

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
Cambridge International Diploma Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME for the October 2007 question paper

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA IN BUSINESS

5172 Effective Business Communication, Maximum mark 100

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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.

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1 Lee Chong, the Human Resources Manager, is very concerned about communicating effectively in order to avoid future difficulties.

(a) Explain to Lee *four* consequences of poor communications at such a critical time. [8]

Answers should be along the following lines:

- The process of communication and the message sent are devalued and deemed as meaningless
- The sender may need to follow up the message to confirm understanding
- The receiver may be so annoyed that he/she misinterprets the message and reads something into it that is not there
- Poor or low moral
- The medium may have been inappropriate and off-putting
- The time taken to resolve the problem creates further problems in future communications
- Barriers to communication arise that are difficult to remove

(2 marks per point up to four points)

(b) Identify and explain to Lee the *three* most appropriate methods for communicating news about the future redundancies. [6]

Students should be able to identify that redundancies will require both meetings and formalised letters confirming the details.

They should identify two-way communications where terms and conditions can be discussed, communicated and agreed – this can be briefings and meetings.

Memos or letters offering arrangements for meetings can be used but it is important that students identify that confirming redundancy arrangements is necessary within a letter. It is not acceptable to include notices because of the nature of the situation and the sensitivities required.

Level 1 – Identification by list only of written and verbal communications. (1–3)

Level 2 – Analysis of the situation and being able to justify why verbal and written communications are essential. (4–6)

(c) Explain the characteristics of verbal and non-verbal communication which will be important to Lee when communicating with staff in relation to the redundancies. [6]

Body language needs to be sympathetic and not aggressive or defensive – negative body language distorts the message and creates barriers.

Verbal communications – the voice should remain steady and calm – negative use of voice such as shouting, raising your voice or screaming/screeching is not appropriate.

Combined – verbal and non-verbal communications should portray care and consideration whilst conveying a difficult and firm message.

Level 1 – Students should be able to list positive forms of verbal and non-verbal communication (1–3)

Level 2 – Students should be able to look at the combined effect of verbal and non-verbal communication in addition to the specifics of positive/negative forms of the two forms. (4–6)

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2 You work for John Yang, the Managing Director, and he wishes to arrange a meeting with other business leaders in the region to discuss the plan for setting up the 'Job Search' website.

(a) Draft a letter on behalf of John, inviting the business leaders to the meeting. Create all necessary details. [10]

The letter should conform to the following format:

- Logo or letter heading of the company
- Date
- Reference – title
- Appropriate salutation – Dear Mr/Mrs (Personalised because he has made the contact)
- The content of the letter
- Inviting them to confirm that they can attend the meeting
- Appropriate closure
- Signature (in this instance – Yours sincerely)

Marks should be allocated on the basis of
5 marks for layout i.e. logo/letterhead, date, reference, signature
5 marks for content

(b) The business leaders need to be informed of the benefits of setting up the 'Job Search' website. [6]

Explain to them *three* reasons why using the Internet to support the redundant miners is a good idea.

Answers should be along the following lines:

Speed of access and transmission
Volume of information that can be contained
Interactive website which enables them to search, receive, load information, register
International access
Makes information more attractive and more digestible
Can communicate through discussion boards, notice boards and online forums
Cost effective
Easy and quick to keep updated

(2 marks per point up to three points – 1 mark for identification of the point and 1 mark for elaboration)

(c) Explain what is meant by an *Intranet* and identify *one* benefit to Lee of setting up an *Intranet* at this difficult time. [4]

The Intranet is in essence an internal form of the Internet that is accessible only by internal members of the organisation, and is password protected.

Benefit: It enables employees to access relevant information about the organisation, employees, market information and financial information.

2 marks for the definition
2 marks for the benefit

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3 (a) The issue of redundancy is bound to cause conflict within the workforce. [8]

Identify and explain FOUR common causes of conflict that arise in working groups within organisations.

Students should identify and explain the following points.

Answers should be along the following lines:

- Disagreement about objectives of group
- Different responsibilities
- Different priorities
- Inappropriate or poor communications
- Different ideologies
- Different beliefs
- Different culture

(2 marks for each point up to 4 points)

(b) Lee has asked you to help him prepare an agenda for the redundancy meetings.

(i) Explain why it is important to draw up an agenda for a meeting. [3]

- Agendas provide structure to meetings
- Agendas act as a guide to the chair of the meeting
- Agendas ensure that all relevant and important points are addressed
- Agendas ensure that points are prioritised during meetings

(1 mark per point addressed)

(ii) Identify *three* standard items that are included in any meeting agenda. [3]

- Briefly explain what should be included within an agenda
- Apology for non-attendance
- Minutes from the previous meeting
- Matters arising
- Correspondence
- Any other business
- Date, time and place of the next meeting

(Students can select any 3 from the above list – 1 mark per point addressed)

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- (c) **Because of the nature of the situation, John and Lee have decided that all future meetings must have a chairperson and secretary.**

In such meetings, explain the roles of:

- (i) the chairperson; [3]**

The role of the chair person – is to manage the meeting, manage the group, manage the group dynamics, ensure that everyone has an opportunity to discuss key points, ensure that a minute secretary is appointed, that minutes are taken, actions allocated to specific people and recorded, ensure that the meeting achieves its objectives.

(1 mark per point up to 3 points)

- (ii) the secretary. [3]**

The role of the secretary – is to organise the meeting, distribute the agenda to all concerned, ensure the right people are invited, takes the minutes, records the actions, distributes the minutes and ensures that actions are undertaken.

(1 mark per point up to 3 points)

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4 Lee is responsible for recruiting new managers to implement the new technology systems and processes.

(a) Explain the role of an employment interview. [4]

Answers should be along the following lines:

- To enable a sharing of information between the employer and interviewee
- To provide a planned and controlled communication
- To enable both parties to speak and listen
- To enable both parties to assess the level of interest in terms of whether or not they like each other and the organisation
- To enable decisions to be made about the right person for the job.

(1 mark per point raised up to 4 points)

(b) Explain to Lee how he should prepare for the employment interviews. [10]

- Plan for the interview
- Identify the aims and objectives of the interview – to recruit new staff
- Decide who should be present at the interview – managers – directors
- Decide on the types of questions, open, closed, scenario based etc.
- Decide upon discussion points
- Determine how the two-way flow of information should take place
- Determine how the interviewer should set the tone for the interview
- How to chose the appropriate location and time and collect all of the necessary information
- The importance of listening carefully and recording relevant information
- How to make notes at critical times during the interview, and identify any forms that may need to be completed
- How to make follow up notes after the interview
- 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)

Level 2: Demonstrates a clearer understanding of the planning stages (4–7)

Level 3: Demonstrates a full and detailed analysis of the stages (8–10)

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- (c) Identify *three* different types of question Lee could use in his employment interviews and provide an example of *each* type of question. [6]

Students should be able to choose from:

A leading question – generally leads the interviewee in a particular direction – for example: “You have obviously had experience of mining technologies before then?”

(1 mark for description and 1 mark for the example)

A hypothetical question – is where there is a scenario provided and the interviewee has to consider what they would do if the scenario prevailed or became a live event – for example, “what would you do if an employee came running towards you and said the lift was stuck in the mine shaft?”)

An open question – enables interviewees to open up and allows them maximum freedom to answer and respond to questions – for example “can you explain the process that Goaloa Corporation should go through to implement lift shaft technologies?”

(1 mark for description and 1 mark for the example)

A closed question – usually requires a specific answer – for example: “have you ever worked in a mine before?” The answer is either “yes” or “no”.

(1 mark for description and 1 mark for the example)

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- 5 (a) John and Lee need to talk to the workforce about redundancies. Explain to John and Lee why it is important to use graphical forms of information to help them to communicate more effectively with employees. [4]**

Answers should be along the following lines:

- Because the people they are talking to are not generally used to hearing lots of words and reading lots of words, graphical representation will be easier for them to understand and follow
- Graphical representation will make the presentation more interesting and meaningful
- Graphical representation will enable a display of trends – in this case it might be a reduction in sales due to lack of competitiveness.

2 marks per explanation selected from the above list or any other relevant answer.

- (b) John is going to prepare an organisation chart for Lee to show where the new management will be within the organisation. [8]**

Explain to John the differences between a flat organisational structure and a hierarchical organisational structure.

A flat organisational structure is a structure that has a wide span of employees across the organisation, but not an upward span – i.e. there will be very limited levels of management. In other words it is a flat – horizontal shaped organisation.

A hierarchical structure has a vertical span of control – it will have many tiers of management and employees – it may have several levels of manager, including junior, middle, senior management, directors, chairman etc.

Level 1 – Recognises the basic differences between the two but does not identify issues of span of control. (1–4)

Level 2 – Recognises the differences, and is able to relate spans of control and communication to the structures. (5–8)

- (c) Identify *four* different software packages that John and the other local business leaders could use to make their ‘Job Search’ website more attractive. [8]**

John and the local leaders will be able to use:

- Flash
- PowerPoint
- Graphic cards
- Multi-media
- Sound cards
- Video clips
- Desktop publisher
- Dream Weaver

(1 mark for identification of appropriate software = 4 x 1)

[Total: 20]