



General Certificate of Education

Leisure Studies

8641/8643/8646/8647/8649

LS02 A People Business

Report on the Examination

This Report on the Examination uses the [new numbering system](#)

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

General Comments

It is important that teachers understand that students need to be able to apply their theoretical knowledge to the organisations studied. This will invariably mean that in every question the reality of customer service is more important than the theoretical knowledge. Accurate examples of what takes place in the organisation become the focus of answers rather than theory. The key to good exam marks is the realistic application of customer service provision.

What was particularly good

Candidates are becoming more concise when writing specifically about their organisation and are trying to keep to the issues that the question focuses on. When candidates showed a willingness to be more creative in their answers based on their own interpretation of investigations of their organisations studied, they scored highly compared to those that simply relied on stock information and superficial outcomes.

What was not so good

The relationship between theory and practice was not developed by some candidates and this aspect of customer service needs to be addressed in every question. Every time a customer service principle is learnt, students need to be able to illustrate it in real terms to show they properly understand both its application and why leisure organisations today consider customer service provision to be both added value and giving them a competitive advantage. In addition, many students are not correctly interpreting what the question requires when it is set out in stages. Often the first part of the question is answered well whilst the other parts are not dealt with, or only very superficially.

Assignment Task A

In

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, the majority of candidates were able to describe the various features of information provision, although not all concentrated on how staff actually provide this. The provision of advice was also ignored by many candidates as a specific customer service tool that staff use to provide additional information that customers would find very useful. The benefits were largely superficial and often beyond the scope of the information provided. The provision of information by staff will not necessarily lead to repeat business and customer loyalty, and the link between what staff provide and how customers use it was often not fully discussed.

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 was again heavily focused in many cases on the organisational benefits from practical help. Where there was full explanation, students were able to show how in turn this can lead to organisational benefits, which again were in keeping with practical help and assistance offered. Some students made claims which were not realistic such as that the opening of a door for a woman would lead to repeat business and loyalty. Superficial claims of benefits to the organisation from a simple act of practical help or assistance was not evidenced or proven but simply stated as a fact.

Assignment Task B

In

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 the majority of students were very comfortable detailing a whole list of customer service skills, as if this were a theory paper on the subject, but did not realise that the question asked in the first instance for a customer service situation that needed to be described in detail; then the customer service skills required for that situation needed to be applied to the situation, based on a practical application. Those students that applied their knowledge scored highly on this question.

In **04** some students failed to specify an area, or identified a number of areas, so consequently weakened their answer. A strong answer to this question needed to identify the area of the organisation, and then the type of interaction between staff and customers. Then the specific duties of the staff involved needed to be identified so that the training and the experience of staff could be geared up to the provision of successful customer service and consequently enable the staff to deal with the issues in working in the area identified. Again, too many students talked of training and experience in a theoretical way, forgetting its actual application to the area under discussion, but those that did, scored highly on this question.

Assignment Task C

05 was answered well in the majority of cases, with a clear detailed range of roles that the mystery shopper would perform. There were some misconceptions about the methods employed by mystery shoppers, but this was not penalised providing their roles were specified.

06 was also answered quite well by the majority of candidates. They made the association between the mystery shopper feedback and how this would result in changes to customer service, either through training or affirmation to staff that they were doing a good job. Had the above points been dealt with in more detail and depth then higher marks would have been scored.

07 produced some of the weakest answers on the whole paper. Too many students concentrated on the first part of the question and neglected the second and most important part. The development of customer service was the issue here. How a survey can help this is really down to the quality of information provided by the survey and how the organisation responds to this through finding out what its customers' opinions are. Too many answers focused on the theory of survey design, question compilation and the positive and negative outcomes in approaching surveys, with very little reference to its actual impact on customer service development. Those students focused on the customer providing information, and its relevance to the organisation that looks at this information, and then making suitable changes to the organisations' customer service, scored highly on this question.

Assignment Task D

08 was the most interesting question on the paper, as it allowed considerable scope for candidates to express their thoughts regarding how Sarah Johnson's experiences affected the outcomes needed. Most students were able to give a good account regarding what they believed should have happened and why, and in many cases argued various scenarios that should have occurred. However the best candidates used the information provided and saw the subtle leads given that showed when Sarah was put to work she in fact did really well, with constant supervision enabling her to perform her job to a good standard. Good candidates stated whilst this was admirable on her part, she nevertheless did not obtain specific training, knowledge and procedures regarding the organisation, which showed the depth of understanding required to score highly.

09 was the most difficult question to answer as many candidates found it hard to equate competitive advantage with good staff training and knowledge. Too much training theory was offered in answers and superficial reference to knowledge led to equally superficial claims that this would lead to competitive advantage, showing no real understanding of how Competitive Advantage is actually realised in the leisure industry. Very few candidates appreciated that what sets staff apart from those of other organisations is how they actually deal with customers over time. A consistent approach to serving customers, and above all the human touch is vital

in creating relationships with customers that sets them apart from other organisations, where there is a more robotic approach. Examples of how staff show their human side and provide good service whatever the situation would lead to a good answer.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates

1. Teachers need to ensure that all candidates fully understand what is required in the question.
2. Spend time explaining to students the boundaries of the question so that they do not waste time and effort writing in areas not asked for.
3. If a question is in two parts then the second part is essential to the answer and requires depth to show the relevance of the first part and how it links with it.
4. There is too much emphasis on stock phrases such as repeat business, and customer loyalty, and how this leads to good customer service, when the real issue is to identify the specifics of a customer service situation, and deal with outcomes from it through actual examples pertinent to the question being asked.
Candidates need to be able to describe a customer service situation fully and understand that through this interaction both the member of staff and customer are affected in various ways, and that outcomes vary from customer to customer, even in the same situation.
5. A greater understanding of customer service can be realised from actual role play situations in which students are able to act out both customer and staff situations. This in addition to theory will enable candidates to be more fully prepared for the exam.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.