

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
Cambridge International Diploma Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME for the May 2012 question paper
for the guidance of teachers

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

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1 With the pressure from external drivers, Peter Chan is very concerned that communication will be a vital factor in bringing about the changes required.

(a) Give three reasons why effective internal communication is important when making the planned improvements within the organisation. [3 × 2 = 6]

To keep all the staff informed of the changes

It may mean managing their behaviour to ensure they do not prevent or damage desired outcomes. This cannot be achieved without effective communication – both listening and sharing information.

All organisations need to manage change. If they fail to do so they may be left behind by the competition. Change management within the company involves bringing the issues out into the open, confronting barriers to change, winning the commitment and support of all employees and delivering an effective plan for change.

Resistance to change: work closely with employees and get them involved as much as possible in the programme.

(b) Peter Chan wishes to communicate to all the company stakeholders about the changes within the company. Suggest four appropriate methods of communication that he could use. [4 × 2 = 8]

One-way methods: reports, letters, memos, emails videos, CD-ROMS, Billboards, intranet, video programmes.

Two-way methods: team meetings, virtual team meetings, joint consultations, quality circles, seminars, briefings, telephone communications and conferencing.

2 marks per example if relevant to case study. 1 mark only if points listed

(c) It is important for Peter Chan to use good verbal and non-verbal communication skills in the presentations he will be giving to staff. Explain, giving an example in each case, what is meant by:

(i) verbal communication. [3]

(ii) non-verbal communication. [3]

Verbal communication – is the act of expressing your thoughts with words. Verbal communication is generally defined as spoken language. Tone, enunciation, pauses, loudness, emphasis, word choice, these can all be used while speaking to enhance the spoken word. Sign Language

Non-verbal communication – kinetics, charts, body language such as facial expression, sitting position and how this affects communication in business

[Total: 20]

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2 The aim of the AGM is to present the Annual Report which gives an update on the company's activities, including the previous year's finances.

(a) Write a letter of invitation to the shareholders, using information in the case study. You may add any other details which may be required. [12]

Full address of the company and logo
 Full address of Shareholder
 Date
 Telephone and fax numbers
 Email address
 Dear Mr/Mrs etc. and Yours sincerely
 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.
 Inclusion of the agenda
 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) Write an email to the Hilton Hotel booking the venue both for the AGM and for the 20 Directors who will be staying at the hotel the day before the AGM to prepare for the meeting. [8]

The Company and or logo
 To: Hilton Hotel Hong Kong – Reservations
 From: – the candidate name
 Date: Today's date
 Subject: –
 1 mark for each of the above = 4 marks

Booking for the AGM and the meeting for the 20 Directors including dates and the need for refreshments
 Use of appropriate tone, clarity, direct and succinct. Use of paragraphs, spelling and grammar.
 1 mark for each of the above = 4 marks

[Total: 20]

3 Peter Chan recognises the importance of the AGM for the company and those attending.

(a) Explain five characteristics of a successful meeting. [5 × 2 = 10]

Aims and objectives outlined (2)
 Action points highlighted (2)
 Time constraint adhered to (2)
 Leadership provided – role of key participants – chairperson, secretary (2)
 Provision and use of an agenda (2)
 Minutes – written record of matters discussed with action points and decisions made (2)
 Only one mark if list is given with no expansion.

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- (b) The Board of Directors are meeting the day before the AGM. Describe five factors which may affect the success of their meeting. [5 × 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 to its members
 2 marks for each group rule. Only one mark if no explanation

[Total: 20]

4 Peter Chan wishes to improve the Performance Appraisal Reviews for all employees.

- (a) Give a definition of a Performance Appraisal Review. [4]

An interview where the manager (the appraiser) discusses with the employee (the appraisee) his or her performance. It is a two way process which enables both parties to speak and listen

- (b) Explain why it is necessary for the appraiser to prepare for the Performance Appraisal Review. [10]

Job description – has there been any changes in your work role (1)
 Evaluate current job role in terms of purpose, skills required, changes which have happened and may happen (2)
 Assess past performance – what has gone well and not so well (2)
 Consider training and development opportunities (1)
 Think about career pathways both short and long-term (1)
 Define the support required from managers or the organisation to help personal development (1)
 Completion of documentation agreeing action points and review dates (1)
 Must be a positive interview (1)

- (c) During the Performance Appraisal Review, a variety of questions will be asked. Describe, with examples, two types of question that may be asked during the review. [2 × 3 = 6]

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.
 1 mark only if types of question is a bullet list.
 2 marks if definition given or example used.

[Total: 20]

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5 Peter Chan will be giving a presentation at the AGM which will include the financial information for the previous year.

(a) Identify two visual charts which Peter Chan could use during the presentation and explain two advantages and two disadvantages of each. [6 × 2 = 12]

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.

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- (b) Peter Chan has to give a number of presentations within the organisation. Explain two ways in which multimedia could improve the quality of presentations. [2 × 2 = 4]**

Video

Computer graphics

Sound.

Power point as a means of presentation and production of high quality pre-prepared slides, graphics and animation.

Use of Excel for spreadsheets

Access

- (c) At the AGM a report will be presented by Peter Chan. List four headings in a formal business report. [4 × 1 = 4]**

Components of a business report

Title

Author

Date

Reference

Contents page

Main body of report

Conclusion

Appendices

1 mark for any one of the above – 4 marks in total.

[Total: 20]