

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

Cambridge International Diploma Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME for the May 2005 question paper

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA IN BUSINESS

5172

Effective Business Communication (Core), maximum mark 100

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May 2005

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA

Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME

MAXIMUM MARK: 100

PAPER: 5172

BUSINESS
Effective Business Communication



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1 Ahmed is worried that new bank staff will not understand the new electronic chip credit card and its benefits.

(a) Explain the role of internal communications within the bank, and the potential consequences of poor internal communication when introducing the new system. [6]

Role of internal communications within the bank:

- To ensure communications with different levels of employees as service providers
- To ensure that staff are aware of the potential issues and problems of the new cards
- To ensure that staff are aware of the benefits of the new cards
- To ensure that the messages to customers are consistent

Causes of poor internal communication could include:

- No clear aim or purpose of communication
- Use of inappropriate language such as 'management' speak
- Staff unable to understand the message due to education/experience levels
- Use of inappropriate medium such as informal chats or slips in wage packages
- Lack of regular communication

[2 marks per point explained up to 6 marks]

(b) When training the new staff in customer communications, explain two methods of two-way communication which Ahmed could use. [8]

Answer could include two of the following expanded methods:

- Team meetings – gathering of team on regular basis to discuss issues in a formal way and receive feedback
- Joint consultations – discussions with two groups e.g. sales and design to discuss key issues of mutual interest such as the launch of a new product
- Quality Circles – these are used to develop and implement improvements within the workplace. Select their own leaders and are seen as a practical way of devolving responsibility or empowering staff to enable total participation of the organisation. Develops motivation and confidence.
- Seminars – these are usually presentation of information which leads to a discussion, often used for training purposes or proposals
- Briefings – this is where management brief staff on a regular basis, about the key issues and current problems. This is often more one-way communication than two-way communication.

[2 marks per method + 2 mark per explanation each up to 8 marks]

(c) You notice that a number of staff seem to have problems in understanding the message about the advantages of the new credit card. Explain each of the following and give one example for each.

- (i) Non-verbal communication
- (ii) Meta communications
- (iii) Paralanguage

[6]

(i) Non-verbal communications

kinesics, body language, dress, facial expression, posture etc.

Example - the staff may stand with folded arms or hands in their pockets or not look at the customer when talking to them. This indicates a lack of respect. [2 marks]

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(ii) Meta communications

Meta communication comes from the Greek meaning beyond. 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 could be that the staff may say that the advantages of the card are high, but customers feel that this is just a sales pitch which links to a bonus scheme. **[2 marks]**

(iii) Paralanguage

The intonation used to emphasise what the real meaning of the words are. It is not what is said but the way in which it is said.

Example: the staff may be sarcastic or condescending in their tone when talking to customers. **[2 marks]**

[Total 20]

2 Ahmed has been asked to help to improve external communications with customers who have the old type of credit card.

- (a) Write a letter to the current customers who have the old type of credit card explaining the new electronic credit card and its benefits. You should try to encourage customers to request the new type of card. You can ‘create’ any information to help. **[14]****

The letter should conform to the following format:

- Letter heading of the company } **[2 marks]**
- Date } }
- Reference number } }

- Appropriate salutation – Dear Mr/Mrs } **[2 marks]**
- Letter Heading } }

- The body/content of letter } **[6 marks]**
- Promoting the new chip card } }

- Appropriate closure } **[2 marks]**
- Signature and position } }

- Response mechanism } **[2 marks]**

The content and tone of the letter should be polite and persuasive, detailing the potential benefits of the chip card. The letter should also summarise by explaining what the next stage will be i.e. send in attached slip or email.

Level 1: demonstrates limited content and persuasion **[1-3 marks]**

Level 2: demonstrates a good tone and appropriate contents **[4-6 marks]**

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- (b) Explain three disadvantages of using electronic methods of communication to convey this information to customers. [6]

Disadvantages could include:

- Email could get lost in 'spam' junk email
- All customers need to have email facilities which may not be the case
- Need customer's email addresses which are sometimes hard to capture accurately
- Receipt is dependant on the server used and if any problems the communication may not be received, therefore cannot ensure delivery
- Email is more informal and thus the message may be misinterpreted
- Some customers may not use email for personal communications

Level 1: some disadvantages identified [1-2 marks]

Level 2: some disadvantages which are explained [3-4 marks]

Level 3: a good range of well explained disadvantages [5-6 marks]

[Total 20]

3 Ahmed notices that the internal bank staff do not seem to be working effectively as a group.

- (a) Identify and briefly explain four sources of staff conflict which could be the reason for this. [8]

Group conflict in the workforce due to:

- Lack of information or poor communication system
- NVC - poor body language and distortion of message
- Inappropriate language
- Poor listening and feedback
- Pre-judgement
- Poor relationships – unions and management conflict
- Emotional responses
- Different ideologies

[1-2 mark per point up to 8 marks]

- (b) Ahmed decides to interview a number of junior staff to identify the reasons for low staff morale. Explain each of the following types of questions which Ahmed could use within these staff interviews. Give an example for each type of question.

(i) Closed question [3]

(ii) Leading question [3]

(iii) Open question [3]

(iv) Hypothetical question [3]

- (i) **Closed question** – offer a choice of answers only i.e. Do you feel that you want to move from your current job in the bank?

[1 mark per type of question and 2 marks per example up to 3 marks]

- (ii) **Leading question** – lead the interviewee into speaking about specific issues i.e. Why do you think that you are unhappy in your role?

[1 mark per type of question and 2 marks per example up to 3 marks]

- (iii) **Open question** – a question which allows the interviewee the opportunity to give open, frank and in-depth information i.e. What are our future ambitions within the bank?

[1 mark per type of question and 2 marks per example up to 3 marks]

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- (iv) **Hypothetical question** – gives a scenario to allow the interviewee to answer in role, i.e. You have just found out that your colleague has converted 80 more customers than you to take the chip card – how would you feel?

[1 mark per type of question and 2 marks per example up to 3 marks]

[Total 20]

4 Explain the purpose of each of the different types of business interviews which Ahmed may undertake with his staff. **[5 x 4]**

(a) Performance appraisal review

Purpose of performance appraisal reviews:

- To identify achievement of objectives
- To have a frank and open discussion between staff and line management
- To identify new objectives
- To identify new training needs
- To identify any problems or conflicts
- To motivate staff

[2 marks per point which is explained up to 4 marks]

(b) Induction

Purpose of induction interview:

- To offer information about the company which the staff has just joined
- To get to know the new member of staff
- To introduce new systems and staff
- To communicate the culture and objectives of the company

[2 marks per point which is explained up to 4 marks]

(c) Termination of employment

Purpose of termination interview:

- To explain company position
- To give staff the information required for exiting the company
- In some cases to find out why staff are leaving

[2 marks per point which is explained up to 4 marks]

(d) Discipline

Purpose of discipline interviews:

- To establish facts
- To caution the staff about a problem
- To follow legal requirements

[2 marks per point which is explained up to 4 marks]

(e) Counselling

Purpose of counselling interview:

- To identify personal problems
- To offer staff support and advice
- To give information about company policy in this area

[2 marks per point which is explained up to 4 marks]

[Total 20]

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5 Ahmed knows that he needs to track the number of customer requests for further information about the new credit cards and record these.

(a) Explain one advantage and one disadvantage of the following types of graphical forms of communication which Ahmed could use to present this data.

- (i) Pie chart
- (ii) Line graph
- (iii) Bar chart
- (iv) Table

[4 x 2]

- (i) Total value of items must be known, use of colours to enhance impact, limited to the amount of in-depth information that can be conveyed using a pie chart, need to work out in terms of 360%
- (ii) Good for showing trends, cannot readily or clearly be interpreted is too many plotted lines of information, therefore not helpful for complex information
- (iii) Good for indicating trends, wide range of bar charts available, difficult to present complex information
- (iv) Good for tabulating complex information, limited immediate visual impact and difficult to interpret readily

[1 mark per advantage and disadvantage and an explanation for each method up to 2 marks each]

(b) Ahmed is aiming to design a brochure about the new credit cards. Explain how Information Technology can help in this process. [6]

Specific computer graphics packages such as Pagemaker, Coral Draw allow the design of brochures to be of a professional quality. Colour, graphics and text is very easy to manipulate and design using such computer packages. Graphs using Excel could also be inserted.

The brochure could be improved using:

- Graphics in Word
- Examples of CAD designs etc.
- CD containing the brochure could be designed with virtual tours of the bank
- Brochure could be put on website and video clips and moving animation could be used

Level 1: demonstrates limited understanding of computer aids [1-3 marks]

Level 2: demonstrates understanding and may give examples [4-6 marks]

(c) A press release will be written about the new credit cards. Explain the characteristics of a press release. [6]

Press release characteristics to include:

- Written for publication to different audiences – journalist and target audience
- Content - information needs to be newsworthy, credible, true, etc.
- Structure and style - needs to include headline, include facts, quotations, embargo date, needs to be double line spaced, include photos etc.
- Needs to be checked internally before release, etc.

Level 1: demonstrates limited understanding of press releases [1-3 marks]

Level 2: demonstrates understanding and may give examples [4-6 marks]