



**General Certificate of Education (A-level) Applied  
January 2013**

**Applied Business**

**BS04**

**(Specification  
8611/8613/8616/8617/8619)**

**Unit 4: Meeting Customer Needs (External Test)**

***Mark Scheme***

---

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all examiners participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each examiner analyses a number of students' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this Mark Scheme are available from: [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

Copyright © 2013 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

**Copyright**

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

	<b>Assessment Objectives</b>
	The Assessment Objectives represent those qualities which can be demonstrated in students' work and which can be measured for the purposes of assessment.
AO1 Knowledge, skills and understanding	Students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the specified content and relevant business skills.
AO2 Application of knowledge, skills and understanding	Students apply knowledge and understanding of the specified content and relevant business skills.
AO3 Research and analysis	Students use appropriate methods in order to obtain and select information from a range of sources to analyse business problems.
AO4 Evaluation	Students evaluate evidence to reach reasoned judgements.
<b>Quality of Written Communication</b>	<p>The quality of written communication is assessed in all assessment units where students are required to produce extended written material. Students will be assessed according to their ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and complex subject matter</li> <li>• organise relevant information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate</li> <li>• ensure that text is legible, and that spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate, so that meaning is clear.</li> </ul> <p>The assessment of the quality of written communication is included in Assessment Objective 4.</p>

1

**Total for this question: 20 marks**

**1 (a)** Use examples from **Item A** to describe **two** ways in which JLP segments its customers. (4 marks)

Level	Descriptor	Marks	Assessment Objective
2	Describes <b>two</b> ways using examples from <b>Item A</b> . (Award three marks for one very good description).	4–3	AO2
1	States relevant method(s) of segmentation/shows relevant knowledge.	2–1	AO1

**Relevant answers might include the following:**

- by income. The company has a reputation for supplying products for wealthy consumers and has recently introduced its 'Value' and 'Essential' ranges
- by gender. The company's department stores operate separate departments for men's and women's clothing
- by lifestyle. The company sells products on the internet through its online store as well as through its retail outlets
- by age. John Lewis sells products specifically aimed at children in its clothing department.

**1 (b)** Use **Item A** to explain how JLP uses ICT to provide good customer service. (7 marks)

Level	Descriptor	Marks	Assessment Objective
3	Uses <b>Item A</b> to explain possible method(s).	7–6	AO2
2	Uses <b>Item A</b> to describe possible method(s).	5–4	
1	States relevant points/shows relevant knowledge.	3–1	AO1

**Relevant answers might include the following:**

- customer service includes all the activities that affect the customer's experience of dealing with a business
- the online store offers the company a chance to provide a wider range of products and thereby to meet its customers' diverse needs
- the company's 'click and collect' service offers a speedy response as well as a very wide range of products
- customers can use the website to contact the company to place and amend orders and to contact individual stores – this service is available at all times
- the website makes it easy for the company to offer high quality after-sales service such as dealing with complaints and exchanging goods
- disabled customers (for example, those with visual impairments) can use the website relatively easily.

**1 (c)** Analyse why JLP has used ICT to improve its customer service. Use **Item A** to support your answer. (9 marks)

Level	Descriptor	Marks	Assessment Objective
3	Uses <b>Item A</b> to analyse why JLP has used ICT to improve customer service.	9–7	AO3
2	Uses <b>Item A</b> to explain why JLP has used ICT to improve customer service.	6–4	AO2
1	States relevant points/shows relevant knowledge.	3–1	AO1

**Relevant answers might include the following:**

- customer service includes all the activities that affect the customer's experience of dealing with a business
- the percentage of UK households with internet access is rising rapidly meaning that using the internet as a method of providing customer service is relevant to more consumers
- consumers' expectations are changing as more expect to be able to communicate with retailers electronically
- the company has a reputation for providing good customer service (top in a recent UK poll) and has adapted its use of ICT to achieve this
- retail sales are falling for many businesses (1.5% down in 2011 compared with 2010) so using all possible methods to improve customer service is essential.

2

**Total for this question: 20 marks**

**2 (a)** *Using Item B, analyse how selling a wide range of products to different types of customer will affect how JLP operates its business. (8 marks)*

Level	Descriptor	Marks	Assessment Objective
4	Uses <b>Item B</b> to analyse effect(s).	8–7	AO3
3	Uses <b>Item B</b> to explain possible effect(s).	6–4	AO2
2	Explains generic reason(s).	3–2	AO1
1	States relevant points/shows relevant knowledge.	1	

**Relevant answers might include the following:**

- the company has to provide detailed product information for the more complex products that it sells. It will have to train its staff thoroughly to facilitate this
- the company makes other operational changes to give its customers product information. Thus it has introduced product reviews on its website
- the company has to recognise which products need a large amount of information and to ensure that this is provided. Consumers buying towels require little information but purchasers of HD TVs will need much more product information to judge the value and suitability of this product
- some of *JLP's* customers have needs prior to purchasing a product and the company must organise itself to meet these. For example, the company can design interiors for hotels and schools. It has to train staff to supply these services
- after-sales service can be an important need for many of *JLP's* customers. For example, customers buying furniture and kitchen appliances will want a delivery service. The company has to operate a transport service to meet these needs
- on-going advice and support is an important need for customers buying electrical products, for example. Staff training is essential here, as is the provision of a telephone support service
- insurance claims may be made at any time of the day or night. The business has to provide suitable skilled staff to meet these needs as well as the resources for its staff to deal with claims and enquiries.

**2 (b)** Do you think that product development **or** providing high quality customer service is the most important way in which JLP meets the needs of its customers?  
Use **Item B** to justify your decision. (12 marks)

Level	Descriptor	Marks	Assessment Objective
3	Uses <b>Item B</b> to analyse argument(s).	7–6	AO3
2	Uses <b>Item B</b> to explain point(s).	5–4	AO2
1	Identifies relevant point(s).	3–1	AO1

**Relevant answers might include the following:**

**In support of product development being the most important factor:**

- the company's product development has augmented its products in many ways. It provides a credit card, delivers heavy goods etc. This augmentation can be vital in differentiating its products and satisfying consumers' needs
- the company has developed additional features to increase the attractiveness of its products and meet the needs of its customers more fully. Its wedding service is an example of an additional feature that it provides
- the company has developed its product range to meet the needs of international customers which means that many more customers can be satisfied with the company's offerings.

**In support of providing high quality customer service being the most important factor:**

- high quality customer service is vital to ensure that *JLP* meets its customers' needs as it moves into new markets such as interior design and wedding services. This is essential if it is to develop a customer base
- some of the company's products are complex and supplying detailed product information on electrical products or plants for gardens, for example, will be a necessary part of customer service and ensuring customers' needs are met
- *JLP* is renowned for its high quality customer service. Any decline in this area would damage the company's reputation and one of its USPs
- good customer service helps to meet the needs of the retailer's customers and continuing to provide this (through effective training, for example) is a vital part of meeting customers' needs.

**Possible themes for Evaluation:**

- *JLP* is expanding. In these circumstances, as it enters new markets, developing new products will be a central part of meeting the needs of its customers, especially its new ones
- for existing customers, perhaps attracted by *JLP*'s deserved reputation for excellent customer service, product development may be of limited importance in meeting needs
- balanced approach may help to meet the needs of the retailer's customers.

**See next page for evaluation grid.**

For **AO4**, you should award marks using the scheme below.

**Note** AO4 also assesses students' quality of written communication. When deciding on the AO4 level to be awarded, consider the degree to which the student orders and communicates his/her ideas.

<b>Level</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Marks</b>	<b>Assessment Objective</b>
E2	Offers judgement plus full justification.  Ideas are communicated using a logical structure, with some appropriate use of technical terms. There are occasional errors in accepted conventions of written communication.	5–3	AO4
E1	Offers judgement plus limited justification.  Ideas are communicated with some structure evident with occasional use of technical terms. There are some errors in accepted conventions of written communication.	2–1	



3

**Total for this question: 20 marks**

**3 (a)** Using **Item C**, describe how City Sandwiches Ltd might differentiate its products.  
(4 marks)

Level	Descriptor	Marks	Assessment Objective
2	Offers description using <b>Item C</b> .	4–3	AO2
1	Provides generic information about differentiation.	2–1	AO1

**Relevant answers might include the following:**

- differentiation occurs when businesses make distinctive products, providing consumers with benefits that cannot be matched by competitors' products
- if the business does offer its 45 minute service, this will differentiate as no other business provides a similar service
- the company could differentiate its products by lowering prices – most sandwich makers in the area charge similar prices.

**3 (b)** Use **Item C** to analyse the reasons why City Sandwiches Ltd should invest in research and development as soon as possible.  
(6 marks)

Level	Descriptor	Marks	Assessment Objective
3	Uses <b>Item C</b> to analyse reason(s).	6–5	AO3
2	Uses <b>Item C</b> to explain reason(s).	4–3	AO2
1	Identifies relevant reason(s)/shows relevant knowledge.	2–1	AO1

**Relevant answers might include the following:**

- research and development is scientific research undertaken by businesses with the aim of developing new products
- the company's products are possibly outdated and new ones are necessary if it is to increase sales and compete more strongly with new rivals
- Jemima is inventive, has the necessary skills and is keen to improve and update the product range – this would help to keep costs under control at a time when profits are low
- the company's sales are falling more quickly – its profits are very low and action needs to be taken urgently
- informal research has suggested that the company's customers are bored with its unchanging menus. Research and development into new products would remedy this.

**3 (c)** *Donald favours the use of questionnaires to collect information on existing customers' opinions. Jemima insists that consumer panels would be more effective. Recommend which approach should be adopted. Use **Item C** to justify your decision.* (10 marks)

Level	Descriptor	Marks	Assessment Objectives
3	Uses <b>Item C</b> to analyse factor(s) affecting the decision.	5	AO3
2	Uses <b>Item C</b> to explain factor(s) affecting the decision.	4–3	AO2
1	Identifies relevant point(s)/shows relevant knowledge.	2–1	AO1

**Relevant answers might include the following:**

- customer questionnaires ask a number of closed questions as the basis of a focused survey
- consumer panels consist of a selection of people who represent the target group for the business's products.

**In support of Donald's view:**

- the business wishes to collect information on many customers (730 in December 2012) who have different needs and a questionnaire would make this easier to carry out
- the company's financial position is increasingly weak and the issue and collection of questionnaires would not be too expensive
- the market appears to be growing and changing quite quickly. Researching a larger number of respondents using questionnaires might be more effective in capturing these changes.

**In support of Jemima's view:**

- Donald only wishes to send questionnaires to existing customers, but this market is (possibly) growing at 7% per year and *City Sandwiches Ltd* has been losing market share. The market research should encompass the whole market
- the company sells food products. The nature of consumer panels will allow more detailed information to be collected on **why** people like or dislike products which will help inform decision-making
- Jemima intends to research and develop new products. Conducting consumer panels could be an integral and important part of this process.

**Possible themes for Evaluation:**

- cost and time are important issues here. This seems to favour Donald's approach
- with food products, a more in-depth approach would provide more information and increase the chance of developing successful products
- do the two approaches have to be mutually exclusive?
- use of questionnaires beyond existing customers.

For **AO4**, you should award marks using the scheme below.

**Note** AO4 also assesses students' quality of written communication. When deciding on the AO4 level to be awarded, consider the degree to which the student orders and communicates his/her ideas.

Level	Descriptor	Marks	Assessment Objective
E2	Offers judgement plus full justification.  Ideas are communicated using a logical structure, with some appropriate use of technical terms. There are occasional errors in accepted conventions of written communication.	5–3	AO4
E1	Offers judgement plus limited justification.  Ideas are communicated with some structure evident with occasional use of technical terms. There are some errors in accepted conventions of written communication.	2–1	