

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
Cambridge International Diploma Standard Level

MARK SCHEME for the May 2009 question paper
for the guidance of teachers

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA IN BUSINESS
5162 Effective Business Communication, maximum mark 100

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You must answer all of the following questions

1 Olav is keen to use as much two-way communication as possible. The training programme is complex and new and participating employees may have many questions.

(a) Describe the following methods of communication which SPL could use when communicating about the e-Purchasing Academy, giving *one* benefit of *each*.

[4 × 3 = 12]

(i) **Video conferencing**

A remote conferencing activity that enables individuals anywhere in the world to talk with one another and see one another through the use of television screens. It is a visual form of two-way communication.

Benefit: Being able to see the person you are talking to and being able to watch their responses to different situations, including an awareness of their non-verbal as well as their verbal responses.

(ii) **Telephone conferencing**

Where a number of people using a common dial code, number and password, can discuss business issues together in a group on the telephone. It is a form of two-way communication.

Benefit: Quick and easy to organise, accessible and generally cost effective.

(iii) **Seminars**

A presentation of information which leads to discussions. Often used for briefing or training purposes.

Benefit: A face-to-face method of communication (i.e. two-way communication) providing an opportunity to gain information and to discuss it openly, with an opportunity to ask questions and get answers.

(iv) **Team Meetings**

A gathering of a team on a regular basis in a formal way and receiving feedback, something that will be important for the SPL core team.

Benefit: An opportunity to maintain regular face-to-face or at least verbal contact (these can be done in the same room, through video conference or telephone conference) and keep up to date with work-based project issues, including operational activities.

For each of the above, 2 marks should be awarded for the description of the communications tool and 1 mark for the benefit.

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- (b) Explain *four* factors that Olav should consider when selecting the most appropriate form of internal communication to promote the e-Purchasing Academy. Give a reason for each factor. [4 × 2 = 8]

Internal communications

- Necessary for a business to operate successfully at all levels
- Need to consider the individuals within the organisation i.e. Directors, Core Team, participants and consider appropriate methods.
- Need to consider the immediacy of the communication
- Need to consider the importance of the communication
- Need to consider the level of feedback required i.e. one-way or two-way communications
- Need to consider methods of recording the communication i.e. 'copies to' etc.
- Need to consider timings and costs involved
- Need to consider use of electronic methods

Students should explain four factors. If they give a detailed explanation for each of the four factors they should gain 2 marks per factor. If students provide a bullet point then they only gain 1 mark per factor.

- 2 Ken and Olav have decided to organise a briefing for the Core Team. The meeting is to take place at the end of the month.

- (a) Write a memo to members of the Core Team, requesting them to attend a meeting to discuss the communication plan for the launch of the e-Purchasing Academy. Use the case study to assist with this memo and make up content relating to time and venue. [8]

The memo must conform to company style

- Logo
- Date
- To: Core Team members
- From: You
- Subject: Re: Briefing
- Body/content of the memo
- Appropriate conclusion
- Initials or signature

Marks should be awarded on the basis of: 4 marks for content, 4 marks for layout and structure.

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(b) SPL uses an intranet to communicate with its staff in 76 countries.

(i) Explain what is meant by an intranet. [4]

An intranet is a private network contained within an organisation that will allow users within their intranet to access the public Internet through firewall servers that have the ability to screen messages in both directions so that company security is maintained.

An intranet is used for internal communications between employees in the organization and employees and managers, and holds a significant amount of company information including a list of who's who in the organization, policy documents, financial information, protocols for operations, marketing information and meeting minutes to name but a few.

[4]

(ii) Identify *two* benefits to SPL of using the intranet to communicate about the e-Purchasing Academy. [2 × 2 = 4]

- It stores much of the organisations open information in a common place
- It can be used as a company notice board
- It increases accessibility to company information
- It provides a central forum for online discussions for the company
- It is a private network and not open to any users
- It is password protected within the organisation through 'single-sign-on' so it can only be accessed by those individuals who are deemed appropriate
- It has links to public Internet sites commonly used by organisations

Any of the above, or other valid alternative and justifiable answers. 2 marks per point explained or 1 mark for a bullet point only.

(c) Identify *two* disadvantages of using electronic forms of communication when communicating with staff in different countries. [2 × 2 = 4]

- Time lags in information due to different country time zones
- Culture versus use of language i.e. the correct use of words and tone is very important
- Misinterpretation of information is likely to be greater because of lack of understanding
- Medium not widely used in every country

Any of the above two, or other valid alternatives. 1 mark per point for bullet points, 2 marks per point for elaboration. [2 × 2 = 4]

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3 Olav is preparing a presentation for the meeting with the Core Team.

- (a) Identify what Olav will need to consider in terms of *verbal* and *non-verbal* communication when planning the presentation. [8]**

4 × 1 mark for verbal communications = 4 marks

4 × 1 mark for non-verbal communications = 4 marks

Verbal Communication:

- Decide on the aim of the message
- Select and deliver the important facts and figures – content of the message
- Identify and stress the key points of the message
- Choose an appropriate verbal style – sincerity, warmth, assertiveness, diplomacy
- 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
- Need to ensure eye contact
- Need to check facial expression
- Need to choose most effective methods of presenting data – charts etc.

Students should provide four points from verbal and four points from non-verbal communications. 1 mark to be awarded for each point.

- (b) Olav realises that team work will be essential if the Core Team are to work effectively. Explain how *each* of the following affects working relationships. [4]**

Answer should include:

- (i) Relationships within the group [4]**

Relationships within the group can relate to power and personal length of service. The level of trust and credibility within the organisation will have an impact. The level of external interaction will also have an impact.

- (ii) Size of the group [4]**

Smaller groups can become more intimate and communicate well, but may not have all the skills required, however larger groups may not be able to communicate effectively.

- (iii) Group culture [4]**

Group culture is very important in terms of how the group operates, can be related to people's background, lifestyle, nationality, religion, attitudes to work, education and interests.

- Level 1:** demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding 1–3 marks
Level 2: demonstrates a clearer understanding of groups 4–6 marks
Level 3: analyses and discusses the key issues 7–9 marks
Level 4: excellent understanding of all elements and applied 10–12 marks

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4 Olav is planning to recruit a training officer to undertake measurement and monitoring of the e-Purchasing Academy. It is important that the right person is appointed to ensure its success.

(a) Explain what you as the interviewer will need to plan for this type of recruitment/selection interview. [12]

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, 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, 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	1–3 marks
Level 2: demonstrates a clearer understanding of planning stages	4–7 marks
Level 3: analyses appropriate stages	8–10 marks
Level 4: excellent analysis of appropriate elements	11–12 marks

(b) Open and closed questions can be used in an interview. Explain what open and closed questions are. Provide *one* example of *each*, based on the case study. [2 × 4 = 8]

Answers to include:

- 1) **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?’
- 2) **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.

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5 Olav needs to prepare quarterly reports on how often employees use the e-Purchasing Academy.

(a) Describe *three* types of graphical visual aid which Olav could use. Give reasons why *each* would be useful for presenting the relevant information. [3 × 4 = 12]

- **Tables** – the use of numeric tables as a valuable way of presenting complex facts
- **Line graphs** – the advantage of line graphs against tables is that the line graph can still retain complex information, but it can be easier to identify and compare at first glance
- **Pie charts** – pie charts break up data into a circular diagram representing 360 degrees or 100%. The relative size of the slice of the pie indicates the proportion of it to the whole
- **Bar charts** – series of bars in vertical or horizontal format representing totals or amounts of items being compared using a common scale

3 × 4 = 1 mark per type of visual aid and 1 mark per description up to 4 marks.

(b) Give *two* examples of how technology could help Olav enhance visual communications for his presentation to the Core Team. [2 × 2 = 4]

- Models can be produced – 3D to visualise more effectively
- Full colour can be used
- Integration with other IT packages for an effective presentation such as PowerPoint
- Integration with other multimedia aids such as talking heads etc.
- Information can be produced as progressive information

2 marks per example up to 4 marks.

(c) Olav is planning to use a Gantt chart to demonstrate the roll-out plan for the e-Purchasing Academy.

Explain what a Gantt chart is and give *two* benefits of using it for the roll-out plan. [4]

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. [4]

Two benefits:

- Provides Olav and the Core Team with a pictorial/graphical view of the project timelines
- Can be changed and modified automatically to reflect changing timelines and targets
- Can be colour coded to ensure that different project activities are clearly defined
- Gantt charts as a useful planning tool for major projects

Any two of the above points × 2 marks.