

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
Cambridge International Diploma Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME for the May 2011 question paper
for the guidance of teachers

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

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1 The Board of Directors of The Major Road Construction Company have made communication with all its stakeholders a priority whilst working with The Ca Mau Company.

(a) Identify four key causes of poor internal communication [4 x 2 = 8]

No clear aim or purpose of communication established
 Use of inappropriate language
 Use of inappropriate medium
 Recipient unable to understand message due to inappropriate language/cultural understanding.

Do not include motivation as a cause of poor internal communication
 1 mark each for language and cultural

(b) The directors of both companies are concerned that there will be no misunderstandings between the employees regarding communication. List three advantages and three disadvantages of written communication. [6 x 1 = 6]

Advantages of written communication:
 Evidence of message sent
 Can act as a contract or agreement
 Confirmation of verbal communication

Disadvantages of written communication:
 Time-consuming to produce
 No opportunity for immediate exchange of ideas or attitudes
 Misunderstanding of the language used.

Do not include cost as a disadvantage of written communication.

(c) It is very important for all managers to understand the role of non-verbal and verbal communications. Explain the meaning of each of the following. Give one example of each.

(i) Metacommunications [3]

Metacommunications – Meta comes from the Greek meaning beyond e.g. 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.

An example would be that the managers from each company while discussing how to move the project forward must ensure that their message is convincing. There is a danger that one company may feel that it is a takeover of the other.

(2 marks for explanation and 1 mark for example up to 3 marks)

(ii) Kinetics [3]

Non-verbal communication. Body language, dress, facial expressions and posture.

An example would be that managers must be dressed appropriately for their role. There should be good consideration of facial expression and body language i.e. an open and friendly expression.

(2 marks for explanation and 1 mark for example up to 3 marks)

[Total: 20]

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2 The merger of both companies for the duration of project has been agreed. A face to face meeting has been arranged for both Managing Directors.

(a) Write a letter to Richard Lomas inviting him to meet with Ying Tien. The meeting will take place on the 6 June at the Head Office in Bac Giang. List the agenda items and any other details which would be appropriate. You can invent any other relevant details. [12]

Full address of The Ca Mau Company and logo

Full address of Richard Lomas

Date

Telephone and fax numbers

Email address

Dear Richard and Yours sincerely (would accept Mr Lomas and Sincerely yours)

One mark for any of the above with a maximum of 6 marks

Content in appropriate business style – to include date and time of the meeting.

A short list of agenda items.

The candidate must use paragraphs, open punctuation, spelling and correct grammar.

Closing sentence to include “I look forward to meeting you” or similar words.

6 marks in total.

(b) There will be a further meeting for all the Directors' of The Ca Mau Company to meet with Richard Lomas. Write a memo to all the Directors inviting them to meet with Richard Lomas. Ying Tien has insisted upon full attendance. You can invent any other relevant details. [8]

The Ca Mau Company and or logo

To: All Directors

From: – the candidate name

Date:

Subject: – Meeting with Richard Lomas

1 mark for each of the above = 4 marks

Use of appropriate tone, clarity, direct and succinct. Use of paragraphs, spelling and grammar.

List of agenda items

Location of meeting, time and date.

A requirement to attend

1 mark for each of the above = 4 marks

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3 The preparations for the Directors' meeting are now completed.

(a) Describe the characteristics of a successful meeting. [6 x 1 = 6]

Aims and objectives outlined
 Action points highlighted
 Time constraint adhered to
 Leadership provided
 Role of key participants – chairperson, secretary
 Provision and use of an agenda
 Minutes – written record of matters discussed with action points and decisions made.
 1 mark for each of the above.

Do not give marks for location or venue / or date and time of next meeting.
 Give credit for controlling of discussion with regard to the role of Chairperson.

(b) Due to the nature of the merger a number of teams will be virtual groups. List the factors which affect virtual groups. [6 x 1 = 6]

Lack of physical contact
 Lack of visual impact
 Distance
 Culture
 Language
 Coordination/integration of activities
 Time difference and technical issues for example poor internet connection

(c) There will be a number of groups from each company working very closely together for the duration of the project. Identify four rules which the groups will comply with if they are to be successful. [4 x 2 = 8]

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 to its members
 Dress Code

2 marks for each group rule. Only one mark if no explanation

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4 One of the action points resulting from the discussion between the two Managing Directors is that The Ca Mau Company has not been conducting performance appraisal interviews with its staff. Ying Tien has asked you to review their appraisal procedures.

(a) Prepare six guidance points which should be discussed during a performance appraisal interview. [6 x 2 = 12]

Job description – have there been any changes in your work role

Evaluate current job role in terms of purpose, skills required, changes which have happened and may happen

Assess past performance – what has gone well and not so well

Consider training and development opportunities

Think about career pathways both short and long-term

Discuss salary/pay review

Define the support required from managers or the organisation to help personal development. Completion of documentation agreeing action points and review dates

Must be a positive interview.

(b) Ying Tien has asked you to give examples of four types of question you may use for a recruitment and selection interview. What should they be? [4 x 2 = 8]

Open questions are designed to allow people to speak openly and get them talking. This is useful for gaining a large amount of information quickly. They begin with - who, what, which, where, when, how and why.

Closed questions are designed to find out specific information, to confirm something or to get a commitment from someone. They begin with phrases like - do you, is it, are there and usually require "yes" or "no" as an answer.

Use of leading questions – usually inappropriate as it leads the interviewee to the correct or required answer.

Hypothetical questions – setting a scenario in which the interviewee has to assume what they would do if the scenario situation prevailed.

1 mark only if types of question is a bullet list.

2 marks if definition given or example used.

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5 Ying Tien has asked you to analyse the data for raw materials which will need to be purchased to complete the project.

(a) Suggest and justify four types of graph which could be used to present this data.

[4 x 2 = 8]

Line graphs compare two variables. Each variable is plotted along an axis. A line graph has a vertical axis and a horizontal axis. So, for example, if you wanted to graph the height of a ball after you have thrown it, you could put time along the horizontal, or x-axis, and height along the vertical, or y-axis. They are good at showing specific values of data, meaning that given one variable the other can easily be determined. They show trends in data clearly, meaning that they visibly show how one variable is affected by the other as it increases or decreases. They enable the viewer to make predictions about the results of data not yet recorded.

Unfortunately, it is possible to alter the way a line graph appears to make data look a certain way. This is done by either not using consistent scales on the axes, meaning that the value in between each point along the axis may not be the same, or when comparing two graphs using different scales for each. It is important that we all be aware of how graphs can be made to look a certain way, when that might not be the way the data really is.

Bar graphs are used to display data in a similar way to line graphs. However, rather than using a point on a plane to define a value, a bar graph uses a horizontal or vertical rectangular bar that levels off at the appropriate level.

There are many characteristics of bar graphs that make them useful. Some of these are that: They make comparisons between different variables very easy to see. They clearly show trends in data, meaning that they show how one variable is affected as the other rises or falls. Given one variable, the value of the other can be easily determined. Limited visual impact if results are very close in value; limited number of bars per bar chart.

The circle of a **pie graph** represents 100%. Each portion that takes up space within the circle stands for a part of that 100%. In this way, it is possible to see how something is divided among different groups. It is important to be aware of how pie charts can be misrepresented. There are two ways that this can happen: Leaving out one or more of the parts of the whole. Not defining what the whole stands for. If a part of the whole is left out, then it increases the percent values of the other parts that are displayed. If a whole is not defined, then we do not know what the parts represent.

Table – components; a clear title, a scale or interval – e.g. 12 month period; a list of items to be compared and totalled; indication of the meaning the numbers being used.

Disadvantages: limited immediate visual impact; difficult to interpret readily.

Do not give marks for histogram or pictogram

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(b) Identify the structure of a suitable report to be sent to Richard Lomas. [6 x 1 = 6]

Title
Author
Date
Reference
Contents page
Main body of report – findings
Conclusion
Recommendations
Appendices
Bibliography

1 mark for any of the above

(c) Explain to Ying Tien what a Gantt chart is and how it can be used within the project. [6]

A Gantt chart is a bar chart that shows the tasks that will make up a project, when each must take place and how long each will take. As the project progresses, bars are shaded to show which tasks have been completed. People assigned to each task also can be represented.

- When scheduling and monitoring tasks within a project.
- When communicating plans or status of a project.
- When the steps of the project or process, their sequence and their duration are known.
- When it's not necessary to show which tasks depend on completion of previous tasks.

1 mark for bar chart

1 mark for drawing an example

4 marks for definition

[Total: 20]