



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
Cambridge International Diploma in Business
Advanced Level

EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

5172/01

Core Module

October 2009

2 hours plus 15 minutes reading time

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your Centre number, candidate number and name on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen.

You may use a soft pencil for any diagrams, graphs or rough working.

Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Attempt **all** tasks.

Start each task on a new piece of paper.

Please leave a margin on the right and left hand side of each new page.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together, in the correct order.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.

This document consists of **4** printed pages.



You must read the case study below and attempt ALL the tasks which follow.

(The case study is fictitious.)

YELLOW BAND DRINKS COMPANY

The Yellow Band Drinks Company manufactures soft drinks, which are sold globally. There are manufacturing plants in China, Malaysia, India, USA and Germany. The Head Office is based in India. The company produces own brand drinks for major supermarkets as well as still and sparkling bottled water. The company produces over 1,000 different brands of soft drinks and its business is complex with many different supply chain relationships in place. 5

The company had until recently a very good reputation for quality. In the past any problems with quality were usually due to minor damage to packaging or labels rather than the quality of the products. The Quality Control Department at the Yellow Band Drinks Company was extremely good and staff were careful in everything they did, as they knew the business implications of sending out sub-standard products. 10

However, since the appointment of the new Operations Director, Peter Zhanti, there has been a decrease in quality and an increase in product defects. When Peter started work at the company he said that he could increase production of soft drinks by 30% over two years. However, it appears that quality has been affected and major defects are being identified by the Quality Control Department. For example, some water had been bottled too soon after chemicals had been flushed through the system for cleaning purposes. This had made the bottles of water taste of the chemicals. The Quality Control Department had identified the problem and the 100,000 batch of sparkling water was destroyed. 15

In India, a more serious problem occurred. A large batch of sparkling orange drink had the wrong amount of artificial colouring added to the drink. The drink had a strange bright orange colour and a bad taste. This could have caused many customers to become ill. Fortunately the problem was picked up by the Quality Control Department before the drinks were sent out. 20

More recently a large batch of defective lemonade was dispatched from a factory in Malaysia. The defect had been completely missed by the Quality Control Department. The lemonade was cloudy and had a strange taste. The problem was only picked up at the point of sale when a number of customers became ill after drinking the lemonade. In fact over six outlets complained about the batch of lemonade. This level of complaint was very unusual for the Yellow Band Drinks Company and never in its entire history had such a large problem occurred before. 25

The main concern of the company was to limit the damage to its reputation and to deal with the complaints. The company withdrew the product immediately, as the cause of the problem was not known. An investigation was started, and the Board of Directors wanted some very quick answers from Peter Zhanti as to why this situation had ever arisen. 30

The Yellow Band Drinks Company urgently needs to go on a 'quality offensive'. The company needs to communicate immediately with key stakeholders, such as their customers, distributors, supermarkets, consumers and employees, to show its concern for those affected by the situation and to explain how it intends to overcome the current difficulties. The Yellow Band Drinks Company needs to assure these stakeholders that the company continues to be committed to quality. 35

You work for the team responsible for preparing these communications, and your manager, Susan Chan, is taking charge of all communications activities. She is very keen to have your input, as you have recently undertaken a course in Business Communications. 40

You must attempt ALL of the following tasks. Where appropriate use information from the case study to support your answer.

- 1** Susan has asked you to prepare a presentation for all plant managers to give to their production and quality control departments. The aim of the presentation is to explain what is going to happen next.
- (a)** Explain what the plant managers would need to consider in terms of verbal and non-verbal communications when preparing this presentation.
- (i)** Verbal communications [4]
- (ii)** Non-verbal communications [4]
- (b)** You have discovered that Susan doesn't really understand the communications process. Identify and explain the **six** parts of the communications process. [6 x 2 = 12]
[Total: 20]
- 2** Susan wants to call a meeting of the Board of Directors at the Head Office to explain the proposed communications plan. The meeting is very urgent and she wishes it to take place the next day.
- (a)** Prepare a memo from Susan to all the directors asking them to attend this meeting. Use the detail in the case study and create all other necessary details. [8]
- (b)** As part of the communications plan, Susan wishes to undertake a number of electronic forms of communication. Explain to Susan **three** advantages to the Yellow Band Drinks Company of using the electronic communications listed below:
- (i)** email;
- (ii)** website;
- (iii)** Extranet. [4 x 3 = 12]
[Total: 20]
- 3** The meeting with the Board of Directors is extremely important and Susan needs a good understanding of what is involved in managing meetings successfully.
- (a)** Explain to Susan **four** things she should consider when planning tomorrow's meeting. [4 x 2 = 8]
- (b)** Explain to Susan **four** things that her role as Chairperson of the meeting will involve during the meeting. [4 x 2 = 8]
- (c)** Taking minutes will be an essential component of this meeting.
- Explain **four** benefits of taking the minutes of important meetings. [4]
[Total: 20]

4 The Board of Directors has decided that they need to increase the frequency of performance appraisals of key members of staff involved in the drinks incident in Malaysia.

(a) Prepare **four** guidance points for the preparation and conduct of an appraisal interview. [4 x 2 = 8]

(b) Explain **two** types of questions that could be used in an appraisal interview, giving an example of **each** one. [2 x 3 = 6]

(c) It is possible that Peter Zhanti will face a disciplinary interview. Why might this be the case? Explain what is meant by a disciplinary interview. [2 x 3 = 6]
[Total: 20]

5 (a) The Board of Directors has asked for a graphical presentation of the number and type of defects at each plant for the last two years. They are concerned that the increases are a result of Peter Zhanti's drive to increase output and performance, and they need evidence.

Explain the benefits of presenting the number and types of defects for each plant for the last two years using the following:

(i) bar charts;

(ii) line graphs;

(iii) tables. [3 x 4 = 12]

(b) Susan has asked you to prepare a press release for the various stakeholders in the supply chain, outlining the next steps in the communication process.

Identify **four** things you should consider when preparing a press release. [4]

(c) You and Susan think it would be useful to produce a Gantt chart for the investigations and the planned communications.

Explain **two** benefits of using a Gantt chart. [2 x 2 = 4]
[Total: 20]