



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
Cambridge International Diploma in Business
Advanced Level

EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

5172/01

Core Module

October 2011

2 hours plus 15 minutes' reading time

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your Centre number, candidate number and name on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen.

You may use a soft pencil for any diagrams, graphs or rough working.

Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Attempt **all** tasks.

Start each task on a new piece of paper.

Please leave a margin on the right and left hand side of each new page.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together, in the correct order.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.

This document consists of **4** printed pages.



You must read the case study below and attempt ALL of the tasks that follow.
(This case study is fictitious.)

SYNERGY

Synergy is a world-leading plant science business. It is committed to promoting sustainable agriculture through innovative research and technology. Its purpose is 'bringing plant potential to life'. Synergy currently employs more than 24 000 people in over 90 countries.

Synergy was formed in 2000. The company has a wide range of product lines from crop protection to treatment for garden lawns. Product lines include seeds for planting and garden plants. Throughout the world, farmers and growers are looking to increase the amount produced from their land. Synergy's research teams are dedicated to researching and developing products to meet worldwide demand from farmers and agricultural businesses for products at competitive prices. Global sales in 2008 were approximately \$11.6 billion¹, with 37% of sales in Europe, Africa and the Middle East and 32% in North America and Mexico. 5 10

Its customers range from farmers to governments. Well-qualified innovative scientists are the main strength of the business. However, the company also needs people in other supporting roles to ensure the products that its scientists develop can reach their chosen markets and customers. A strong focus on recruiting and developing its employees helps Synergy remain a major player in a highly competitive market. The business prides itself on attracting motivated and talented employees. Once recruited to the company all new members of staff are involved in an induction and full training programme. 15

Traditionally large businesses divide the organisation up into functional areas. Synergy's functions include research and development, global supply (including manufacturing), human resources, sales and marketing, finance, and information systems. 20

Within any organisation there are likely to be several layers of authority. The number of levels depends upon whether the business has a hierarchical or flat structure. Synergy operates through both a hierarchical and matrix structure. This involves staff from different departments and different levels working together in teams on specific projects and tasks. Each team will consist of members from different departments, with each member having their own specialism and expertise related to the project. It takes employees out of their usual functional areas to work with other employees with different expertise and specialisms. This ensures the project has all the skills it needs to achieve its target. It also means the employees may benefit from each other's abilities and from the mutual trust that builds up between them. Synergy's senior management relies heavily on the work of these matrix-based teams when making its decisions. 25 30

The company presents annual awards to employees whose achievements have helped drive the business forward. These awards are publicised through the company's magazine and intranet, so everyone inside the company can see how achievement is rewarded.

Tao Chen and Cheung Chen-Chi are both Project Managers based in China and work very closely together. They have recently found some problems with poor communications both internally and externally. Tao Chen's Marketing Manager is wishing to retire and the vacancy will require filling as soon as possible. Tao Chen is currently organising his Annual Employee Meeting. This meeting allows all the employees to attend and is held each year at the Sanya Exhibition Centre. Tao Chen feels that this annual meeting is very important for two-way communication. 35

¹ Quoted in US Dollars

You must attempt ALL the following tasks.

Where appropriate use information from the case study to support your answer.

- 1 Tao Chen is worried that there have been some internal problems which may have been caused by poor communications.
- (a) Describe **four** two-way methods of communication which could be used within the company. [4 x 2 = 8]
- (b) Identify **four** key causes of poor internal communications. [4 x 2 = 8]
- (c) Explain why a business needs to understand the communication process. [4]
[Total: 20]
- 2 (a) Write a letter to all employees inviting them to the Annual Employee Meeting. Confirmation of attendance will be required by 25 October 2011 for seating and buffet arrangements. Use the information in the case study and make up any other relevant details. [12]
- (b) Briefly explain to Tao Chen the benefits of the following types of communication which could be used with different customers and other stakeholders:
- (i) Electronic Mail [2]
- (ii) Website [2]
- (iii) Presentations [2]
- (iv) Press Releases [2]
[Total: 20]
- 3 As stated in the case study Synergy uses project teams to work on specific projects or tasks.
- (a) List **six** rules the project teams will use to ensure effective group communication. [6 x 1 = 6]
- (b) Explain **four** factors which the project teams will need to consider to ensure that they are effective groups. [4 x 2 = 8]
- (c) List **six** characteristics of a successful meeting. [6 x 1 = 6]
[Total: 20]

- 4 You have been asked to take part as a member of an interview panel recruiting a new Marketing Manager.
- (a) Give a definition of a business interview. [2]
 - (b) Explain what you, as the interviewer, will need to plan for this type of recruitment/selection interview. [6 x 2 = 12]
 - (c) Open and closed questions can be used in an interview. Explain what open and closed questions are. Provide **one** example of each. [2 x 3 = 6]
[Total: 20]
- 5 The case study shows how Synergy operates through a hierarchical structure.
- (a) Describe how the features of a hierarchical organisation structure impact on the effectiveness of internal communications. [10]
 - (b) Tao Chen will be using charts, as part of his presentation to all staff at the Annual Employee Meeting. Identify **one** advantage and **one** disadvantage of each of the following graphical charts.
 - (i) Bar Chart. [2]
 - (ii) Pie Chart. [2]
 - (iii) Line Graph. [2]
 - (c) List **four** multimedia facilities which Tao Chen could use to enhance his presentation. [4 x 1 = 4]
[Total: 20]

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