRACTICE PROBLEMS, QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

A lot of books and study material include problems, questions and exercises designed to test your mastery. Oftentimes, these also find their way to the main exams such as the PHR exams.

USE HIGHLIGHTING EXTENSIVELY

Most people underutilize the use of highlighting. Whether it is due to a desire to keep the text unblemished or to save the book for others, the point is, the non-use of highlighting denies you the substantial benefits that it can provide.

The benefits of using highlighting include:

- Coaxing you to make a value judgment about the concepts involved
- Facilitating the process of focusing on the important stuff
- Makes you spend more time with the study materials
- Because of its visual nature, it improves your recall of key concepts.

Of course it takes a bit of practice to properly determine which portions to highlight so here are a few tips:

- Watch out for items in bold or italics, particularly terms and definitions
- Look closely at bulleted and numbered items, sidebars and outlines
- Constantly consider, which facts are given emphasis and which are repeated
- When you can, compare textbook material with items appearing on practice tests. If the material appears on the practice test then it should be highlighted.

MASTER THE ART OF TAKING NOTES

It is a curious fact that even if we don't read our notes again, the mere act of taking down notes will, in fact, improve our retention and comprehension. This is due to two things, the mental process that needs to absorb the material in our brain and the resulting act of physically writing the note. While this is not an endorsement for not reading notes, it is most certainly one for taking down notes.

Here are key things to take note of in the course of a lecture:

1. The main and secondary ideas
2. Authorities and citations
3. Opinions and facts
4. Key terms and concepts

Be on the lookout for verbal clues that indicate important points. Examples of these verbal clues include the following:

- The reason is ...
- The thing to remember ...
- The key is ...
- An important factor ...
- The 3 things to keep in mind ...

SECRET 8: TRICKS OF THE MEMORY MASTERS

In the PHR, SPHR and GPHR tests, retention of key ideas and concepts in your memory plays a very big role in having a good score.

With this in mind, make use of the memory tricks below and learn the secrets of the memory masters.

MEMORIZATION AND REMEMBERING

There are five ways by which one can have better retention of facts and formulas:

1. Association – associating the facts with things that you know
2. Sensory Emphasis – using as many senses as possible to process the facts.
3. Drawing and making diagrams
4. Use of memory tricks – employing mnemonics such as acronyms and acrostics.
5. Visualization – making use of methods like linking, place and peg

USING MNEMONICS - ACRONYMS

Acronyms – This is a type of mnemonic that uses a word to serve as an aid in remembering words in a specific order. Popular examples are SCUBA which stands for Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus or LASER which stands for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation.

As you can see, they can be extremely helpful and a lot easier to remember as well. Sure they will take a bit more time to create but it will pay dividends when exam time comes around and the critical answer is just on the tip of your tongue.

So now let's now look at the sequence and steps involved in creating acronyms:

1. Put together your list of terms which you want to memorize or a number of steps in a process you want to be able to recall.
2. Write down the terms or steps on a sheet of paper.
3. In the event that the order of the terms or steps is not essential, you may want to consider rearranging the terms when creating the acronym.
4. This is the fun part because now you have to get those creative juices flowing and try finding words that consist of the first letters of the terms or steps in your list.
5. Put together a short list and select the acronym which you feel is easier to recall.

TIP: Link what you know to what you have to remember.

6. Once you have decided, proceed to arrange the terms you need to recall in the order of your chosen acronym. Then highlight and/or underscore the first letter of each term so the word will jump out at you once you are reviewing.

Keep your acronyms handy and look at them and read them aloud, engaging all your senses. Visualize it in your mind for instant visual recall.

USING MNEMONICS - ACROSTICS

Acrostics are another kind of mnemonic which is a silly sentence or phrase which is made up of words that begin with the letter or letters that start each item in a series that has to be remembered.

One popular example, “Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally” is a nonsensical acrostic that math students have been using for a long time to remember the order of operations:

Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally _

Parentheses, **E**xponents, **M**ultiply, **D**ivide, **A**dd, **S**ubtract

Acrostics can be quite simple to remember and are particularly helpful when a list has to be remembered in a particular order.

Acrostics do have an advantage of acrostics over acronyms because they are less limiting. Hence if your words cannot create easy-to-remember acronyms, using acrostics may be preferable.

The disadvantage though is they require a bit more thought and time to create. It also calls for remembering a whole sentence instead of a single word.

Chunking is a memory technique used to group or “chunk” items—generally numbers—together for better recall. It can also be used for recalling other things aside from numbers.

The idea is that an average person is able to store about seven items give or take a couple, in his or her short-term memory. A good example of this is the easy recall of local phone numbers.

So the process of using chunking involves decreasing the number of items you need to memorize, by increasing the size of each item.

To illustrate, if you need to memorize the number string 10301988, you could try to remember each number individually. Alternatively you could break down the string as 10 30 19 88 (four chunks of numbers). Instead of remembering eight individual numbers, you are only memorizing four larger numbers.

SECRET 9: BE STRESS FREE ON EXAM DAY

The last secret is one which most people probably didn’t see coming. After all, being a bit high strung and tensed up seems to be part and parcel of events where we are tested mentally or physically. However, unlike sporting events where a bit of adrenaline is good to have, in exams like the HR certification, it is best to be relaxed and calm to facilitate the functioning of our higher brain faculties.

So keep in mind that for this exam, stress free is the goal and here are some tips to help you attain it:

- Do not create unrealistic or unattainable goals by telling yourself what you “should” do.
Just do the best that you can, knowing that you are well prepared for the exam.
- Get plenty of sleep.
Exhaustion decreases ability to cope with stress and makes recall difficult as well.
- **Eat balanced meals.** Diet and exercise are important for your complete health and for tip top mental functioning.

- **Don't take stimulants.** Although the commercials make them appear so tempting but using stimulants to give yourself that extra boost of energy is self defeating as their efficacy period is so short and can be detrimental to your health in the long run.

- **Don't psyche yourself up to fail.**

Be mentally tough. Think positive and visualize your success. The power of visualization has been proven over and over again. So visualize only positive things.

- **Study!**
No amount of visualization can allay the fears of someone who knows that they are ill prepared for the exam. So be well prepared.
- **Reward yourself.**
The power of rewards is a potent one regardless of who is doing the rewarding. So you must ensure that you reward yourself wisely throughout the entire process.
- **Practice taking tests.**
Taking practice tests are an excellent way to reduce or eliminate test taking jitters. Use them or make your own. They are worth their weight in gold.
- **Think positively!**
This is the most important of all the tips. It cannot be repeated enough that you should surround yourself with positive influences and positive thoughts. Avoid negative people and negative thoughts.

Do not dwell on past failures.

Even if you failed the test before, never walk into the exam room recalling those events. Don't sabotage all the hard work you did to get back to this point. This is a new exam, look forward and never look back.

COGNITIVE TYPES OF ITEMS ON THE HRCI EXAMS

Cognitive Types

As you study, keep in mind that items on the HRCI certification exams may be classified into three cognitive types:

- **Knowledge/Comprehension:** These items are designed to assess your ability to recall facts or interpret a concept.
*PHR-24%, SPHR-15%
- **Application/Problem Solving:** These items assess your ability to solve real-life problems by applying familiar principles or generalizations.
*PHR-50%, SPHR-50%
- **Synthesis/Evaluation:** These items assess your ability to accurately and logically use critical judgments to combine distantly-related elements into a whole.
*PHR-25%, SPHR-35%

Facts and knowledge you learn in preparation for the PHR or SPHR exam will only get you so far towards a PASS. You need to push yourself beyond the facts and into application and synthesis.

Source: HRCI

INSIDER TIPS FROM THE NET FOR TAKING MULTIPLE CHOICE TESTS

GENERAL TIPS

To assist you with the exam, here are a few strategies that will go a long way in making the exam go easier:

- 1. Read the directions carefully**
Determine if there is more than one correct answer.
Find out if there are penalties for guessing
Know just how much time is allotted as this will determine your overall strategy.
- 2. Preview the test**
Skim the test quickly and answering the easy questions first
Then mark those you think you MIGHT know the answer to.
- 3. Read through the test a second time and answer more difficult questions**
The other questions may provide you with clues about the correct choice.
- 4. If time allows, review both questions and answers**
This is important in the event that you misread the questions earlier.

TIPS FOR ANSWERING

ANSWERING OPTIONS

Improve your odds, think critically:

Ignore the options, read the stem, and try to answer

Select the option that most closely matches your answer

Read the stem with each option

Treat each option as a true-false question, and choose the "most true"

STRATEGIES TO ANSWER DIFFICULT QUESTIONS:

Eliminate options you know to be incorrect

If allowed, mark words or alternatives in questions that eliminate the option

Give each option of a question the "true-false test:"

This may reduce your selection to the best answer

Question options that grammatically don't fit with the stem

Question options that are totally unfamiliar to you

Question options that contain negative or absolute words.

Try substituting a qualified term for the absolute one, like *frequently* for *always*; or *typical* for *every* to see if you can eliminate it

"All of the above:"

If you know two of three options seem correct, "all of the above" is a strong possibility

Number answers:

toss out the high and low and consider the middle range numbers

"Look alike options"

probably one is correct; choose the best but eliminate choices that mean basically the same thing, and thus cancel each other out

Double negatives:

Create the equivalent positive statement and consider

Echo options:

If two options are opposite each other, chances are one of them is correct

Favor options that contain qualifiers

The result is longer, more inclusive items that better fill the role of the answer

If two alternatives seem correct,
compare them for differences,
then refer to the stem to find your best answer

GUESSING:

Always guess when there is no penalty
for guessing or you can eliminate options

Don't guess if you are penalized for guessing
and if you have no basis for your choice

Use hints from questions you know
to answer questions you do not.

Change your first answers
when you are sure of the correction, or other cues in the test cue you to change.

Remember that you are looking for the best answer.
Not only a correct one, and not one which must be true all of the time, in all cases, and
without exception.

PREPARING FOR A MULTIPLE CHOICE EXAM

Studying for a multiple choice exam requires a special method of preparation distinctly
different from an essay exam. Multiple choice exams ask examinees to recognize a correct
answer among a set of options that include 3 or 4 wrong answers (called *distractors*), rather
than asking the examinees to produce a correct answer entirely from his/her own mind.

For many reasons, examinees commonly consider multiple choice exams easier than essay
exams. Perhaps the most obvious reasons are that:

The correct answer is *guaranteed* to be among the possible responses. An examinee can
score points with a lucky guess.

Many multiple choice exams tend to emphasize basic definitions or simple comparisons,
rather than asking examinees to analyze new information or apply theories to new
situations.

Because multiple choice exams usually contain many more questions than essay exams,
each question has a lower point value and thus offers less risk.

Despite these factors, however, multiple choice exams can actually be very difficult and are
in this course. Consider that:

Because multiple choice exams contain many questions, they force examinees to be familiar with a much broader range of material than essay exams do.

Multiple choice exams also usually expect examinees to have a greater familiarity with details such as specific dates, names, or vocabulary than most essay exams do. Examinees cannot easily "bluff" on a multiple choice exam.

Finally, because it is much more difficult for a teacher to write good multiple choice questions than to design essay questions, students often face higher risks due to unintended ambiguity.

To prepare for a multiple choice exam, consider the following steps:

Begin studying early

Multiple choice exams tend to focus on details, and you cannot retain many details effectively in short-term memory. If you learn a little bit each day and allow plenty of time for repeated reviews, you will build a much more reliable long-term memory.

Make sure that you identify and **understand thoroughly everything that your instructor emphasized in class.**

Pay particular attention to fundamental terms and concepts that describe important events or features, or that tie related ideas and observations together. These are the items that most commonly appear on multiple choice exams.

As you study your class notes and your assigned readings, **make lists and tables.**

Concentrate on understanding multi-step processes, and on ideas, events, or objects that form natural sequences or groupings. Look for similarities and differences that might be used to distinguish correct choices from distractors on an exam.

If your textbook highlights new vocabulary or key definitions, be sure that you understand them. Sometimes new words and concepts are collected at the end of a chapter. Check to be sure that you have not left any out by mistake.

Do not simply memorize the book's definitions. Most instructors will rephrase things in their own words as they write exam questions, so you must be sure that you really know what the definitions mean.

Brainstorm possible questions with several other students who are also taking the course.

Practice on sample questions, if you have access to a study guide or old exams.

EXAM DAY: ANSWERING MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

There are many strategies for maximizing your success on multiple choice exams. The best way to improve your chances, of course, is to study carefully before the exam. There is no good substitute for knowing the right answer. Even a well-prepared student can make silly mistakes on a multiple choice exam, however, or can fall prey to distractors that look very similar to the correct answer.

Here are a few tips to help reduce these perils:

Before you begin taking the exam, enter all pieces of required information on your answer sheet

If you are so eager to start that you forget to enter your name and ID number, your results may never be scored. Remember: your instructor will not be able to identify you by handwriting or similar text clues.

Try to anticipate the correct response before you are distracted by seeing the options that your instructor has provided. Then, uncover the responses.

If you see the response that you anticipated, circle it and then check to be sure that none of the other responses is better.

If you do not see a response that you expected, then consider some of the following strategies to eliminate responses that are probably wrong.

None of these strategies is infallible. A smart instructor will avoid writing questions for which these strategies work, but you can always hope for a lapse of attention.

Responses that use absolute words, such as "always" or "never" are less likely to be correct than ones that use conditional words like "usually" or "probably."

"Funny" responses are usually wrong.

"All of the above" is often a correct response. If you can verify that more than one of the other responses is probably correct, then choose "all of the above."

"None of the above" is usually an incorrect response, but this is less reliable than the "all of the above" rule. Be very careful not to be trapped by double negatives.

Look for grammatical clues. If the stem ends with the indefinite article "an," for example, then the correct response probably begins with a vowel.

The longest response is often the correct one, because the instructor tends to load it with qualifying adjectives or phrases.

Look for verbal associations. A response that repeats key words that are in the stem is likely to be correct.

If all else fails, choose response (b) or (c). Many instructors subconsciously feel that the correct answer is "hidden" better if it is surrounded by distractors. Response (a) is usually least likely to be the correct one.

Take the time to check your work before you submit your answers.

EXAM TAKING TIPS AND PITFALLS

Quite a bit of advice and warnings have emerged as far as multiple choice exams are concerned. So here is a collection of these do's and don'ts.

Remember that the ones who are preparing your actual exam are not beholden to this collection so be prudent in applying them to your exam.

More often than not, **the correct answer is B or C**. This isn't always true, of course, but test writers are most likely to gravitate towards one of these answers.

If there is an **"all of the above"** option, chances are high that's the answer. If you know more than one answer is correct, there's a very good chance it's "all of the above."

"None of the above" is usually wrong. This isn't always the case, but test writers often throw that in because they've run out of ideas.

Has everyone ever told you that "the first thing you think of is probably right?" and that you shouldn't change your answers? This is not true.

If you don't know the answer, **always guess**. Why wouldn't you?

You can often rule out answers that contain **generalization terms**, like "always" or "never." Answers that contain words like "usually" or "mostly" are more likely to be correct.

Don't worry about the pattern of the answers. If you answer B to four questions in a row, you might be right.

Don't spend too much time on each question, especially if there are essay questions in the test as well. Essay questions take longer, and students usually do better on them.

Ask your professor ahead of time for sample multiple choice questions from a previous test, to give you an idea of what to expect. Most professors don't mind.

TEST TAKING GEMS FROM THE PHR – SPHR LOUNGE

PHR SPHR CERTIFICATION – 9 STRATEGIES TO CLEAR THE PHR OR SPHR EXAM

Taking the PHR SPHR Certification exam is no joke. It can impact your career or life at a certain degree. No matter what purpose you may have in taking the exam, one thing is certain: you want to clear the exam. Period!

I have listed the following tips that work well for me and hopefully it will work for you as well. These tips do not guarantee that you will pass the exam however, it can impact your preparation and outlook in test taking.

- 1) **Take a Pretest.** It's a good idea to pretest yourself say 4 months prior to your exam date and benchmark your knowledge in relation to the six body of knowledge (Strategic Management, Workforce Planning and Employment, Human Resource Development, Total Rewards, and Employee and Labor Relations) covered in the exam. There are tons of providers online that you can try or subscribe to like the HRCI, Certgear, HRCP, HR Review, and PhRExamPrep. Word of caution: you need to spend some amount for their practice tests.
- 2) **Analyze the Pretest Results.** At the end of your pretest, you will get a comprehensive result of your exams. Sometimes the results can be very surprising and amazing. Don't celebrate or feel bad about it. It's just an indicator to where you are at the moment in terms of a specific HR body of knowledge. Instead, analyze the results and identify your weaknesses and strengths. And then, create a review roadmap. Identify the body of knowledge you will devote most of your time and so on.

View the remaining 7 strategies on my site:

<http://www.phrsphrlounge.com/phr-sphr-certification-9-strategies-to-clear-the-phr-or-sphr-exam/>

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE PHR OR SPHR CERTIFICATION EXAM

Most of the exams (aptitude tests) nowadays, be it for employment, college admission, licensure, or certifications are in a multiple choice form. This also holds true to the professional human resources certification exams. I mean phr certification, and sphr certification exams. Each item in the exam is consists of four (4) choices (stem) with only one best answer (key). The good thing is, examinees after completing the 225 test items, will get to know whether they are certified or not in a blink of an eye. Gone are days of

anxiety and excitement waiting for the test results. Thanks to the advent of technology and to PROMETRIC testing center.

Multiple Choice Exams:

According to [Wiki](#), Multiple choice is a form of assessment in which respondents are asked to select the best possible answer (or answers) out of the choices from a list. E.L. Thorndike had introduced this type of test in the early 1900s and it became very popular nowadays because of its reliability and validity. In fact, most of the psychometric tests used in employment and College Admission Tests like the SAT is in a multiple choice form.

Multiple choice items consist of a stem and a set of options. The STEM is the beginning part of the item that presents the item as a problem to be solved, a question asked of the respondent, or an incomplete statement to be completed, as well as any other relevant information. The options are the possible answers that the examinee can choose from, with the correct answer called the KEY and the incorrect answers called DISTRACTORS. Only one answer can be keyed as correct.

Multiple Choice as used in the PHR or SPHR Exam:

Read the rest of the article here:

<http://www.phrsphrlounge.com/a-closer-look-at-the-phr-or-sphr-certification-exam/>

THE “I HATE PART” OF THIS STUDY GUIDE

Caution> Please don't read this part if you are not re-takers

You may escape this part as it is the least of your concern now. Focus on passing the exam first and not on retaking the exam. If all else fails, then open again this study guide and read this text.

TIPS FOR RETAKING THE EXAM

- Remember that failing the PHR or SPHR exam does not mean that you are incompetent at your job. Failing the exam is not any indication of your intelligence nor the basis for your self-worth.
- Do an evaluation of yourself. Weigh carefully if there is any merit in retaking the exam. Be open to the possibility that there may not be any merit. Recall all the preparation you went through and the exam proper and think if you want to go through it again. If not then it ends here. If you are ready then proceed to the next section.
- Learn from your results. The detailed results provided by HRCI can help you identify areas where you may be weak. Be sure to put extra emphasis on those areas as you study.
- Beef up your study materials. Were the topics included on the exam adequately covered in the study materials you used? You might consider obtaining more or better study aids.

- Scrutinize your own preparation. Were you sufficiently diligent in your study? Did you put in the time and effort to learn the HR body of knowledge?
- Work on improving your test-taking skills. Find as many quality practice questions as you can and practice, practice, practice.

RETAKING ADVICE STRAIGHT FROM THE HRCI

Deciding to retake an exam is a personal one. These guidelines are intended as just that—guidelines. However, understanding the statistical findings may help make your decision to retake the exam more informed.

Review your final score. Because of the reliability of the exams, candidates who retake the exam will find that unless they significantly change their study approach or acquire new exempt-level HR knowledge, their scores will remain within a few points of each other, particularly if little time has elapsed (to add to work experience) between test administrations. The further candidates are away from the minimum passing score (500), the less likely the chance of passing the exam. It may be advisable to acquire broader generalist HR work experience before retaking the examination.

Review your study approach. Review your score report and identify those areas in which you were not as strong and focus studies in those areas. Were multiple sources of study materials used? Did you use the most effective study approach for your learning style? Use of multiple sources of study materials cannot be overemphasized. If you did not purchase the HRCI Certification Guide (available through Amazon.com, the Barnes and Noble online bookstore and the SHRM Store), consider doing so. It is an excellent, cost-effective resource to begin re-evaluating your study approach. The guide includes a discussion on how the exams are developed, suggested study plans for group or individual study, a bibliography of recommended reading and sample exam questions and answers.

If you did not pass the SPHR exam, consider the type of exempt-level HR work experience you have. It may be more reflective of the PHR exam level. For more information about the differences between the PHR and the SPHR exams, please review the sample profile of PHR and SPHR candidates. It is not recommended that candidates who did not pass the PHR exam retake the exam at the SPHR level.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

I put together on [my site](#) a lot of resources that are valuable for those who will take the certification exam. I can say, indispensable books, a must have for examinees.

Here are a few of the resources:

Human Resource Management- Robert Mathis (Hardcover) – A leading resource for preparation for professional HR certification. It covers all major topics for the PHR and SPHR professional examinations given by the Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI). This edition effectively blends theory and practice as it highlights the latest trends in human resource today, including strategic HR, employee retention, HR technology, talent management, total rewards, risk management, and workforce demographics changes.

SPHR Exam Prep: Senior Professional in Human Resources- Larry Phillips (2nd Edition) (Paperback)- This book provides proven study tools and expert insight that will help you score higher on the SPHR exam. It has focused exercises throughout the chapters that will reinforce your knowledge of test topics by allowing you to apply what you are learning. Practice questions include detailed explanations of the answers–so you can learn the material by understanding why an answer is correct. Comprehensive discussion of all subject areas covered by the SPHR: Strategic Management, Workforce Planning and Employment, Human Resource Development, Total Rewards, Employee and Labor Relations, and Risk Management. Two full-length practice tests (one in the book and one on the CD) enable you to time yourself under exam circumstances so you know exactly what to expect on test day and can identify any areas in which you are struggling before you take the real exam.

Human Resource Management- Robert Mathis (Hardcover) – A leading resource for preparation for professional HR certification. It covers all major topics for the PHR and SPHR professional examinations given by the Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI). This edition effectively blends theory and practice as it highlights the latest trends in human resource today, including strategic HR, employee retention, HR technology, talent management, total rewards, risk management, and workforce demographics changes.

SPHR Exam Prep: Senior Professional in Human Resources- Larry Phillips (2nd Edition) (Paperback)- This book provides proven study tools and expert insight that will help you score higher on the SPHR exam. It has focused exercises throughout the chapters that will reinforce your knowledge of test topics by allowing you to apply what you are learning. Practice questions include detailed explanations of the answers–so you can learn the material by understanding why an answer is correct. Comprehensive discussion of all subject areas covered by the SPHR: Strategic Management, Workforce Planning and Employment, Human Resource Development, Total Rewards, Employee and Labor Relations, and Risk Management. Two full-length practice tests (one in the book and one on the CD)

enable you to time yourself under exam circumstances so you know exactly what to expect on test day and can identify any areas in which you are struggling before you take the real exam.

PHR/SPHR Practice Test: Presented by PHRPrep.com (Paperback) – This is a must-have for anyone taking the PHR or SPHR certification exam. This book provides a comprehensive, 200-question practice test. The questions will help you assess your preparedness for the PHR/SPHR exam and will help you target your study efforts. The questions are based on the HRCI exam’s body of knowledge. The book includes detailed answer explanations for each of the 200 questions.

PHR / SPHR Professional in Human Resources Certification Study Guide-Anne Bogardus (Paperback) – More than 80,000 HR professionals having earned the Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) or Professional in Human Resources (PHR) certification, and another 20,000 are expected to take the exam in 2009. This complete update of the bestselling guide to HR certification contains additional coverage of new HR policies and standards, as well as updated practice exam questions and real world scenarios. Key topics include strategic management, workforce planning and employment, compensation and benefits, employee and labor relations, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. The CD-ROM contains two bonus exams (one each for PHR and SPHR) as well as flashcards and an electronic book.

You can view the rest of the resources on my site:

<http://www.phrsphrlounge.com/useful-resources/>

GOOD LUCK AND THANK YOU !

Here is where we part ways.

From this point onwards, it's all up to you. Rest assured that if you made it this far, then success is close at hand.

Please visit the [site](#) for additional materials and late breaking stuff.

Thank you for using this guide and I wish you the very best of luck in the exam and in your HR career.

Peter A.