

Some information that comes to mind that were repeated by numerous people that I hope you find helpful - hopefully others on this list will add theirs:

- READ the questions. Underline key words such as BEST, FIRST, MOST, NOT, LEAST, etc., or hot buttons like ANTITRUST, LIABILITY, etc. and then re-read the question emphasizing those. Pick your answer, and then reread the question again to make sure you didn't make a bad assumption.
- Don't spend too much time on any one question - mark it, move on, and go back. Sometimes a clue to one question will be found in the question of another.
- Be super careful not to get your answer key out of sequence with your answers - we've heard a number of stories where people screwed up like this, caught it and then panicked trying to correct and ensure their answers were right. One person said they wrote their answers on the test because they knew they did this a lot, and then went back and transcribed after they were done.
- Never put a question into the context of your own organization. When looking for an answer don't try to think of examples of other organizations (this was a real killer for us when defining the differences between Federations, two and three tiered organizations, etc., most of the examples that people came up with would often not fit the book definition).
- Always think of the questions in terms of "what would the best legal answer be that would benefit the organization the most financially be" - Often we would get tripped up weighing an answer with the morale benefits. If in a particular circumstance, the federal law allows you to work someone 200 hours non-stop for 45 cents an hour, then that would be the answer.
- Being concerned about what a jury would think is never a consideration.
- If a question has "survey your members" or "do an environmental scan" and you're asked what the first step is - that's the one that will bear serious consideration.
- In the "these are book answers, not real world" category - Members always deal with members, staff always deals with staff, and the CEO is the only person that deals with the board.
- Remember, the executive committee can act on the board's behalf, so if "refer it to the Executive Committee" is an answer, carefully consider this.
- Be careful of your personal knowledge of state laws - the questions are always about federal law. As an example, our organization observes a 37.5 hour work week, but the federal guidelines for overtime are based on a 40 hour work week.

- Oftentimes, no matter how ridiculous it would be in the real world, the answer that involves legal counsel is correct - the point to make is don't rule these out right away if they sound absurd.
- Know the different Federal laws that govern HR issues cold - what each one is, what it affects and the staff sizes that they apply to. I don't have the Cox book with me, but there's a great chart that shows them by organization size.
- Know the Lobbying and PAC limit and numbers fairly well.
- Scan the book for any tables where numbers are cited or compared - these are probably testable.
- "No comment" is never the correct answer to the media.
- Many questions assume that you assume the role of a particular person
- and most specifically your marketing person (even though the question doesn't say you don't have one). Don't rule out "Assume the role of. . ." answers.
- Understand the different types of accounting practices reports that are commonly used, by all of their names, and what they are used for. (I.e., where would you find your capital expenditures).
- Also, not every best practice of accounting is a GAAP practice - I've thought for years that some things were GAAP - we were told that GAAP applies primarily to the reporting and format of reporting of accounting reports, not check handling procedures as the specific example (I still have trouble with this one). Point - don't assume GAAP is correct when dealing with practices.
- Be *very* careful with any question that deals with, or possibly involves, anti-trust. These are the ones that tripped many of us up consistently.
- Unless it specifies otherwise, you are the Chief Staff Executive (CSE) in every question.
- We heard from a number of people that while all three books are important, the Professional Practices book is the real key, and some people said this was all they read - so if you're out of time for reading, I would focus on that, and not try to cram too much reading in.

Finally, while there are components of the body of knowledge that are rote (HR laws and numbers, lobbying limits, categories of this or that) a lot of the exam content can't be quantified that way, so the questions are very subjective particularly in governance, leadership, etc. These are often the questions that I *\*KNEW\** I had the right answer for, and in a number of cases assumed the correct answer was a throwaway (having your legal counsel act as your spokesperson in a crisis - right, right). With these, as I mentioned

before, I plan to make good use of the comments - if I think a question is poorly worded or incomplete in a way that more than one answer could be correct, I'm going to note it.