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OFFICE ADMINISTRATION ADVANCED LEVEL
INTERPERSONAL BUSINESS SKILLS (OPTIONAL MODULE) 5176

Assignment Cover Sheet for Candidates

(Page 1 of 4)

When submitting a copy of your assignment please complete this Assignment Cover Sheet and an S.A.R., which is completed by your tutor. By completing this form and submitting the assignment for assessment by CIE you confirm that the assignment is all your own work. Any work taken from another source has been appropriately referenced and acknowledged.

CIE Unique Candidate Identifier								
Centre No.			Year	Cand. No.				

Candidate Name	Date of Submission		

Please read this page and complete the grids on the next three pages, before handing in your assignment. This form is designed to help you check that your work is complete and that you have covered all the required competence criteria. There are four pages in total. The assignment guidelines, available in the syllabus, provide full information for the completion of the assignment.

For this assignment you must present a written report which includes the following:

- a contents page
- an introduction (purpose of the assignment and an outline of the work to be included)
- how you went about the investigation - a clear explanation of the investigation you have carried out and methods you have used (steps taken to obtain information, e.g. interviews, surveys, visits, research why these methods were chosen and how they proved to be effective)
- a short description of the organisation or institution in which the assignment is being carried out. This should include a description of its function (e.g. college, private sector company, government department), its products or services, its size and location
- a brief description of how potential members of the reference group were asked to take part
- a brief description of the sample group (the individual members of the sample group should not be named)
- a complete copy of the questions designed and used in the survey, in order to gather information from the sample group
- a description of how the information was collected
- a write-up (well summarised findings from the investigation)
- adequate coverage of the aims and objectives (these are listed on the next three pages)

In addition, your report should:

- be between 1800 – 2500 words long
- be word processed (legible hand writing is also acceptable)
- have a logical structure with clearly presented and explained sections
- have a bibliography (list of reference materials, publications and text books used as reference sources)
- have a clear, legible and business-like layout and format

Have these requirements been met? YES/NO

Comments:

Further details of the assignment requirements can be found in the syllabus section headed 'Assignment Guidelines'. A copy of the syllabus can be found at www.cie.org.uk.

FOR CENTRE AND CANDIDATE USE - PLEASE PHOTOCOPY AS REQUIRED

Assignment contents

(Page 2 of 4)

Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the service provided to customers by a specific organisation and recommend improvements. The findings should be presented to a small group followed by a short discussion led by the candidate to discuss any conclusions and recommendations. For the purposes of the assignment, the group of customers surveyed will be called the sample group. The group to which the presentation is made will be called the reference group. Those from whom candidates must get agreement prior to carrying out the survey will be called key individuals.

You should go through the grids and indicate in the boxes where the evidence can be found. You may want to add a comment to explain your choice, but this is not always necessary.

Carry out a survey of the sample group		Page no.	Comments
1.1	Understand and demonstrate a range of communication skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the meaning of active listening • how to improve the ability to listen: looking interested, suspending pre-judgements, consciously analysing what is being said • different types of questions: open, closed, reflective, leading, hypothetical • when to use and when to avoid particular types of question 		
1.3	Analyse and consciously employ appropriate verbal behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of questions for different purposes: seeking information, asking for ideas, testing understanding • use of statements for different purposes: summarising, building, disagreeing about issues, personalising disagreements giving information, making suggestions, supporting 		
2.4	Understand and demonstrate how to make and refuse requests assertively <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to make assertive requests: positive mental attitude, clear objectives and fall-back position, being clear and specific, avoiding manipulation, listening and, if necessary, seeking compromise • saying 'no' assertively: resisting feeling guilty, clarity of expression, acknowledging the request, giving reasons and avoiding excuses, asking for information and time to think, if possible suggesting solutions 		
5.1	Understand and demonstrate interviewing techniques, focusing on the role of the interviewer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • characteristics of a good interview (e.g. prepared by both parties, constructive, 2-way, controlled, clear conclusions) • preparation: clear objectives, content, questions to ask, structure and arrangements • effective openings: establishing an appropriate climate, agreeing how you intend to structure and run the interview • managing the core of the interview: using questions correctly, listening actively, using the agreed structure, building on one another's ideas, testing your understanding and summarising, keeping control of the time • clear endings: summarising, agreeing actions, checking that the interview has covered everything the interviewee wanted to discuss • follow-up: making notes, communicating decisions to other, carrying out and monitoring agreed actions 		

		Page no.	Comments
6.1	Understand and demonstrate customer care skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preparation: knowing the products and services, appropriate personal appearance and manner • what customers want: attention, to be treated as individuals, to be offered solutions by people who care • relating positively to customers: courteous greetings, open, friendly body language, sensitivity to the type and amount of help they want • establishing customers' needs: asking open questions, testing understanding, listening actively, creating empathy • meeting customers' needs: making helpful suggestions, offering options, checking satisfaction, exceeding customers' expectations 		

Make a presentation to the reference group

1.2	Understand and demonstrate non-verbal communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • importance of non-verbal communication • different aspects of non-verbal communication: physical setting, spatial distance and orientation, physical appearance, facial expression, eye contact, posture and gestures • interpreting non-verbal communication accurately, principles and dangers • strengths and weaknesses of non-verbal communication 		
1.3	As before – analyse and consciously employ appropriate verbal behaviour		
4.1	Make effective presentations to groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • setting clear objectives • understanding what the audience know already and will want from the presentation • getting the physical setting right (checking that the equipment works, arranging the audience to suit the purpose of the presentation) • planning the presentation: listing the major points, putting them in logical sequence, estimating the timescale, deciding how to balance detail, clarity and time available, selecting/designing simple visual aids, scripting the opening, preparing notes, predicting likely questions, rehearsing • delivering the presentation: effective openings, empathising with the group, the use of variety, correct and incorrect body language • what to do if something goes wrong: backtrack if you lose the place, watch your body language, avoid excessive apologising 		

Lead a short discussion of the conclusions with the reference group

2.3	Understand and demonstrate how to receive praise and criticism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when being praised, acknowledging your achievements • when being criticised, know how to react assertively if you agree with the criticism, if you disagree, if you don't understand, if the criticism is personal 		
2.4	As before - understand and demonstrate how to make and refuse requests assertively		
3.1	Understand and demonstrate influencing skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what influence in an organisation may be based upon: position, expert knowledge, personality, resources • different influencing strategies and when to use them: reason, force, coalitions, bargaining, resort to higher authority, relationships, sanctions • different influencing styles: 'push' – <i>telling</i> the other person what you think of the situation and making suggestions about what they should do – vs. 'pull' – <i>asking</i> the other person for information and ideas and then building on what they say 		

		Page no.	Comments
4.2	Organise, lead and take part in small group meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chairperson's preparation: clear objectives, agenda, notes from previous meetings, organising the physical setting, giving participants notice of the purpose, content and arrangements • participants' preparation: their objectives, what they will contribute, their questions, 'homework' • agreeing simple ground rules: turning up on time, no phone calls during meetings, how the meeting will be run, who will take notes • chairperson's different roles and what they involve: leader, gatekeeper, referee, administrator 		

Assess the activities carried out

1.1	As before – understand and demonstrate a range of communication skills		
1.2	As before – understand and demonstrate non-verbal communication		
2.2	Understand and demonstrate how to give constructive praise and criticism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • features of giving constructive praise: specific, honest, descriptive, immediate • principles of constructive criticisms: issues not personalities, positive mental attitude, being clear and specific, using 'I' statements, asking for responses and suggestions, summarising agreed actions • what to do if the person you are criticising reacts emotionally: with anger, denial, silence or tears 		

Self Evaluation

	Comment on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your approach to selecting information • the strengths and weaknesses of your report 		
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