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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS

2010 Task Analysis Survey Report



Balancing Validity and Reliability

Executive Summary

In 2010, the Institute for Certification (IC), a department of the International Association of Administrative Professionals launched a task analysis survey in order to update the certification exams to reflect current practice and provide validity to the exam blueprint.

In February 2010 the IC educators and certification staff met to review previous surveys and develop new survey content. The new survey had a total of 122 task items, along with a section on demographic information. The respondents were asked to rate how frequently they performed each task on the job.

The survey was sent out in 2 waves via email to a total of 4000 certified professionals and a total of 1648 were returned, an overall response rate of 41%.

Of the responders, 12 did not report on their employment status, while 60 reported being currently unemployed. The educators had previously decided that surveys from those not currently working in the field would not be used for the purposes of the task analysis. These 68 are not included in the analysis, as well as 17 respondents who reported being in temporary situations. Two (2) additional respondents answered no task questions at all, giving a total of 1557 usable surveys, an effective 39% response rate. The previous response rate as a paper and pencil survey was 29%. Overall, the electronic delivery and shorter format of the survey worked well to encourage participation.

Demographic Section

Items 1-12 of the survey collected demographic information. The tables presenting the results of the demographic items includes all 1648 respondents.

Table 1 details employment status. The overwhelming majority of responders were Full-time Salaried/Hourly (92% of all responders). A wide variety of organization types were represented (see details in Table 2). A majority (55%) worked for an organization with more than 1000 employees (Table 3).

Most respondents were very experienced, with a slight majority (51%) working 21 or more years in the field (32% in the 21-30 years and an additional 19% with 30 or more years of experience, details in Table 4). The most common title for the responders is Administrative Assistant (25%, Table 5), with a full 35% filling in a title as other.

Four-hundred and sixteen (416 or 25%) supervise others (Table 6). Table 7 details the responses to racial/ethnic origin. Eighty-two percent (82%) had at least some college with a detailed breakdown given in Table 8.

Surprisingly, 17% replied “No” to holding an active CPS rating (Table 9), while 37% replied “No” to holding an active CAP rating (Table 10). Personal Satisfaction was the most prevalent primary motivation (42%, Table 11), while Personal Satisfaction (28%), Job Advancement (23%), and Continuing Education (20%, Table 12) were the top 3 secondary motivations.

Task Analysis

Task items were grouped by 10 major categories, Organizing/Planning Functions, Maintaining Equipment and Supplies, Managing Records and Files, Communication, Document Production, Performing Financial Functions, Information Distribution, Computer Hardware, System, and Configuration, Human Resources, and Advanced Administration. The number of task items under each heading ranged from 5-21.

CPS and CAP Parts 1 through 3 Task Analysis

A selected subset of items were selected for inclusion in the analysis for Parts 1 through 3 of the CPS and CAP exam blue print (86 items). A Rasch analysis using the Winsteps program was used to analyze the data. Each task was evaluated and a measure calibration was calculated based on the frequency responses. These measures were transformed into exam percents. The distribution of the percentage of items for the large categories are presented in Table 13.

The percentage of items to be drawn from each individual task item is listed Table 14. Task items are listed in descending order within each content area.

CAP Part 4 Task Analysis

A total of 966 respondents were listed with an active CAP certification and selected for inclusion in the analysis for the CAP Part 4 exam blueprint using a total of 88 task items selected on the basis of their content and the 4 domains of the existing CAP Part 4 exam blueprint. The distribution of the percentage of items for the large categories are presented in Table 15.

The percentage of items to be drawn from each individual task item is listed in Table 16. Task items are listed in descending order within content area.

Comments

Due to rounding, some table percentages may tally to 99 or 101%. In this situation, the IC may use its discretion to adjust the percentages of items drawn from the content areas or tasks to complete the exam blueprint.

Table 1 Employment Status

Employment Status	Frequency	Percent
	12	1
Currently unemployed	60	4
Full-time Salaried/Hourly	1518	92
Full-time Self-employed	11	1
Part-time Salaried/Hourly	28	2
Part-time Self-employed	2	0
Temporary employment	17	1
Total	1648	100

Table 2 Organization Type

Organization Descriptor	Frequency	Percent
	39	2
Advertising/Public Relations	9	1
Construction	20	1
Education	302	18
Engineering/Architecture	58	4
Financial/Accounting	107	6
Government	195	12
Health Care/Medical	197	12
Hospitality Industry	20	1
Insurance	99	6
Legal	20	1
Manufacturing or Industrial	98	6
Media/Communications	10	1
Not for Profit	66	4
Oil and Gas	41	2
Other (please specify)	248	15
Personnel/Human Resources	5	0
Sales and Marketing	27	2
Telecommunications	13	1
Utilities	74	4
Total	1648	100

Table 3 Employer Size

Organizational Size	Frequency	Percent
	40	2
Less than 15 people	71	4
15 - 100 people	176	11
101 - 500 people	297	18
501 - 1000 people	157	10
More than 1000 people	907	55
Total	1648	100

Table 4 Number of Years Working in the Field

Years	Frequency	Percent
	14	1
1 to 5	47	3
6 to 10	191	12
11 to 15	282	17
16 to 20	272	17
21 to 30	521	32
More than 30	321	19
Total	1648	100

Table 5 Position Title

Title	Frequency	Percent
	115	7
Administrative Assistant	417	25
Assistant to...	42	3
Coordinator	59	4
Executive Administrative Assistant	244	15
Office Manager/Administrator	71	4
Other (please specify)	579	35
Senior Administrative Assistant	121	7
Total	1648	100

Table 6 Supervising Others

	Frequency	Percent
	29	2
No	1203	73
Yes	416	25
Total	1648	100

Table 7 Racial/Ethnic Origins

	Frequency	Percent
	17	1
African American or Black (Not of Hispanic origin)	229	14
American Indian or Alaskan Native	4	0
Asian or Pacific Islander	16	1
Hispanic/Latino	67	4
I prefer not to answer this question	117	7
Race and/or Ethnicity Unknown	2	0
Two or More Races	22	1
White (Not of Hispanic organ)	1174	71
Total	1648	100

Table 8 Highest Education Level Achieved

Level	Frequency	Percent
	19	1
Associates degree	332	20
Bachelors degree	339	21
Business/Technical/Vocational school diploma	145	9
High school diploma/GED	131	8
Masters degree	53	3
Some college courses	629	38
Total	1648	100

Table 9 Actively Hold CPS

Hold CPS	Frequency	Percent
	25	2
No	273	17
Yes	1350	82
Total	1648	100

Table 10 Actively Hold CAP

Hold CAP	Frequency	Percent
	23	1
No	609	37
Yes	1016	62
Total	1648	100

Table 11 Primary Motivation for Seeking Certification

Motivation	Frequency	Percent
	12	1
College Credit	67	4
Continuing Education	237	14
Employer Encouragement	78	5
Job Advancement	330	20
Other (please specify)	49	3
Pay Increase	183	11
Personal Satisfaction	692	42
Total	1648	100

Table 12 Secondary Motivation for Seeking Certification

Motivation	Frequency	Percent
	25	2
College Credit	121	7
Continuing Education	335	20
Employer Encouragement	96	6
Job Advancement	382	23
Other (please specify)	57	3
Pay Increase	173	10
Personal Satisfaction	459	28
Total	1648	100

Table 13 Major Categories Percent Distribution CPS and CAP Parts 1 through 3 in Descending Order

Communication	17%
Organizing/Planning Functions	16%
Information Distribution	14%
Managing Records and Files	14%
Document Production	13%
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	8%
Performing Financial Functions	8%
Computer Hardware, System, and Configuration	6%
Human Resources	4%
Advanced Administration	1%
Total	

Table 14 Overall Percentage Distribution at the Item Level within Area for CPS and CAP Parts 1 through 3 in Descending Order

Area	Task	Percent
Communication	Handle telephone calls.	2.52
Communication	Respond to inquiries.	2.36
Communication	Responsible for confidential information.	2.18
Communication	Create correspondence.	2.14
Communication	Create documents and reports.	2.12
Communication	Greet/assist visitors and clients.	1.88
Communication	Participate in teams, committees, or task forces.	1.47
Communication	Develop networking opportunities.	1.36
Communication	Communicate office policies and procedures.	1.26
Organizing/Planning Functions	Plan, organize, and prioritize own work.	2.54
Organizing/Planning Functions	Manage calendars.	2.05
Organizing/Planning Functions	Prepare materials for meetings.	1.53
Organizing/Planning Functions	prepare agendas.	1.35
Organizing/Planning Functions	Compile data for company reports.	1.27
Organizing/Planning Functions	Arrange for food and beverage at meetings and/or conferences.	1.11
Organizing/Planning Functions	Plan, organize, and prioritize work of others.	1.11
Organizing/Planning Functions	Arrange audio-visual equipment for meetings.	1.08
Organizing/Planning Functions	Make domestic travel arrangements.	1.05
Organizing/Planning Functions	Arrange for facilities for meetings and conferences.	1.03
Organizing/Planning Functions	Arrange for virtual meetings or education.	0.63
Organizing/Planning Functions	Plan conferences or other significant events.	0.59
Organizing/Planning Functions	Make international travel arrangements.	0.30
Organizing/Planning Functions	Plan physical layout of office(s).	0.17
Information Distribution	Compose and respond to electronic mail messages.	2.59
Information Distribution	Receive and/or download documents via electronic media.	2.26
Information Distribution	Process mail.	2.15
Information Distribution	Send or receive documents via fax.	2.12
Information Distribution	Obtain information or conduct research for self or others.	1.83
Information Distribution	Monitor electronic mail system.	1.73
Information Distribution	Compose and respond to electronic mail for others.	1.43
Managing Records and Files	Retrieve information from files.	2.30
Managing Records and Files	Manage electronic files.	2.28
Managing Records and Files	Manage paper files.	2.20
Managing Records and Files	Maintain classified or confidential files.	1.65
Managing Records and Files	Use database for record management.	1.55
Managing Records and Files	Process records for destruction or disposition.	1.08
Managing Records and Files	Implement records management system.	0.83
Managing Records and Files	Maintain photographs, and/or historical biographical data.	0.78
Managing Records and Files	Maintain reference library.	0.56
Managing Records and Files	Develop records management system policies and procedures.	0.43
Document Production	Proofread and/or edit documents.	2.20
Document Production	Scan documents electronically.	1.87
Document Production	Create documents using spreadsheet software.	1.68
Document Production	Determine best process for reproducing materials.	1.41
Document Production	Identify appropriate software for job.	1.10
Document Production	Create documents using presentation software.	1.08

Document Production	Prepare minutes of meetings.	1.04
Document Production	Create documents using desktop publishing software.	1.03
Document Production	Create charts and graphs.	0.93
Document Production	Produce multipage final documents including binding, lamination, or tabs.	0
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Maintain inventory of supplies.	1.20
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Make purchase decisions for equipment and/or supplies.	0.95
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Troubleshoot software problems.	0.90
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Train others on office equipment.	0.85
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Maintain inventory of forms.	0.82
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Train others on software.	0.80
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Schedule maintenance of office equipment.	0.56
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Troubleshoot hardware problems.	0.54
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Evaluate/recommend equipment and/or furniture.	0.38
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Perform regular maintenance on equipment.	0.36
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Supervise installation of office equipment and furniture.	0.31
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Maintain software inventory.	0.16
Performing Financial Functions	Accept payment on account	1.16
Performing Financial Functions	Reconcile cash count and receipts	1.11
Performing Financial Functions	Make journal entries	1.09
Performing Financial Functions	Prepare bank deposits	1.08
Performing Financial Functions	Prepare or reconcile electronic fund transfers	1.05
Performing Financial Functions	Reconcile bank statements	1.01
Performing Financial Functions	Perform or reconcile currency exchanges	1.00
Computer Hardware, System, and Configuration	Execute basic commands on an operating system such as format, copy, save, or move.	1.58
Computer Hardware, System, and Configuration	Transfer data from one media source to another.	1.39
Computer Hardware, System, and Configuration	Convert documents from one software to another.	1.29
Computer Hardware, System, and Configuration	Back up system.	0.63
Computer Hardware, System, and Configuration	Perform routine system security functions such as virus protection.	0.57
Computer Hardware, System, and Configuration	Install or update software.	0.30
Computer Hardware, System, and Configuration	Set up printers and give rights for printer use.	0.22
Human Resources	Field employee problems and complaints.	0.98
Human Resources	Maintain production/project records.	0.69
Human Resources	Create or maintain procedures manual.	0.59
Human Resources	Maintain employment records.	0.57
Human Resources	Prepare training materials.	0.56
Human Resources	Participate in hiring selection process.	0.24
Human Resources	Arrange for temporary assistance.	0.24
Human Resources	Recommend personnel policies.	0.06
Human Resources	Explain compensation and benefit packages.	0.00
Advanced Administration	Interact with international clients or associates.	0.68

Table 15 Major Categories Percent Distribution CAP Part 4 in Descending Order

Area	Percent
Communication	20%
Performing Financial Functions	17%
Organizing/Planning Functions	16%
Document Production	15%
Information Distribution	11%
Human Resources	9%
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	6%
Advanced Administration	3%
Managing Records and Files	2%
Computer Hardware, System, and Configuration	1%
Total	100%

Table 16 Overall Percentage Distribution at the Item Level within Area for CAP Part 4 in Descending Order

Area	Task	Percent
Communication	Handle telephone calls.	2.60
Communication	Respond to inquiries.	2.51
Communication	Responsible for confidential information.	2.35
Communication	Create correspondence.	2.31
Communication	Create documents and reports.	2.29
Communication	Participate in teams, committees, or task forces.	1.72
Communication	Develop networking opportunities.	1.60
Communication	Communicate office policies and procedures.	1.44
Communication	Serve as team leader or committee chair.	1.19
Communication	Deliver oral presentations.	0.74
Communication	Deliver multimedia presentations.	0.54
Communication	Conduct new employee orientation.	0.49
Performing Financial Functions	Process invoices for payment	1.81
Performing Financial Functions	Review and/or control budgets	1.44
Performing Financial Functions	Compile financial reports	1.35
Performing Financial Functions	Summarize financial data	1.35
Performing Financial Functions	Review and retrieve information from financial statements	1.35
Performing Financial Functions	Accept payment on account	1.26
Performing Financial Functions	Reconcile cash count and receipts	1.19
Performing Financial Functions	Make journal entries	1.18
Performing Financial Functions	Prepare budgets	1.16
Performing Financial Functions	Prepare bank deposits	1.15
Performing Financial Functions	Prepare or reconcile electronic fund transfers	1.12
Performing Financial Functions	Reconcile bank statements	1.10
Performing Financial Functions	Perform or reconcile currency exchanges	1.07
Organizing/Planning Functions	Plan, organize, and prioritize own work.	2.64
Organizing/Planning Functions	Manage calendars.	2.33
Organizing/Planning Functions	Prepare materials for meetings.	1.80
Organizing/Planning Functions	Prepare agendas.	1.57
Organizing/Planning Functions	Compile data for company reports.	1.48
Organizing/Planning Functions	Make domestic travel arrangements.	1.28
Organizing/Planning Functions	Plan, organize, and prioritize work of others.	1.26
Organizing/Planning Functions	Arrange for facilities for meetings and conferences.	1.23
Organizing/Planning Functions	Arrange for virtual meetings or education.	0.79
Organizing/Planning Functions	Plan conferences or other significant events.	0.77
Organizing/Planning Functions	Make international travel arrangements.	0.48
Organizing/Planning Functions	Plan physical layout of office(s).	0.25
Document Production	Proofread and/or edit documents.	2.42
Document Production	Create documents using spreadsheet software.	1.90
Document Production	Create documents using presentation software.	1.30
Document Production	Prepare minutes of meetings.	1.26
Document Production	Create documents using desktop publishing software.	1.16
Document Production	Create statistical documents.	1.15
Document Production	Create charts and graphs.	1.11
Document Production	Produce multipage final documents including binding, lamination, or tabs.	1.06

Document Production	Create documents using graphics software.	1.03
Document Production	Design forms.	0.99
Document Production	Create databases.	0.94
Document Production	Create flow charts.	0.78
Document Production	Create web pages.	0.34
Information Distribution	Compose and respond to electronic mail messages.	2.68
Information Distribution	Receive and/or download documents via electronic media.	2.47
Information Distribution	Obtain information or conduct research for self or others.	2.09
Information Distribution	Monitor electronic mail system.	1.97
Information Distribution	Compose and respond to electronic mail for others.	1.65
Human Resources	Process and/or review employee time sheets/attendance records.	1.22
Human Resources	Field employee problems and complaints.	1.18
Human Resources	Maintain production/project records.	0.83
Human Resources	Create or maintain procedures manual.	0.74
Human Resources	Supervise others.	0.70
Human Resources	Prepare training materials.	0.69
Human Resources	Maintain employment records.	0.66
Human Resources	Conduct staff meetings.	0.62
Human Resources	Establish continuous quality improvement goals.	0.58
Human Resources	Create or maintain job descriptions/specifications.	0.46
Human Resources	Participate in hiring selection process.	0.38
Human Resources	Arrange for temporary assistance.	0.34
Human Resources	Conduct employee training/continuing education.	0.32
Human Resources	Mediate employee conflict.	0.19
Human Resources	Evaluate employee's performance.	0.13
Human Resources	Recommend personnel policies.	0.09
Human Resources	Determine employee continuing education needs.	0.05
Human Resources	Explain compensation and benefit packages.	0.01
Human Resources	Develop staffing plan.	0.00
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Maintain inventory of supplies.	1.37
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Make purchase decisions for equipment and/or supplies.	1.14
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Troubleshoot software problems.	1.08
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Train others on office equipment.	1.02
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Train others on software.	0.97
Maintaining Equipment and Supplies	Evaluate/recommend equipment and/or furniture.	0.48
Advanced Administration	Interact with international clients or associates.	0.85
Advanced Administration	Mentor others for career development.	0.73
Advanced Administration	Manage cultural differences in the workplace.	0.71
Advanced Administration	Participate in conflict resolution.	0.52
Advanced Administration	Participate in long-range planning for the organization.	0.45
Managing Records and Files	Maintain classified or confidential files.	1.84
Managing Records and Files	Develop records management system policies and procedures.	0.52
Computer Hardware, System, and Configuration	Perform administrative tasks on a network such as creating new users, groups, and rights.	0.65