

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
Cambridge International Diploma Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME for the October 2009 question paper
for the guidance of teachers

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

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Answer all of the following Tasks

1 Susan has asked you to prepare a presentation for all plant managers to give to their production and quality control departments. The aim of the presentation is to explain what is going to happen next.

(a) Explain what the plant managers would need to consider in terms of verbal and non-verbal communications when preparing this presentation.

Verbal communications

[4 Marks]

Non-Verbal communications

[4 Marks]

Answer to include:

Verbal Communication:

- Decide on the aim of the message
- Select and deliver the important facts and figures
- Identify and stress the key points of the message
- Choose an appropriate verbal style – sincerity, warmth, assertiveness, diplomacy
- Choose an appropriate articulation – tone, enunciation, emphasis, volume, projection
- Monitor feedback constantly – adjust delivery accordingly
- End on a positive note

(1 mark for each of the points explained above)

Non-verbal Communication:

- Need to decide on body stance and gestures – ease, physical presence, enthusiasm
- Need to ensure eye contact
- Need to check facial expression
- Need to choose most effective methods of presenting data – charts etc.

(1 mark for each of the points explained above)

(b) You have discovered that Susan doesn't really understand the communications process. Identify and explain *six* parts of the communications process. [6 × 2 = 12]

- The need for communications – the need leads to objectives of communication
- The translation of internal thoughts into external meaning transmitting them as a message (encoding)
- The transmission message – spoken, pictorial, written, body language, inflection, tone, timing (transmitting)
- The reception of the message – how and why people listen (receiving)
- The translation of the message to internal thoughts and feelings on the part of the receiver (decoding)
- The need or desire to respond to the message – thinking, feeling, planning (responding)

[Total: 20]

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2 Susan wants to call a meeting of the Board of Directors at the Head Office to explain the proposed communications plan. The meeting is very urgent and she wishes it to take place the next day.

(a) Prepare a memo from Susan to all the directors asking them to attend this meeting. Use the detail in the case study and create all other necessary details. [8 Marks]

The memo must conform to company style:

- Logo
- Date
- To: Board of Directors
- From: You
- Subject: Re: Training
- Body/content of the memo
- Appropriate conclusion
- Initials or signature

Content should be able to highlight the urgency of the situation and the fact that it is imperative that the communications schedule is resolved quite speedily.

Marks should be awarded on the basis of:

4 marks for content

4 marks for layout and structure

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- (b) As part of the communications plan, Susan wishes to undertake a number of electronic forms of communication. Explain to Susan *three* advantages to the Yellow Band Drinks Company of using the electronic communications listed below: [4 × 3 = 12]

Email – benefits include:

- Speed of communication
- International coverage
- Can attach files
- Ease of response by customer
- Can be accessed remotely by receiver
- 24 hour access

(1 mark for identification and 1 mark for explanation for any two of the above)

Website – benefits include:

- Channel for communicating with customers
- Can provide a range of information and enable transactions
- Opportunity to provide virtual presentations
- 24/7/365 access
- Enables task forums
- Can be linked to database functions

(1 mark for identification and 1 mark for explanation for any two of the above)

Extranet – benefits include:

- Private Internet for suppliers or customers and password protected access to company information
- Enables the organization to manage its supplier relationship through the provision of information
- Links to an organisation's database
- Allows online transactions from distributors and customers (i.e. middlemen and the supermarkets) and can be automated
- Enables task forums
- 24/7/365 access

(1 mark for identification and 1 mark for explanation for any two of the above)

[Total: 20]

- 3 The meeting with the Board of Directors is extremely important and Susan needs a good understanding of what is involved in managing meetings successfully.

- (a) Explain to Susan *four* things she should consider when planning tomorrow's meeting. [4 × 2 = 8]

- Decide who should be invited to the meeting and what their respective roles will be
- Issue a notice of the meeting
- Prepare and arrange an agenda
- Decide an approximate time-scale for the duration of the meeting
- Arrange for a suitable room and venue
- Prepare appropriate information and ensure it is ready in advance of the meeting

(1 mark for identification and 1 mark for explanation up to 4 points)

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(b) Explain to Susan *four* things that her role as Chairperson of the meeting will involve during the meeting. [4 × 2 = 8]

- Keeping to and following the agenda
- Keeping control of the discussion
- Keeping control of the time scale
- Ensure that people are given the opportunity to contribute appropriately
- Arrange for minutes to be taken, produced and circulated after the meeting has taken place
- Decide on the action points and people to complete these actions
- The date of the next meeting should be decided

(1 mark for identification and 1 mark for explanation up to 4 points)

(c) Taking minutes will be an essential component of this meeting.

Explain *four* benefits of taking minutes of important meetings. [4 marks]

- A good record of the meeting and the various points of discussion
- A record of those who attended
- A record of actions agreed at the meeting and who is responsible for them
- A record of timelines agreed with the various actions
- A record of the next meeting, venue, time, place
- A record of 'any other business' which was not part of the original agenda

(1 mark for each point up to 4 points)

[Total: 20]

4 The Board of Directors has decided that they need to increase the frequency of performance appraisals of key members of staff involved in the drinks incident in Malaysia.

(a) Prepare *four* guidance points for the preparation and conduct of an appraisal interview. [4 × 2 = 8]

- Discuss the individuals' performance
- Discuss the contribution they have made to the organisation
- Evaluate the efficiency of the targets and goals set versus those achieved
- Establish priorities for the appraisee and manager
- Identify, assess and resolve any problems
- Look at resourcing issues
- Explore issues relating to motivation
- Look at plans for the future
- Explore training and development needs

(Any four of the above points – 1 mark for identification and 1 mark for elaboration)

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(b) Explain two types of questions that could be used in an appraisal interview, giving an example of each one. [2 × 3 marks]

- Open ended question designed to allow the appraisee to open up and discuss issues relating to his/her job role/performance – What do you think is the cause of the defective lemonade?
- Closed question – to identify specific information i.e. Were the previous set targets achieved?
- Re-statement questions – To check the appraisee has informed the person of information correctly

(1 mark per question type identified, 1 mark for the explanation and 1 mark per example for any two of the above)

(c) It is possible that Peter Zhanti will face a disciplinary interview. Why might this be the case? Explain what is meant by a disciplinary interview. [2 × 3 = 6]

A disciplinary interview is an interview that takes place between the employer and employee in relation to a 'wrong-doing' in the work place, or poor performance. In the case of Peter Zhanti, his performance improvement drive appears to have comprised the quality of work undertaken and therefore he is at fault potentially for not getting the balance of improvement versus quality right.

[Total: 20]

5 (a) The Board of Directors has asked for a graphical presentation of the number and type of defects at each plant for the last two years. They are concerned that the increases are a result of Peter Zhanti's drive to increase output and performance, and they need evidence.

Explain the benefits of presenting the number and types of defects for each plant for the last two years using the following:

- **Bar charts**
 - **Line graphs**
 - **Tables** **[3 × 4 = 12]**
- Explanation of tables – good for tabulating complex information, limited immediate visual impact and difficult to interpret readily.
 - Explanation of bar charts – good for indicating trends, wide range of bar charts available, difficult to present complex information.
 - Explanation of line graphs – good for showing trends, cannot readily or clearly be interpreted as there are too many plotted lines of information, therefore not helpful for complex information.

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(b) Susan has asked you to prepare a press release for the various stakeholders in the supply chain, outlining the next steps in the communication process.

Identify *four* things you should consider when preparing a press release. [4 marks]

- Target audience – different stakeholder groups
- Circulation – i.e. different mediums to be used – press, internet, email etc.
- Nature and tone of the message
- Any requirement for graphics, photographs etc.
- Timing of the publication
- As it is a one way method of communication how can stakeholders respond
- Where can stakeholders get further information

(1 mark for any four of the above points)

(c) You and Susan think it would be useful to produce a Gantt chart for the investigations and the planned communications.

Explain *two* benefits of using a Gantt chart. [2 × 2 = 4]

- Useful as a planning tool
- Highlights different activities and their associated timelines
- Can use colour codes to make the plans transparent
- Can include resource/responsibility for the tasks to be undertaken
- Provides a good graphical of the top line overview of a project

(1 mark for identification and 1 mark for elaboration up to 2 points, from any of the above)

[Total: 20]