

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
Cambridge Career Awards

MARK SCHEME FOR the October 2002 question paper

CAREER AWARD IN BUSINESS
STANDARD LEVEL

5162 Effective Business Communication

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were initially instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began.

All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

The mark scheme must be read in conjunction with the question paper.

- CIE will not enter into discussions or correspondence in connection with this mark scheme.



MARKING SCHEME

The following are not model answers, but are nevertheless to be regarded as persuasive. Candidates may offer other relevant and appropriate material and arguments.

Question 1

1 *Essam is very concerned about the level of complaints and so is considering the best method to respond to each customer complaint*

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

- i email to the customer [3 marks]*
- ii telephone call to the customer from the customer complaints department [3 marks]*

Answer to include :

- i email – quick method of communication, 24/7 world-wide access, easy to check if it is received, can attach vouchers 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*
- ii telephone call – two-way method, can tailor the message to each individual complaint and get immediate feedback to ascertain what the customer requires to remedy the complaint. However, not able to keep a copy easily unless transcripts taken, lengthy process, may be difficult to get hold of the customer if only home or work number given, cannot immediately send vouchers etc with this type of communication.*

[3 marks per method up to 6 marks]

(b) *Essam also wants to tell the staff within the organisation about the levels of complaints and returns. Identify and justify the most appropriate method of communication he should use to do this.*

[6 marks]

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.

Level 1: demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding [1-2 marks]

Level 2: demonstrates a clearer understanding of communication types [3-5 marks]

Level 3: lists methods and fully justifies issues which are applied to the case [6 marks]

- (c) **List two reasons why it is important that Essam uses the most appropriate methods of communication for both internal and external communications**

[8 marks]

Answer to include:

Internal communications

- Necessary for a business to operate successfully at all levels
- Need to consider the individuals within the organisation and consider appropriate methods, i.e. Directors, shop floor, admin staff etc
- Need to consider the immediacy of the communication
- Need to consider the importance of the communication i.e. disciplinary interview, notice about canteen opening times
- 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

External Communications

- Need to consider the reputation of the organisation externally
- Need to consider the formality of the communication
- Need to consider the level of feedback required
- Need to consider the skills required by communicators with external customers
- Need to consider the different needs of the customers
- Need to consider cost involved
- Need to consider the accessibility of the customer to the communication

[2 marks per reason for each internal and external communication up to 8 marks]

Question 2

2 **Essam has decided that he is going to advertise for temporary staff.**

- (a) **Write a memo from Essam to the Human Resources Director, explaining that it will be necessary to recruit four new members of staff on a temporary contract.**

[8 marks]

The memo to format to include:

- To/from } **format 4 marks**
- Date/reference number or department } **format 4 marks**
- Subject (Recruitment of Temporary Staff) } **format 4 marks**
- Body of memo should include:
 - Reasons for need to recruit new staff } **body 4 marks**
- Indication that the staff will need to be on temporary contracts because of the impending recession to allow maximum flexibility of the workforce
- Indication of the timing i.e. quite urgent to get this moving
- Next step – i.e. HR manager to arrange for this to happen

- (b) **The company has received fifty applications and has decided to short-list eight people for interview. Write a letter inviting one of the shortlisted candidates for interview. You can 'create' any details that you think are necessary**

[12 marks]

Business letter to conform to the following format:

- Logo or letter heading of the company }
- Date } **format 6 marks**
- Reference number }
- Recipient's name & address }
- Appropriate salutation – Dear Mr/Mrs }
- Letter heading – RE Application for }
- The body/content of the letter – calling for interview, giving date, time, location and any other information required for the interview i.e. CV etc
- Appropriate closure – Yours sincerely } **body 6 marks**
(up to 12 marks)

Question 3

3 *The problems of low morale and high levels of absenteeism are a major worry to Essam. He has decided to form a group of staff to consider this problem.*

(a) *Identify and briefly explain three advantages of using a group to try to solve problems like this.*

[6 marks]

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 although groups tend to decide on a strategy for moving forward than if left to an individual
- 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) *Essam decides to convene meetings for this group every month. Identify four characteristics of successful meetings which Essam will need to consider.*

[8 marks]

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 encourage to participate
- Members of the group during the meeting 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 both verbal and non-verbal communication in a group meeting*

[6 marks]

Answer to include:

Essam will could consider the following during the meeting:

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 comms
- 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]

Question 4

4 *Interviews have been arranged for the applicants for the new positions within the company.*

(a) *Describe the type of interview structure which Essam is likely to use for these recruitment interviews and explain why you have selected this structure.*

[10 marks]

Answer to include:

A structured interview would have been used for the selection interview, as all candidates were external and not know to the organisation. This ensures that all candidates are treated fairly and appropriately. There would be a number of closed questions aimed to find out facts and a number of open or hypothetical questions to allow the candidate to illustrate their previous experience and demonstrate what they could bring to the company.

- Level 1: incorrect structure selected but some reasoned points [1-3 marks]**
Level 2: correct identification of structure with limited understanding [4-6 marks]
Level 3: correct identification of structure and reasoned arguments and understanding of the issues involved [6-8 marks]
Level 4: correct identification of structure and very well reasoned arguments which are fully applied to the case [9-10 marks]

(b) Identify three purposes of selection interviews

[6 marks]

Purposes could include;

- To identify key personal characteristics of the 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
- To identify the interviewee's attitude to a temporary contract

[2 marks per point up to 6 marks]

(c) Briefly explain open and closed questions which could be used at these interviews and give one example for each.

[4 marks]

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?

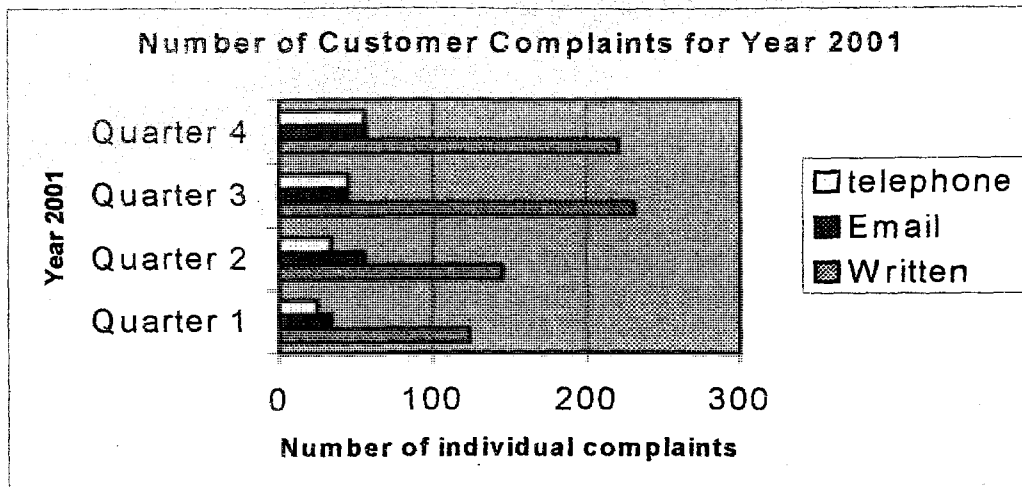
[1 mark per explanation and 1 mark per example of question up to 4 marks]

Question 5

5 Essam is preparing a report on the key problems within the organisation for the Board of Directors to consider.

(a) Prepare the data in Table 1 and present it as a bar chart for the customer complaints only to be included within the report

[10 marks]



Correct & accurate graph used

[2 marks]

Correct values plotted

[2 mark]

Correct shaded areas to illustrate key

[2 mark]

Clarity of chart and correct labelling

[4 marks]

(b) **Explain the following types of visual aids which Essam could use to present the data**

- i pie chart
- ii line graph

[4 marks]

- explanation of pie charts – good to use for less complex data –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
- explanation of line graphs – can be used to show trends, etc but cannot readily or clearly interpreted if too much information is plotted e.g. too many lines on one graph is confusing

[2 marks per graph type up to 4 marks]

(c) **Essam is going to include an organisation chart within the report. Explain what can be illustrated via an organisational chart.**

[6 marks]

Answer to include:

Explanation of organisational charts can be used to show:

- levels of authority
- levels of responsibility
- lines of formal communication
- illustrate status and role of employees

Level 1: demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding [1-2 marks]

Level 2: demonstrates a clearer understanding of organisational charts [3-5 marks]

Level 3: demonstrates good understanding and give examples applied to the case [6 marks]