UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

Cambridge International Diploma Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME for the May 2009 question paper

for the guidance of teachers

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA IN BUSINESS

5172　　　Effective Business Communication, maximum mark 100

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UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

1   You have been asked to consider how information about the new ECRT programme should be communicated to travel buyers

   (a) Explain how the following methods of communication could be used to inform customers about new ECRT programme.   [2 × 3 = 6]

      (i)   Press releases to all relevant trade journals

         Press releases – written to enhance reputation of the organisation and the fact that it is proactively involving itself in reducing carbon emissions. Written to submit to journalists in the press or trade and special interest magazines – one-way communication.

      (ii) Letters to buyers in Travel Wide

         Letters – formal one-way communication, on headed company paper, used in mail shots. Can include some free guidance on the ECRT programme so can be very persuasive.

      3 marks for each of the two forms of communications. Full marks should only be allocated where a reasonably detailed description is given.

   (b) Suggest, with reasons, *four* other methods of communication which Travel Wide could use to launch the ECRT programme,   [4 × 2 = 8]

      • **Sales reps or Key Account Manager visits** – one-to-one meetings (two-way communication) with travel buyers, this will allow the message to be tailored to their requirements and how the accreditation scheme will be applied.
      • **Email** – informal, maybe appropriate as a first communication for general awareness, but not very effective at being persuasive.
      • **Conference or open meeting** – two-way communication. Could be used to gather a number of travel buyers together and give accreditation and general policy information.
      • **Advert in trade press/brochures** – one-way, only good for raising limited awareness – not really the most appropriate method but joined with other methods such as Key Account Managers visits could be effective.
      • **Website** – not very effective one-way method requires the travel buyer to seek out the information which is generally quite complex.

      Any four of the above – 1 point for identification and 1 point for explanation.

(c) It is very important that those involved in contacting travel buyers understand the role of non-verbal and verbal communications.

Explain the meaning of *each* of the following. Give *one* example of *each*.

- **Meta communications** [3]
- **Kinetics** [3]

Meta communications
Meta communication – comes from the Greek meaning beyond e.g. the sense that humans have in feeling that there is more to what a person says than just the words i.e. beyond the words.

Example
An example would be when the sales reps are talking to the travel buyers, they must ensure that the message they give is convincing. There is a danger that the travel buyers may think that the sales reps are just trying to increase their commission i.e. more of what the sales reps say.

2 marks for explanation and 1 mark for example up to 3 marks.

Kinetics
Non-verbal communications, body language, dress, facial expression, posture etc.

Example
Sales staff must ensure that they are dressed appropriately for this role. There should be good consideration of facial expression and body language i.e. an open and friendly, smiling approach should be considered.

2 marks for explanation and 1 mark for example up to 3 marks.

[Total: 20]

2   Travel Wide is planning a joint travel conference with the Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (Asia Pacific) to launch the ECRT programme. The conference will take place from 13 to 16 October 2009.

(a)   Write a letter to all potential delegates inviting them to the conference and the launch. Use the information in the case study about the ECRT programme, and make up any other required details.   **[12]**

   The letter should conform to the following format:
   - Logo or letterhead of the company
   - Date   [2]
   - Reference number
   - Appropriate salutation – Dear Mr/Mrs   [2]
   - Letter heading
   - The body/content of letter
   - Explanation of the conference   [6– levels below]
   - Appropriate closure
   - Signature and position   [2]
   - Response mechanism

   The content and tone of the letter should be polite and persuasive, detailing the new ECRT Programme. The letter should also summarise by explaining what the next stage will be in booking for the conference.

   Level 1 demonstrates limited content and persuasion (1–3 marks)
   Level 2 demonstrates good tone, persuasion and content (4–6 marks)

(b)   **One of the tasks that you will need to undertake in planning for the conference is to email customers and to send out a press release to the travel buyers.**

   Explain *four* benefits of using a database to support email communications. [4 × 2 =8]

   Database of email addresses:
   - The database should provide contact details which could be used to send out mailshots
   - The database could be used to build a loyalty scheme
   - The information on the database could be used to target similar customers with similar characteristics
   - Email is quick and available 24/7
   - Can attach hotlink to website or example of packages etc.
   - Email can reach international customers more effectively
   - No printing costs

   2 marks for each point up to four points.

3   The preparations for the conference require a lot of planning in Travel Wide and meetings with the Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (Asia Pacific).

(a)   Explain *five* ways of ensuring that the meetings between Travel Wide and the Institute of Tourism and Travel Management are successful.   [5 × 2 = 10]

- Decide on the nature of the meeting i.e. is it solely to give or to receive information or both? Is a facilitation of a discussion important?
- Who should be invited to the meeting and what is to be each individual's role or relative contribution?
- A notice of the meeting must be issued
- An agenda must be prepared
- An approximate time-scale for the duration of the meeting should be decided – a guillotine approach to agenda items may need to be undertaken
- Minutes should be taken, produced and circulated after the meeting has taken place
- Action points must be detailed in the minutes which must be referred to in the following meeting
- Prioritising of agenda items
- A chair for the meeting must be appointed and his/her agenda drawn up – is the chair to rotate? Personality of the Chairperson
- A suitable room/location must be prepared and ready to receive the participants
- Preparation of appropriate information must be ready for each meeting
- The date of the next meeting should be decided at the end of each meeting
- The timing of the meeting in terms of the time of day should be decided
- The mix within the group

2 marks per point up to a maximum of 5 points.

(b) Travel Wide and the Institute of Tourism and Travel Management will join together for the conference.

Explain *five* potential barriers to communication that could arise when two different organisations work together. Suggest how *each* barrier could be overcome. [5 × 2 = 10]
[Total: 20]

Barriers to good group communication include:
- Lack of information or poor communication system
  Overcome barrier by improving quality of information
- NVC - poor body language and distortion of message
  Overcome barrier by being more aware of body language and how it is interpreted by others
- Inappropriate language
  Overcome barrier by moderating use of bad language and too much jargon
- Poor listening and feedback
  Overcome barrier by being more attentive to the buyers needs and demonstrating that you are listening to their needs
- Emotional responses
  Overcome barrier by demonstrating better self-control in the situation and remaining calm
- Aims for the group have not been set
  Overcome barrier by ensuring that prior to the meeting the aims are set and communicated and consulted upon with the group

For each of the above, students should get 1 mark for identification of the barrier and 1 mark for identifying a way of overcoming the barrier.

4 The timing of communications for the launch of the ECRT programme is very important and so the use of technology is being considered.

(a) Explain how the following technology could be used to support the launch of the ECRT programme internally and externally and give *two* advantages for *each*.

   (i) Intranet for employee communication   [5]

        Intranet – holds information which is accessible for all employees in all sections/offices/ locations of the organisation
        Advantage: easy for staff to access a large range of information
        Quick for staff to access information

        3 marks for the explanation and 1 mark for each advantage up to 2 marks

   (ii) Extranet for communication with travel buyers   [5]

        Extranet – password protected area of the Intranet which retailers can access, which allows them privileged information about the accreditation scheme
        Advantage: builds trust and support for buyers, relationship building therefore more reliability and service

        3 marks for the explanation and 1 mark for each advantage up to 2 marks.

(b) **You need some assistance in preparing for the conference and you have asked your line manager for temporary administrative support. This has been agreed and you will undertake the interviews yourself.**

Prepare *five* guidance points that you should follow for your interview to be a success.
[5 × 2 = 10]
[Total: 20]

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, leading, 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, the interviewers 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

2 marks for each point elaborated upon. If students provide only bullet points then 1 mark per point should be awarded.

5 **During the conference a range of visual presentations will be given to show how rates of emissions might change over time.**

(a) **The information on the change in emissions could be represented as a graph. Suggest the best type of graph for use as a visual aid. Provide *one* advantage and *one* disadvantage of this graph.** **[5]**

Students should recommend line graphs as the plot progresses over time.
Advantage: They should explain that a line graph is good for showing trends.
Disadvantage: They should indicate that if the information is too complex then it would be difficult to read, also multiple trends on one graph would not be clearly demonstrated.

1 for identification of the graphical form, 2 marks for the advantage (fully explained), 2 marks for the disadvantage (fully explained)

(b) Planning for the conference required managing a lot of complex timelines.

Explain the use of Gantt charts and how they can help in planning complex events such as conferences. **[5]**

A Gantt chart is a chart used to plot/plan a series of timed activities and gives a graphical picture of the plan in a way that is meaningful to users. [2]
- Provides you with a pictorial/graphical view of the conference including the different conference sessions, support activities and how they all fit together
- Can be changed and modified automatically to reflect changing timelines and targets
- Can be colour coded to ensure that different conference activities are clearly defined
- Gantt charts are a useful planning tool for major projects including identification of clear timelines

3 marks for a demonstration of how a Gantt chart can help in planning a conference.

(c) You will be expected to produce a monthly report in relation to your activities for planning and preparing for the conference.

Identify the report structure and briefly explain what the content of your report might include. **[10]**
[Total: 20]

- Report headings
- To/from
- Date
- Terms of reference – aims to discuss the progress of the conference organisation
- Body of the report – providing progress to date on the conference organising including input from the Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (Asia)
- Conclusion – next steps and things to consider
- Recommendations – things in particular that link to costs, resources of timelines that are falling behind
- Appendix – any statistics/graphs etc.

8 marks for each of the report headings and 2 marks for an overview of the content.