



SMP

Exam Content Outline

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Domain 1 - Engagement (19%)



Domain 2 - Strategy Formulation (27%)



Domain 3 - Preparation for Strategy Transformation (25%)



Domain 4 - Strategy Execution, Governance and Evaluation (29%)

The Strategy Management Professional (SMP) exam is created using the SMP EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE, which details the responsibilities needed by today's strategy practitioners. In turn, the OUTLINE is created by strategy subject matter experts (SMEs) whose work is reflected in a rigorous job task analysis (JTA) undertaken by the International Association for Strategy Professionals (IASP), formerly the Association for Strategic Planning (ASP), in 2019. This JTA is updated on a regular basis to ensure it is consistent with current practices in the strategy profession. The current exam content outline came into effect in May 2021.

Domain 1 - Engagement (19%)

ENGAGEMENT: This domain normally accounts for 15 to 19 percent of the SMP exam, or 24 to 30 questions, out of 160. The purpose of the group of activities that make up the ENGAGEMENT domain is to build employee commitment and remove barriers to all strategy activities. Leaders are called upon to: explain the strategy; report on initiatives that will be carried out; identify current priorities; highlight progress made; describe cascading objectives; and, reward people for their achievements. It also requires leaders to take account of feedback offered up by employees throughout the organization.

Activities

1A Culture of Strategy Management and Agility

- 1A1 - Coach organizational leadership working from a shared vision toward organizational performance-driven alignment and accountability to a strategic plan.
- 1A2 - Design processes and drive a culture of strategic management and agility enterprisewide and at all levels of the organization using a whole system approach.
- 1A3 - Provide leadership and facilitate organizational capacity-building.
- 1A4 - Establish and manage a strategic management function to guide the strategic thinking, planning, and implementation processes.
- 1A5 - Facilitate processes that encourage innovation and identify and agree upon strategic options.
- 1A6 - Model and guide effective sourcing, application, and sharing of knowledge and learning enterprise-wide.
- 1A7 - Build necessary relationships across country cultures, languages and geography with awareness and sensitivity.

1B Planning Team Expectations

- 1B1 - Establish a top management planning team process led by the chief executive that involves key internal and external stakeholders.
- 1B2 - Orient assembled top management planning team to planning process.
- 1B3 - Tailor the planning process to the needs of the organization.
- 1B4 - Support executive sponsorship efforts among senior management and key stakeholders to gain their advocacy for strategic change.
- 1B5 - Mentor and coach executive sponsors on strategic planning and management processes.
- 1B6 - Advise leaders on how to involve and communicate the value of change to staff to minimize resistance.

Domain 2 - Strategy Formulation (27%)

STRATEGY FORMULATION: This domain normally accounts for 24 to 28 percent of the SMP exam, or 38 to 44 questions. The purpose of this group of activities is to devise a new strategy, or make adjustments to an existing one. This entails: analyzing the external and internal environments; formulating and analyzing several strategy alternatives; and, selecting the most appropriate.

Activities

2A External and Internal Environmental Scan

- 2A1 - Organize systematic trend-spotting in sectors external to the organization and throughout the organization.
- 2A2 - Gather, analyze, and interpret environmental trends.
- 2A3 - Monitor and assess early indicators of external trends in change drivers that could lead to disruption of the organization.
- 2A4 - Identify the key environmental indicators at play.
- 2A5 - Synthesize internal and external environmental data as appropriate to the context of the organization.
- 2A6 - Identify future customers/clients and the likely alignment with currently relevant products and services.
- 2A7 - Analyze both the current and the future environment and create a range of scenarios which are the most likely and relevant.
- 2A8 - Evaluate readiness or capacity for change and ensure recommended changes are informed by findings.
- 2A9 - Communicate data, both written and orally, to create actionable understanding.

2B Strategy Design and Formulation

- 2B1 - Create alternative strategic directions that create value for stakeholders and a competitive differentiation for the organization.
- 2B2 - Articulate to senior management the importance of the organization's distinctive core competencies and the strategies that result in competitive differentiation.
- 2B3 - Facilitate the crafting of vision and mission statements that clearly articulate the organization's purpose.
- 2B4 - Assist senior management with the identification of business models that drive value for stakeholders and achieve the expected performance outcomes.
- 2B5 - Facilitate leadership in the identification and selection of the organization's objectives, core strategies, and key results..
- 2B6 - Anticipate changes that can impact or support the successful execution of the strategy.
- 2B7 - Assess the potential impact of competitor activities, macro changes and regulatory policies on strategic direction.
- 2B8 - Assess and advise on options to enhance value proposition and to improve return on investment.
- 2B9 - Develop appropriate feedback loops to validate strategy options.

Domain 3 - Preparation for Strategy Transformation (25%)

PREPARATION FOR STRATEGY TRANSFORMATION: This domain normally accounts for 27 to 31 percent of the SMP exam, or 43 to 50 questions. The purpose of this group of activities is to align the operating model (i.e., how the organization functions) to the new strategy. This entails identifying, determining the scope of and executing the required transformation projects.

Activities

3A Alignment of the Organization Design with Strategy

- 3A1 - Educate senior management on organization design/ redesign principles and its relationship to the success of strategy execution and management.
- 3A2 - Select the organization design framework in consultation with management and organization design professionals.
- 3A3 - Design plan for implementation, including how organization structure should be modified enterprise-wide.
- 3A4 - Advocate for and coach senior management on change management plan for organizational design effort.
- 3A5 - Promote ethical consideration and communicate with employees on the minimum nonnegotiable behaviors through the organization code of conduct.
- 3A6 - Analyze the current and required corporate cultural components and identify the core values that support or hinder the strategy execution.
- 3A7 - Assemble change leadership team(s) to monitor and assure movement in strategy development and execution.

3B Alignment of Operations with Strategy

- 3B1 - Assess internal organizational cross-functional capabilities to close the gap between the current and desired state.
- 3B2 - Facilitate analysis of the organization's functional components to identify impacts of and risks to implementation of the strategic plan.
- 3B3 - Identify and sequence the transformation projects that must be executed to improve the organization's ability to execute its strategy.
- 3B4 - Create transformation plan(s).

3C Operational Planning for Implementation

- 3C1 - Facilitate the development of an implementation plan that supports the organization's strategies.
- 3C2 - Identify specific activities and resources needed to realize the organization's strategies.
- 3C3 - Determine and assist senior management in assigning and allocating resources, finances, timelines, and desired outcomes for each activity.
- 3C4 - Foster senior management ownership of a viable operational plan for change.
- 3C5 - Use specific frameworks and structures to build and evaluate the multi-year business plan and the links between the corporate strategic plan.
- 3C6 - Monitor the selection, and execution of strategic plan initiatives and projects, communicating issues and risks to senior management.
- 3C7 - Develop an enterprise-wide communication plan to disseminate information about strategy and implementation.

Domain 4 - Strategy Execution, Governance and Evaluation (29%)

STRATEGY EXECUTION, GOVERNANCE, AND EVALUATION: This domain normally accounts for 26 to 30 percent of the SMP exam, or 41 to 48 questions. The purpose of this group of activities is to deliver on a day-to-day basis the stakeholder value propositions defined by the strategy. This entails executing all primary (e.g., R&D, manufacturing, logistics, sales, and marketing) and secondary (e.g., procurement, IT, HR and finance) processes at the heart of the operating model in perfect alignment to the strategy. Also, the purpose of this group of activities is to direct and control all strategy activities. This entails setting the organization's direction (i.e., challenge and ratify the direction setting recommendations coming from the other group of activities) as well as make decisions on the conduct of and resource allocations tied to the other groups of activities.

Activities

4A Strategy Execution and Transformation

- 4A1 - Facilitate the development of annual and project plans that align with the strategy.
- 4A2 - Educate and coach senior leadership on change management.
- 4A3 - Cultivate executive sponsorship of senior management to lead and support the strategic change.
- 4A4 - Collaborate on executive communications that facilitate a high-performance culture.
- 4A5 - Lead the strategy management function to execute the strategy implementation process.
- 4A6 - Serve as the trusted advisor to senior management as the strategy is executed.
- 4A7 - Facilitate development of performance-based systems that motivate and incentivize people to change.

4B Governance and Decision Making

- 4B1 - Identify with senior management the strategy evaluation criteria, steps, and procedures for decision-making.
- 4B2 - Create a governance plan for decision-making regarding strategic plan execution.
- 4B3 - Communicate the governance structure and decision hierarchy modifications in their plans.
- 4B4 - Assess performance of current governance structures and decision hierarchy.

4C Strategic Performance Management

- 4C1 - Facilitate senior management in identifying the performance metrics and targets for strategic objectives.
- 4C2 - Oversee the operation of a monitoring and accountability process to track implementation of the change.
- 4C3 - Recommend corrective action based on opportunities, issues, risks and lessons learned affecting strategy implementation and execution.
- 4C4 - Measure and monitor organizational health and take corrective actions.



The International Association for Strategy Professionals' (IASP) mission is: To Lead and support people and organizations first through the promotion of a holistic approach to strategy management and, secondly, by setting professional standards for strategy through certification, thought leadership and professional development. Just as IASP has earned its standing as the premier strategy certification organization, individual IASP-certified professionals have earned their credentials for possessing the skills and knowledge needed to properly manage risks and enhance people-driven business results. The IASP offers certification as a “Strategy Planning Professional Level I” (SPP) and a “Strategy Management Professional Level II” (SMP). Learn more about IASP certification programs at www.strategyassociation.org. The IASP wishes to acknowledge the contributions of the following individuals whose efforts as part of the Job Task Analysis (JTA) made possible this important manual:

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IASP

✉ **37637 Five Mile, #399, Livonia, MI USA 48154**

☎ **toll-free ph.1.844.345.2828**

☎ **certification director ph.1.613.570.8339**

🌐 **www.strategyassociation.org**

✉ **info@strategyassociation.org**