

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
Cambridge International Diploma Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME for the May 2010 question paper
for the guidance of teachers

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA IN BUSINESS
5172 Effective Business Communication, maximum mark 100

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1 Chui Phi-ling and Tony Smith are concerned about the effect poor internal communications would have on the business.

(a) Explain *four* main causes and consequence of poor internal communications. [4 × 2 = 8]

Causes:

no clear aim or purpose of communication established, use of inappropriate language, use of an inappropriate medium, recipient unable to understand the message due to inappropriate language/cultural understanding.

Consequences:

process and message sent is devalued; sender may need to "follow up" transmissions; unable to access message due to incompatible technology; inappropriate medium leads to inappropriate action.

1 mark for identification and 1 mark for explanation.

(b) Describe *four* two-way methods of communication which could be used within the company. [4 × 2 = 8]

The main two-way methods; team meetings, virtual team meetings, joint consultation, group discussions, quality circles, seminars, briefings, telephone communications and conferencing.

1 mark for method 1 mark for description.

(c) Explain the importance of communication within a business. [4]

External – communication with stakeholders including customers.

Internal – communications with different levels of employees as service providers, supervisors, managers in a range of situations such as change culture, crisis, takeover or merger situations.

1 mark for external customers and loss of sales.

1 mark for each identification of 2 internal stakeholders.

1 mark for 2 situations.

[Total: 20]

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2 You have been asked to help to contact new customers.

- (a) Write a letter, which can be sent by either post or email, to prospective customers in Beijing introducing the new business and the benefits of the products. You may add any relevant details. [8]**

4 marks for content – appropriate business style, paragraphs using open punctuation, formality appropriate to recipient, suitable language and length used, opening salutation/closing subscription.

4 marks for layout i.e. logo, use of printed letter headed paper, date, email address, telephone/fax, full address of organisation, Dear/Yours faithfully/sincerely, signature.

- (b) Explain to Chui Phi-ling the benefits of the following types of communication which could be used to contact prospective customers. [5 × 2 =10]**

(i) Electronic mail

Email will reach its destination across the world in a few seconds as opposed to days or even weeks with the postal service.

Email doesn't worry about crossing time zones.

Email can be sent to groups of people at the same time. This facilitates efficient dissemination of information.

(ii) Website

Consumers search for products and services online before making purchases.

You are able to conduct business when it is convenient for your client whether it be during the day or in the middle of the night.

Consumers can become educated about your business and get answers to many of their questions which will help to cut back on the number of phone calls you receive with this information on your website.

(iii) Presentations

Allows questions and discussion, immediate feedback, able to show products/DVD's, etc.

(iv) Press releases

Reaches potential customers, can contain detailed information, can be linked to website, can target particular countries/areas.

(v) TV/video conferencing

Perhaps the biggest advantage or benefit video conferencing has to offer is the ability to meet with people in remote locations without incurring travel expenses or other expenses associated with face-to-face communication. More people are easily accessed and contacted using video conferencing. Because of this technology information and knowledge are often disseminated at more rapid rates, and collaboration between people occurs more willingly and freely.

2 marks for each benefit explained.

- (c) Tony Smith is concerned about the security requirements needed to protect the data on the computer systems. List two security measures required. [2 × 1 = 2]**

Passwords, firewalls, encryption, physical security e.g. good locks on doors.

[Total: 20]

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3 The London based Head Office needs to appoint a new member for the Board of Directors due to a recent resignation. Chui Phi-ling and you have been asked to fly to London.

(a) Tony Smith has asked you to organise the meeting. Explain *five* characteristics of a successful meeting. [5 × 2 =10]

Aims and objectives outlines;
 Action points highlighted;
 Time constraint adhered to;
 Leadership provided - Chairperson, secretary, treasurer;
 Provision and use of an agenda;
 Minutes – written record of matter discussed with action points and decisions made.

2 marks for each point identified.

(b) The new Board member has been selected and the next meeting has been arranged. Describe *five* factors which may affect the success of meetings. [5 x 2 =10]

- **Group attributes:** recognised by its members and by those outside.
- **Norms:** conform to patterns of outlook, attitude and behaviour.
- **Purpose:** clearly stated objectives and aims.
- **Hierarchy:** formal, or informal, leadership order.
- **Exclusivity:** ability to grant or deny admission; loyalty of its members.
- **Sources of group conflicts':** different obligations and responsibilities; inappropriate communication method; differing ideologies, beliefs.

2 marks for each identification and description.

[Total: 20]

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4 The Training Manager in Beijing has resigned due to family problems. The job has been advertised and the closing date for applications was yesterday. Chui Phi-ling has asked you to organise the interviews which are to take place in three weeks' time.

(a) Explain the stages necessary to prepare for the recruitment interviews. [5 × 2 = 10]

Plan the interview – short list using selection criteria (person specification);
 Decide on who is going to be involved, location, timing, structure;
 Preparation of questions – open, closed, scenario-based, etc – two-way communication;
 Set criteria and structure the opening, body and close of the interview and set appropriate timings;
 Recording mechanisms and the use of selection criteria for each interview to ensure unbiased decisions for recruitment interviews;
 How to determine who to accept for the role and how to write acceptance and rejection letters appropriately.

Level 1 demonstrates a limited knowledge and understanding (1–3 marks)
 Level 2 demonstrates a clearer understanding of the planning stages (4–7 marks)
 Level 3 demonstrates a full and detailed analysis of the stages (8–10 marks)

(b) Describe the purpose of *three* different types of interview which may be carried out by the Human Resources Department. [3 × 2 = 6]

Performance appraisal review – is a meeting with a line manager to discuss performance and goals;
 Counselling – Counselling interviews are used where a change of attitude or behaviour is required;
 Discipline – deals with unacceptable behaviour by an employee;
 Exit/Termination interviews – Exit interviews are seen as good employment practice, giving employees an opportunity for closure and employers a chance to gain valuable feedback on their organisation;
 Medical Interviews – required when starting a new job or if taking a significant number of sick days;
 Grievance Interviews – when the employee makes a complaint or has a feeling of resentment at having been treated unfairly;
 Recruitment interviews.

1 mark for identification and 1 mark for definition.

(c) During employment interviews, a variety of questions will be asked. Describe *two* types of question that may be asked during the interview. [2 × 2 = 4]

Closed questions (usually requires one specific answer);
 Use of leading questions (generally leads the interviewee in a particular fashion);
 Use of open questions (allows interviewee to open up and allow maximum freedom to answer and respond);
 Hypothetical questions (setting a scenario in which the interviewee has to assume what they would do if the scenario situation prevailed).

1 mark for identification 1 mark for definition.

[Total: 20]

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5 You have been asked to co-ordinate the analysis of sales from each country that distributes Business Education and Training Ltd. training materials. This information is to be included in a report for the next Board of Directors' meeting to be held in London in three weeks' time.

(a) Describe each of the following *four* methods of data presentation. [4 × 2 = 8]

(i) Table

Components – e.g. 12 month period; a list of items to be compared and totalled; indication of the meaning of the numbers being used.

(ii) Bar Chart

Bars have an individual identity either by name or with use of a key; possible use of three dimensions and colour to enhance visual impact.

(iii) Pie Chart

Values of each part must be included clearly in percentage terms to enhance analysis of data, use of colours to enhance impact.

(iv) Line Graph

Grid of equal sized squares; two sets of information plotted in relation to one another, one set of data plotted vertically the other horizontally.

1 mark for identification and 1 mark for explanation.

(b) Explain *three* ways a computer software package could improve the presentation of information in the report. [3 × 2 = 6]

Decide what information needs to be presented and then you can pick from Access reports, Excel graphs and spreadsheets as well as PowerPoint as a means of presentation and production of high quality pre-prepared slides, graphics and animation where appropriate.

(c) You have been asked to include in the report the organisational structures of the other distribution outlets. Explain *three* uses of an organisation chart. [3 × 2 = 6]

Organisational charts: clarifies the roles and responsibilities of employees, different types of charts for hierarchical or flat structures to show span of control or self-managing work groups.

2 marks for each use identified.

[Total: 20]