UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

Cambridge International Diploma Standard Level

MARK SCHEME for the May 2005 question paper

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA IN BUSINESS

5162   Effective Business Communication (Standard), maximum mark 100

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UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

May 2005

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA

Standard Level

MARK SCHEME

MAXIMUM MARK: 100

PAPER: 5162

BUSINESS
Effective Business Communication

1 You work for Moorcroft and are very concerned about the level of complaints which have been received about a certain range of pottery. You are considering the best method to respond to each customer's complaint.

(a) **State the effectiveness of using the following methods:**

(i) **telephone call to the customer from the customer complaints department;** **[3]**
(ii) **email to the customer.** **[3]**

Answer to include :
(i) telephone call – two-way method, can tailor the message to each individual customer and get immediate feedback to ascertain what the customer requires. However, not able to keep a copy easily unless transcripts taken, lengthy process, may be difficult to get hold of the customer. Cannot immediately send reports etc. with this type of communication.

(ii) email – quick method of communication, 24/7 world-wide access, easy to check if it is received, can attach reports etc., one-way method but easier for customers to respond, can keep electronic copy, can be cost-effective. However, impersonal, not all customers have email facility, may not have the email addresses. Some customers have an aversion to using email. Virus ethics/too many emails etc.

[3 marks per method up to 6 marks]

(b) **You need to tell the staff within Moorcroft about the levels of complaints and returns. Identify the most appropriate method(s) of communication you should use to do this. Give reasons for your choice.** **[6]**

Answer could include following methods:
• Seminars
• Team meetings
• Staff interviews
Justification – need to use internal two-way method of communication to try to find out problems, to get feedback, need to ensure that staff are not alienated by the communication
Report – which will contain evidence of complaints/followed up by a meeting etc.

Level 1: demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding **[1-3 marks]**
Level 2: demonstrates a clearer understanding of communication types **[4-6 marks]**

(c) **Identify <u>four</u> potential key problems which the company could face because of the lack of communication with each of the following:**

(i) **international customers;** **[4]**
(ii) **design staff within Moorcroft.** **[4]**

(i) Key problems because of lack of communication with customers:
• Lack of repeat orders
• Poor understanding of product range by customers
• Lack of understanding of customer needs
• Customers' lack of awareness about products
• Poor service needs to be explained

[1 mark per point up to 4 points]

(ii) Key problems because of lack of communication with internal staff:
- Low morale
- Lack of group cohesion and effectiveness
- Unmotivated workforce
- Lack of understanding of staff requirements by management
- Lack of loyalty by staff
- Marketing department may not give feedback from customers to the design team
- Any design issue/strategy may not be conveyed to the design team

[1 mark per point up to 4 points]

[Total 20]

2 Your manager has decided that you should gain more experience in communicating externally and internally.

(a) Write a letter to be sent to all the customers on the database. The letter is intended to promote a collector's club and the new range of speciality pottery. You can 'create' any details that you think are necessary. **[12]**

The letter should conform to the following format:
- Logo or letter heading of the company   }
- Date   }   **[2 marks]**
- Reference number   }
- Appropriate salutation – Dear Mr/Mrs   }   **[2 marks]**
- Letter Heading – Collector's Club   }
- The body/content of letter   }
- Explanation of new club and range   }   **[6 marks – levels]**
- Appropriate closure   }
- Signature and position   }   **[2 marks]**
- Response mechanism   }

The content and tone of the letter should be persuasive and illustrate the benefits of the collector's club. The letter should also summarise by explaining what the next stage will be i.e. how to join the club by sending off slip or email/fax back etc.

Level 1: demonstrates limited content and persuasion   **[1-3 marks]**
Level 2: demonstrates a good tone and appropriate contents   **[4-6 marks]**

(b) You have been asked to prepare a report which explains the potential benefits of the new collector's club.

(i) Identify <u>three</u> essential elements of a report. **[4]**
(ii) Explain <u>two</u> advantages of using a report for this communication. **[4]**

(i) Explanation of three elements of a report:
- Introduction
- Development – findings
- Conclusion – including recommendations

Level 1: demonstrates limited identification of 2 or 3 elements   **[1-2 marks]**
Level 2: demonstrates a good discussion of all 3 elements   **[3-4 marks]**

(ii) Discussion of three advantages of using a report:
- One-way form of communication
- Information presented in formal format
- Information is recorded
- Use of graphics to present information
- Offers conclusions and recommendations
- Can be circulated electronically or in hard format

Level 1: demonstrates limited identification of 2 or 3 advantages **[1-2 marks]**
Level 2: demonstrates a good discussion of 3 advantages relating to case **[3-4 marks]**

[Total 20]

3 **There is low morale within the workforce at Moorcroft and increasing numbers of staff are taking time off sick. You have decided to set up a group of staff to consider these problems.**

(a) **Identify and briefly explain three advantages of using a group to try to solve problems.** **[6]**

Answer to include following advantages:
- Greater commitment to the problem – by involving a group of people in the process of decision-making or defining organisational policy, there is likely to be greater understanding and ownership of the final solution
- More appropriate decision making – groups generally generate more valued and wide-ranging solutions to problems than an individual. Therefore, decisions made by groups tend to be more democratic and more likely to succeed
- Greater bank of information available – individuals in the group add a wider range of experiences on which to draw or brainstorm about the problem
- More courageous suggestions are made in groups – individuals tend to be more conservative when making important decisions and carrying out tasks, groups tend to decide on a strategy for moving forward
- Greater productivity from group – working in groups can often stimulate productivity as the collective will of the group can often make things happen where an individual might struggle to get things underway

[1 mark per advantage and 1 mark for explanation up to 6 marks]

(b) **You have decided to run regular meetings to try to improve the morale problem. Identify four characteristics of successful meetings.** **[8]**

Answer to include:
- Desired aims are identified at the beginning of the meetings
- Members have an interest in the end decision
- Action points are followed up
- Meetings take place in a limited time scale
- Leader for the meetings is appointed
- Paperwork, such as agenda and minutes from previous meeting, are available
- Agenda and minutes are sent out in good time for the next meeting
- The venue is appropriate
- All members are able and encouraged to participate
- During the meeting, members of the group are listened to

Level 1: demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of characteristics **[1-2 marks]**
Level 2: demonstrates a clearer understanding of issues **[3-5 marks]**
Level 3: characteristics identified and fully justified which are applied to
the case **[6-8 marks]**

(c) **Explain the importance of <u>both</u> verbal and non-verbal communication in a group meeting.** **[6]**

Answer to include:

Verbal Communication:
- Important to decide on the aim of the message
- Need to select and deliver the important facts and figures
- Identify and stress the key points of the message
- Choose an appropriate verbal style – sincerity, warmth, assertiveness, diplomacy – to create correct atmosphere
- Choose an appropriate articulation – tone, enunciation, emphasis, volume, projection
- Monitor feedback constantly – adjust delivery accordingly
- End on a positive note

Non-verbal Communication:
- Need to decide on body stance and gestures – ease, physical presence, enthusiasm – to give the correct cues
- Need to ensure eye contact – to show sincerity
- Need to be prepared to listen to feedback and show this
- Need to check facial expression – to be congruent with verbal communications
- Need to choose most effective methods of presenting data – charts etc.

[1 mark per appropriate point for non verbal and 1 mark per point for verbal up to 6 marks]

[Total 20]

4 You need to recruit two new design staff for Moorcroft from the local University.

(a) **Explain <u>four</u> purposes of a recruitment interview.** **[4]**

Purposes could include;
- To identify key personal characteristics of interviewee
- To assess the interviewee's essential skills required for the job
- To promote the company to the interviewee
- To offer the interviewee an opportunity to find out more about the company
- To see if the interviewee would 'fit in' the company
- To assess the interviewee's personal appearance and punctuality

[1 mark per point up to 4 marks]

(b) Explain what you will need to prepare for in these interviews. **[8]**

Need to plan the interviews:
- Consider the aims and purpose of the interview
- Need to decide who should be present at the interview
- Need to consider type of questions – open, probing, scenario base, etc.
- The discussion should largely go backwards and forwards from the interviewer to the interviewee so that the interviewer maintains the position of controlling the proceedings
- The interviewer will also need to set the general tone of the interview which will reflect the relationship of the parties and nature of the discussion
- Need to choose an appropriate location and time and collect all necessary background data that will set the structure for the interview i.e. personal specification, job specification, selection criteria
- Need to listen carefully for information expressed by the interviewee. Need to consider how this is to be recorded
- Need to make notes on critical issues during the course of the interview and close with a summary of the main points raised, highlighting the next stage of the process i.e. when the decision will be made
- After the interview, need to spend a few minutes making additional notes that may be useful for reference later, whilst the interview is fresh in the mind
- Need to consider the acceptance and rejection letters after the interview to the appropriate people

Level 1: demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding **[1-2 marks]**
Level 2: demonstrates a clearer understanding of planning stages **[3-5 marks]**
Level 3: analyses appropriate stages which are fully applied **[6-8 marks]**

(c) Briefly explain open and closed questions which could be used at these interviews and give <u>one</u> example for <u>each</u> type of question. **[8]**

Answers to include:
- Closed question – used to find out facts about the candidate such as age, current income, checking skills, checking details on the application form – questions such as 'are you trained to use Excel spreadsheets?'
- Open questions – used to find out attitudes and past experience – questions such as why did you apply for this position? What could you bring to the job?

[2 marks per explanation and 2 marks per example of question up to 4 marks for each type]

[Total 20]

5 Your manager is preparing data to present the last five years' sales figures and he is also preparing an organisational chart for Moorcroft.

(a) Explain what is meant by a line graph, and explain <u>two</u> advantages of using this type of graph to present data. **[6]**

Explanation of line graph: possibly a diagram to illustrate
Advantages – can be used to show trends, can use range of colours, can plot large amount of data etc. but cannot be readily or clearly interpreted if too much information is plotted e.g. too many lines on one graph is confusing

[2 marks for explanation and 2 marks each for advantages up to 6 marks]

(b) **Explain <u>two</u> advantages of presenting data in a pie chart.** **[6]**

Explanation of pie charts:
Advantages – good to use for less complex data, easy to read, can use range of colours, 3D pie charts – but limited to the amount of in-depth information that can be conveyed using a pie or circle chart e.g. some data such as trends is too complex to illustrate this way

[3 marks each for advantages up to 6 marks]

(c) **Explain the purposes of an organisational chart.** **[8]**

Explanation of organisational chart:
Show levels of authority
Shows levels of responsibility
Illustrates lines of formal communication
Illustrates the status and role of employees

Level 1: demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of organisational
chart **[1-2 marks]**
Level 2: demonstrates a clearer understanding of chart and gives some
explanation **[3-5 marks]**
Level 3: organisational chart identified and fully explained and applied to the
case **[6-8 marks]**

[Total 20]